



Canadian Taxpayers Federation Questionnaire: Ontario PC Leadership Candidates

PROVINCIAL TAXATION

1. Will you commit to repealing the healthcare premium tax?

The healthcare premium tax was implemented by the McGuinty Liberals shortly after being elected in 2003. This tax was not included in the Liberal's election platform document and was even rejected by McGuinty in campaign advertisements. Who could forget the 2003 Liberal election ad with McGuinty looking the Ontario voter in the eye promising "I won't raise your taxes..."

That single action by the McGuinty Liberals not only tarnished the reputation of their Party but also of politicians in general. It's no wonder the public is so cynical of politicians and politics.

The healthcare premium tax was implemented in 2004 generating billions in revenue for the Ontario government to improve healthcare. What do we have to show for it? Very little! That's because the revenue generated by the healthcare premium tax is not dedicated to the healthcare system, but goes into general revenues. After all this taxpayer money generated by the McGuinty healthcare tax, we have over 850,000 Ontarians still without a family doctor, little improvement to wait times and an e-health system that is mired in scandal and cost overruns.

A PC government under my leadership would commit every cent collected under the healthcare premium tax to healthcare. I will also propose a healthcare accountability measure that will provide detailed receipts to patients that list the services received and the costs assessed to OHIP for those services.

2. Will you commit to a more robust and enforceable Ontario Taxpayers Protection Act?

I support the Ontario Taxpayers Protection Act as it was enacted by the PC government in which I proudly served. Regrettably, the McGuinty government amended the Ontario



Taxpayers Protection Act in order to legalize the healthcare premium tax. A PC government under my leadership will respect the letter and spirit of the Ontario Taxpayers Protection Act.

- 3. Will you commit to working with the federal government towards a bilateral constitutional amendment entrenching said act, therefore protecting it from repeal or undermining amendment?**

Yes. I look forward to working with the Federal government to ensure that the Ontario Taxpayers Protection Act can withstand attempts by future governments to undermine the very purpose of the act: the protection of the taxpayer.

MUNICIPAL TAXATION

- 4. Will you commit to enact legislation implementing a municipal property tax cap to ensure municipal property taxes don't increase by more than the rate of inflation without a referendum?**

I believe that elected officials at all levels of government should be empowered to make decisions they believe are in the best interests of their constituents. They will be held accountable for those decisions by their constituents at election time. The setting of property tax rates should remain the responsibility of elected municipal Councils. I do, however support protecting homeowners against skyrocketing assessments resulting from fluctuations in the real estate market. Property taxes should be based on the cost of services delivered, not the valuation of a home.

PROVINCIAL SPENDING

- 5. Will you commit to enacting legislation capping annual provincial spending increases at a rate of the combined growth in the inflation and population rate?**

As a fiscal conservative, I will commit to minimize government growth and spending to ensure that there is an efficient balance between the services that government provides and the costs associated with the delivery of that service. Government spending requires the pragmatic and efficient delivery of services. Unfortunately, we have seen far too often the McGuinty government's ease of distributing taxpayers dollars through grants, sole source contracts and mismanagement. This has resulted in an inability for



Ontario to weather the economic storm and has led to Ontario becoming a “have not” province and has caused our bond rating to be downgraded compared to other provinces.

6. Will you commit to enact legislation that restricts the government from increasing spending during the fiscal year (other than declared emergencies)?

The government must have the flexibility to react to and take decisive action to deal with emerging issues. A PC government under my leadership will be guided by the principle of fiscal responsibility. We will respect budgetary frameworks, and the business of the province will be transparent and accountable.

7. Will you eliminate corporate welfare – including auto bailouts - from the provincial budget?

In these tough economic times, we have seen governments from all levels make extraordinary decisions, including the so-called auto sector bailouts.

A PC government led by me will make strategic investments as required in order to assist our manufacturing industry to stay competitive in the world economy. I would pursue the strategy of targeted tax incentives such as enterprise zones, research and development partnerships and tax credits for new jobs created in priority sectors to attract new industry and create jobs.

Specific, consumer focused tax incentives such as a sales tax holiday on the purchase of new cars and trucks which I championed earlier this year, would build on the premise that all business starts with a sale. I continue to believe that the answer is not to pour billions into a business that has failed, but to focus the stimulus on the consumer where it is transparent and accountable. The auto industry needs sales to kick-start the economic cycle in that industry. Bailouts simply won't do that.



DEMOCRATIC REFORM AND ACCOUNTABILITY

8. Will you commit to work with the federal government in holding Senate elections?

Yes. The senate has an important role to play in our parliamentary system, however those holding that office should be accountable to the electorate.

9. Will you commit to enact a Citizens' Initiative Act, giving Ontarians the right to initiate and vote in a binding referendum on issues of importance?

I believe in the empowerment of the individual. That applies to the grassroots of our Party and it applies to the general electorate. While it is the responsibility of each elected MPP to ensure that the view of their constituents are represented in the legislature, there may well be circumstances under which the direct expression of citizens is necessary to give guidance on specific issues.

10. Will you commit to enact a MPP Recall Act, giving Ontarians the right to recall their MPPs?

Yes! I believe that politicians have a responsibility to conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner. I believe that the electorate should have a mechanism available to them to recall an elected official who has broken trust with them. There must be appropriate safeguards however, to protect against frivolous and vexatious attempts to undermine the credibility and reputation of those in public office.

11. Will you commit to disclose a complete list and dollar amount of all campaign contributions you have received during this PC leadership campaign no later than one week before voting begins?

I will comply with the Party regulations which require full disclosure of campaign contributions.

12. Will you commit to introduce legislation requiring pre-election campaign contribution disclosure for all future elections (general provincial, municipal and party leadership) in Ontario?



I believe that a comprehensive review and reform of election finances should be undertaken. Any activities of a partisan nature, be they funded by a political party or a third party, should require disclosure and should be subject to limits.

HEALTHCARE REFORM

13. Will you commit to give Ontarians the right to purchase private health insurance to cover costs incurred by those who pay for timely access to medically necessary procedures?

Private health insurance to cover medically necessary services are available in Ontario today. Many employee benefit programs provide their members with services that are “medically necessary”, but are not covered by OHIP. Many of these services such as chiropractic and physiotherapy were at one time covered by OHIP and de-listed by the McGuinty government, at the same time that the healthcare premium tax was implemented. The real issue is who defines what is “medically necessary”.

I believe all Ontarians should have timely access to the best care possible and political ideology should not keep us from improving access and efficiency in our healthcare system. Timely access to medically necessary procedures should be provided within our universal healthcare system. This can be achieved by allowing the private sector to participate in our healthcare system within the guidelines of the Canada Health Act. By encouraging the private sector to partner in the delivery of healthcare services that are accessible to all Ontarians with a valid OHIP card, we will reduce wait times and increase efficiencies without compromising universality.

14. Will you commit to ending public funding of non-medically necessary procedures?

We should review and assess the list of non-medically necessary procedures being funded now to ensure that our tax-funded healthcare system is properly prioritizing services.



LCBO REFORM

15. Will you commit to reforming the LCBO's government monopoly? If so, please explain.

I will propose that we review the LCBO to ensure that it is operating efficiently and is serving the best interests of the taxpayers of Ontario. Any changes to the structure of the LCBO will be considered in response to our Party's Policy Advisory process.

SPEECH, PROPERTY AND ASSOCIATION RIGHTS

16. Will you commit to working with the federal government towards a bilateral constitutional amendment entrenching property rights? If so, explain.

Yes. Property rights are an important component of our society. As such, it requires specific rights that should be enforced through the Canadian constitution. I am also proposing that provincial property rights legislation be introduced to ensure that Ontarians are protected against expropriation without fair compensation.

17. Will you commit to enacting legislation making union membership voluntary, while supporting the right of workers to join unions as a matter of choice? If so, explain.

I will commit to working with our Party's policy process to develop a policy that will allow for freedom of choice when it comes to union membership. Unions should have the right to organize and voting by its members should be administered through secret ballot.