

From Queen's Park by Sylvia Jones MPP ? People's Guarantee promises positive results for Dufferin-Caledon

Last week, I had the pleasure of hosting the Leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party, Patrick Brown in Caledon for a speech to supporters where he shared the PC platform for the 2018 election, the People's Guarantee.

The People's Guarantee represents the result of months of consultation with Ontarians from across the province. I am proud of this work. Importantly, Kevin Page, former Parliamentary Budget Officer for Canada has said that ?the fiscal estimates underlying the Ontario PC platform have been deemed reasonable by the non-partisan Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy, University of Ottawa.?

It outlines our plan to help address the issues that I have been hearing from constituents for years: a rising cost of living; skyrocketing hydro rates; unaffordable child care; the mental health crisis and the rising mistrust of government.

That is why Patrick Brown, the PC Party and I are putting forward five specific guarantees, about what we would do differently if given the honour to form the government in 2018.

First, we will reduce the income tax rate for the middle class by 22.5 per cent. Second, we will introduce a new Ontario Child Care Refund to pay up to 75 per cent of a family's childcare expenses. Third, we will lower the average hydro bill by an additional 12 per cent. Fourth, we will invest \$1.9 billion in mental health services, the largest provincial commitment in Canadian history. Fifth, we will introduce the first ever Trust, Integrity and Accountability Act, to restore accountability to the provincial government.

Of the five guarantees, I am particularly proud of our historic commitment to mental health. Having sat on the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions more than seven years ago, I know how badly this investment is needed. According to Children's Mental Health Ontario, children are waiting for up to 1.5 years for urgent mental health treatment and nearly 12,000 children are waiting for long-term psychotherapy.

Stakeholders from across the mental health field agree. The CEO of Children's Mental Health Ontario said, ?So pleased to see topping up elementary and secondary school supports for services targeted at improving mental health and well-being, including funding awareness campaigns as part of (People's Guarantee).?

The President of Ontario Provincial Police Association said, ?Great to see such a commitment to mental health. We need to invest more for those in crisis and those requiring adequate support.?

Patrick Brown also made commitments that are going to make a real difference in Dufferin-Caledon, including a commitment to finally complete the environmental assessment of the GTA-West Highway Corridor. The land within the corridor has been frozen for more than a decade of study. The government's unprecedented step to suspend the Environmental Assessment two years ago has left municipalities and landowners in limbo.

Part of my job as a member of the official opposition is to highlight the government's failures and waste. While many individuals recognize the government's failings, they also want to know what we would do differently. The People's Guarantee outlines exactly that.

I encourage everyone to visit www.dufferincaledon.ontariopc.com to read the full platform.

