



Canadian Taxpayers Federation Questionnaire: Ontario PC Leadership Candidates

PROVINCIAL TAXATION

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

Dalton McGuinty's healthcare premium tax is a regressive tax that hits middle class families very hard. I support lower taxes for middle-class families and will identify proposed tax cuts in a fully-costed program before the 2011 election.

During the leadership campaign, I have outlined immediate steps that should be taken by the McGuinty government to lower taxes, including a one-year payroll tax holiday on the Employer Health Tax and the temporary suspension of the Land Transfer Tax. These steps would stimulate the economy and help middle-class families.

As Premier, I would have the goal of making Ontario the province with the lowest taxes on business investment in the country and would cut taxes on middle-class families to leave more money in their pockets and to fuel economic growth. I have announced that I would allow income splitting for all families with pre-school age children, providing parents with the opportunity and the flexibility to significantly lower their household tax burden.

I am proud to have championed lower taxes throughout my career and to have been part of a government that reduced taxes significantly for Ontario families and businesses. I look forward to working with the PC Party Caucus, PAC and grassroots to determine the best ways to relieve the tax burden on Ontario families.

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

I voted in favour of the Taxpayers Protection Act in 1999 and in 2004 I voted against the Liberal government's budget which raised taxes and amended the Taxpayer Protection Act. As Premier, I would abide by the principles and intentions of the Act. Dalton McGuinty is proof that merely passing an Act is not sufficient to stop a government that is determined



to raise taxes and does not respect taxpayers enough to seek their consent before doing so. Ontario needs to elect a government that actually believes in lower taxes.

- 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?**

I support the Taxpayer Protection Act and its principles, but I am not in favour of starting another series of national constitutional discussions at this time. While our economy is in recession, our focus must be on creating jobs, balancing our budget and reducing taxes in Ontario.

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?**

No. I believe that democratically elected municipal officials must take responsibility for their own decisions, including the need to treat property taxpayers fairly. The way to keep municipal property taxes low is through grassroots activism and political organization at the municipal level – not through top-down provincial laws.

That said, I do believe that the provincial government has a role to play in property assessment.

As Finance critic, working with our party's Finance Policy Advisory Committee (PAC), I introduced the Homestead Act, which capped assessment increases as long as home ownership by a family was maintained, allowed home renovations up to \$100,000 over a four-year period without fear of an assessment increase and gave a property tax break to seniors and the disabled.



During the leadership campaign, I have called on Premier McGuinty to order an immediate province-wide reassessment to reflect changes in the economy and current property values.

As Premier, I would fundamentally reform the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) by overhauling its leadership, improving its customer service, streamlining its appeal process, improving its assessment techniques, reducing secrecy and improving transparency.

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?

I believe that government must live within its means – just like Ontario families and businesses. I am the only candidate in the race that is talking about the need to constrain government spending and proposing concrete suggestions to do so.

Under Dalton McGuinty, total government expenditures have increased by an average of 8 percent each year, while the Ontario economy has grown by 4 percent annually. That is unacceptable.

At a time when Ontario is facing the biggest economic crisis in decades, we all need to do our part. First, we need to ensure that government spending is consistent with government revenues. As Premier, I would target wasteful and unnecessary spending, including Dalton McGuinty's billion dollar corporate welfare funds.

Second, we can't afford a business-as-usual approach to public sector wage increases. To help Ontario during these tough times, I have called on Dalton McGuinty to:

- immediately impose a wage freeze on senior government administrators, non-unionized employees and MPPs for the duration of the recession.



- sit down immediately with all public sector unions and to renegotiate more affordable collective agreements.

As Premier, my goal would be to ensure that public sector wage settlements reflect private sector realities. These are specific ways that we can keep government spending in line and consistent with inflation and population growth.

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

My principles and my perspective on the role of government are very different from those of Dalton McGuinty's Liberals, which have been heavily criticized for their year-end spending sprees, including at least \$32 million that was given to community groups over two years without the appropriate controls and paperwork, including \$1 million provided to the Ontario Cricket Association even though they only requested \$150,000 for facility upgrades.

Unlike Dalton McGuinty's Liberals, I believe in balanced budgets and that government should live within its means. As Premier, I will ensure that a Progressive Conservative Government treats taxpayer dollars with respect and that the priority for year-end surpluses would be debt and tax reduction, not increased spending.

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

As Premier, I would scrap the McGuinty Government's corporate welfare programs that pick winners and losers. His corporate welfare programs pledge approximately one billion dollars a year to companies of the government's choosing – often those with the highest paid lobbyists. Instead, those funds would be targeted at broad-based tax relief for all businesses to become more competitive and create permanent jobs in Ontario.

Since it is clear that Dalton McGuinty is intent on giving taxpayer dollars to the auto sector, I have stated that such funds must, at a minimum, meet the following criteria: First, auto companies must have a plan, not just to survive, but to thrive in the future. Second, they



must make very clear and long-term job guarantees in Ontario. Third, taxpayer dollars should not be used to support auto sector pensions.

DEMOCRATIC REFORM AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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

Yes, I support elections for Ontario's Senate seats.

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 support the use of referendums for issues of importance, such as the proposed changes to our electoral system in 2007. In 2001, I supported the Direct Democracy Through Municipal Referendums Act.

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

No. I personally believe in our representative model of parliamentary democracy.

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?

My campaign will abide by all campaign finance rules and laws. I will process contributions that have been received by the convention on a real-time basis. If I receive contributions after voting begins, these contributions will also be posted publicly in accordance with the existing laws.

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?

As Premier, I would review existing campaign financing laws to improve transparency.



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?

I support choice in the delivery of health care services as long as it is within the existing publicly-funded, universal system. One of Dalton McGuinty's first acts as Premier was to spend millions of taxpayer dollars, not on health care services, but to buy out decades-old private providers of health services. That is wrong.

I believe that the private sector can help to provide access to health services – such as MRIs and CT machines – as long as these families pay for services with their OHIP card, not their credit card.

It is unacceptable that Ontarians who need a scan because a doctor has found a lump in their body or who suffered a serious injury to their knee or back are forced to drive to Michigan or New York for a timely diagnosis.

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

I believe that we must focus our scarce health dollars on priority, medically-necessary services in order to reduce wait times and improve services for urgent medical procedures. For example, I am opposed to using OHIP dollars to fund sex-change operations.

LCBO REFORM

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

Yes. I believe we must have more choice and competition in Ontario's wine, beer and liquor sales. That's why I have introduced Bill 7, the VQA Wine Stores Act, which would allow Ontario wineries to group together to sell Ontario VQA wines in a single store as one way to help increase competition and choice. As Premier, I will take steps to create more choice for consumers and expand opportunities for Ontario producers, including VQA wine stores and craft beer stores.



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.

I would support initiatives taken by the federal government to protect property rights.

I believe that property rights are one of the fundamentals of free and democratic society. People should be able to enjoy their own property without unfair intrusion from the government.

I think it is wrong for the government to trample on property rights without proper notice, due process, avenue of appeal or fair and timely compensation.

Legislators have a responsibility to ensure that the interests of property owners are not ignored. Government should not be able to expropriate or rezone land in a way that is inconsistent with its existing use without fair and just compensation.

As Premier, I would introduce a Property Owner's Bill of Rights which enshrines these principles.

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.

As Premier, I would restore the right to a secret ballot when workers are faced with the decision to join a union. Also, I believe that workers deserve the right to know how their paycheque deductions are spent by union leadership. As Premier, I would implement a Paycheque Protection Law that will allow workers the freedom to opt out of funding political campaigns they don't support.