

# NEWS RELEASE / COMMUNIQUÉ

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## OPSEU's Thomas condemns Ford's cannabis hypocrisy

TORONTO – OPSEU President Warren (Smokey) Thomas is chastising Doug Ford for trying to play both sides of the fence on the issue of legal cannabis sales.

Thomas accused Ford of adding hypocrisy to his cannabis concoction. “Last week, he managed to keep a straight face when he called out Justin Trudeau for legalizing cannabis, saying the PM had put people at risk – a risk Ford has done just about everything possible to increase. It’s almost as if the Premier is causing chaos in the system so he can go after the PM in next year’s federal election.

“In fact, Doug Ford was barely through the front doors of Queen’s Park before he killed off the responsible, public model of retailing cannabis through the Ontario Cannabis Store,” said Thomas. “Instead, he surrendered sale of a controlled substance to potentially thousands of private, for-profit interests – another ‘promise kept’ that was never a ‘promise made’ during the campaign.”

The previous government had put in place a public model whereby LCBO-staffed stores would be the sole legal distributors of cannabis in the province. A [recent Nanos poll](#) indicates that Ontarians trust the LCBO 11 times more than for-profit businesses to keep cannabis out of the hands of kids.

“To add fuel to the cannabis fire,” Thomas continued, “Doug Ford threw open the doors to smoking cannabis wherever tobacco could be smoked – on the streets, in parks and playgrounds, on the beach. At the same time, he says it’s a ‘psychoactive drug.’ That’s exactly why we need to sell it through the LCBO, like alcohol – and keep it out of parks and anywhere else kids are present.”

With a general strike looming by Canada Post, Thomas held up a letter from Finance Minister Vic Fedeli to the federal government as further proof of the Conservatives’ failed cannabis policy.

“At this very moment, 40 Ontario Cannabis Stores could be up and selling cannabis across Ontario, were it not for Doug Ford. Now Vic Fedeli has to plead with the feds to keep Canada Post from striking, as he sees the Tories’ hazardous cannabis policy going up in smoke.

“All this could have been avoided if Doug Ford had gone ahead with the responsible, public option. But he was dead set on enriching his buddies in the private sector – whatever the cost to Ontarians.

“But there’s still time to change course. Instead of having frustrated consumers turning to backstreet criminal elements, LCBO stores can be quickly and easily retrofitted to sell cannabis. It’s the obvious solution. It’s the right solution. So I ask the Premier: Will you finally do the right thing?”

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