



SENIORS FOR SOCIAL ACTION (ONTARIO)

EDITORIAL

TAKING MATTERS INTO OUR OWN HANDS – AN AGENDA FOR LOCAL ACTION!

June 30, 2022

In the aftermath of the Ontario election, several things have become clear.

Ontario had the lowest election turnout in its history with only 4.6 million of 10.7 million eligible voters actually casting a ballot. That is a 43% voter turnout (Rodrigues, 2022).

The result of this low voter turnout and a popular vote for the PC's of only 40.84% (of the 43% who voted) was a majority government. A 40.84% vote for the PC's translated to 66.9% - 83 of the seats necessary to form a government.

The NDP's 23.7% of the vote translated to 25% - 31 of the seats.

The Liberal's 23.9% of the vote translated to only 6.5% - 8 of the seats - depriving them of official party status in the Ontario Legislature. This means that they are unable to effectively represent almost 24% of voters (Fair Vote Canada, 2022).

Let's unpack that.

This means that a majority of Ontario citizens are not represented by the current Ontario government because of its first-past-the-post voting system.

When a government does not represent a majority of the people, especially voters, but obtains a significant majority, there can be a problem of legitimacy. People, feeling unrepresented, are more likely to take matters into their own hands.

With older adults fearing forced institutionalization because of the Ontario government's focus on warehousing more and more of them, the way forward is now obvious. Older adults and those who support them need to take matters into their own hands.

In the coming days, weeks, and months Seniors for Social Action Ontario will be providing those wishing to take local action to protect the quality of their own and their loved ones' lives with information and examples of ways that this can be done.

Serious Problems with Home Care

While the majority of older adults want to remain in their own homes with a viable, responsive Home Care program, that does not currently exist in Ontario. Even before the pandemic, Home Care was unable to fulfill requests for care 95% of the time. After the pandemic that dropped to just 56% of the time (Thompson, 2022). 5,800 alternate-level-of-care patients were languishing in hospitals (CBC News, 2022) when they could have gone home had Ontario had a Home Care program like Denmark's. With only \$4.5 billion spent on home and community care services in 2021/22, \$1 billion would be a significant investment – if it happens.

How this government plans to spend the \$1 billion it promised for Home Care (vs the over \$7 billion it has invested in building and refurbishing more institutions and topping up funding for COVID) is unclear.

SSAO will be seeking answers concerning planned government expenditures on Home Care, and we urge you to also seek answers from your MPP's on how the planned \$1 billion for Home Care will be spent. If you get a response, please share it with us at seniorsactionontario@gmail.com

Significant Expenditures on Institutions

As of April, 2022, the government was moving quickly on its commitment to institutions, having 31,705 new and 28,648 upgraded beds in development (Ontario Government, 2022).

Broken down, the Ontario government, over and above its previous investment of \$2.69 billion in long-term care institutions, plans to spend an additional \$3.7 billion in 2024/25 for 10,000 new beds and 12,000 upgraded beds for a total of \$6.4 billion since 2019. In addition to that, long-term care institutions are to receive \$868 million in top-ups for COVID costs (Ontario Government, 2022) bringing the full total to \$7.268 billion.

Information Is Power

For those concerned about being unjustifiably institutionalized or their loved ones being forced into long-term care institutions because of an absence of viable alternatives, some residential alternatives do exist. SSAO has already sent out information on two of these – one on a residential alternative for individuals living with dementia, which can be found here -

https://www.seniorsactionontario.com/files/ugd/c73539_1357a0e3ec3f4ef5be3faca5da509b80.pdf

and one on Burlington's PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) found here -

https://www.seniorsactionontario.com/files/ugd/c73539_4d416485187f47aea29920d620f1af72.pdf

On July 14th, the Councillor who spearheaded the PACE program in Burlington will be presenting this program in a free online event for those who have registered.

In coming days and weeks SSAO will also be acquainting members of its Distribution List with concepts such as Elder Care Co-ops and Co-housing arrangements.

The possibilities of citizen action at the local level to shift the agenda from one that supports institutionalization to one that supports alternatives to them will also be explored, and SSAO will be holding more online events with experts in these areas of interest to provide an opportunity to members to speak directly with them and have their questions answered.

To effectively act at the local level, activists wanting to take matters into their own hands and plan and develop alternatives for themselves and their loved ones need tools, and SSAO aims to provide these.

SSAO has already provided support to citizen activists in Port Hope in their fight to prevent Southbridge from building a large institution there. The brief supporting these activists can be found here:

https://www.seniorsactionontario.com/files/ugd/c73539_6fa29e5f869e4f0cb90d2499cab15838.pdf

SSAO is Offering Support to Local Groups

For those who have formed local groups to advance their own agendas when it comes to long- term care, although SSAO is run entirely by volunteers, we can provide back-up research, writing, speaking, and strategic support through Zoom meetings, briefs, flyers, and other means, so do not hesitate to contact us. If you have special talents in these areas and wish to volunteer, we would love to speak with you.

There is much to learn from other sectors and organizations when it comes to finally building a comprehensive, community-based, non-profit long-term care system that works for those it is intended to serve.

Information is power and SSAO is committed to providing the information necessary for local individuals and groups to empower themselves.

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