

To the conservative party of Ontario,

I know what it means to be poor, but maybe you do not. So, I will take a moment now to share some things with you. When you work two full time jobs, and still do not have enough money to pay for rent, that is poverty. When you have to make a choice between buying food or paying your bills, that is poverty. When you have to walk 5 kilometers a day to work in the dead of winter, not because you enjoy the snow, but because you cannot afford the cost of public transit, that is poverty. This is my experience living in poverty. And I am one of the lucky ones, at least I can work, at least I do have a home, many do not.

Others living in poverty have children and disabilities and are victimized or abused. I am not a racialized body or part of the LGBTQ+ community, where the level of poverty I have experienced gets multiplied ten-fold. I am the working poor, and the only reason I am working is because I can, but for many more they cannot due to illness or disability (either seen or unseen). I know my struggle and it is hard enough as it is, I cannot imagine having to endure this while also trying to care for myself in ways that become even more strained under such circumstances.

It is your responsibility, as the governing body of the people of this province, to ensure that no one falls into despair or even death as a result of austerity. Cuts to social assistance programs, services and resources is fatal, make no mistake about it. My life is in jeopardy, as are the lives of every single mother, trans youth, indigenous community and disabled pensioner. Every service that you cut, every provision and conditional clause that you add, every dollar of funding that you take from us and give to the uber wealthy, is another stab in the back to those who need it the most.

Just remember that the rise of homelessness, mental illness, addiction, gun violence, teen pregnancy, diabetes, and so much more can ALL be attributed to poverty and that by withholding and removing essential services you are actively seeking to make things worse, not better.

I hope that when you review your budgets and policies you think twice about the deadly impact that your choices have on the people of this province.

Fearfully yours,

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