

Socialist Caucus Resolutions for the Ontario NDP Convention, April 21-23, 2017

Below are the Socialist Caucus resolutions approved at the SC conference held on December 10, 2016. Please circulate widely, and present them for adoption at meetings of Ontario NDP riding associations, Youth clubs and affiliated Unions. Please let us know when any of the approved resolutions is adopted, in whole or in part, by any organization. Contact the Socialist Caucus at: 416 – 535-8779, e-mail: info@ndpsocialists.ca or visit: www.ndpsocialists.ca

1. Convention should set ONDP election platform priorities

Whereas Convention is the supreme decision making body of the Ontario New Democratic Party,

And whereas at convention members devote much thought and effort to considering the policy resolutions that reflect the political priorities of the party members,

And whereas in recent elections NDP candidates for Provincial Parliament lacked proper preparation, including comprehensive policies and platform,

And whereas, in recent elections the Leader presented policies and a platform with little or no basis in adopted Convention Resolutions,

And whereas it is reasonable that the Leader and the Election Planning Committee have some flexibility to respond to newly emerging political issues,

Therefore be it resolved, that at least 50% of all future Ontario NDP Election Platform priority issues consist of policies adopted and prioritized by the preceding ONDP Convention so that prospective MPPs and their local campaigns are able confidently to plan and present to the public the main planks of the Election Platform, with full knowledge of the key issues and policies, and how best to advance them locally.

2. For Democracy in the Candidate Nomination Process

Whereas the Ontario NDP Executive and its Administrative Committee have facilitated controversial decisions and unacceptable practices governing the candidate nomination process in the ONDP;

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Ontario NDP affirms that:

- a) each ONDP constituency association is the paramount deciding body concerning the determination of the NDP candidate for its own riding;
- b) the ONDP Convention is the primary and final deciding body with regard to party policies, tactics and strategy;
- c) party officials and staff may not override convention-based policy, nor override a candidate nomination, nor prevent an NDP member in good standing from seeking a nomination;

And Be It Further Resolved that any interference with the local nomination process, is subject to ratification by a two-thirds majority of the ONDP Provincial Council within one month immediately following the change. Should the motion to ratify fail, the candidate for the nomination, the nominated candidate, and/or the party practice in question automatically revert to the previous status.

3. Raise the Minimum Wage

Whereas the current minimum wage is far too low to support a single person, let alone a family;

And whereas the current minimum wage unfairly punishes the young, and those working in the service sector;

Be it resolved that the Ontario NDP actively campaign for, and seek to legislate, the elimination of distinctions in the minimum wage law based on age or occupation.

Be it further resolved that the ONDP actively campaign for, and the NDP seek to legislate during its first year in office an increase in the minimum wage to a living wage equal to 60% of the average unionized worker's wage (presently \$18.60) in Ontario, and include a permanent, annual cost of living adjustment for it to keep pace with inflation.

4. Welfare, for a Decent Quality of Life

Whereas the Mike Harris Conservative government, as part of its war on the poor, reduced welfare rates by 21.6% in 1995, and the Ontario Liberal government has decided to restore only 3% of the 21.6% cut;

Therefore Be It Resolved that the ONDP actively campaign for the immediate restoration of rates of social assistance at least to the level existing before the Harris government cuts, plus inflation since then, and demand an increase in social assistance rates and allowable earnings to a level which permits recipients to have a decent quality of life.

5. Eliminate Tuition, Ancillary Fees, and Student Debt

Whereas the cost of post-secondary tuition and ancillary fees has skyrocketed in Ontario in recent years;
And whereas many students are now graduating from post-secondary institutions with student debt of over \$50,000 each;

Therefore Be it resolved that the Ontario NDP actively campaign to immediately freeze tuition in Ontario, and through annual reductions, completely eliminate tuition and ancillary fees during its first term of office, and support student movements, like that in Quebec in 2012, against tuition increases.

Therefore Be it further resolved that the ONDP actively campaign for abolition of student loan debt and implement that policy within its first term of office.

Therefore Be it further resolved that the Ontario NDP actively campaign for a more equitable and progressive taxation system that would help to fund free access to post-secondary education.

6. Universal Child Care

Whereas publicly-funded, high quality, low-cost child care programs in Scandinavia have proven to lower rates of poverty, increase women's participation in the economy, reduce the large wage gap between men and women, and provide children with a strong beginning to their education and life experiences;

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Ontario NDP actively campaign for, and seek to legislate, a publicly-funded, \$5

a day child care program throughout the province of Ontario, funded by progressive taxation.

7. For Social Ownership and democratic control of runaway companies

Whereas many manufacturing branch plants of transnational corporations have closed down and ceased production in Ontario in the last decade, including US Steel, Diesel Locomotive, Heinz, and Kellogg's,

And whereas these productive facilities were not technologically outdated, nor were their products suffering from lack of demand, and their owners took millions of dollars from Queen's Park while promising to maintain local jobs,

And whereas the plants were closed primarily to take advantage of lower tax rates and/or lower wages in places to which the Transnational corporations could shift production to generate higher profits and stock dividends,

And whereas the plant closures occurred with little warning for the workers, unions and municipalities that benefit from local production and employment,

Therefore be it resolved that the ONDP actively campaign for socialization under workers' and community democratic control of such manufacturing concerns, and strive to bar the removal of any means of production from such facilities, and work to ensure that all extant workers' wage and benefit packages are upheld.

8. Right to Strike

Whereas governments increasingly seek to erode, restrict or eliminate workers' right to strike, falsely arguing that unions and strikes pose a threat to public health and safety, while governments themselves trample human needs by de-regulating capital, privatizing public services, and facilitating growing corporate control over all facets of life;

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Ontario NDP actively campaign for, and seek to legislate the unfettered right to strike for all working people, and that the party respect the integrity and competence of unions to safeguard public health and safety and provide for the delivery of genuinely essential services during a strike by their members.

9. No Public Funding for Religious Schools

Whereas Canada/Ontario was found in violation of its international human rights obligations by the United Nations Human Rights Committee in 1999 and again in 2005 by virtue of discrimination in the funding of Roman Catholic schools in Ontario;

Whereas the termination of public funding for religion-based schools by the governments of Quebec and Newfoundland has negated the constitutional rationale for public funding of Roman Catholic schools;

Whereas the Ontario Legislature has the power to eliminate public funding to the Roman Catholic school system by passing legislation to that effect, as was done by the legislature of Manitoba;

Whereas the religious segregation of Ontario children undermines the role of public schools in fostering tolerance and respect between Ontarians of different backgrounds; and

Whereas the ONDP has always advocated and supported equality and equity for all Ontarians in the delivery of public services;

Therefore Be It Resolved that the ONDP supports one publicly funded school system and will actively campaign for an end to public funding of any kind for any religion-based schools in Ontario, while permitting, where appropriate, religious instruction in any faith in publicly funded schools outside regular instructional hours.

10. Health Care

Whereas the Ontario Liberal government initiated a health premium and de-listed some OHIP services.

Therefore be it resolved that the Ontario NDP actively campaign to eliminate Health Care premiums immediately, and expand Health Care to include, but not limited to, free and universal Dental Care, Physiotherapy, Pharmacare, Optometry, Psychotherapy, Home Care, and Senior Care, and terminate all Public-Private-Partnerships in health care.

11. Housing

Whereas homelessness is unacceptable, and,

Whereas many people are living in marginal housing and are on the verge of becoming homeless and,

Whereas homelessness has increased in the last ten years and homeless people are dying on the streets and, Whereas developers are not interested in creating affordable housing,

Therefore be it resolved that the ONDP in government will take initiatives, with the cooperation of other levels of government, to create universally affordable and accessible cooperative and social housing,

And further be it resolved that the NDP must have both long term and short-term policies for creating universally affordable and accessible cooperative and social housing for all people,

And be it further resolved that the ONDP actively campaign for the demand that the federal government allocate 2% of federal expenditures for cooperative and social housing.

12. Public and Democratic Hydro

Whereas the old Ontario Hydro was bureaucratic, undemocratic, debt-ridden, and lacked the accountability necessary to provide environmentally friendly energy (including solar, wind and geothermal energy) to the people of Ontario;

And whereas the Ontario Conservative Party's partial privatization of Ontario Hydro has led to radically higher rates, poorer service, power shortages, and even greater environmental harm, and the Ontario Liberal government is pursuing the same agenda with the steady privatization of Hydro One;

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Ontario NDP actively campaign to put what was formerly known as Ontario Hydro, including its energy production and distribution facilities, under public ownership with minimal compensation for private owners (in the form of long-term, low interest bonds), and commits to legislate to that end.

Therefore Be It Further Resolved that the new public Ontario Hydro be controlled democratically and managed by its workers, with direct election of plant managers and directors (subject to recall), and integrate significant and meaningful participation in decision-making by consumers and local communities.

13. Social Ownership and Economic Democracy

Whereas large corporations and financial institutions are undemocratic and hierarchical, seeking profits and power over and above the interests of citizens and the environment;

And whereas social ownership is a necessary precondition for democratic control of the economy, full employment and an equitable distribution of income and power;

And whereas workers' control would contribute greatly to economic justice, greater efficiencies, and most importantly, improve the quality of life of working people and our allies;

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Ontario NDP is committed to actively campaign for and implement social ownership, including but not limited to the following industries: natural resources, manufacturing, energy, mass media, medical drugs, transportation, banking, communications, education, health care, insurance.

Therefore Be It Further Resolved that these industries be democratically controlled and managed by their workers, by instituting direct election of plant managers and enterprise directors, with the right of recall by their electors, and integrate significant and meaningful consumer participation in the decision-making process.

14. Social Ownership of Primary Industries

Whereas Canada's primary industries such as forestry, mining, and fishing are vital to economic development and job creation, especially in smaller communities;

Whereas many of these industries continue to be controlled by small groupings of powerful shareholders who seek profits and power over and above the interests of citizens, workers and the environment;

Whereas these industries, under private ownership, threaten smaller communities with de-investment and capital flight;

Be it resolved that an Ontario NDP government socialize all major primary industries in Ontario over a period of time with compensation to the former owners by means of low-interest, long-term bonds;

Be it further resolved that an ONDP government place all public enterprises under democratic control by their workers, instituting direct election of plant managers and enterprise directors, with the right of recall by their electors, and have significant and meaningful participation in decision-making by consumers, environmental groups and local communities.

Be it further resolved that public enterprises undergo a "green screen" and move towards the use of environmentally friendly forms of energy, the building up of resource capacities and other varieties of sustainable development.

15. Social Ownership of Banking and Insurance

Whereas large banks and insurance monopolies in Ontario are concerned mainly with maximization of profits and bigger dividends for shareholders at the expense of citizens, small business persons and farmers;

Whereas private ownership of banks and insurance companies leads to greedy and corrupt practices, wasteful advertising and duplication of services, higher transactions costs, and thus higher costs for consumers;

Be it resolved that an Ontario NDP government place all large private financial institutions and large insurance companies (including life, home and auto insurance firms) under social ownership with compensation over a period of years to the former owners in the form of low-interest, long-term bonds;

Be it resolved that publicly owned industries be managed democratically by their workers, instituting direct election of managers and enterprise directors, with the right of recall by their electors, and have significant and meaningful participation in the decision-making process by consumers, small business persons and family farmers.

16. For More Policy Discussion at Conventions

Whereas substantially greater democracy and political pluralism are an urgent necessity within the NDP;

Therefore Be It Resolved that this party mandate and provide more accessible, more democratic, membership-delegate driven party conventions and provincial council meetings, with low/minimal registration fees, and at least 80% of convention and provincial council time dedicated to debate and voting on resolutions from grassroots organizations.

17. Building the Party as a Mass Movement of the Working Class and Allies

Whereas the NDP must restore and expand its links to the working class, including the unemployed, the under-employed, and the non-waged workers, and to the social protest movements that battle the depredations of globalized capitalism, including the Occupy movement;

And whereas NDP links to labour unions, including its receipt of their financial contributions, proudly distinguish the NDP from the parties of big business as the democratic political expression of the workers' movement in this country;

And whereas we can learn much from the legacy of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), predecessor to the NDP, which was founded as a "Federation" of local clubs, farmers' unions, cooperatives, labour and socialist parties, workers' unions, intellectual societies, and other grassroots working class organizations, united initially on the basis of the Regina Manifesto in 1932-33.

Therefore Be It Resolved that the NDP actively campaign to increase union affiliation to the party and invite progressive social movements and groups of activist individuals to form clubs and to affiliate to the party.

Therefore Be It Further Resolved that the party actively promote the idea of an expanded movement of affiliates which would enjoy direct in-pu to conventions and councils of the NDP, and which would constitute an expanded working class and activist base on which to build the party as an instrument for democratic socialist transformation of society.

18. Abolish the HST

Whereas the Harmonized Sales Tax is a regressive tax that increases the financial burden on working people and those who can least afford it,

And whereas the HST can be eliminated by the Ontario government serving notice to the federal government that it wishes to phase out the tax in five years or less,

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Ontario NDP actively campaign to abolish the HST.

19. Stop Line 9

Whereas reducing carbon emissions is a key way to mitigate the climate change that threatens life on our planet; And whereas building more pipeline capacity in Canada only encourages and facilitates more production of oil sands bitumen;

And whereas Pipe Line 9 passes through aboriginal lands, and most First Nations oppose the line's conversion to a bitumen conduit;

And whereas Line 9 passes through dozens of municipalities, posing a health and safety risk;

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Ontario NDP actively campaign for no bitumen or oil shipment through Line 9,

Be It Further Resolved that the ONDP actively support progressive, grass roots campaigns and protests that have emerged on this issue.

20. Guarantee Work Hours

Whereas companies are more concerned with their profits than with their employees.

And whereas increasing the minimum wage does not guarantee an increase in employee hours. In fact many employers may reduce worker hours because of this.

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Ontario NDP urge the provincial government to enforce guaranteed work hours (25-30 a week for part time, 35-40 hours a week for full time) for all workers regardless of the workplace, and protect against employers cutting employee hours when business is slow, thus ensuring that workers will earn a consistent pay cheque.

Therefore Be It Further Resolved that employers be required to post the schedule at least two weeks in advance so that employees are able to plan their appointments and other activities.

21. Welfare, for a Decent Quality of Life

Whereas the Mike Harris Conservative government, as part of its war on the poor, reduced welfare rates by 21.6% in 1995, and the Ontario Liberal government has decided to restore only 3% of the 21.6% cut;

And Whereas Hugh Segal is charged with undertaking a pilot project that Provides Single adults with a basic income of \$1321;

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Ontario NDP state that there is no need to wait for the results of a Basic Incomes pilot project, and call for an immediate raise in the Ontario Works Programme rates for single adults to \$1321.00 and to those on disability by an immediate \$500.00 increase.

22. Share the Work, Shorten the Work Week

Whereas the official work week in Ontario is among the longest in the industrialized world, a situation proven to cause increased stress, illness and lower productivity;

Whereas tens of thousands of new jobs would be created if the work week was reduced appropriately;

Therefore be it resolved that the Ontario NDP actively campaign to reduce the work week to 32 hours, without loss of pay or benefits to workers, and to outlaw mandatory overtime.

Resolutions in the areas of Inter-Provincial and International Affairs

23. Boycott apartheid Israel, End the Siege of Gaza, uphold Palestinian Rights

Whereas boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) campaign helped to end apartheid in South Africa.

Whereas the current BDS campaign aimed at Apartheid Israel, endorsed by CUPE Ontario, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers and unions around the world, seeks to end the siege of Gaza, and uphold the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, including the right of refugees to return to their homes and properties.

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Ontario NDP actively support the international campaign of boycott, divestment and sanctions to demand that Israel end the siege of Gaza, dismantle the apartheid wall and Israeli settlements in the West Bank, and fully comply with international law, including U.N. resolution 194, which calls for the right of return of Palestinian refugees.

24. Canada Out of NATO

Therefore Be It Resolved that this body re-affirm the longstanding NDP policy that Canada should quit the NATO alliance immediately.

25. No military intervention in Syria, Iraq, Ukraine, Russia and Iran

Whereas the 2006 NDP Federal Convention voted overwhelmingly for an immediate withdrawal of Canadian Forces from Afghanistan,

And whereas, contrary to the party's anti-war policies, NDP MPs voted in Spring 2011 in favour of participation by Canadian Forces in the NATO bombing of Libya, and have failed to speak out against Conservative government threats to take action against Syria and Russia, and against Ottawa's aid to the reactionary coup-installed government in Kiev,

And whereas NDP Foreign Affairs critic Paul Dewar participated in a September 2014 visit to Baghdad, led by Tory Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird, in which Ottawa pledged millions in aid to the reactionary regime in Iraq,

Therefore Be It Resolved that this body asks that the Federal NDP actively campaign for the immediate exit of Canadian and all foreign troops and military contractors from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria, condemn the NATO intervention in Libya, urge a halt to aid to the reactionary regime in Kiev, and oppose military intervention into Syria, Iraq, Ukraine, Russia and Iran.

26. Fair and Democratic Trade

Whereas the so-called "free trade" agreements of the FTA, NAFTA, GATS, TPP, CETA and the institution of the WTO are undemocratic and driven by corporations and banks to maximize private profits and make the worldwide movement of money easier;

Whereas this corporate agenda is a serious threat to social programmes, the environment, human and labour rights, and the goals of democratic socialism;

And whereas the Bolivarian Alternative Trade Agreement (ALBA) pioneered by Venezuela and Cuba, demonstrates that there is a way to foster international trade on a cooperative and non-exploitative basis;

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Ontario New Democratic Party is committed to actively campaign for abrogation and withdrawal of Canada from the FTA, NAFTA, GATS, TPP, CETA and the WTO.

Therefore Be It Further Resolved that the NDP is committed to developing and promoting a democratic and participatory system of trade that supports and protects the rights, freedoms and interests of working people, unions, women, Aboriginal peoples, farmers and peasants, seniors, and the poor, dispossessed and marginalized peoples.

27. Repeal the Clarity Act

Whereas the Liberal government's federal Clarity Act, which arrogates to Parliament the unilateral right to determine, after the fact, whether a referendum vote for Quebec sovereignty has a sufficient majority, based on a sufficiently clear question, and thus the Act constitutes a gross violation of Quebec's national right to self-determination;

Therefore Be it Resolved that the Ontario NDP actively campaign for repeal of the Clarity Act.