

Proud Vote Questionnaire

On Thursday, June 2nd, 2022, Canadians will vote in the 43rd Ontario general election, electing Members of Provincial Parliament (MPP) in 124 ridings, including 5 in Simcoe County.

The results of this election will have a significant impact on gender and sexually diverse communities in Simcoe County and Ontario as a whole. We are sending all candidates representing the main parties in Simcoe County ridings, a list of questions about issues important to our community. We will grade and share the candidate's response.

Policy Questions

1. What do you believe are the main concerns of gender and sexually diverse people in Ontario? What specific actions will be taken to improve the lives and wellbeing of gender and sexually diverse communities?

2SLGBTQIA+ people in Ontario face transphobia, homophobia, prejudice and barriers to accessing services like health care, employment, economic opportunities, senior care and justice. For far too long gender and sexually diverse people in Ontario have been ignored and harmed by previous governments; the NDP have a detailed and actioned plan to help remove these barriers. We will Launch a 2SLGBTQIA+ Inclusion Action Plan, Ensure diverse health care professionals from 2SLGBTQIA+ communities working in primary care are recruited and properly compensated, Make long-term care 2SLGBTQIA+ affirming so people can always live with Pride, Funding and expanding shelter spaces and services for queer and trans youth and adults, Support 2SLGBTQIA+-owned businesses through our diverse vendor strategy, and take on alt-right extremist groups.

2. Many gender and sexually-diverse youth haven't seen themselves reflected in the curriculum. Where do you stand on the current elementary and secondary health and physical curriculum, and how will you ensure that youth get the information they need?

The NDP supports a modern and diverse curriculum that represents all Ontarians. An Ontario NDP government has a plan to keep discrimination out of schools and across education settings. Through launching a 2SLGBTQIA+ Inclusion action plan so that not just our curriculum is inclusive but so is the environment.

3. Trans and gender diverse people lack quality, accessible healthcare in Ontario. In what ways do you think the Government can better support access to medical services and specialists for trans patients in Ontario? In what ways will you bolster access to trans-inclusive healthcare?

We know that trans folks face barriers in safely accessing health care in Ontario. Because of this we know that many trans folks avoid seeking both preventative or acute medical attention. This is costing the trans folks their lives. The government can better

support trans folks by making the health care system more ‘of by and for’ the community by committing to hiring more 2SLGBTQIA+ identified health care professionals to work in primary care. As well, as part of our 2SLGBTQIA+ Inclusion Action Plan we will bolster training and access to information for healthcare providers around trans and gender diverse affirming care.

4. The gender and sexually diverse community are disproportionately affected by mental health and addictions due to various social and economic factors. What steps will you take to improve our community's overall mental health and wellness?

The NDP has a comprehensive plan to address the mental health and well-being of all Ontarians. Firstly, we are committing to universal, publicly funded mental health care – meaning you would pay for your therapy with your OHIP card. This will dramatically increase folks’ access to mental health care. We will also specifically be addressing the wait time for children to access mental health support, which will take a pro-active approach in addressing mental health and addictions early on. As well, we plan on hiring more mental health worker and child and youth workers to increase support students are able to access.

5. Gender and sexually diverse youth are overrepresented in the homeless youth population. What specific steps would you take to address the gender and sexually diverse youth homelessness crisis in Ontario?

A provincial NDP government is committed to increase the funding and expanding shelter spaces and services for queer and trans youth and adults. We’ll increase shelter spaces and fund wraparound services for queer trans and gender diverse youth in need.

6. Many gender and sexually diverse people are concerned about moving into retirement communities, care facilities, or having at-home care out of fear of having to “go back into the closet” or because they fear they won’t receive sensitive, informed care. How will you ensure long-term care will competently accommodate and work with the gender and sexually diverse community? What steps will you take to improve long-term care for our community?

We are committed to making long-term care 2SLGBTQIA+ affirming so people can always live with Pride. Moving into long-term care should never mean having to move back into the closet. We will ensure that 2SLGBTQIA+ people have access to long-term care that is fully affirming and inclusive.

7. The repeal of the three-month MSM (“men who have sex with men”) blood ban has been replaced by another deferral policy that still primarily impacts men who have sex with other men. The new deferral policy ignores advancements in HIV diagnosis, treatment, and prevention, while also disqualifying some straight donors. What steps will you take to make blood donation fairer and based on science instead of stereotypes?

No response.

8. Do you intend on increasing support to HIV/AIDS organizations in Ontario or access to healthcare? If so, what will you do to increase support or accessibility?

No response.

9. What steps will you take to end invasive, and medically unnecessary operations on Intersex children?

No response.

10. In today's world, reproductive healthcare, such as abortion rights is being called into question. What will you do to ensure Ontarians have access to abortion services, birth control, and contraceptives?

The NDP government is committed to ensuring that Ontarians have access to abortion services and is committed to make contraception free. Cost should not be a barrier to individuals' ability to make choices about their reproductive health.

11. Gender and sexually diverse people are less likely to be hired or secure stable employment, and experience wage disparity in comparison to their cisgender (non-trans) and heterosexual peers. What initiatives do you believe the Government can develop or support to reduce the rate of unemployment and underemployment in the gender and sexually diverse community?

We know that the the 2SLGBTQIA+ community are often precariously employed. This is why we are committed to Support 2SLGBTQIA+-owned businesses through our diverse vendor strategy and introduce a grant program to support 2SLGBTQIA+ community organizations to expand their programming and services.

12. Organizations working with or for the gender and sexually diverse community struggle to gain or maintain long-term, sustainable funding. How will you support organizations, specifically ones that provide important health and social services and ones that work in arts, culture, and heritage?

We know that funding is often the biggest hurdle in maintaining effective programs and institutions. We will provide an immediate eight per cent funding boost for frontline mental health and addiction agencies and provide ongoing sustainable funding, and introduce targeted hospital funding to increase the number of Tier 5 treatment beds for people with complex needs.

13. The principles of Truth and Reconciliation are important to address the impact of colonialism on Two-Spirit/gender and sexually diverse Indigenous peoples. What does your plan for Truth and Reconciliation look like? Will you implement the Calls to Action that are relevant to the Province of Ontario?

An Ontario NDP government will work in true, nation- to-nation relationships to recognize and uphold the full rights of Indigenous Peoples. We will do this by committing to a number of actions. We will implement UNDRIP and ensure Indigenous Peoples in Ontario are treated equitably under the law. We will act immediately to end boil water advisories in Ontario, and work with the federal government to fund needed water infrastructure in First Nations communities. We will Establish the Treaty Commission of Ontario, with a clear mandate to independently and impartially help settle land claims and assist negotiations between the governments of Ontario, Canada, and First Nations. We will bring Justice for Grassy Narrows: Clean up the mercury in the English-Wabigoon River system, taking immediate action to find and dig up the buried mercury upstream from Grassy Narrows. We will Establish a provincial strategy to address the suicide crisis among First Nations youth, and work with the federal government to ensure targeted funding to improve mental health, on and off reserve. We will Create a for-Indigenous-by-Indigenous Housing strategy: Working in partnership with Indigenous-led housing providers and the federal government, we'll ensure an adequate supply of safe, affordable, culturally appropriate urban and rural housing, including the construction of at least 22,000 new homes. We will Work with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities to transform and establish community control of child welfare for Indigenous communities. We will Work with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities on transformational change to our justice system, to ensure justice is fair, culturally relevant, and recognizes Indigenous history, values, and traditions. We'll recognize the agency of First Nations communities to determine policing in their territory, work to reduce rates of victimization, crime, and incarceration among Indigenous communities. We are committed to investing in Culturally competent health care for First Nations people: We'll support expanding primary health care services to meet the unique needs of Indigenous people and honour the commitments in the plan for health transformation in Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) communities, including training more community health workers from northern Treaty communities, sponsorships for people to take the health manager and paramedic trainings, and funding the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority Hospital development. We will Improve access to culturally responsive health care, mental health care, long-term care for Indigenous Peoples: We'll work with First Nations leadership to identify health care priorities and deliver more and better health care, including mental health and addiction support, that's culturally appropriate. We'll guarantee that First Nations Elders have access to home and community care and long-term care that is personal and familiar, with staff and practices that reflect their distinct cultures and languages. We will Restore the Indigenous Culture Fund to strengthen opportunities for Indigenous artists and ensure they have fair opportunities for their stories to be seen and heard. We will Work with Indigenous representatives to

establish a commission to review and make binding recommendations on the display of historical figures and symbols in Ontario's government- owned buildings and public spaces. The commission will be led by an Indigenous representative, selected in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples.

We will Support and work with First Nations to identify burial site locations of children at Indian residential schools. We'll act on the TRC's Call to Action 82 by commissioning a monument that recognizes the victims of the Indian residential school system, to be created by an Indigenous artist and prominently displayed at Queen's Park. The 231 Calls to Justice of the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls acts as a stark reminder that the shameful legacy of Indian residential schools continues to have a devastating impact on Indigenous communities today, and that the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls is not something in the past but an ongoing reality for Indigenous women and girls, their communities, and families. We are committed to work with Indigenous communities to implement the recommendations of the National Inquiry in a community-led process. We will also Work with Indigenous Peoples to introduce a mandatory Indigenous curriculum for Ontario classrooms to make sure Canada's actual history is taught to all Ontario children. As well we will Establish the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation as a provincial statutory holiday.

14. The rights of sex workers are important to the gender and sexually diverse community, with our community being well represented within the workforce. What will you do to help end the criminalization of sex work in Ontario, ensuring full labour rights and protections?

No response.

Party Questions

Does your party have any openly gender diverse and/or sexually diverse candidates? If comfortable answering: How many, and in what ridings? Also, what concrete steps will your party take to increase the representation of gender and sexually diverse people among candidates?

Yes, however, I do not have a list of candidates available at the moment.

Does your party have policies and practices that are affirming of gender and sexually diverse people? If so, what are they? If not, will you commit to adding them?

Yes.

Have your staff and volunteers been through training on gender and sexually diverse topics and

issues? If yes, please explain. If not, will you commit to participating in training on an ongoing basis?

No response.