

**Ontario NDP**

**Social Assistance**

**Roundtable Report**

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Hon. Doug Ford,  
Premier of Ontario

MPP Hon. Merrilee Fullerton, MPP  
Minister of Children, Community and Social Services

December 7, 2022

Dear Premier Ford and Minister Fullerton,

Ontario's extremely low social assistance rates are legislating hundreds of thousands of Ontarians into deep poverty, leaving them struggling to find housing and pay the bills, eroding their health, and costing our province millions of dollars in health care, social services, and other costs. The inadequate rates of Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program are also putting immense strain on food banks and community meal programs, which are struggling to keep up with increased demand.

Thousands of Ontarians and hundreds of community organizations have called on your government to raise the rates. Sadly, those calls have been ignored.

Earlier this year, we invited you to join us on a social assistance diet for a limited time, in order to briefly experience what it is like to live on such a small amount of money at a moment when the cost of food is rising rapidly. Since you refused to join us, we have decided to share the voices and experiences of people living on social assistance directly with you.

In October, the Ontario New Democratic Party held a roundtable with social assistance recipients and community organizations. We invited social assistance recipients to fill out an online feedback form to give you a sense of what their experience is like living in such deep poverty created by your government.

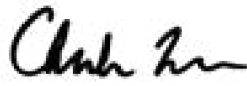
We hope that you will carefully read the experiences of these Ontarians and understand the damage that is being done by your government's policies. We hope that this moves you to take swift action and double Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program rates, ensuring that every person in this province can live with dignity.

The Official Opposition stands ready to pass legislation to make this change swiftly, to make a serious difference in the lives of hundreds of thousands of Ontarians.

Sincerely,



Monique Taylor, MPP  
Hamilton Mountain



Chandra Pasma, MPP  
Ottawa West—Nepean



Lise Vaugeois, MPP  
Thunder Bay—Superior North



Jessica Bell, MPP  
University—Rosedale



Joel Harden, MPP  
Ottawa Centre

## Introduction

For hundreds of thousands of Ontarians, receiving social assistance means living in deep poverty. Every day, people who receive social assistance are forced to make impossible choices: do they eat or pay their rent? Do they pay for medication or their hydro bill?

Social assistance recipients primarily receive income support from two provincial programs: Ontario Works (OW), which serves individuals who are unemployed but supposedly able to work and in financial need, and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), which serves people with disabilities as defined in the *Ontario Disability Support Program Act*. OW provides single individual recipients with \$733/month and ODSP provides \$1,228/month. Both programs are split into two parts, with a shelter allowance and a basic needs allowance. Many individuals receive OW while awaiting approval for ODSP.

These rates are so low that those receiving social assistance live not only in poverty, but deep poverty. The deep poverty line is defined as 75 per cent of the market basket measure for poverty;<sup>1</sup> a single person receiving OW receives income support equivalent to about 56 per cent of the deep poverty line, while a single person receiving ODSP receives about 84 per cent.<sup>2</sup>

Increasingly, people receiving social assistance must contend with a rapidly rising cost of living. The cost of groceries is rising at a rate not seen since the early 1980s; a month's rent for a bachelor apartment is significantly higher than the rates of social assistance in many communities across Ontario, and waitlists for affordable housing are years' long. It's clearer than ever that living a decent, healthy life while receiving social assistance in Ontario is impossible.

Despite record levels of inflation and rates frozen since 2018, this year, the Ford government only provided a meager, five-per cent increase to ODSP. Those who receive the maximum ODSP rate saw their monthly payments rise from \$1,169 to \$1,228. But this increase was not given equally to every recipient. For example, an ODSP recipient living in subsidized housing is only eligible for a five-per cent increase on their basic needs allowance, meaning they get a paltry increase of around \$35 per month.<sup>3</sup> For those receiving Ontario Works, rates remain frozen at \$733/month.

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1 Market basket measure is defined as market based on the cost of a specific basket of goods and services representing a modest, basic standard of living. See more here: [URL](#).

2 Welfare in Canada: Ontario, Maytree Policy Institute, December 2021, [URL](#).

3 Doug Ford's math on social assistance doesn't add up — and doesn't solve the problem of legislated poverty for people on ODSP, Andrea Hatala, Trevor Manson, Claudia Calabro, *Toronto Star*, October 31, 2022. [URL](#).

New Democrats believe that social assistance rates should be doubled so that all Ontarians can live a life of dignity. In September, five Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) undertook two weeks of advocacy to push the government to raise the rates. In the weeks following, New Democrat MPPs circulated a petition calling for social assistance rates to be doubled and hosted a roundtable discussion composed of people who receive social assistance, social services providers, and advocates working to ensure all Ontarians have access to shelter, food, and other necessities. This report is a summary of the experiences shared during the roundtable. The experiences detailed in this report, and the attached appendix of testimonials from people with lived experience on social assistance, is a message to the Ford government: Enough is enough; it's time to double the rates.

## **Daily Impacts of Life on Social Assistance**

Participants at the roundtable shared their day-to-day experiences as recipients of social assistance. ODSP and OW recipients expressed that the impacts of legislated poverty are felt in every aspect of their lives, and that it impacts their mental health and emotional well-being. Several participants revealed that current ODSP rates hold them back from achieving peace, happiness, and stability, and limit their opportunities to give back to their community in ways that are meaningful to them.

They shared with the roundtable their feelings of intense grief and isolation from their loved ones, as well as from the larger community. Many participants, like Andrea and Paul, echoed that poverty puts a strain on their social relationships, as they are unable to go out with their friends and family the way others can, due to lack of funds. Many feel embarrassed when having to ask their loved ones for money to purchase items such as socks, laundry, and soap – these bare necessities cannot be covered when social assistance recipients are forced to choose between eating and paying other crucial bills. Those who have family and friends to turn to consider themselves lucky, as many more go without any support. Participants expressed that they feel constant stress and anxiety because of the extreme mental burden that comes with having to choose which basic needs they must forgo each month in order to survive.

For example, Jordan often skips meals to provide for his daughter. He can no longer afford a membership to the YMCA, which means his daughter can't attend her favourite swimming classes. When Declan's mother passed away in July, their OW caseworker was unable to find any additional supports that would allow him to pay for a haircut in advance of their mother's memorial. When a shelter threw out her belongings for missing check-in one day, it took Tracey MacKinnon two years to get her ID replaced because it cost \$35.

**“We have to rob Peter to pay Paul; we have to not pay bills to eat. I need more supports.”**

**–Tracey C., ODSP Recipient**

Several participants spoke to the dehumanizing nature of government policies and attitudes towards people with disabilities. They felt legislators view them as “lazy” or “unwilling to get a job,” a sentiment reflected in Premier Ford’s 2018 statement: “[W]e’re going to get the economy booming once again here in Ontario until less (sic) people are on social assistance”<sup>4</sup> or PC MPP Lisa MacLeod’s 2018 statement that “the best social program is a job”.<sup>5</sup> Participants stressed that many of them are unable to work because of their disability, even if they’d like to or have worked in the past. Before a car accident left her with a disability that keeps her at home, Tracey C. worked in government management. Declan worked at a restaurant for years while battling a genetic condition that left them having to call in sick at least once a week. Work became increasingly dangerous for them during the pandemic due to their disability and they can no longer work without facing an extreme physical toll. As a result, Declan had to leave their job and is currently receiving OW while waiting for ODSP.

**“Everyone wants to feel like they have a purpose in life – for the government to pile on top of difficulty and expand that inequality is so cruel.”**

**–Jordan Smith, ODSP Recipient, ACORN London**

Participants of all backgrounds argued that ODSP and OW policies are dehumanizing. Parents of adult children receiving ODSP are enraged they must charge their children rent for them to be eligible to receive the full five-per cent increase in rates. Similarly, Erica Braunovan of the Ottawa Community Food Partnership is terrified about what will happen to her child if Erica passes away; without family, she is unsure how her child can survive if ODSP rates are not doubled.

Sherry, co-founder of the Ontario Disability Coalition, also shared the hardships that caregivers of people living with disabilities face. Many caregivers are forced to access social assistance themselves, as they are unable to work while they provide critical support to loved ones. Sherry noted that some parents receive OW while they provide for children who require 24-hour care. Those parents are unable to sleep due to the lack of home health care, and while receiving \$733/month from OW, they are unable to afford basic necessities for their children, such as diapers. Sherry highlighted that other

<sup>4</sup> Ontario Legislature Hansard. August 8, 2018. [URL](#).

<sup>5</sup> MACLEOD: The best social program is a job, Lisa MacLeod, *Toronto Sun*, November 23, 2018. [URL](#).

government supports for low-income parents, such as assistance to buy formula, are generally 'hidden' and extremely difficult for parents to find.

Many roundtable participants highlighted that as the pandemic unfolded, it became clear that people with disabilities were not a priority for the government. Participants stated that they were not informed by their ODSP caseworker as to what emergency benefits were available to them, if any. As the majority of ODSP recipients were ineligible for CERB, those who were able to receive other discretionary benefits stated that they were insufficient and hard to obtain. Those who were eligible for CERB saw their already meager income clawed back.

**“What they heard a lot of [at the ODSP Action Coalition] was how quickly CERB was distributed and how high the amount was. It sent the message to the disability community that they weren’t worthy of \$2000... because you’re disabled, you’re worth half of what an able-bodied person is worth.”**

**–Trevor Manson, ODSP Recipient, ODSP Action Coalition**

## **The Physical Toll of Living in Poverty**

For many, the stress of living in poverty takes a physical toll. ODSP recipients are forced to choose between bills, medication, and food, and are generally forced to eat a poor diet due to high food prices.

Trevor, an ODSP recipient and volunteer with the ODSP Action Coalition, does not eat more than one meal a day. He is horrified when he walks into grocery stores and sees the price of food. Tracey C. only has \$22 per month to spend on food after rent and relies on her Ontario Trillium Benefit to bring that amount to \$80. She is unable to afford salt and pepper, and often makes egg salad sandwiches or spaghetti to eat for weeks, which is unhealthy and contributes to weight gain. For people who need special diets, like Declan, it is very difficult for them to find safe foods to eat; the stress of finding and affording these foods worsens his condition.

John Stapleton from Open Policy Ontario highlighted that non-perishable items are cheaper and considerably less nutritious than perishable items such as fruits, vegetables, and meat. Those who are forced to rely on low incomes, such as ODSP and OW recipients, are limited in the food they can afford and compelled to choose foods that are less likely to spoil, meaning they are not receiving adequate nutrition.

## **The Societal Cost of Legislating People to Live in Poverty**

ODSP and OW recipients deserve the dignity of choice and proper nutrition. If this requirement is not met, not only are we abandoning people who receive social assistance, but there will also continue to be long-term impacts on our health care system.

Dr. Gary Bloch, a family physician at St. Michael's Hospital, discussed how people are in deeper poverty now than when he first started his practice 20 years ago. He highlighted the difficulty of providing medical care for physical and mental health concerns to his patients, many of whom are marginalized, because he is instead addressing the immediate impacts of living in deep poverty. Dr. Bloch stressed that it would cost our health system less overall to address poverty head-on and give people supports to live healthier lives, than to continue with the status quo.

It is the province's responsibility to take care of Ontarians. We can begin to eliminate poverty and allow people to live healthier lives by doubling ODSP and OW rates.

**“If we saw an increase in rates, it would give me more space to do the job I am supposed to be doing. It is almost impossible to provide primary health care if people don't have their foundational needs met. I spend a good portion of my time trying to alleviate effects of poverty.”**

**–Dr. Gary Bloch**

The effects of the health care crisis are already felt disproportionately by ODSP and OW recipients. Jordan shared the constant stress and anxiety he felt when he had to travel to four different optometrists to find one that would work with his ODSP voucher – the amount of which was already insufficient. During the pandemic, Paul was in the hospital due to a psychiatric relapse that resulted in a physical health issue. He had to stay in the hospital for 15 months – 11 of which were because, although he was ready to be discharged, he had nowhere to go. His basement rental was in the process of being sold in his absence, and he could not afford market rent in Ottawa while receiving ODSP. Ultimately, it cost the system more for Paul to be in the hospital when he did not have to be, than if he would have been able to find and afford housing.

**“We are in a constant state of damage control.”**

**–Jordan Smith, ODSP recipient, ACORN London**



## Cost of Living

The mental and physical impacts of living in poverty are further exacerbated by the untenable cost of living.

Tracey MacKinnon spends 80 per cent of her income on rent, uses her dietary supplement money to pay her bills, and previously used high-interest payday loans to pay rent until she was able to find a more affordable place to live. After rent and bills, she can no longer afford to fill her prescription and requires food banks to feed herself. Jordan is in an extremely precarious housing situation and is at a risk of being forced into homelessness. Tracey C. is unable to leave a housing situation that is causing her intense mental strain. Trevor spends two-thirds of his income on rent and cannot afford to stay where he is, or to move. He is currently on the waitlist for affordable housing and expressed the lack of dignity that the process entails: Toronto Community Housing policy dictates that he cannot look at a potential apartment before selecting it, a policy that poses a unique challenge to those with a disability.

Helen Armstrong, Community Development & Social Action Worker from The Neighbourhood Group, highlighted that people receiving ODSP who lose their housing can often become homeless. We know that 46 per cent of Ontarians who experience homelessness have disabilities.<sup>6</sup> The shelter allowance that some ODSP recipients are eligible to get after the government's five-per cent increase, \$522, is not even half the average cost of a room in a shared apartment in Ontario.<sup>7</sup> For many ODSP recipients, such as Tracey C., it is incredibly difficult to find a roommate who will accommodate the living conditions necessary for their disability. When an average bachelor apartment in Ontario costs approximately \$1,500, how are social assistance recipients expected to find safe, dignified housing?<sup>8</sup>

The simple answer is, they cannot. At a time of exorbitant housing and food costs, current ODSP and OW rates are legislating people into homelessness and poverty. Forcing people living with disabilities into homelessness is exacerbating our province's health care and social services crises.

## Strains on social services

The current cost-of-living crisis, paired with the effects of the pandemic, has led to a severe strain on our social services system. Feed Ontario's [2021 Hunger Report](#) showed that 66 per cent of people visiting Ontario food banks had less than \$1.33 a day to spend on food after paying rent, and 22 per cent of people had less than zero dollars.<sup>9</sup>

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6 Does four more years of Ford mean four more years of homelessness for Ontarians with disabilities? *Ontario NDP*. June 22, 2022. [URL](#).

7 Social Assistance Rates, Inflation and Canada's Official Poverty Line for Toronto – 1993 to 2021, MPP Chris Glover and Hugh Mackenzie. [URL](#).

8 How much does it cost to rent an apartment in Ontario? *Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants*. [URL](#).

9 Hunger Report 2021. *Feed Ontario*. [URL](#).

Several of the roundtable participants work at food banks and homeless shelters around the province. Many reported that usage of social services has gone up dramatically. Deborah Jules from the Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre in Toronto shared that the numbers at their Food Access Program continue to climb. 80 per cent of people who access their program are senior citizens, and most clients are precariously housed or at the risk of becoming homeless. Graham Winter from the Caldwell Family Centre in Ottawa reported seeing an influx of food bank clients who are returning after three or four years of not needing the food bank. Caldwell Family Centre has recently seen a 200-per cent increase in visitors, resulting in the need to cut back on the number of visits clients are allowed. Maggie Helwig from the Church of St. Stephen-in-the-Fields in Toronto shared that the number of people attending the church's meal programs escalated dramatically during the pandemic. An anonymous participant from a homeless shelter reported that the number of clients using their shelter food program has dropped due to a lack of donations but observed that more services are in demand overall compared to when they started over a decade ago.

Although the demand for social services has increased considerably, the province has reduced funding for the Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF), a choice that participants stress will be detrimental to their communities. Karen Secord, Executive Director of the Parkdale Food Centre in Ottawa shared how during the pandemic, a community response program "Cooking for a Cause" employed 20 local restaurants and caterers to make meals for 31 social service agencies. The agencies then distributed the meals to those in need. The program has a \$1 million annual cost and provides 5,000 meals a week to individuals, families, and seniors, in addition to immeasurable social and mental benefits for participants. As a result of the program, Karen reports that at the Somerset West Community Health Centre's Safe Consumption Site, people's wounds are healing faster, there are fewer conflicts between clients, and clients are gaining healthy weight. Rachel Robinson from The Well in Ottawa stated that the SSRF allows for their program to be open on the weekends, providing stability for participants who were previously unable to eat until the food bank reopened Monday mornings. These programs, and others like it, are vital to the communities they serve. The choice to wind down the SSRF will unnecessarily harm those who are already struggling and further strain social services.

The increased demand for social services is occurring at the same time as a staffing crisis in the social services sector. An anonymous participant highlighted how their organization has a hard time finding staff. While there are people who would like to volunteer, there are not enough staff to coordinate volunteers, thus compromising their ability to deliver services. For Graham, who works at the Caldwell Family Centre in Ottawa, 30 per cent of staff funding is from a grant that is ending in December; if it is not extended, the centre will have to cut services. Erica Braunovan from the Ottawa Community Food Partnership is looking at not being able to make payroll this coming January due to a lack of funding. She would like to see social assistance rates raised so that there is less need in the community.

People are increasingly turning to social services as a band-aid solution for the systemic problem of poverty. Ashley, who works at a food bank organization, stressed that food banks and other social services are ultimately intended for emergency use, not as part of the social safety net, in the same way that shelters are meant to provide short-term emergency – rather than permanent and affordable – housing. Erica from the Ottawa Community Food Partnership said there is a lack of dignity in having to use a food bank, and the emphasis on having to sift through expired food to ‘rescue’ it for community fridges and foodbanks is worrying.

**“[Food banks are] a band aid on a gaping wound.”**

**–Erica Braunovan, Ottawa Community Food Partnership**

Legislated poverty is at the root of the social services crisis. Increased funding to social services programs will provide relief, but part of the long-term solution should be doubling social assistance rates and permanently lifting people out of poverty.

## **Conclusion**

Roundtable participants and New Democrats uniformly agree that doubling ODSP and OW rates is a core action that would bring immediate relief and stability to people’s lives. The mental anguish of choosing between bills, food, and medication would be lessened. Many participants told us what increased rates would mean to them or the people they serve, including the ability to receive essential health services, buy winter boots, go out with their friends, eat more than one meal a day, or find suitable housing.

**“If we want to deal with other issues beyond poverty, we need to address poverty first. We can’t tackle reconciliation, anti-Black racism, mental health stigma, etc. without a basic floor of income. How do you expect to carry out those other tasks without first addressing poverty? We need to take an intersectional approach to poverty.”**

**–Dr. Gary Bloch**

Doubling ODSP and OW rates is the first step in a holistic approach needed to address poverty in Ontario, an approach that simultaneously addresses the intersecting issues of racism, a social services staffing crisis, and mental health. During the roundtable, Campaign 2000 repeatedly drew attention to the fact that poverty is a human rights issue, as determined by The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. It is the responsibility of the province to end poverty for Ontarians. As such, we urge the government to revisit the Ontario Basic Income Pilot, implement the recommendations of the Income Security Roadmap for Change, undertake meaningful consultation with ODSP and OW recipients to co-design the social assistance system and ensure that sufficient funds continue to be available through the Social Services Relief Fund.

In this fiscal year alone, the government is sitting on a \$4.6-billion contingency fund. At the time of publishing, \$4.2 billion of that fund remains unallocated. These funds represent billions of dollars that the government can spend right now to significantly increase social assistance rates and begin to lift recipients out of poverty. Ultimately, forcing people into legislated poverty reflects the government's priorities, not its ability to spend. However, we cannot think of the impact on human beings only in terms of dollars and budgets. People receiving ODSP and OW are suffering, and that should be more than enough reason for the government to act now to dramatically improve the lives of those living on social assistance.

## Appendix A: Members of the roundtable have messages for Minister Fullerton and Premier Ford

The messages below were shared with the Ontario NDP through the roundtable process. The comments reflect the individual views of participants and have been lightly edited for clarity.

Dear Premier Ford and Minister Fullerton,

- “Forgive the debt from CERB. You are actually taking more than taxes with the employment claw backs, taking 50% of our income - this makes us not want to talk to our ODSP workers unless we have to. The punitive nature of this system just takes and takes and takes. The Conservatives took the Income Security Roadmap for Change and threw it out the window. I wish there didn’t have to be a pain competition among people - supporters of the Conservatives always talk about how hard they have it with taxes, if there was less emphasis on that, it would be better.”  
–**Andrea Hatala, ODSP recipient, ODSP Action Coalition**
- “Give us affordable housing that meets the needs of the people we serve, and the supports to deliver it.”  
–**Anonymous**
- “What happens [in response] is word salad. There are pre-approved messages that [Fullerton] and others rely on. When asked questions, they rely on preapproved messaging from the centre. It would be a good idea to address the constant replies that are always the same. This pre-approved stuff will only go so far. It has a best before date. If we read that best before date, it has already passed. They need to say something different. There are compelling ways to do so. Address the framing. We can counter them with facts figures but they have no interest. They don’t care about me, they don’t care about any of you. They feel bulletproof. “  
–**Anonymous**
- “End claw backs on provincial assistance for those who receive federal benefits (i.e., pandemic benefits such as the CERB or CRB, or the Canada Child Benefit). Make sure that the doubling of social assistance rates does not impact what other benefits people can access – benefits should be working together to address poverty. This is a human rights issue - eliminating poverty isn’t an aspiration, it is a necessity.”  
–**Campaign 2000**
- “Not everybody on ODSP or OW is lazy or wants to be on it. They want to work or do work. Sometimes I feel like that’s what the government implies.”  
–**Deborah Jules, Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre**
- “The messages you send to people matter, and we need a baseline of dignity. More money means more choices for food, etc.”  
–**Erica Braunovan, Ottawa Community Food Partnership**

- “You will end saving money down the road if you put in the money up front. The cost of poverty is huge. Redirect those billions of dealing with the fallout of poverty back toward supporting people living healthy full satisfying lives. We’d have a happier, healthier, society. Better than the patchwork of social programs. We need to dig our heads out of the sand – we pay for poverty somewhere; we might as well pay for it up front. We want to support our neighbours.”

–**Dr. Gary Bloch, family physician**

- “We really need funding – 30 percent of our staffing is reliant on a grant that was supposed to end in September but was extended to December. If we don’t get more cash, we have to shut down services.”

–**Graham Winter, Caldwell Family Centre**

- “Food charity is an unhealthy, inadequate way to address the failure of our economic system to ensure the decent standard of living we all deserve. The SSRF monies allowed already overburdened agencies - organizations that your government neither funds nor supports - to create a supply chain that involved both economic and community development, purchasing food from small businesses to address the growing chaos among the food insecure by offering nutritious, balanced meals in a dignified way. The government must commit to recognizing food as a basic human right and refrain from relying on out-dated, poor solutions such as ‘food banking’. The health of this province depends upon it.”

–**Karen Secord, Parkdale Food Centre**

- “The doubling of ODSP is the minimum starting point that we need for people to live their lives with dignity.”

–**Maggie Helwig, Church of Saint Stephen-in-the-Fields**

- “Disabled people are people like you and me, and becoming disabled can happen to anyone. It could happen to you. What’s different about disabled people is they often are unable to work, although many contribute greatly through volunteer work and advocacy. On the surface it seems there is no financial reason to double ODSP to bring it to the poverty line. Persons with disabilities can’t leverage their work and go on strike because you believe that you don’t want or need anything from us. But doubling ODSP would create great savings in healthcare by the province. That is something you want. Research on giving individuals a basic income shows there’d be an overall savings in such spending. So, there is a reason to do it other than it being the right thing for those on ODSP struggling to eat and pay rent. The reason - it’s cost effective. If ODSP had been doubled in 2018, I wouldn’t have had to spend 11 months in hospital at a cost of \$750 a day to the taxpayer. I would have had enough to afford an apartment at market rent. Real healthcare savings could have been achieved. And there are hundreds like me in Ottawa. \$750 a day was a number I remember from a decade ago to house someone in a psychiatric bed in hospital. It’s likely higher now.”

–**Paul, ODSP Recipient**

- “It is a provincial responsibility to provide for these programs - every time we bring it back and we write letters, it’s pushed off to the Feds. It is Doug Ford’s responsibility to look after people with disabilities. It is not okay to pass the buck, people are falling through the cracks. Caregivers should be given dignity and supports; they are left behind on OW. They need more help, and they are saving the system so much money. Caregivers of young kids who are trying to live on OW deserve the same amount of supports as someone on ODSP for that child and family.”

–**Sherry Caldwell, Ontario Disability Coalition**

- “The Ford government shot themselves in the foot when they cancelled the Basic Income Pilot, especially with the excuse that it was too expensive. Ontario might be the only province that could afford to run a basic income, and it can still do a lot on its own to improve supports for people but a national basic income makes more sense. What Ford could have done, with positive pilot results coming in, is use that evidence to seek support from the federal government, which has much greater tax capacity, including from the rich.”

–**Sheila Regehr, Basic Income Network Canada**

- “Realize that people on ODSP are humans. The way that disabled people are treated is bad. Wake up and smell the coffee. For Fullerton to be a doctor, that knows what her patients go through, meanwhile she turns her back on them. Just because Ford is your leader, it doesn’t mean anything. You are working for your constituents, not him. For them to sit there on daily basis like we aren’t even human. People are going to MAID. When the basic income was cancelled 4 people killed themselves. I am going to get people out to vote to make sure he is gone. At the end of the day, we need to make sure we are taken care of. 5 percent is a bone he gave to counter the NDP and Greens. It’s not enough. What’s 5 percent? One dinner for yourself? Cherry cheesecake ingredients? They need to take care of us. We did not ask to be disabled. I was disabled because I was in a car accident. I was making 6 figures a year. If he didn’t have money, what would he do? They should do the social assistance diet for 3 months, pay your mortgage and bills. Do it properly.”

–**Tracey C., ODSP Recipient**

- “RAISE THE RATES!”

–**Tracey MacKinnon, ODSP Recipient**

- “Whatever we wanted to tell the Minister we said Minister in our recent letter. Social services relief fund, my Freedom of Information request - where did the money go, how much support, etc.? Stop using the same well-worn talking points, stop using the Canadian Disability Benefit as an excuse to do nothing now.”

–**Trevor Manson, ODSP Recipient, ODSP Action Coalition**

## Appendix B: Social Services Online Feedback Form

We received nearly 250 submissions to our online form asking people to share their concerns directly with the Ford government. We have provided Appendix B to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services and the Premier only, to respect the privacy of the individuals who provided submissions.