

Nothing left to cut

Ontario is dead last in public program spending

In this Ontario election, all three parties are talking about cutting program spending.

PC leader Tim Hudak says he'll fire 100,000 public employees and cut the provincial deficit by \$8.5 billion in one year. Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals say they'd keep cutting until the deficit is gone and find an extra \$1.25 billion in unbudgeted savings over the next three years. And NDP leader Andrea Horwath says she'd cut \$600 million in government "waste."

Are public dollars being misspent? Sometimes. Government pays more than it has to when private companies deliver IT services, medical lab testing, highway maintenance, and other services. Government pays more when it pays private-sector interest rates and profit margins for infrastructure projects like hospitals and gas plants.

But does Ontario spend too much on public services overall? For that question, the answer is **NO**.

Ontario spends less per capita on government programs than any province in Canada, the Ministry of Finance says. And not by a little: by a lot.

In 2013-14, Ontario spent \$8,598 per person on government programs. British Columbia spent \$8,979. If Ontario spent at B.C. levels, we've have an extra **\$5.2 billion** to spend on public services and infrastructure.

And other provinces spend even more. Last year, neighbouring Manitoba spent \$11,128 per person on programs. If Ontario spent at Manitoba levels, we'd have an extra **\$34.4 billion**. In other words, **we could pay off the current deficit and still have \$21 billion to spend on:**

- › health care
- › schools
- › transit
- › post-secondary education
- › safe communities
- › housing
- › child protection
- › women's shelters
- › supports for people with disabilities
- › drinking-water testing
- › food security
- › environmental protection

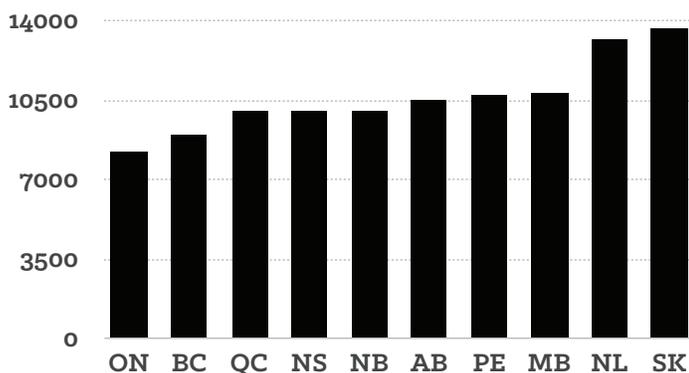
...or any of the other important needs that are going unmet in this province.

Ontario's public services are desperately underfunded. The people who provide those services are asked to do more with less every year. It's time Ontarians knew it: *our public services need proper funding, not more cuts.*

Question for Politicians

Q As you probably know, Ontario spends less per person on government programs than any other province in Canada. What is your plan to increase funding to public services to adequate levels? If you plan instead to cut public services, which ones will you cut, and can you explain how those cuts will affect our community?

Program Spending Per Capita in 2012-2013



Note: Due to differences in accounting standards, figures may not be directly comparable. Sources: 2012-2013 Provincial Accounts and Statistics Canada

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