

Dear Brandon,

Thank you for writing. Below are my answers to the specific questions.

Generally, let me say how appreciative I am of your efforts on behalf of the LGBTQ community. I am a proud ally, and have worked as school board chair and trustee, as well as vice-president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, to fight for equity and inclusion.

I strongly support the new health and education curriculum, and am appalled that my Conservative opponent, who has refused to condemn Doug Ford's pledge to scrap the curriculum, despite her personal support for the curriculum.

I am happy to discuss my answers further.

Best,

Loralea Carruthers

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

I believe we need to continue to work towards equity, inclusion and celebration of LGBTQ people in our community. It is always a pleasure to join the community for the York Region Pride Parade and the Pride Flag raising in Bradford West Gwillimbury. I am glad to see new programming and outreach for queer youth, and will want to continue to invest in the mental-health care needed with an historic commitment of \$2.1 billion (which the Conservatives have said they will cut back on). I believe we need to continue to support LGBTQ people at all stages of their life.

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?

As a school trustee and the former vice-president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, I strongly support the health and physical education curriculum and am deeply troubled by Doug Ford's pledge to scrap it. I would hope my local opponent would speak up and oppose this backwards pledge by her leader, but she has refused to do so to date.

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 the province? In what ways will you bolster access to trans-inclusive healthcare?

We need to continue to invest in our health-care system, and our platform proposes to make the largest investment in our hospitals in a generation. For trans people in particular, we need to ensure health services that treat them with dignity and respect.

- 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 the overall mental health and wellness of our community?**

We are making an historic investment of \$2.1 billion and are committed to a multifaceted strategy to address addictions and other health issues. This is funding the Conservatives would cut.

- 5. 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 in order to reduce the rate of unemployment and underemployment in the gender and sexually diverse community?**

I support programmes and promotional efforts to address this gap, including public education, enforcement of labour standards, and targeted funding for trans youth to enter the job market.

- 6. What will you do to help end the one-year MSM (“men who have sex with men”) blood ban?**

I support ending the ban and would use my voice as MPP to advocate to the federal government in this regard.

- 7. What will you do to help end the criminalization of people living with HIV/AIDS in Ontario?**

I would work with the federal government towards a legislative framework that respects the dignity of those with HIV/AIDS.

- 8. The principles of Truth and Reconciliation are important to addressing 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 fully implement the 94 Calls to Action, and how will you address the impacts of colonialism?**

This Ontario Liberal government has worked collaboratively with First Nations to invest in their communities, improve their public services and infrastructure, and to ensure a respectful dialogue. I strongly support the Truth and Reconciliation process.

- 9. 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?**

This is a great question. I would want to work with the organisations to ensure they are able to apply for funding on a long-term basis and would provide support to ensure this can occur.

- 10. How do you intend on increasing support to HIV/AIDS organizations in Ontario?**

This government has invested in HIV/AIDS care, including the new Casey House, and I would hope to see that work continue.

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

I will admit I am not immediately familiar with this issue, but am committed to working with LGBTQ stakeholders to find the correct legislative or regulatory solution.

12. 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?

I defer to the federal government, who has jurisdiction over the Criminal Code in this regard.

13. 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?

I strongly support the new national housing strategy and plan to ensure our region benefits from new social housing.

14. 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?

This is an area where I believe parliamentary committees should investigate best practices around the world to reach an informed decision on how best to address this problem, given our ageing population.