

Candidate name: Elizabeth Rowley
 Political Party: Communist Party of Canada (Ontario)

1. Do you agree with the following statements?

	Yes	No	Not Sure
a) The growing income gap is creating instability for many middle income earners and increasing hardship for people on low incomes.	X		
b) Job loss and income insecurity make the affordability of daily living harder for middle and lower income earners and, unless they borrow money and increase their debt load, they will be limited in what they are able to do in many areas of life e.g. education, home ownership.		X	
c) The lowest income earners and especially those who receive social assistance, disability supports or must rely on low fixed incomes are increasingly unable to make ends meet as their means decrease and the cost of living rises.		X	
d) Those with no, low or fixed incomes need social policy and programs supported by a progressive and fair tax system.		X	

2. Will you support investment in the following policy recommendations and directions related to employment?

	Yes	No	Not Sure
a) Resuming 75 cent increases to the minimum wage so that it reaches \$12.50/hr. in 2014 bringing the earnings of full-time, full-year workers 10% above the poverty line and indexing the minimum wage annually thereafter.	X		
b) Supporting the creation of jobs that pay a living wage for all workers.		X	
c) Implementing rigorous employment standards and preventive enforcement strategies that eliminate chronic violations and labour market practices that deny workers their earned wages and rightful benefits.		X	
d) Reinstating employment equity as a measure to ensure equal opportunities for all Ontarians.	X		
e) Avoiding reductions in public sector employment in Ontario's health, education and human service systems to ensure the contribution of this sector to the social and economic well-being of Ontario.	X		
f) Continuing investments in green jobs and energy - promote programs to support local alternative energy cooperatives.		X	
g) Removing disincentives to workplace organizing.		X	

3. Will you support the following policy recommendations and directions to improve income security for Ontarians?

	Yes	No	Not Sure
a) Immediately increasing social assistance rates of \$100/month as a first step in a plan to eliminate deep poverty (living at less than 80% of the poverty line) among all Ontarians who are not in the workforce.	X		
b) Ensuring that social assistance and other public benefits for people on fixed incomes are at a livable income level and indexed annually to the cost of living.		X	
c) Ensuring that adequate healthy food is considered as a priority in all decisions related to funding of social assistance or additional programs such as discretionary or special diet allowances.		X	
d) Restoring implementation of the Ontario Child Benefit to families on low income with		X	

children.

- e) Removing the cap on discretionary benefits and restore previous budget amount- Waterloo Region has been using this fund to good benefit. X
- f) Ensuring any changes to the Ontario social assistance system meets peoples' needs in a respectful way that maintains their dignity and does not feed stigmatization. X

4. Will you support investment in the following policy recommendations and directions related to housing?

- | | Yes | No | Not Sure |
|---|-----|----|----------|
| a) Implementing a full housing benefit for low income individuals and families to ensure that their housing costs consume no more than 30% of their household budgets. | X | | |
| b) Increasing incentives for building or refurbishing affordable housing. | X | | |
| b) Ensuring there is adequate, appropriate and supported housing for those with mental health needs, disabilities, chronic health conditions or who are aging with or into disabilities can live independently and with dignity | X | | |
| c) Increasing readiness to meet the needs of an aging population - establish 'visit-able housing' standards for a significant portion of new housing to ensure people are able to age in place if they experience mobility limitations. | X | | |

5. Will you support investment in the following policy recommendations and directions related to education?

- | | Yes | No | Not Sure |
|--|-----|----|----------|
| a) Supporting the reallocation of funding for the Ontario Tuition Grant to an across-the-board tuition fee reduction for all college and university students. | X | | |
| b) Supporting the elimination of interest on the Ontario portion of Ontario Student Assistance Program loans. | X | | |
| c) Recognizing spouses as independent adults when they are applying for post-secondary admission and financial assistance - assess qualification for assistance based on their income and not family income. | X | | |

6. Will you support investment in the following policy recommendations and directions related to childcare as part of a healthy social infrastructure?

- | | Yes | No | Not Sure |
|---|-----|----|----------|
| a) Strengthening the provision of childcare for children and families in Ontario up to age 13. | X | | |
| b) Strengthening the provision of early learning programs for children and families in Ontario. | X | | |

Comments:

7. Will you support investment in the following policy recommendations and directions for direct and preventative services as part of a healthy social infrastructure?

- | | Yes | No | Not Sure |
|--|-----|----|----------|
| a) Ensuring adequate supports for newcomers for at least 5 years. | X | | |
| b) Faster recognition of credentials for foreign trained professionals. | X | | |
| c) Increasing supports for prevention and alternative justice programs NOT higher cost policing and prisons. | X | | |
| d) Continuing support for women in abusive situations, increase crisis beds and support options for women to rebuild their lives. | X | | |
| e) Ensuring there is adequate investment in health promotion and prevention through lower cost, community sector organizations rather than through higher cost traditional health care services. | X | | |

8. Will you support investment in the following policy recommendations and directions to ensure a diverse and accountable community sector?

	Yes	No	Not Sure
a) Strengthening a diverse and healthy non-profit sector, including small and medium sized organizations, through a combination of core operational and project funding programs.	X		
b) Ensuring provincial level information systems and web based portals such as '211' are part of an integrated information and support infrastructure working with and not aiming to replace local information service providers and data providers.	X		
c) Re-thinking allocation of \$4m annual 'poverty reduction' funding to support the central body (O211SC) that has been recognized by the Government of Ontario as the body to develop and deliver the '211' service. O211SC has no accountability to local communities or for reducing poverty. Either fund from a different envelope or allocate resources to be used by local poverty reduction collaborations to evaluate effectiveness of the '211' service for reducing poverty in real and substantial ways.	X		

9. Will you support investment in the following policy recommendations and directions to ensure there is healthy physical infrastructure and environment in Ontario?

	Yes	No	Not Sure
a) Ensuring air and water quality is monitored and measures taken to ensure there are safe and adequate supplies, especially in areas with poor quality and/or with potentially insufficient water supply.	X		
b) Ensuring there are adequate transfer payments to municipalities (from provincial and federal governments) to enable maintenance of safe and accessible public services and facilities, including public transportation, parks and green spaces, sidewalks and to be sure there is no erosion in existing facilities such as libraries.	X		
c) Developing and maintaining sufficient public transportation systems in and between communities across Ontario to ensure there is affordable, accessible and adequate transportation for all.	X		
d) Supporting local municipalities in building and maintaining community facilities to enable more options for use of these spaces and less reliance on user fees which are a disincentive to community initiatives.	X		
e) Continuing grants to support the community use of schools, making it a priority for community use of decommissioned schools and ensuring this program is widely promoted.	X		

10. Will you support investment to address the unique needs and human rights of the following groups?

	Yes	No	Not Sure
a) Women	X		
b) Persons with disabilities	X		
c) Immigrants and refugees	X		
d) Visible minorities/persons of colour	X		
e) First Nations/aboriginal peoples	X		
f) Older adults	X		
g) Youth	X		

11. I will respond to these additional questions. Yes

12. Do you agree it is important that the public and separate school boards begin discussions about how they could work together more, share resources (e.g. school facilities) and reduce costs? Yes

I support a single, secular, public school system, open to all regardless of religion, gender, sexual orientation

or nationality. Religion is a personal matter, and should be separate from education and government.

13. Will you support restoring funding to support the program that provides accessible materials through Ontario libraries?

Yes

14. Will you advocate for increasing social assistance rates?

Yes

We should raise OW and ODSP above the poverty line immediately, and also introduce a Guaranteed Annual Income and a living wage for all.

15. Will you advocate for reinstating the special diet, community start-up and discretionary fund allowances at previous funding levels and eligibility requirements?

Yes

This is urgent. The Liberals decision to cut it has caused even more widespread hunger and misery.

16. Would you advocate for a guaranteed annual income in Ontario?

Yes

We are campaigning for a GAI and a living wage, and have campaigned for this for more than 30 years.

17. Will you champion poverty eradication in Ontario?

Yes

We live in a rich province, and one of the richest countries in the world. There is absolutely no reason for the massive and growing poverty levels in Ontario (& Canada), except massive corporate greed and right wing governments who feed it. We need governments with the political will to raise wages and incomes, create good jobs, raise living standards, deliver affordable housing and rent controls, introduce an accessible, affordable public child care system across the province.

18. The National Health Report Card of Canada's health care system was recently released by the Canadian Medical Association and shows a widening disparity between rich and poor in terms of health measures. It appears that 'wealth equals health' is still the case for Canadians. How would your party address this issue for Ontarians?

We have to enforce the Canada Health Act, and expand Medicare to include denticare, vision care, pharmacare and long-term care. We should put doctors on salary, and recognize the credentials of internationally trained doctors and health care workers. We should eliminate co-pay charges and premiums, and fund healthcare through expanded federal and then provincial transfers paid for through progressive tax reform based on ability to pay. We should eliminate balanced budget legislation that force hospitals (cities and school boards) to cut services and lay off staff, to the detriment of the public interest.

19. There is concern that legislated contracts will damage relations between teachers, boards and government. How will you as an MPP assist schools, politicians and educational leaders to collaborate?

A new needs-based funding formula - promised but not delivered by the provincial government since 2003 - should be introduced now, enabling School Boards and educators and their unions to negotiate their collective agreements. Threats and illegal and undemocratic interference in free collective bargaining by the Liberal government is a sure way to create a crisis, as the Harris government did in the 1990s. The Liberals created the current crisis when they passed their spring austerity budget and removed billions from education, health and social spending. This is austerity. This is the real cause of the current crisis.

20. How will your party eliminate the stated deficit faced by the Government of Ontario?

The deficit was caused by 30 years of corporate tax cuts and bank and corporate bail-outs in the 2008 economic crisis. Reversing those corporate tax cuts, restoring the capital tax, doubling the corporate tax rate (now just 11%), and introducing wealth and inheritance taxes on estates over \$750,000 would be a good start. This would be the first step in introducing progressive tax reform based on ability to pay. Revenues raised

should be used to create jobs, raise wages and living standards, fund social programs, build affordable housing, and move the economy towards real recovery for working people. Real recovery for jobs, wages and living standards would eliminate the deficit over time. Progressive tax reform based on ability to pay would put the load on the biggest corporations

21. With regard to the proposed development of Highway 7 between Kitchener and Guelph, what will your party do to protect the wetlands adjoining the proposed development?

We support repair of the highway - not an expansion, and investment in inter-urban rail systems to move people between cities across the province in an environmentally sustainable way. We also want to expand public transit within Ontario cities and towns, and reduce fares to encourage people to leave their cars at home. The provincial and federal governments should pay for rolling stock, and substantially increase public transit grants to municipalities.

22. How will you change the current focus that seems predominate in corporations to reduce costs and increase profits while having no accountability or responsibility to the communities in which the companies are located?

Federal and provincial governments have the power and authority to make these corporations obey the law; however they lack the will to pass laws or enforce them, so that the public interest prevails over the corporate drive for higher and higher profits. Corporations receiving public funds or tax breaks should be required to maintain their operations and employment levels in Canada as a condition of receiving funds, or in the case of foreign corporations - as a condition of purchase or investment in Canada. We need plant closure legislation with teeth that would force corporations to show just cause before a public tribunal. Tribunals should have powers to fine and jail those whose employers who break this law.

23. There are a range of stakeholders coping with poverty now, including local and provincial orders of government, community groups, agencies, churches and more. How will you promote a cohesive, collaborative approach to programs that includes and supports non government stakeholders?

The provincial and federal governments must take the lead to address the fundamental issues of poverty - incomes, housing, childcare, healthcare, education, jobs, taxation. The public must be involved as well - especially the poor themselves to have determining input and control over the decision being made that will affect them directly.

24. How will you work to reduce the stigma of poverty and ensure people who are homeless or in economic need can live a life with dignity and respect?

Raising incomes and living standards above the poverty line is central and crucial. Giving those who are poor control over their lives is also crucial and central. Defeating governments that refuse to address poverty, and that continue to implement policies that will exacerbate and increase poverty, and replacing them with governments with the will to address these issues, in partnership with those directly affected - will create the conditions for lives of dignity and respect.

25. What will you do to promote non-profit housing?

Build 200,000 units of affordable social housing in 5 years, and introduce real rent controls immediately.

26. What will you do to reverse cuts to the Workman Safety Insurance levels?

Raise the rates, and organize a broad-based people's movement to push this issue forward now. Enact legislation: kill or injure a worker, go to jail.

27. What would you do to end the marginalization of injured workers?

Elect a government, and MPPs and MPs, willing to put people needs before corporate greed and corporate profit. Build a movement to force this issue onto the legislature's agenda.

28. What policy would reduce the requirements for credentials in those situations where this may be an artificial or arbitrary barrier to employment?

I'm unsure what credentials are being referred to here. Barriers to pay and employment equity must be made

illegal, and laws must be vigorously enforced. Recognize the credentials of internationally trained and educated professionals.

29. How would you improve and monitor the Employment Standards Act and/or the Ontario Labour Relations Act to protect Ontarians in regards to precarious employment?

Enact plant closure legislation with teeth, and anti-scab legislation. Amend bankruptcy laws to protect workers wages, pensions and severance in bankruptcy. Introduce card-check certification for unionization. Enforce pay and employment equity in every workplace in the province. Ban overtime. Reduce the work week to 32 hours with 40 hours pay. Increase pensions and lower the voluntary pension age to 60. Raise the minimum wage to \$19 because that's what it costs to live, and make it apply to all workers irrespective of age, status, or employment. Eliminate two-tier wages and the forced labour of indentured temporary foreign labour. Enshrine the right to strike, picket and organize in a Labour Bill of Rights.

30. What will you do about the mental health crisis in this and other communities in Ontario?

Restore health care funding, and put in place the supports urgently needed by those struggling with mental health issues, and related problems including homelessness, addiction, hunger, etc. We need to build and fund assisted and transitional housing, emergency shelters, and affordable, social housing. We also need harm reduction and safe injection sites. And we need to fund health, education and social programs, including staff, that can address and support the many needs of those with mental health issues. We also need to involve those affected in making the decisions about the changes that are needed, listening and respecting their views, knowledge, and experience.

31. In 2011 one-time funding was provided to fight the spread of bedbugs. What will your party do to ensure the growing problem of bedbugs is addressed?

Public health must have provincial and federal funding and staffing to develop an eradication plan in each community. Bedbugs are directly linked to poor housing, and poverty. Landlords must be forced to clean up their infested buildings and units, and to provide (or pay for) alternate bug-free accommodation while the clean-up is being done. Bedbugs are a health crisis, and all levels of governments must act urgently and together to eradicate bedbugs and protect the public from this scourge.

32. Is there anything you want to add?

These issues will not go away September 7th, and we will have to continue to fight for increased wages and incomes, good jobs, affordable housing, childcare, services, tax reform, after the election. A broad-based, inclusive and united coalition of the 99% can push forward an agenda for real change, to oppose austerity, to meet people's needs. We need to move masses of people into action, in the streets, to achieve real change. We can do it! People's needs - not corporate greed!