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TORONTO-ST.PAUL'S

A BETTER TOMORROW

Phil's Policy Priorities For Toronto-St. Paul's

green
PARTY OF CANADA

A Message From Phil De Luna

The pandemic exposed cracks in our society, cracks that were always there. To sustainably renew our economy and society we need new ideas and bold change.

In these pages, I lay out in detail some of my top priorities as a candidate for Parliament. For me, these policies aren't abstract—they are deeply personal, often coming from my own experience, and developed through consultation with some of the smartest policy thinkers I know.

As you read through, I would love to hear what you think. Send me a note at phil.deluna@greenparty.ca with your feedback and ideas.

Phil De Luna
Green Party MP Candidate for Toronto-St. Paul's

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Policies for a Better Tomorrow

A Just & Sustainable Society

- Guaranteed livable income & a federal sick day program
- Mental health supports for essential workers
- Student debt relief & education credits for essential workers

Green Jobs That Leave No One Behind

- Redirect all fossil fuel subsidies to cleantech
- 100% zero-emission electricity grid, net-zero cities, and public transit electrification
- Unleash science and innovation to fight climate change

Housing All Can Afford

- Build and maintain an affordable housing supply
- Increase federal incentives for purpose-built housing and the missing middle
- Support more accessible and sustainable homes

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A Just & Sustainable Society

As we turn the corner on this pandemic, we must not forget the hard-earned lessons of the last year. The pandemic was not felt equally among us, with many women, youth, racialized Canadians, and lower-income Canadians shouldering the burden.

> *My story: My fiancée Danielle is an operating nurse at Sick Kids Hospital and works at the frontlines of the pandemic. Many Filipino-Canadians occupy low-paying but essential work in care-giving, factories, fulfilment centres, and customer service. These are essential roles that kept our economy and society going.*

The Federal Government can renew our society by addressing the gaps and valuing essential work. It can do this by implementing a **federal sick day program**, to ensure that everyone can feel safe going to work. It can implement a **guaranteed livable income**, to ensure that everyone has what they need to survive in a society that is becoming increasingly automated. It can also provide **mental health supports** to nurses, doctors, and other healthcare workers who have been so heavily impacted by the last year.

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A Just & Sustainable Society

Guaranteed livable income & a federal sick day program

The Facts

- 3 million Canadians are living below the national poverty line. This includes a disproportionately large population of Black and Indigenous people and people of colour
- Only 42% of Canadian workers have access to paid sick days. This rate is even lower—only 10%— for low-wage workers
- Several countries around the world have national paid sick leave programs, including Australia, New Zealand, and several European countries

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed deep inequalities in how Canadians live and work. Many workers who lack paid sick leave have been forced to choose between their safety and their livelihoods. Many more still are struggling to meet their bills using federal subsidies that are always just a couple of months away from running out.

The Federal Government can implement programs to help level the playing field to the benefit of all Canadians. In particular, the Federal Government should:

- **Introduce a Federal Sick Day Program**, which ensures that every worker in Canada has access to paid sick leave
- **Establish a Guaranteed Livable Income**, using taxes and transfers to ensure that every Canadian has enough money to meet their basic needs

The current government introduced versions of these policies during the pandemic. But these programs shouldn't be limited to times of crisis. Pandemic or not, no Canadian should be forced to choose between their health and earning a paycheck; and no family should be denied the ability to afford basic housing or food on the table.

The good news is that under these policies, we all benefit—through safer workplaces, a healthier economy, and less strain on other government services like hospitals and public housing.

A Just & Sustainable Society

Mental health supports for essential workers

The Facts

- 60% of Canadians are employed in jobs that cannot be done from home; many of these are so-called “essential workers”, who have continued to work throughout the pandemic
- Since the onset of COVID-19, essential workers are more than twice as likely to have received treatment from a mental health professional (34% vs 12%) and to have been diagnosed with a mental health disorder (25% vs 9%)
- Healthcare workers have been especially hard hit. 35% of healthcare workers have experienced symptoms of PTSD as a result of the pandemic

Essential workers form the backbone of our society, ensuring the operation of our hospitals, our supply chains, and even our grocery stores. Without them, our economy grinds to a halt.

Up until now, it has been all too easy for some to take the role of essential workers for granted. But the pandemic has revealed the risks of this approach. It has become clear that protecting our essential workers in fact protects us all.

There are a number of gaps in our support for our essential workers including, especially, around mental health. Essential workers have shouldered a terrible burden during the pandemic, working in difficult conditions and facing a degree of risk that has taken a toll on many workers’ mental health.

The Federal Government can help. Working with the provinces, the Federal Government should:

- **Provide a greater range of mental health resources,** supports, and care aimed at essential workers
- Support and **expand virtual mental health services**
- Prioritize **workplace mental health**
- **Increase investment** in the social determinants of health

These investments are essential to help our essential workers recover, receive the ongoing support they deserve, and provide our economy with greater resilience in the face of future crises.

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A Just & Sustainable Society

Student debt relief & education credits for essential workers

Essential workers have risked their own and their family's health, safety and well-being throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. It is past time we look for ways to repay them for this sacrifice.

One place to start is by reducing the barriers to higher education in these crucial professions. The average Ontario university graduate accumulates $26,000 in student debt. This hole can be especially difficult to climb out of for those who choose essential service professions like nurses, long-term care workers, and homecare providers.

These workers should be rewarded for their efforts in the pandemic. More than that, as our population ages and we need more of these workers, we must make sure these professions remain attractive careers for young people to enter into.

The Facts

- Communities with the greatest numbers of essential workers have had three times more COVID-19 cases than the communities with the least
- Essential workers too often live in states of financial insecurity. Long-term care workers, for example, often must work more than one job to pay the bills
- Ontario has among the lowest funding levels for post-secondary students in Canada

Addressing the cost of education is a good place to start. In particular, the Federal Government should:

- Introduce a **student loan forgiveness** policy for those defined as essential workers throughout the COVID-19 pandemic
- Introduce a **new education credit** for those pursuing training in essential work
- Provide funding to universities and colleges aimed at **expanding capacity for training** in essential professions

We owe an enormous debt to these workers. And as our need for these professionals grows in the future, we must ensure these remain attractive careers. Addressing the cost of education provides a starting point to addressing this challenge.

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Green Jobs That Leave No One Behind

A big reason I got into politics is because I felt we weren't moving fast enough to address the climate crisis. This is the decade that we need to act if we are to avoid the most catastrophic effects of climate change. And there is more that the government can and should be doing.

> *My story: For me, "green jobs that leave no one behind" isn't just a slogan—it's personal. I grew up in Windsor, Ontario, the automotive capital of Canada. My dad was an auto worker who lost his job at the Ford plant when it closed down in 2008.*
>
> *I know exactly what it's like to live in a community that is dependent on one industry, and what happens when that industry fades away. That exact same thing is happening today in the oil and gas and other heavy emissions industries*

The Federal Government can help. We can be more aggressive on climate change, making the investments needed for a green transition. At the same time, we can support workers in those declining industries, transitioning their impressive skill sets to the industries of the future. And we can harness Canada's global leadership in research and development to become **a clean energy superpower** in the economy of the 21st century.

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Green Jobs That Leave No One Behind

Redirect all fossil fuel subsidies to cleantech

It would surprise many Canadians to learn that Canada's fossil fuel industry continues to receive massive public subsidies, via direct investment and tax exemptions, for the production, transport, and use of fossil fuels.

At the same time as we have asked everyday families and businesses to help cover the true cost of CO_2 emissions through carbon pricing; the same time that our clean energy market is fighting to attract the investment it needs to grow at the pace we need; and even the same time as our governments are setting ambitious emissions reduction targets; our tax dollars continue to subsidize the very activities that the rest of our efforts are aimed at winding down.

There is a better use for our public money. Federal investment can help more broadly deploy clean energy technologies that we already have, as well as increase the pace of research and development on the next wave of cleantech that will help us get to net-zero emissions by 2050.

The Facts

- Each year, Ontario alone provides nearly $700 million in public subsidies for fossil fuels
- Simply eliminating fossil fuel subsidies could produce up to a 13% decline in CO_2 emissions, putting Canada on track to reach our carbon reduction targets

In particular, the Federal Government should:

- Immediately **cease all subsidies** and tax exemptions to the fossil fuel industry
- **Redirect these funds to investment** for infrastructure and R&D for cleantech
- Invest in **retraining programs** to help oil and gas workers transition to good jobs in clean energy

This simple step is the right thing to do, introducing more fairness for the many Canadians who are working hard to do their part for climate change. And by increasing the pool of investment for cleantech, it can dramatically accelerate our progress towards a net-zero emissions society.

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The Facts

- In order to reach net-zero emissions by 2050, the GTHA needs to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions at four times the current rate
- In 2018, the GTHA made up 44% of Ontario's total carbon emissions
- 55% of emissions in the City of Toronto come from buildings, with another 36% from transportation

Green Jobs That Leave No One Behind

100% zero-emission electricity grid, net-zero cities, and public transit electrification

With more than 80% of Canada's populations living in cities, revitalizing our urban environments will play a major role in helping us to reduce emissions. In and around Toronto, City Councils have taken the first step by unanimously declaring a climate emergency and setting ambitious emissions reduction targets.

The bad news is that we're not on track to meet those targets. The GTHA today is still responsible for 44% of Ontario's total greenhouse gas emissions and is not on track to meet our goal of a 30% reduction by 2030.

The Federal Government can help. In particular, the Federal Government can:

- Invest in clean electricity sources to make electricity in Canada **100% emissions-free**
- Provide support for **major retrofits to urban buildings,** improving efficiency and moving to a greater reliance on electrification
- Increase subsidies for the electrification of transit, including electric buses, commuter trains, and advocating for **high-speed rail among Canada's largest urban centers**

Using clean electricity to transform our urban environments is achievable and would be a major step on the way to combatting climate change. What is required is the courage and vision to make the investments that are needed.

Green Jobs That Leave No One Behind

Unleash science and innovation to fight climate change

Successfully tackling climate change requires that we get much more aggressive in deploying the clean energy technology we already have. But it also requires that we develop new approaches to decarbonization that are not yet ready for the market. And this requires science and innovation.

There will be huge opportunities available to the countries that develop new climate change tech first. Nearly $150 billion (USD) was invested globally last year in solar installations alone. Emerging technologies like hydrogen, batteries, and carbon capture could soon reach this same scale.

A green revolution is coming, and Canada has the opportunity to be at the forefront. Along the way, we can create good jobs and be a global leader in the innovation needed to combat climate change. But we must be bold and act now.

The Facts

- Only 1/3 of Canada's emissions reductions targets by 2050 can be met by technology currently available on the market. The other 2/3 of reductions require developing new technology
- Experts at the World Bank have estimated that governments should be spending 2% of their GDP on climate-mitigation efforts, which in Canada would be about $50 billion per year
- Canada struggles to keep top climate researchers in the country, a problem likely to get worse as the U.S. increases research investment under President Biden

Canada is not doing enough to take advantage of this opportunity. The Federal Government should:

- Set a target of **2% of GDP for investment in climate mitigation**
- **Enhance funding for the granting councils**, including the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), and the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR)
- Establish an **Advanced Research Projects Agency** for the energy transition modelled after ARPA-E in the U.S.
- **Reduce bureaucracy and streamline approvals** to adopt disruptive clean technologies

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Housing That All Can Afford

The housing market is unsustainable. Many people are putting more than half their monthly income into rent or mortgages, leaving little to save for the future or to spend in the local economy. Expensive housing also keeps talent away and creates brain drain in our cities.

> *My story: I am part of a generation that wonders, will we ever be able to afford a home in our city? I've been speaking to people who have children coming of age and are being priced out of the neighbourhoods that they grew up in.*
>
> *For many, including myself, housing is out of reach without financial support from parents or family.*

Housing should be for living, not investing. Simply put, there is not enough affordable housing available. The Federal Government can act to build more affordable non-market housing now. We did so in the 20th century during the post-war era, and we can do it again now.

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Housing That All Can Afford

Build and maintain an affordable housing supply

The Facts

- Since 2000, house prices in Canada have risen 168%. This is one of the fastest rates in the world and well ahead of countries like the U.S. (50%), Britain (94%), and Germany (31%)
- Buying a typical home in Toronto requires a household income of over $180,000, or $125,000 for a condo. The median household income in Toronto is just under $66,000.
- The 2016 Census found that nearly 1 in 5 Toronto households lived in a dwelling considered "unsuitable, inadequate, or unaffordable"

Canada is in the midst of a housing crisis, and Toronto is one of the epicenters. Too many people in my generation, faced with an inaccessible housing market, are coming to the grim conclusion that they may never achieve their dream of owning a home.

But the housing crisis is a policy choice. For half a century, municipal, provincial and federal policy makers have introduced a series of policies that have made it all but impossible for many Canadians to find affordable housing.

Enough is enough. The housing crisis in Toronto and across the country must be met by a national strategy to increase affordable supply and build more homes.

To begin, the Federal Government should:

- **Appoint a federal Minister of Housing** to strengthen the National Housing Strategy through direct investment, taxation policy, lending and granting programs
- Refocus the core mandate of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) **to develop affordable, non-market and cooperative housing**
- **Ban blind bidding**

Residents of Toronto St-Paul's, living in the core of one of the most inaccessible housing markets on the planet, deserve a government that will fight for their right to affordable housing.

Housing That All Can Afford

Increase federal incentives for purpose-built housing and the missing middle

The Facts

- Between 2007 and 2016, rental condos provided 97% of new rental supply in the GTA
- Mid-rise apartments take only 3-4 years to build, whereas high rises take 5-7 years
- Transitioning just 1% of houses in Toronto's residential detached neighbourhoods into triplexes would create 44,000 new housing units

Toronto is building more condos than ever before, but this isn't translating into housing affordability. The reason is that misaligned market incentives and restrictive zoning and development codes in the city have led to a boom of investment properties that renters can barely afford to live in, let alone purchase.

We simply aren't building enough purpose-built rental properties. With a realignment of zoning restrictions, the city could open up immense new opportunities to create badly needed affordable rental units.

The dominant zoning restrictions are at the municipal level, but the Federal Government can play a role in tackling this challenge.

In particular, the Federal Government should:

- Use federal levers to encourage density and mixed-use in urban land already reserved for residences, especially through **the adoption of Inclusionary Zoning**
- Through the CMHC, require local governments requesting assistance with housing affordability to approve some of these projects at **higher than typically allowed zoning**
- Provide **direct financial incentives for building affordable housing units**, such as waiving federal GST on the construction of new affordable housing

Increasing the supply of affordable rentals will not only help renters, it will also ease the pressure on the housing market by creating a realistic alternative to ownership. This is smart policy, and requires a more aggressive approach, led by the Federal Government.

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The Facts

- 22% of Canadians have a disability, and this figure is rising
- If planned from the design stage, the cost of building new apartments is the same whether it is accessible or not
- Buildings accounted for 55% of the City of Toronto's total greenhouse gas emissions in 2018, mostly a by-product of natural gas heating

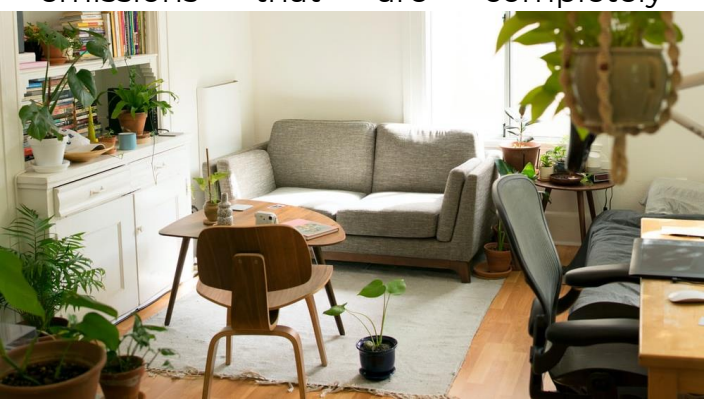
Housing That All Can Afford

Support more accessible and sustainable homes

The Government of Canada has declared that housing is a human right and that climate change is a national emergency. And yet it is not doing enough to use one of its major tools to address both of these issues—the National Building Code.

The need for accessible affordable housing is a crisis, with the number of Canadians with a disability outnumbering the number of accessible housing units available. Meanwhile, the costs to renovate conventional housing are often out of reach for many Canadians.

At the same time, our building stock is one of the top sources of greenhouse gas emissions, particularly in our cities. Poor design and inefficiencies create emissions that are completely



The Federal Government can help to tackle these issues. In particular, the Federal Government should:

- Develop a new **National Building Code** to make universal design and net-negative energy profiles mandatory in new multi-unit residential buildings
- **Appoint a Federal Housing Advocate**—a position which has been promised, but never delivered
- **Finance major housing energy retrofits** with a target to increase efficiency of buildings by a minimum of 80% on average

The Federal Government can lead the way in developing housing that employs the principles of universal design—accommodating anyone of any age or ability—while also reducing our carbon footprint. This will benefit all of us, by reducing long-term burdens on the health system, improving our economy, and enhancing the dignity and freedom of all Canadians.

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References & Further Reading

Disclaimer

This policy book outlines priorities for Phil De Luna's campaign in Toronto-St. Paul's. They are not officially endorsed by the Green Party and have not received by formal review or approval.

Official Green Party policy can be found at www.greenparty.ca

Our team used a wide variety of sources as background for this booklet. Here are a few resources we found particularly helpful, and may be worth your time to read, listen, and watch:

A Just and Sustainable Society

Guaranteed Livable Income and a Federal Sick Day Program

UBI Works website, An organization dedicated to informing Canadians about Universal Basic Income

CTV News article, "Why doctors, advocates are calling for permanent paid sick days for Canadian workers", April 2021

Glassdoor report, Which Countries in Europe Offer the Fairest Paid Leave and Unemployment Benefits?, February 2016

Mental health supports for essential workers

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Student debt relief & education credits for essential workers

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Redirect all fossil fuel subsidies to cleanteach

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Clean Energy Canada report, Quantifying Canada's Clean Energy Economy, March 2019

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100% zero-emission electricity grid, net-zero cities, and public transit electrification

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Unleash science and innovation to fight climate change

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Housing That All Can Afford

Build and maintain an affordable housing supply

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Increase federal incentives for purpose-built housing and the missing middle

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Support more accessible and sustainable homes

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The Pulse podcast episode, "Building Accessible Housing", May 2021

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Have an idea you think we should have included? Send me a message at phil.deluna@greenparty.ca

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