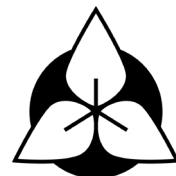


2023 PREBUDGET SUBMISSION

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs

Ontario Federation of Labour
February 2023



**ONTARIO
FEDERATION OF
LABOUR**

The Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) is the central labour organization in the province of Ontario. The OFL represents 54 unions and speaks for more than a million workers from all regions of the province in the struggle for better working and living conditions.

With most unions in Ontario affiliated, membership includes nearly every job category and occupation. The OFL is Canada's largest provincial labour federation. The strength of the labour movement is built on solidarity and respect among workers.

We commit ourselves to the goals of worker democracy, social justice, equality, and peace. We are dedicated to making the lives of all workers and their families safe, secure, and healthy. We believe that every worker is entitled, without discrimination, to a job with decent wages and working conditions, union representation, free collective bargaining, a safe and healthy workplace, and the right to strike.

Organized labour, as the voice of working people, promotes their interests in the community and at national and international forums. We speak out forcefully for our affiliates and their members to employers, governments, and the public to ensure the rights of all workers are protected and expanded.

For far too long, working people have paid the price for crises they did not create.

Wages have been frozen or cut, while the cost of living has gone through the roof. Our public services are crumbling; health care is on the brink of collapse – and at a time when it is needed most. Ontarians can barely afford to pay rent or live in the towns and cities where they grew up. Some are being forced to choose between paying for food, medication, or keeping the lights on. Ontarians can barely make ends meet, while corporations and the banks are making record profits.

More and more people in Ontario are saying “enough is enough”. The Ford government can no longer turn away from the realities that the people of this province are experiencing.

The Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) believes that the 2023 Ontario budget provides an important opportunity to change course. It is time that the Ford government address the concerns of working-class people in this province.

REAL WAGE INCREASES

Amid decades-high inflation, workers in Ontario are struggling.

Wages are failing to keep pace with inflation, and those who cannot find higher paying employment or negotiate a raise are encountering real reductions in their purchasing power. At its peak last year, consumer prices in Ontario increased more than twice as fast as wages.ⁱ The gap between the two translates into a substantial reduction in real living standards for workers.

This is not a workers' wage-led recovery, and the government must act accordingly.

Stop the appeal of Bill 124

Instead of easing the financial pressures felt by Ontario families, the Ford government is holding steadfast onto Bill 124 – wage restraint legislation that caps public sector compensation at one per cent.

Through Bill 124, the Ford government is purposefully targeting public sector workers across the province – including those working in education, health care, social services, and the civil service – as they move to shrink the size of the public sector, erode the quality of public services, drive down wages in both the public and private sector, attack workplace benefits like pensions, and interfere with collective bargaining rights.

In November 2022, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice struck down Bill 124, ruling that it violates workers' constitutional rights to collectively bargain and to strike. As such the government must ensure adequate resources are available for employers and unions to negotiate remedies that make workers impacted by the unconstitutionally deemed Bill 124, whole.

Instead of respecting the Court's decision, the Ford government is appealing this decision – once again spending public dollars to fight workers in court. The Ford government must reverse course and accept the Court's decision. It is also expected that the government / employers return to the bargaining table for a meaningful exchange of reasonable monetary proposals that will redress the negative impacts that Bill 124 has had on public sector workers.

Implement a \$20 minimum wage

Presently, roughly half a million Ontarians earn minimum wage.ⁱⁱ In October 2022, minimum-wage workers received a \$0.50 per-hour raise, bringing the general minimum wage to \$15.50 per hour, or about \$32,000 annually for a full-time worker. With prices

for essentials like housing and food skyrocketing, making the minimum wage is far from making a living.

It is important to remember that once they were in power, the Ford government froze the recently changed minimum wage in 2018 at \$14 for two years and cancelled a series of planned increases that were set to begin with the 2019 introduction of a \$15 minimum wage. Further increases, mandated by 2014 legislation and tied to inflation, would have adjusted the minimum wage upward each October.

The reality is that many minimum-wage workers put their own health at risk to keep working on the frontlines throughout the height of the pandemic, and they paid the price for the three-year delay in raising the minimum wage to \$15. According to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), without the freeze, each minimum-wage worker would have earned between \$3,000 and \$6,000 more from 2018 and 2021.ⁱⁱⁱ Further, as demonstrated by Ontario's move in 2018 to raise the minimum wage, raising the pay floor further reduces the racialized wage gap, particularly for women, amid rising employment levels.^{iv}

Instead of raising the bar for decent work in this province, this government is engaging in a race to the bottom for workers. A \$15.50 an hour pay floor across the province no longer goes far enough to address the affordability crisis. The Ford government must increase the minimum wage to \$20 per hour immediately – with no exceptions.

Double ODSP and OW rates

With the current rate of inflation, social assistance recipients can buy less this year than they could last year, leaving at least 863,000 Ontarians living in deep poverty.^v The government's recent announcement of a minimal 5 per cent increase to Ontario's Disability Support Program (ODSP) rates – which has been frozen along with Ontario Works (OW) rates since 2018 – amounts to an additional \$58 per month per recipient. Ontario Works recipients have had their rates stationary at just \$733 per month.

Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy states that people living on less than 75 per cent of the official poverty line for their region are experiencing deep poverty. The deep-poverty threshold (for a one-person household in a month) ranges from \$1,310 in rural Ontario to \$1,555 in Toronto.^{vi} In other words, by the province's own definition, all people on social assistance live in deep poverty. For instance, Torontonians receiving OW receive less than half of the deep-poverty threshold amount. This is unacceptable. The Ford government must immediately double ODSP and OW rates.

Among a province characterized by poverty wages, a growing gap between the rich and the poor, a disappearing middle class, and the increasing prevalence of precarious work, Ontario's working-class demands:

- Stop the appeal of Bill 124.
- Raise the minimum wage to \$20 an hour.
- End poverty wages.
- Double ODSP and OW rates.
- Restore and expand decent work laws, including paid sick days and equal pay for equal work.
- Make it easier for workers to join a union.
- Provide decent, publicly funded pensions for all.

KEEP SCHOOLS AND HEALTH CARE PUBLIC

In Ontario, decades of neoliberal economic policies and programs have resulted in the province having the second highest income inequality in Canada.^{vii}

Instead of investing in public services – which are the great equalizer of society, ensuring equal access to essential programs, such as education and health care, for everyone – the Ford government continues to perpetuate that divide as they continue to starve the public sector.

Properly fund all our public services

Based on analysis from the Financial Accountability Office (FAO) of Ontario, during the first year of the pandemic, program spending per capita in Ontario was \$11,794, the lowest among the provinces and \$1,960 (14.3 per cent) lower than the rest of Canada average (\$13,754). Since 2008, Ontario's program spending per capita has consistently ranked at or near the lowest among the provinces.^{viii}

Three years later, the situation has not improved.

According to the latest data from the FAO, the government is continuing to misrepresent the financial health of the province. The 2022 fall economic statement projected a \$12.9-billion deficit this year compared to the FAO's calculation of \$2.5 billion. The government's furthest projection is a \$700-million surplus in 2025; meanwhile, the FAO forecasts that the province will have a surplus of \$4.2 billion by then, rising to \$7.6 billion by 2027. It is also estimated that the government will have an additional \$1.7 billion in revenues this year.

The government also continues to consistently spend billions of dollars less than planned. It is projected that spending on programs will be \$6.8 billion lower than detailed by the Ford government in 2022-23, \$4.5 billion lower in 2023-24, and \$1.2 billion lower in 2024-25. In total, over the three-year period, the FAO forecasts that the government has allocated a cumulative \$12.5 billion in excess funds that are not

currently required to support existing programs and announced commitments. Despite these excess funds, there are still funding shortfalls in some sectors, including health care (\$5.0 billion over three years), education (\$1.1 billion), justice (\$0.8 billion), and postsecondary education (\$0.4 billion).^{ix} The reality is that the government has enough money to cover the shortfalls in health care and education – it just needs to act. Instead, the Ford government is starving public systems of the funding they need, waiting for them to crumble, and then championing privatization as the only solution.

This is about priorities. And the Ford government has the wrong ones.

HEALTH CARE

Unsurprisingly, with the removal of almost all public health measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the flu, other respiratory illnesses; staff shortages; and a severe backlog of surgeries and diagnostic tests, Ontario public hospitals have been stretched beyond the breaking point. Emergency departments continue to shut down in local hospitals due to the staffing crisis. For those emergency rooms that kept their doors open, the latest data shows that patients spent on average 22.4 hours in an emergency room waiting to be admitted – with only 23 per cent of patients meeting the province’s target time.^x Paramedics are reporting Code Zero events as all available ambulances are busy and unavailable for emergency calls. Pediatric ICUs in Ontario are forced to operate above capacity, jeopardizing treatment outcomes for sick children.

The crisis in our health care system, however, was largely avoidable.

When the Ford government took power, they cut hospital funding to below the rate of inflation – meaning real dollar cuts – to force continued downsizing leading into the pandemic. According to the Ontario Health Coalition, Ontario has downsized its hospitals to a radical extent, seen nowhere else in Canada.^{xi} This downsizing has been achieved through arbitrarily keeping hospital funding at the lowest rate of any province. For example, in 2020 – the first year of the pandemic – Ontario’s health spending per capita was the lowest in Canada. Since 2008, Ontario has consistently had among the lowest levels of per capita health spending in the country.^{xii} Ontarians cannot afford to wait any longer. Given inflation, population growth, the aging population, increased utilization, COVID-related costs, and the monies required to address the hospital capacity crisis (including staffed beds), the Ford government must immediately increase funding to health care by 15.1 per cent, which amounts to \$4.492 billion.

Stop the privatization of health care

Instead of choosing to address the crisis by resourcing and supporting local public hospitals, and by stopping the price gouging of private for-profit staffing agencies, the Ford government is funnelling monies and resources to private for-profit clinics and hospitals. Those for-profit clinics and staffing agencies pose a real and urgent threat to single-tier public health care.

Most recently, the Ford government announced its plan to permanently move OHIP-funded procedures out of public hospitals and into private Independent Health Facilities (IHF) – non-hospital sites that perform medically-necessary operations – 97 per cent of which are for-profit facilities.^{xiii} While Ford maintains that Ontarians are indifferent to where they receive health care services, provided that they have the same regulations and high-quality staff, recent polling from Environics Research suggests differently:

- 59 per cent of Ontarians oppose relying more on private for-profit health care providers to solve the health care crisis.
- In fact, a plurality of Ontarians (48 per cent) oppose the Ford government's plan to start paying private companies to provide surgeries and other health care services, while four in ten support this.
- Strong majorities agree that all should have equal access to health care regardless of income; that the main objective of for-profit health care companies is to make money; that private companies offering health care services will lead to richer people jumping the queue; and that the Ford government is leading Ontario to two-tier health care.
- If the Ontario government starts paying private companies to provide health care services, six in ten believe it will cost the government more because those private companies will need to make a profit.
- Over six in ten Ontarians do not trust Doug Ford's quoted guarantee that paying private companies to provide health care services will not lead to added direct costs to Ontarians.^{xiv}

The Ford government does not have a mandate to privatize our public services, including our health care system.

In addition to lifting the cap on the number of IHFs that can operate in Ontario, the Ford government plans to privatize “simple” medical operations, such as knee replacement, hip replacement, and cataract surgeries. Interestingly, one of the top private surgery clinics that lobbied the Ford government to expand private cataract surgeries has donated thousands of dollars to the Ford PCs.^{xv}

It is also important to note that according to the 2021 Auditor's report on Outpatient Surgery, "the Ministry has no oversight mechanism to prevent patients from being misinformed and being charged inappropriately for publicly funded surgeries." The Auditor's office hired "mystery shoppers", who contacted 25 different IHFs. Add-on fees for OHIP-insured cataract surgery ranged from \$450 to \$5000 extra per eye for "non-OHIP lens". Some were told purchasing the specialty lens was mandatory.^{xvi} Private clinics can and will upsell publicly insured patients. The Ford government must reverse course and stop the privatization of our health care.

Privatization is the theft of the public good for private profit.

End the staffing crisis in health care

Further, maintaining Bill 124 amid sky high inflation levels continues to intensify a deep sense of resentment, burnout, and injustice among health care professionals who risked their lives throughout the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic overwhelmed resources that were already strained — leading to an unparalleled wave of staff shortages that has now reached a breaking point. In fact, by their own admission, the government's internal briefing documents demonstrate that low wages and the implementation of Bill 124 are worsening staffing issues within the health care system.^{xvii}

According to the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions, approximately 46,000 more hospital staff need to be hired in Ontario just to deal with staff turnover, hospital job vacancies, the impact of the pandemic, as well as the increased needs of a growing and aging population.^{xviii} The Ford government must immediately take several actions:

- Support the existing workforce by staffing up to reduce workloads, providing mental health supports, investing in making the hospital workplace safer for staff and patients, offering full-time employment, and investing in on-site support such as childcare.
- Increase wages to attract and retain staff by stopping the appeal of Bill 124.
- Introduce financial incentives to discourage retirements and enhance hiring and retention.
- Recruit (with incentives) the thousands of nurses, paramedics, and others who are licensed and not working to help staff up hospitals.
- Expand postsecondary spaces for health disciplines by waiving tuition and providing additional financial incentives to study and practice in Ontario.

EDUCATION

Stop short-changing education

In 2022, the Ford government claimed to have made the biggest education investment in Ontario's history by allocating \$26.6 billion towards their "Plan to Catch Up".

In actuality, education funding was cut.

The government's recent expenditure estimates allocated \$27.08 billion to primary and secondary education, after adding in \$140 million from educational operations. This is an increase of about 3.4 per cent over the previous year – which significantly falls below inflation, not to mention enrollment growth.

It is also important to note that the 2022-23 target is also nearly one billion dollars below the government's 2020-21 primary and secondary education expenditure of \$28.083 billion.^{xix} It is also important to note that since 2018-19, Grants for Student Needs – the collection of grants which determines the funding allocation for publicly-funded school boards – has increased by only 2 per cent; however, after accounting for inflation and enrolment growth, real spending per student has dropped by 6.7 per cent.^{xx}

Furthermore, Ontario's ageing school infrastructure has been ignored by successive governments – leading to a growing repair backlog, which is estimated to be approximately \$17 billion.^{xxi} The Ford government's 2019 announcement of a \$14 billion infrastructure plan over 10 years for school repairs and construction falls short, impacting learning for students and working conditions for education workers. For instance, aging schools are ill equipped to provide the ventilation needed to minimize disease transmission, while climate change is making it known that heatwaves are beginning earlier and ending later, making the lack of air conditioning unbearable. The Ford government must fix the more than \$16.8 billion repair backlog and establish the stable funding that is needed to increase board-employed staff, who then maintain schools and prevent further disrepair.

Stop the privatization of education

The Ford government is paving a pathway towards privatization with our education system. As part of their "Plan to Catch Up", the government provided millions of dollars in direct payments to parents "to help their kids catch up". Not only is the amount per child – up to \$250 to pay for tutoring, supplies, or equipment – vastly insufficient to improve learning outcomes, but there are also no strings attached to the money. On an individual basis, these direct payments are exacerbating inequities between students. Collectively, on the other hand, these public funds can be spent towards

lowering class sizes and increasing in-school supports, where all students can benefit from improved conditions within the classroom on an ongoing basis.

With the retrenchment of welfare state programs, the underfunding and privatization of our public services, and the unfounded attacks on decent jobs in the public sector, Ontario's working-class demands:

- Stop the privatization of our health care and education.
- Stop short-changing education.
- Eliminate user fees.
- Properly fund all our public services.
- End the staffing crisis in health care.
- Slash tuition fees at college and university.
- Ensure affordable and accessible child care.
- Treat public sector workers with dignity and respect.

RENT CONTROL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

There is a growing housing affordability crisis across Ontario. Between 2011 and 2018, the number of Ontario households in core housing need – living in an unsuitable, inadequate, or unaffordable dwelling and not able to afford alternative housing in their community – increased (19.1 per cent) while the number of households receiving housing support from provincial programs decreased (4 per cent). Together, these two trends led to an increase in the waitlist for social housing. Ontario's social housing waitlist increased by 27 per cent over this time, with many households waiting over ten years for a placement in social housing.^{xxii} The crisis has both a social and economic cost for people and communities.

Launch a province-wide public housing program that builds decent homes in every community

The absence of meaningful government intervention is becoming increasingly felt, particularly in the context of sky-rocketing cost of homeownership, lack of well-paid and secure jobs, and an inadequate supply of affordable housing. Many people are being priced out of purchasing homes, and some are even being priced out of housing altogether.

Toronto, for instance, is now the second most expensive city in Canada to rent and the most expensive to buy a home and recently claimed the top spot as the country's most expensive city to live in. The rising cost of housing is outpacing wage growth. Buying a home is nearly 300 per cent more costly in the city than it was in the 1990s. The median income, meanwhile, has essentially remained the same. Today, it is estimated that a middle-earning household, saving 10 per cent per month, will need

24 years to save a down payment for an average house in the city. Comparatively, in 1992, it would have taken that same family only 2 years to save for the same home.^{xxiii}

Housing is being treated as a commodity to be bought and sold, rather than as a human right. When housing is a commodity, wealthy multi-property owners and international investors compete with first-time home buyers – and triumph. As a result, only 13 per cent of millennials own a home in Ontario, with 87 per cent renting.^{xxiv} The reality is that a greater number of younger adults are waiting longer to buy a home or have recognized that the dream of homeownership is permanently out of reach unless conditions change. The Ford government must launch a province-wide public housing program that builds decent homes in every community.

Build housing in a sustainable manner and without threatening the environment

Most recently, the Ford government passed Bill 23, *More Homes Built Faster Act*, in an attempt to address the housing crisis. The bill, however, is extremely problematic. One of the most controversial parts of the bill freezes, reduces, and exempts fees developers pay to build affordable housing, non-profit housing, and inclusionary zoning units (i.e., affordable housing in new developments), and some rental units. These fees are typically funnelled to municipalities to pay for services that support new homes, such as road and sewer work, transit, and community centres. It has been estimated that these changes could leave communities \$5 billion short.^{xxv}

Furthermore, the law also temporarily freezes conservation authority fees while reducing the agency's power. Conservation authorities will no longer need to consider factors such as pollution or land conservation when approving permit requirements. Limiting conservation authorities' ability to block development for environmental reasons is exceptionally problematic as the government is removing about 7,400 acres from the protected Greenbelt to accommodate the building of more homes. The government's Housing Affordability Task Force found there are plenty of places to build homes without destroying the Greenbelt. Interestingly, developers owning Greenbelt land appear to have given significant monies to the Ontario Progressive Conservative party. Moreover, lobbying records reveal connections between the party and five of the landowners who will benefit most from the proposed changes. Not only does this law weaken protections for people and properties, but ultimately, it is about making the rich richer. The Ford government must immediately repeal Bill 23.

With the skyrocketing cost of housing, the increasing inaccessibility of home ownership, the mounting pressure to move to other cities to find housing, a system that massively favours and rewards private landlords and developers, the precarity of renters and tenants, the homelessness crisis, and the emergence of tent cities in parks, Ontario's working-class demands:

- Pass real rent control and a Tenants' Bill of Rights.
- Launch a province-wide public housing program that builds decent homes in every community.
- Build housing in a sustainable manner, and without threatening the environment or the Greenbelt.
- Cap mortgage payments as inflation rates rise.
- Stop evictions and foreclosures.
- Create commercial rent control for small businesses.
- House those without housing instead of policing them.

AFFORDABLE GROCERIES, GAS, AND BASIC GOODS

End the price gouging by grocery stores and oil and gas corporations

Between 2020 and 2022, business prices in Canada increased, on average, by 19 per cent. Of every dollar spent on higher prices in the last two years, 47 cents was converted into corporate profits in four industries—led by mining then oil and gas extraction.^{xxvi} These industries were not the only beneficiaries. In the first two quarters of 2022, Canada's grocery conglomerates made \$1.5 billion – nearly twice as much as the \$800 million they made in 2019.^{xxvii} All large grocers saw an increase in gross profit relative to their average past performance – with Loblaw, for example, earning an excess of \$436 million.^{xxviii} Conglomerates were on the right side of this inflationary trend and profited from it.

Consumers, on the other hand, were not.

In 2022, gas prices hit record levels in Ontario, peaking at 212.0/L.^{xxix} While some Ontarians changed their driving habits, for others who drove for work – either as a commuter or as part of their job (e.g., personal support workers, delivery workers and rideshare drivers) – they were left with little choice. Sustained high gas prices, especially in the context of lower wage growth, continue to affect workers in terms of their after-tax income, where they live, and if they'll be able to perform their jobs at all. For low-income workers, who are required to drive as a condition of their livelihood, increased gas costs become choices between food, housing, and debt. Price gouging (and cartel-like behaviour) of oil and gas companies must be stopped.

Make sure every community has access to healthy and affordable groceries

While large grocery stores were raking in record profits, Ontario's food banks were visited more than 4,353,000 times throughout 2021-22, an increase of 42 per cent

over the last three years.^{xxx} It is unsurprising given that dietary essentials are escalating fastest, hurting those on low and fixed incomes the most. For instance, bread costs 17 per cent more than last year; cooking oil, 20 per cent more; and pasta, 30 per cent more. And relief is not expected soon with food prices estimated to increase on average by another five to seven per cent in 2023.^{xxxi} This means that a typical family of four will be forced to spend an average of \$16,288 on food over the course of 2023 – an increase of \$1,065 from last year.^{xxxii} Ontarians are struggling to make ends meet and are being forced to make unthinkable choices. Healthy and affordable groceries must be readily available for everyone.

With the failure of government to intervene as inflation on groceries and gas (and other basic goods) runs rampant; price gouging (and cartel-like behaviour) of grocery store giants and oil and gas companies remains unchecked; and massive profits of corporations accumulates, Ontario's working-class demands:

- End the price gouging by grocery stores and oil and gas corporations.
- Make sure every community has access to healthy and affordable groceries.
- Pass a Right to Food law that guarantees universal free school meals.
- Make transit free and accessible.
- Impose price caps on groceries, fuel, and basic goods.
- Tax the profits of food and oil giants.

MAKE CORPORATIONS AND THE WEALTHY PAY

The world's richest one per cent own nearly 46 per cent of the world's wealth.^{xxxiii} In fact, in Canada, 47 people control \$270 billion in total wealth^{xxxiv} – with Ontario being home to the highest concentration of billionaires in the country.^{xxxv}

Make the 1% pay their fair share

According to the CCPA, Canada's highest-paid CEOs and other top executives shattered records for compensation in 2021, earning an average of \$14.3 million as soaring inflation began to take hold – far surpassing the previous record of \$11.8 million in 2018. They earned 243 times the average worker's annual salary of \$58,800 in 2021, which marked just a three per cent increase from the year before. The reality is that Canada's highest-paid executives made an average worker's entire salary *less than hour* into the first working day of the new year.^{xxxvi}

Inequality, however, is not inevitable. It is a political choice.

It's time that the wealthiest pay their fair share.

Tax the record profits of corporations

As workers grapple with the affordability crisis, their ability to recover from the pandemic recession is diminishing. On the other hand, corporate profits are capturing more economic growth than in any previous post-recession recovery period over the past 50 years. The net result is a historic realignment of who benefits from economic growth in Canada.^{xxxvii} The biggest companies in Canada not only saw profit margins soar by 60 per cent in 2021, but they also avoided \$30 billion in tax, making a solid case for new windfall and excess profits taxes.^{xxxviii}

Corporations and the wealthy should be paying their fair share of taxes. According to Canadians for Tax Fairness, January 7th marked the date when Canadian corporations have earned enough in revenues to pay all of their federal and provincial income taxes for 2022. In other words, corporate income taxes accounted for *a week's* worth of annual operating revenues, while the average Canadian contributes a couple of *months* worth of income in taxes towards the public services we all need.^{xxxix}

Hold big corporate polluters responsible for their actions

According to the CCPA, a quarter of the higher prices Canadians saw over the past two years went directly into oil and gas and mining profits, flooding these carbon-intensive industries with money at a time when massive investments are needed to combat climate change. In fact, in the third quarter of 2022 alone, increased prices funnelled \$18 billion to the bottom lines of companies in the Canadian oil and gas and mining sector.^{xl}

Inflation and climate change are fuelling one another. Something must be done to fund the transition towards a green economy. The reality is that 70 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions in the past two decades can be attributed to 100 fossil fuel producers.^{xli} Governments have the greatest power and agency for change – one that will bring substantial cuts to emissions quickly. Given that a sizeable portion of inflation dollars have become profit, it is time to increase corporate taxes to capture those additional profits that companies did not earn through their own productive merit.

At a time when the money and resources we need are easily available, the massive gap between the rich and the poor is growing, corporations are raking in obscene profits, and the transfer of wealth from the poorest to the richest is rapid, Ontario's working-class demands:

- Tax the record profits of the banks and corporations.
- Make the 1% pay their fair share and restore tax rates for the highest earners.
- End the tax breaks and tax loopholes for banks and corporations.
- Impose fines on banks and corporations that fail to pay their taxes.
- Hold big corporate polluters responsible for their actions.

Nothing is inevitable or unchangeable – not the retraction of decent working conditions; not the underfunding and privatization of our public services; not the absence of rent control and affordable housing; not the lack of affordable groceries, gas, and basic goods; and not the rise in economic inequality.

Ontarians require leadership that champions and acts on issues that have the greatest potential to improve the lives of the working class – moving us towards a long-term vision of stable working conditions, strong public services, affordable homes, and healthy communities for all.

The Ontario Federation of Labour is hopeful that the preceding recommendations help inform the development of the 2023 budget as well as the upcoming legislative agenda.

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