

## 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?

**My humble opinion is that gender and sexually diverse people in Ontario still face instances of discrimination. As a doctoral student for example, I learned the disturbing fact that people face barriers to healthcare based on their indigenous ancestry and sexual orientation.**

**Specifically, we propose Fostering a welcoming and open space for LGBTQ+ persons within the Ontario Liberal Party. As a former refugee, who found so much support in my early years from the gay community of Toronto (Church Street), I intend to be active in listening, interacting with, and advocating wholeheartedly on behalf my beloved people in the LGBTQ+.**

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 an insider (should I get elected), I will aim at collaborating with the Ministry of Education, and in consultation with the OLP so that we can promote more inclusion of LGBTQ literature and heritage, and which is congruent with the Liberal plan to modernize the curriculum. Additionally, the LGBTQ community would always have my ear on suggestion of what can be done to improve the current curriculum, and my enthusiastic participation on many of their events.**

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?

**As an academic (PhD student) with a specialty in healthcare access I have been disheartened to learn about the various obstacles faced by people in the LGBTQ+**

**community. Despite the current laws, regulations and policies providing the basis for equality, in reality this equality is not materialized. As an academic I have proposed that proper cultural sensitivity training should be mandatory for people in the healthcare industry on the front lines. As this is my passion in life pre-politics, I will continue the fight for equality and dismantling the barriers to healthcare groups like LGBTQ+ encounter.**

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?

**I will support the hiring and training of 3,000 mental health professionals (including 1,000 mental health professionals for children) so that gender and sexually diverse community can get the support that they need and get it fast.**

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?

**Firstly, I want to express my solidarity with the homeless community, as having experienced homelessness myself. Second, I believe dealing with the homeless issue is urgent, so I will wholeheartedly support providing municipalities and housing support providers \$100 million dollars, to ending chronic homelessness so that we can provide quick transition for these populations into independent, permanent and safe housing.**

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?

**These issues will be addressed by Del Duca’s revolutionary plan to eliminate for-profit long term care, and providing more support and training for the staff in healthcare, so that gender and sexually diverse communities can feel safe at these homes. I believe Mr. del Duca, has a 0 tolerance when it comes to homophobia as do I, so we will combat it wherever it raises its head.**

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?

**I would support collaboration with our federal partners to ensure there will be no longer eligibility criteria (eliminating discrimination or even having to disclose it) to men who have sex with men. (In other words it should not matter or even be asked for blood donation purposes)**

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?

**I will support covering HIV medications to prevent and treat HIV, but also encourage collaboration with our partner organizations so that we work collaboratively to ensure we understand their needs and I can advocate for their support in fulfilling those needs as much as it is possible from the Ontario government.**

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

**I will take proactive steps to educate myself on the matter, and consult with stakeholders, including leaders in the LGBTQ+ community, parents and others, so that I can provide appropriate support.**

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?

**My party and I support and have always supported the woman's right to chose, and the state has no business dictating to women what they should do with their bodies. We will support all women's health needs, including reproductive services.**

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 will make sure labour legislation and proper enforcement against discriminatory practices are taken seriously, including the right to not be discriminated against based on sexual orientation as per charter of rights and freedoms.**

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?

**In addition to providing funding to the municipalities to provide housing for people in need, including the LGBTQ+ community (sadly overrepresented in the homeless populations), we intend to restore funding for the arts, music, culture and sports, and also our plan focuses on dismantling the system-wide barriers to, and reducing wait times for, gender-affirming surgeries. We're going to invest in eliminating the backlog of all surgeries across this province.**

**We'll do this in close partnership with 2SLGBTQ+ communities across Ontario, as well as hospitals, community care clinics, doctors, and nurses.**

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?

**As a person mostly of Maya Indigenous ancestry, support for my indigenous brothers and sisters will be unequivocal. As part of the liberal plan with respect to Truth and Reconciliation we:**

- **are committed to implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action by working with and learning from Indigenous peoples and First Nations, guided by the principles of self-determination, reciprocity, and mutual recognition of nationhood.**
- **will forge new relationships, starting with the appointment of a standalone Minister of Indigenous Reconciliation to advance the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action**
- **We will support social and economic stability for Indigenous people by ensuring Indigenous child care needs are met and creating 22,000 new homes for Indigenous families.**

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?

**The first thing I would need to do is educate myself on the matter. Aside from my party platform, I would try to get their point of view so that I can learn how to better be an advocate for them, so that we can afford them the protections that any Ontario citizen has, reduce the stigma, while at the same time presenting them with economic opportunities so that they have choices.**

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?

**I am happy to tell you that the Ontario Liberal party has taken diversity very seriously to make sure the candidates represent the diversity in the population of Ontario. We have the highest proportion of female candidates represented in our list of candidates, and though I do not have the data as of the time I am responding to these questionnaire, I can attest to the fact that as a racialized Canadian with a disability, I felt right at home in the party. As for the number of LGBTQ+ candidates, we encourage diversity and at the same time we do not judge, so each candidate is free to be who she or he is.**

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?

**Absolutely, one of the first thing I did when I joined OLP was to take a course and diversity, tolerance and harassment free environments.**

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?

**Yes, we all went through diversity training, and practice respect, love and compassion as my leading campaign philosophy.**