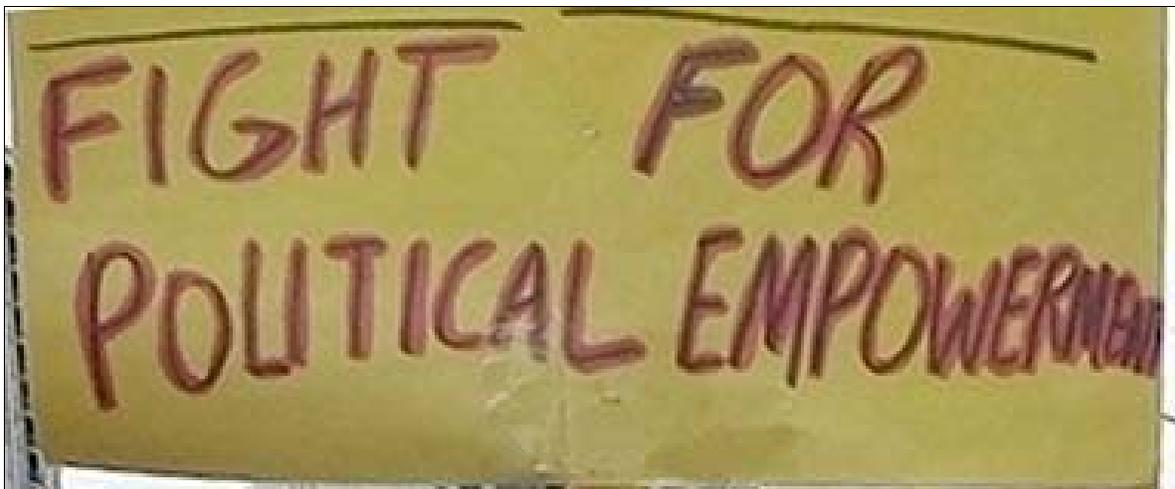


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June 7 General Election

Basic Information

The Ontario general election is scheduled to be held on Thursday June 7, according to Ontario's *Election Act* that fixes the date as "the first Thursday in June in the fourth calendar year following polling day in the most recent general election." The day after the writ is dropped, the 28-day campaign begins, with no campaigning permitted on election day itself. Therefore, for a June 7 election, the government must issue the writ on May 9 to officially launch the election. Nominations

for candidates close May 17 at 2:00 pm. Electors can vote by special ballot at the returning office in their riding from the day after the writ is dropped until 6:00 pm on election day. Voters may also cast their ballot at the advance poll locations noted on their Voter Information Card.

Elections Ontario lists 21 registered political parties as of its latest update on April 13. This election will be held under electoral laws that have been significantly changed since the last election. Amongst other things, the new rules limit individual political donations as well as donations from unions and corporations; significantly increase the public financing of certain privileged political parties, including through the introduction of a per-vote subsidy; strengthen the regime of control over what are defined as third parties; and introduce new measures which facilitate the micro-targeting of the electorate by marketing agencies hired by political parties and the political parties themselves.

There are currently 107 seats in the Ontario Legislature: Liberals, 55 seats; PCs, 28 seats; NDP, 18 seats; Independent, 2; vacant, 4. (MPPs Jack MacLaren and former PC leader Patrick Brown were both kicked out of the PC Party caucus and sit as independents).

There will be 17 new ridings in the June 7 election, for a total of 124. This necessarily changes the composition of many existing ridings. In the previous election a majority required 54 seats, which the Liberals attained at that time by winning 59 seats. Achieving a majority on June 7 will require 63 seats.

The increased number and reorganization of ridings is due to legislation passed by the Liberal government to align provincial ridings with changes made to federal ridings in Ontario, currently totalling 122, as well as a provincial review that recommended a reorganization and increase in the number of ridings in Northern Ontario. The latter led to the creation of two more ridings: Kiiwetinoong and Mushkegowuk-James Bay, for a total of 124.

When it created the two additional Northern Ontario seats, the government indicated that the population of the new Kiiwetinoong riding "will be 68 per cent Indigenous" and that the new riding of Mushkegowuk-James Bay "will be 60 per cent Francophone and 27 per cent Indigenous."



Workers Lead Discussion on the Direction They Want for Ontario



Ontario workers begin regular meetings to discuss the role they can play in Ontario elections, Hamilton, January 21, 2018.

In this election, working people are leading an effort to hold forums, panel discussions, open mics and other activities where they themselves speak about their concerns and how they think solutions can be implemented for problems they face. Steelworkers, injured workers, teachers and education workers are amongst those taking the lead to bring forward issues they consider to matter by discussing their rich experience in fighting for their rights.

The electoral process as it exists today is basically designed to stop any discussion whatsoever from taking place. The "major" parties and their candidates peddle party platforms designed not to solve problems but to get them elected. Today these platforms are designed by corporations, many times foreign, which push ways to serve the aims of powerful private interests. The interests the platforms serve and what they really mean is not known or discussed.

Further, who sets the agendas for discussion during the election is also beyond the people's control. These so-called major parties, abetted by media editorials, pundits and pollsters declare what people want and who supports what. Some of these parties even run advertisements disguised as news stories.

Across the province workers from various sectors of the economy and people from different walks of life are coming forward, having concluded that they are finished with pleading for the so-called major parties to pay attention to their concerns and address them if they form the government. They are raising serious concerns themselves about how they are completely left out of the political domain, not only between elections, but during elections as well.

The pay-the-rich schemes, sell-out of our resources and integration of the economy with the U.S. war economy as well as privatizing health care and education, are being raised as matters of serious concern. Other issues include refusal of the monopolies to negotiate in good faith; the outright robbery of pensions facilitated by the courts and insolvency legislation (*Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act*); the blatant use of legislation and the judiciary to make attacks on workers' rights "legal"; the plight of injured workers; the refusal to recognize the rights of Indigenous peoples to their land and resources and misuse of resources to enrich mainly foreign interests and feed the U.S. imperialist war machine; the crisis in the health care system and in the treatment of welfare recipients, the elderly and people with special needs; the housing crisis and overall anti-social offensive whereby people are made to fend for themselves while governments are engaged in blatant corruption and the media foments scandal after scandal to embroil the people in gossip. This diverts attention from the fact that the people are blocked from representing themselves in elections. Instead, the electoral system keeps them at the mercy of privileged parties which form governments in order to pay the rich in different ways. All of it deprives the people of an outlook which permits the problems to be resolved in their favour.

In this situation it is very positive that the working people are finding ways to represent themselves. Here are photos of some of the meetings which have been held in Ontario in the last few weeks and information on more which are upcoming.



Hamilton, April 22, 2018



Toronto discussion with Peter Page, Ontario Network of Injured Workers' Groups and Migrante Ontario, April 28, 2018.



Discussion on health care in Windsor, April 17, 2018.



Windsor workers' annual May Day Roundtable, April 29, 2018

Upcoming Discussions and Meetings

Barrie

Speakout on Matters of Concern in Ontario Election
Thursday, May 17 -- 5:00 pm
Painswick Branch, Barrie Library -- 48 Dean Ave.
Hosted by the Barrie District Injured Workers' Group

Windsor

How to Ensure the Voice of Workers Is Heard in the Ontario Election
Round Table Meeting
Sunday, May 27 -- 1:00-4:00 pm
547 Victoria Avenue, N9A 4N1
Hosted by OSSTF District 9 Greater Essex
[Facebook](#)

2018 Justice for Injured Workers Bike Ride

Elliott Lake

Seminar -- Occupational Disease in Mining and
McIntyre Powder Research
Friday, May 25 -- 1:00-4:00 pm
Lester B. Pearson Civic Centre Theatre

Inaugural Reception
Friday, May 25 -- 7:00-9:00 pm
Lester B. Pearson Civic Centre Theatre

Massey

Jim Hobbs Memorial Ride & Presentation
Saturday, May 26 -- 7:00 am-3:00 pm
Ride from Elliot Lake Miners' Memorial Park on Highway 108 North
to Massey and District Arena, 455 Government St.

Organized by Ontario Network of Injured Workers' Groups.
For information on all Justice Bike Ride events [click here](#).



Laura Chesnik -- Independent Candidate in Windsor-Tecumseh



Elementary teacher Laura Chesnik will be an independent candidate in the June 7 provincial election in the riding of Windsor-Tecumseh. She has informed her peers and fellow citizens in Windsor that she is running so that the people of Ontario can put MPPs in the Legislature who actually represent what people need and are fighting for. She represents what teachers and education workers have been fighting for and is known for that.

"Our fight for our rights comes head to head with government dictate in defence of private interests," Laura says. "It's time we end this situation and affirm the right of all Ontarians to a high quality public education. This can be done by affirming the rights of teachers, education workers and students who are directly affected by the lack of required funding and privatization."

Laura explains:



"Teachers have been fighting to affirm their right to have a say over their working conditions for some time now. We faced the McGuinty government's dictate to impose contracts, to strip billions out of education and use this to pay the deficit and other handouts to companies. Across the province teachers and education workers rose to say *No!* and we took this fight up as a fight of society itself. 'If you work in Ontario, this is your fight!' was one of the slogans. 'Negotiate don't dictate!' 'Teachers' working conditions are students' learning conditions' were others. Our fight is to provide society with a pro-social aim. When we defend our rights, we defend the rights of all, which is what all working people in fact do.

"We join with industrial workers, hospital workers, injured workers, all working people and we think this is who should be in Queen's Park, not party governments that defend private interests. People don't think the electoral system expresses their own experience and demands and then, come elections, we are supposed to give up our own experience, our fight for our demands and beg for a line on a party platform. If we do get some token mention, we are to hope that it will be

implemented. We are supposed to spend the next four years lobbying MPPs to fight for us.

"I have nothing against any individual MPP. It just so happens that they have no political power to do anything and decision-making is not in their hands either. The decisions are made by those in control of their party and their PR marketing gurus as part of the cutthroat competition of parties vying for power. None of this empowers the people including the individual MPP.

"Given the destruction that is being wrought on social programs and manufacturing, the sellout of our resources and intensified war preparations, this disempowerment and unrepresentative political system are big problems. Today no government today has the consent of the governed.

"The time has come to elect Independents to the Legislature, those who represent and are one with the struggles their collectives wage and who can be trusted to unite with others in the struggle to defend and guarantee the rights of all.

"Independents of course do not have the resources provided the privileged parties that are given state funds. But if I have the backing of my peers and the working people of Windsor-Tecumseh and others in Ontario who are looking for an alternative to party rule, we make a difference. For this to happen, I call on everyone to take a stand. Let us stop dividing our ranks between this or that party based on a vicious competition for power, politics of scandal, scare tactics and dirty tricks.



"By calling on you to make me your MPP we challenge this state of affairs. We set a new course where working people speak for themselves. When they uphold the rights of their own collectives, they uphold the same for all others.

"Anyone who can help bring about this alternative that empowers the people, not the political parties that represent pay-the-rich programs, is more than welcome to join in!

"I hope you decide to join this campaign! Teachers always make a difference and together we can set our own agenda, and speak for ourselves. We have participated in previous elections to express our opposition to what governments in power are doing. In the last election, Windsor was the only city in the province to defeat a Liberal cabinet minister and record a protest vote in that way. Teachers played a crucial role in this. For that we should be proud but let us take this campaign a step further. We can do it! Empower Yourself Now! is my campaign slogan. Check out my website after the writ is dropped: empoweryourselfnow.ca.

"Thank you very much!"

Speaking Out in Northern Ontario

Northeastern Ontario Demands Restoration of Passenger Rail Service

Working people in Ontario are continuing to discuss those issues that are of concern to them in order to intervene in the upcoming provincial elections to advance their interests. In northeastern Ontario, the NorthEastern Ontario Rail Network (NEORN) held a summit in Sault Ste. Marie on April 19 to focus on their demand for the restoration of passenger rail service in northeastern Ontario and the

social, environmental and economic benefits that this would bring to the region. Two dozen speakers and 120 attendees participated.



NorthEastern Ontario Rail Network summit in Sault Ste Marie, April 19, 2018.

With the elimination of passenger rail services from Toronto to Moosonee along the Ontario Northland Railway five years ago, northeastern Ontario is essentially without passenger rail service. Limited passenger rail exists along the CN and CP main lines but rail service in northeastern Ontario is geared to the transportation of resources out of the region and to intercontinental freight services. The need of the people of northeastern Ontario to travel throughout the region has not been recognized by the rail companies or the Ontario government.

NEORN is proposing the restoration of the Ontario Northland Railway services between Toronto and Moosonee and the establishment of a rail loop through northeastern Ontario on existing tracks connecting the cities, towns and Indigenous communities of the Northeast (see map). The summit was the first event of its kind, but there will be more leading up to the provincial election, Lucille Frith, NEORN co-chair said. "We are going to be going on the road with this as soon as the writ is dropped. We will be taking a mini version of this to town hall meetings throughout northeastern Ontario."



Map of Northern Railway Loop (click to enlarge)

Firth says there is an imbalance of provincial tax dollars directed to public transportation, since southern Ontario has an integrated transportation with high-speed trains, subways and buses. "There's a little disparity there ... I feel that the people of (northern) Ontario deserve some equal treatment ... We're not asking for high speed rail like they are in the south. We would just like to have rail once a day, once every other day, depending on where the communities are ... We need our

communities connected even more so than in the south."

Building on the momentum at the summit and prior to the provincial election, NEORN will be holding meetings in many of the communities along the NEORN loop. The dates will be announced soon. NEORN is also asking anyone who knows of a political event in the rail loop to let them know. NEORN followers will attend to present the urgent need for restored passenger train service in northeastern Ontario.



NorthEastern Ontario Rail Network summit April 19, 2018.

(With files from NEORN and the CBC. Photos: NEORN)



Irrationality in Air Transport in Northern Ontario

It costs more to travel by air from Sudbury to Timmins, a distance of 220 kms, than from Sudbury to Washington, DC, a distance of 910 kms. The trip to Washington costs \$183 one-way while the trip to Timmins costs \$193. It is cheaper to fly to New York City than to Sault Ste. Marie. This is irrational. It is because the solution to air transportation needs of the north is not determined by those needs but the desire of air transportation monopolies to maximize their profit. Thus, to fly to Timmins from Sudbury, one first has to fly to a hub in Toronto and there transfer to a flight to Timmins. Direct flights between cities in Northern Ontario are few.

Information on Air Flights Between Sudbury and Cities in Northern Ontario and the U.S.			
Destination	Distance (kms)	Cost (\$)	Cost per kilometer
New York, NY	850	162	\$0.19
Washington, DC	910	183	\$0.20
Sault Ste. Marie, ON	260	161	\$0.62
Timmins, ON	220	193	\$0.88
Thunder Bay, ON	660	166	\$0.25

(Source: Porter Air Lines website, April 26, 2018)