

An Open Letter to Ontarians:

We *can* afford to do better and we must demand it.



The winter has gone, but the Doug Ford political storm rages on. In every community and region of Ontario, people are preparing for a storm ahead - they're afraid and angry too.

That's because Ford has moved with lightning speed to unravel our vital public services like health care, education and the autism services that people and families rely on.

After 15 years of Liberal shenanigans, Ontarians wanted change. It's why they voted for Ford. Now they're realizing that Doug's destructive agenda isn't the change our province needs - talk about buyer's remorse.

It doesn't have to be this way; we absolutely can afford to do better.

Our province is wealthier than it's ever been and our economy is growing. Just recently, the Tory trained seals were bragging about 90,000 new jobs in the economy. Yet, we invest less on public services than any other province in Canada. That's right, we're dead last. And every year, we're falling further behind. Just to be clear, that's a political choice - not an economic necessity. It doesn't have to be all doom and gloom, crisis and cuts.

But if Ontario is wealthier than ever before, why aren't working people better off?

The short answer is corruption. Scandals like SNC Lavalin and the failed coronation of Ron Taverner as OPP commissioner are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to politicians behaving badly. They're

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cozy with the corporate elite who demand more tax cuts and get-rich privatization schemes. A big part of their corporate strategy is to pay workers less, and provide fewer benefits and job protections. While frontline workers are working harder and are more productive than ever, these top bosses are hoarding more of the payoffs.

Life's getting harder and less affordable for most, but a lot more lucrative for the elite. They don't pay their fair share in taxes, and it's coming at a great cost to the rest of us through cuts and privatization.

Corruption means that we get less and they get more.

And Liberal and Conservative governments are complicit in this scam, in return for big corporate donations. They're cozy with millionaires and billionaires, but attacking workers' rights and decent wages. They're making secret deals

with corporate giants, but slashing our public services. They've wasted billions on privatization schemes like P3 infrastructure projects and the Hydro One sell-off, but refuse to invest in affordable housing and child care.

These are choices, and successive governments have chosen to put corporate interests before the people. Instead of focusing on policies to make life more affordable and fair, they're helping their rich backers get even richer. This is corruption plain and simple.

And people are fed up. Most Ontarians don't trust Doug Ford. In recent polling, 60 per cent of Ontarians

said they don't agree with the direction the Ford government is taking, and 70 per cent said they are personally worried about cuts to come - for good reason. Ford's behaving like a dictator, not a democratic leader, and we're all getting robbed.

But there's a storm of discontent brewing too. Just ask the parents of children with autism who are pushing back and winning the fight for decent investments in autism services.

We're on the verge of a political storm and just like those parents, we've got to hit back. But we need to focus our anger where it belongs. This isn't about attacking a political party, it's about standing up to corruption in all its forms. It's about standing up for the communities and the province we want to live in and it's about building a better Ontario.

So as the Doug Ford political storm rages, let's not get swept away. Let's stand our ground and remember: we can afford to do better and we must demand it.

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