

## 1. Rent control (vacancy decontrol):

Ontario's rent control system permits annual rent increases equal to Ontario's Consumer Price Index (CPI). Any other rent increases must be justified and approved by the Landlord and Tenant Board. These limits on rent increases protect sitting tenants. However, when a unit is vacated there are no limits and the landlord is allowed to charge any rent a new tenant will pay.

As a result, landlords have a financial incentive to push out sitting tenants and the number of affordable rental units decreases. This creates serious impacts on tenants living on lower incomes - seniors on fixed incomes, young people just entering the job market, people who are unemployed, households on social assistance, sole-support families and newcomers to Canada.

According to the 2016 Census, 45.6% of Ontario tenant households (i.e. 709,245 households) pay 30% or more of their household income on shelter costs. The risk of homelessness increases as rents take a greater portion of tenants' incomes.

To help keep existing rental housing affordable, rent control should apply to all rental units, whether vacant or occupied.

**Question:** Will your party eliminate vacancy decontrol and ensure that all sitting and new tenants are protected by rent control?

## 2. Provincial cost-sharing and the National Housing Strategy:

On November 22, 2017, the federal government released its National Housing Strategy (NHS) – a \$40 billion plan to be spent over 10 years to address Canada's affordable housing crisis and reduce homelessness. Much of the funding offered (i.e. Canada Community Housing Initiative, the Federal Community Housing Initiative, the Canadian Housing Benefit and the renewed Investment in Affordable Housing initiative) depends on dollar-for-dollar cost-matching from the provinces and territories.

Federal, provincial and territorial governments will be negotiating bilateral agreements for the implementation of the NHS in the months ahead. It is crucial for our province to ensure access to these federal funds by committing to cost-sharing.

**Question:** Will your party commit to cost-matching and accessing the federal funding available under the National Housing Strategy?

### 3. Social housing – new build and preserving existing stock:

The NHS promises to create 100,000 new housing units and to repair up to 240,000 units of existing affordable and community housing. While this is very welcome news, these targets and associated funding commitments are spread Canada-wide and spending is phased in over 10 years. There are simply not enough federal dollars available under the NHS for Ontario to adequately address its affordable housing crisis.

Ontario needs to build at least 10,000 new rental units annually to meet the demand of a growing population. However, we've seen an average of 5,110 rental completions annually over the period of 1990 to 2017 – about half of what we need. Our province has the highest proportion of renter households in Canada paying over 30% of their income on housing. Additionally, a significant number of those who are homeless have mental health issues and/or addictions and need support services in addition to affordable housing.

Provincial dollars are essential to produce the deeply affordable rental housing and provide the support services that are needed by the most financially disadvantaged members of our communities.

**Question:** Will your party commit to funding a stand-alone provincial program to build new social housing - including non-profit rental, co-op housing and supportive housing - with annual targets that will effectively address the needs of Ontario's low-income tenants?

Municipalities simply do not have enough money to carry out sorely needed major repairs and upgrades to the aging social housing stock which they administer. Most of this social housing portfolio was built between 1945 and 1990, and needs close to \$3 billion for major repairs. Tenants bear the brunt of disrepair in the social housing sector through compromised health, safety and security. These problems create pressures in health-care and social service spending, and diminish quality of life for tenants.

The Ontario government must work with social housing providers to put into place new provincial funding that ensures the good repair and maintenance of the valuable public asset that is our social housing portfolio.

**Question:** Will your party commit the provincial funding necessary to maintain and repair Ontario's existing social housing?

### 4. Setting rents in affordable housing:

Currently, the Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH) program, under which the province is cost-matching federal funds, requires rents to be charged that are, on average, at or below 80% of CMHC market rents in the local community. However, average market rents do not take into account the ability of tenants to pay. These rents are too high for lower income tenants.

Almost half of renter households in Ontario have annual incomes below \$40,000. We need an affordable housing program which sets rents within the means of tenants allowing them to pay for other basic necessities such as food, transportation, clothing and medications.

**Question:** Will your party set rents in affordable housing so tenants are not forced to pay more than 30% of their income on housing costs?

## **5. Housing as a human right:**

A safe, secure place to live is a basic human necessity. Without a home, we cannot exercise all of our other civil, political and economic rights. Without adequate housing, we cannot live with dignity and take an active role in our communities. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international covenants ratified by Canada guarantee the right to adequate housing and the right to the equal enjoyment of this right without discrimination.

The federal government recognized that housing rights are human rights in its NHS and intends to introduce new legislation this year that promotes a human rights-based approach to housing.

**Question:** Will your party commit to recognizing the right to housing in provincial legislation?