

Addressing 2SLGBTQI+ Community Priorities for Election 2022

- Should your party form government, do you commit to supporting the creation of a Provincial 2SLGBTQI+ Secretariat and the creation of a Provincial 2SLGBTQI+ Action Plan? Y/N
 - Yes
- Should your party form government, do you commit to supporting the expansion of current Ontario public health insurance to include all medically necessary gender affirming care procedures? Y/N
 - Yes
- Should your party form government, do you commit to supporting the creation of a dedicated funding program of no less than \$25 million a year for 2SLGBTQI+ social and community services? Y/N
 - Yes

Education

How will your party respond to the critical need for 2SLGBTQI+ representation in K-12 curricula (including the exclusion of blended and 'non-traditional' families as taught in Catholic schools)? How will your party support capacity building so that teachers/faculty can adequately and responsibly support this learning and support 2SLGBTQI+ students in their classrooms?

The provincial government has a responsibility to ensure that all publicly funded schools, including Catholic schools, provide students with an education environment free from harassment and discrimination, and that the curriculum is inclusive of Ontario's diverse communities, including 2SLGBTQIA+ persons and their families. New Democrats will ensure those standards are met, and as part of our 2SLGBTQIA+ Inclusion Action Plan, we will work to ensure that *all* government services like health care, education, and long-term care are inclusive of and welcoming to 2SLGBTQIA+ Ontarians.

How will your party address systemic homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in the Ontario publicly funded school system (including the Catholic system)? What specific steps will your party take to ensure all 2SLGBTQI+ students, in both public and Catholic schools, have an inclusive educational experience?

New Democrats are committed to improving our learning environments because all students deserve to learn in a safe, inclusive, and hate-free environment. We are long-time supporters of GSAs, and we have publicly called for Catholic School Boards in Ontario to be more inclusive of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. For example, four of our MPPs (Laura Mae Lindo, Catherine Fife, Marit Stiles, and Terence Kenaghan) [spoke out](#) about the unwillingness of the Waterloo Catholic District School Board to fly the Pride flag during Pride month. Along with community members, they pushed for the Pride flag to be raised during Pride month instead of the proposed Catholic alternative and [got results](#).

We also know that there needs to be more accountability at the trustee level to stop homophobia and transphobia, and are committed to more support, training and accountability for trustees. As part of our 2SLGBTQIA+ Inclusion Action Plan, we will work to ensure that *all* government services, including education, are inclusive of and welcoming to 2SLGBTQIA+ Ontarians.

Additionally, our education platform contains commitments to fund more mental health workers (guidance counsellors) in our schools, who can also help queer students who may be disproportionately impacted by mental health impacts of oppression and/or unable to get support from family or outside of school.

Comprehensive Sexuality Education (sex-ed) is integral for 2SLGBTQI+ students. What steps will your party take to improve 2SLGBTQI+ inclusion within the existing Health and Physical Education Curriculum?

New Democrats stood with students to oppose the rollback of the sex ed curriculum and helped force the government to reverse course on their proposed harmful changes. We are committed to working with teachers and education workers to regularly review Ontario's curricula so that it is inclusive and up-to-date.

Health and Healthcare

Offering 2SLGBTQI+ comprehensive and competent healthcare should not be considered a specialization; it needs to be a standard of care that all practitioners can offer. What are your party's plans to ensure that medical practitioners and surgeons have access to contemporary information/training so that they can offer proficient care specifically to intersex and trans communities?

An NDP government will be the first in Ontario to launch a 2SLGBTQIA+ Inclusion Action Plan, so that government services like health care, education, and long-term care are inclusive of and welcoming to 2SLGBTQIA+ Ontarians. To develop this action plan, we will consult broadly with community members, following the nothing about us, without us approach. We look forward to working together to build and resource a plan that will ensure that medical practitioners have access to inclusive information and training.

New Democrats will also ensure that diverse health care professionals from 2SLGBTQIA+ communities working in primary care are recruited and properly compensated.

Will your party expand and improve gender-affirming care? What will your party do to remove barriers within the healthcare system? How will your party improve the range of gender-affirming care services within the province to remove the barrier of travel?

New Democrat MPP Suze Morrison tabled the *Gender Affirming Health Care Advisory Committee Act* in October 2021. This bill would create a committee, working with advocates and health care providers to reduce barriers to care for transition-related and gender-confirming surgeries, and make recommendations to the Minister of Health for improving access to and coverage for gender affirming healthcare.

The committee will include members of the transgender, two-spirit, non-binary, intersex, and gender diverse communities; and health care providers with demonstrated experience working with members of the transgender, two-spirit, non-binary, intersex, and gender diverse communities. The Minister of Health must make reasonable efforts to ensure that the majority of members of the Committee are members of the transgender, two-spirit, non-binary, intersex, and gender diverse communities, as well as ensuring representation of youth, seniors, Indigenous persons, members of racialized groups, persons living with disability, persons living with, or who have experienced, homelessness or houselessness, persons who are, or were, engaged in sex work persons living in rural and remote areas, persons of diverse sexual orientations, and persons of diverse gender identities and gender expressions.

Human Rights

The rights of sex workers are important to gender and sexually diverse communities and human rights for all 2SLGBTQIA+ people. What will your party do to help end the criminalization of sex work in Ontario, ensuring full labour rights and protections?

Through our 2SLGBTQIA+ Inclusion Action Plan, a New Democrat government will review legislation that negatively affects sex workers and ensure that new legislation or amendments are tabled to put in place labour rights and protections for sex workers.

Intersex children, often face involuntary medically unnecessary and invasive cosmetic surgeries to more closely align their genitalia to the binary concepts of male and female. What actions will your party take to protect intersex children from these harmful practices? How will your party assist and compensate intersex adults to deal with the trauma and pain they have faced because of involuntary surgical operations?

An NDP government will ask the Gender Affirming Health Care Advisory Committee to review the concerns you have raised in this question and make recommendations to the Minister of Health.

Social Services

Organizations working with or for the gender and sexually diverse community struggle to gain or maintain long-term, sustainable funding. How will your party support 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations, specifically ones that provide important health and social services and ones that work in arts, culture, and heritage?

New Democrats are committed to provide funding to the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, starting with \$10 million in 2022-23, and increasing to \$25 million in annual funding beginning in \$25 million in 2024-25.

2SLGBTQIA+ community members continue to face barriers accessing health and social services, and frequently receive inadequate care due to lack of service provider competence on 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion. How will your party work to ensure an inclusive and accessible health and social service experience for all 2SLGBTQIA+ people?

Through our 2SLGBTQIA+ Inclusion Action Plan, we will ensure that all government services like health care, social services, education, and long-term care are reviewed to identify gaps in service/care, and propose recommendations to ensure that our public services, including health and social services, are inclusive of and welcoming to 2SLGBTQIA+ Ontarians.

Housing

Many Ontarians fear that rising rents will leave them homeless, while others struggle to find housing within their limited means. 2SLGBTQI+ people who are often under- or precariously employed and can face housing discrimination (directly or indirectly) are particularly at risk. How will your party address these issues in an inclusive manner?

New Democrats have a comprehensive housing strategy that will treat housing as a human right, rather than an investment vehicle.

We believe that no one should find themselves without shelter, and without housing options that fit their needs and abilities. No one in Ontario should be denied the basic human right of a safe place to live. Housing precarity is caused by economic inequality and social injustice, and lands the hardest on women, Black, Indigenous, and racialized people, folks living with mental health and addictions challenges, and 2SLGBTQIA+ folks. We need a new understanding of poverty and homelessness that stops blaming the victims of bad government policy and the lack of supports and starts supporting Ontarians to start building a stable life with a Housing First strategy.

Our full housing plan can be read [here](#).

(https://www.ontariondp.ca/sites/default/files/homes_you_can_afford_-_en_-_may5_18h11.pdf)

2SLGBTQI+ seniors and elders face several issues related to housing and long-term care (LTC). Some seniors find themselves having to go back into the closet when they enter LTC facilities, fearing discrimination and a lack of inclusive, culturally competent care. How will your party work to improve the lives of 2SLGBTQI+ elders in LTC facilities and alternate housing?

Many 2SLGBTQI+ people have concerns about their safety when it comes to temporary housing, such as group homes, shelters, transition housing, and halfway houses. There

are similar concerns when 2SLGBTQI+ people enter the carceral system and when youth are taken into care. Regulations – such as policies, procedures, and training - can ensure that people are safe, and their identities are respected. 2SLGBTQI+ people often face greater risk of homelessness. Many shelters cannot keep up with the demand for beds and must turn people away. How will your party ensure 2SLGBTQI+ people are protected in these scenarios? What steps does your party plan to take to address the housing crisis while creating structures to protect marginalized populations?

Regarding policies, procedures, and training for when 2SLGBTQIA+ people and youth are taken into care, or enter the carceral system, we would address reviewing existing structures through our 2SLGBTQIA+ Inclusion Action Plan, and will ensure that improvements are made to keep people safe, and their identities protected.

Regarding shelters, New Democrats are committed to funding and expanding shelter spaces and services for queer and trans youth and adults, including wraparound services. Our homelessness prevention strategy will prioritize local and individual needs, and be inclusive of individual and local needs.

Regarding the housing crisis and protecting marginalized populations, we know that housing precarity is caused by economic inequality and social injustice, and lands the hardest on women, Black, Indigenous, and racialized people, folks living with mental health and addictions challenges, and 2SLGBTQIA+ folks. Our housing plan recognizes that there is not a one-size-fits-all solution to the housing crisis. It provides more protections for renters; mandates Universal Design building codes, so that buildings reflect the needs of people of all ages, sizes, and abilities; will deliver 60,000 new homes with supports; and expand the Housing First model, among numerous other commitments.

How will your party ensure that long-term care facilities are safer and affirming spaces for 2SLGBTQA+ seniors? What are your party's plans for offering anti-oppressive and 2SLGBTQI+ comprehensive training, education, and resources to long-term care providers so they can maintain safer and affirming spaces for seniors?

New Democrats agree that seniors should never have to return to the closet simply because they may need to access long-term care home services. We are committed to making long-term care affirming for 2SLGBTQIA+ people, so that they can always live with Pride. An NDP government will use the opportunity provided to us through our 2SLGBTQIA+ Inclusion Action Plan to develop best practices around training and resources for seniors in long-term care.

Employment Services

2SLGBTQI+ Ontarians have been particularly impacted by the economic disparities of COVID-19. How will your party address 2SLGBTQI+ issues in your pandemic recovery plan?

New Democrats would support 2SLGBTQIA+ businesses through our diverse vendor government procurement strategy. Diverse procurement strategies are popular across the United States and have been adopted by the Cities of Toronto and Brampton. This strategy will ensure that diverse businesses, like those owned by members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, will have more access to government procurement opportunities.

We know that many LGBTQIA+ newcomers choose Canada because they see it as a place of refuge to live their authentic lives. However, transitioning to life in Ontario is not always easy, especially given the impacts of the pandemic on our traditionally 'welcoming' communities. Improving the transition to Ontario for LGBTQIA+ newcomers require specialized education and training for those supporting newcomers. Ontario could become a leader in Canadian recruitment of LGBTQIA+ newcomers. What is your party's plan to act on this matter?

New Democrats would be happy to work with the federal government and local organizations to ensure that 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals who want to immigrate to Ontario are supported and welcomed with open arms.

Gender and sexually diverse people are less likely to be hired or secure stable employment, and experience wage disparity in comparison to their cisgender (nontrans) and heterosexual peers. What will your party do to reduce 2SLGBTQI+ unemployment and underemployment?

New Democrats are committed to updating and enforcing the *Pay Equity Act*, and moving forward with the *Pay Transparency Act*, so that we have mechanisms in place to track all forms of the gender pay gap and hold companies accountable for pay discrimination. Through our 2SLGBTQIA+ Inclusion Action Plan, we are committed to exploring what the provincial government can do to reduce 2SLGBTQIA+ unemployment and underemployment.

Culture:

2SLGBTQI+ communities contribute significantly to Ontario culture through the arts. Ontarians benefit from 2SLGBTQI+ arts and festivals (such as Pride festivals) both culturally and economically. How will your party provide sustained, long-term support to 2SLGBTQI+ cultural endeavors?

New Democrats are committed to increasing funding for festivals in Ontario, including Pride festivals. We will also increase and sustain funding to the Ontario Arts Council, including restoring the Indigenous Culture Fund.

Internal Party Development

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 representation of gender and sexually diverse people among candidates?

Yes, we do. Our party prioritizes equity, and we intentionally ask folks from equity-seeking communities to run for us. It is also important to ensure that the most winnable seats are filled with equity-seeking candidates including gender diverse candidates. The Ontario NDP has done this in 2022 by enshrining that all incumbent seats where the incumbent is not re-offering are guaranteed to be filled with equity-seeking candidates.

In total, 12 per cent of our candidates identify as 2SLGBTQIA+, including two of our incumbents, Jill Andrew and Terence Kernaghan. We are also proud to have strong candidates like Lyra Evans in Ottawa-Vanier, Kristyn Wong-Tam in Toronto Centre, and Drew Cumpson in Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston running for us.