Premier Ernie Eves’ plan for Ontario’s future.

the ROAD AHEAD

EXPERIENCE FOR THE ROAD AHEAD.
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Protection for the vulnerable. Swift, strong justice for criminals. A government that taxes fairly, spends prudently and manages wisely.

Those are the core values that have shaped our Party and our efforts to put Ontario back on track. Based on those bedrock values, and on the largest public policy consultation in Ontario history (see box ‘Seizing Tomorrow’s Opportunities’), we are proud to present our new plan for the future prosperity of Ontario, The Road Ahead.

It is guided by the fundamental belief that every Ontarian should be encouraged and supported to be the best they can be, and that all Ontarians should share in our prosperity.

The Choice Facing Ontarians

This is a time of decision for the people of Ontario. You are being offered two very different visions of The Road Ahead for our province, with important consequences for our future.

Over the past eight years, Ontario has made the tough decisions, faced up to powerful special interests and made some real sacrifices that were needed to put our province back on track.

Now comes the most important choice of all - will we sustain that prosperity and use it to build a better life and future for ourselves, our families and our neighbours? Or, will we simply spend our hard-earned progress on a short-term spree, ending with Ontario back in debt, short of jobs, and robbed of hope?

How Far We’ve Come

All of Ontario has worked hard to bring our great province back to a position of prosperity and security again. The economic gains Ontarians have enjoyed since 1995 have not occurred by accident. It took hard work and principled leadership to make those tough choices.

We could not afford to be all things to all people all the time. We had to decide what was important to ensure we had the economic resources to provide quality, universally-accessible health care where you need it and when you need it; excellence and equality in education; safe communities for you and your family; and protection of the natural environment.

The task was not easy, and some people may have forgotten the terrible state of our province back in 1995, after ten years of Liberal and NDP rule.
Once the economic powerhouse of Canada, Ontario was fast becoming an economic weakling. Ontario’s annual deficit was poised to hit a frightening $11.3 billion dollars. The government was spending one million dollars an HOUR more than it was taking in, and Ontario had more people per capita on welfare than any other province.

However, eight years of hard work and smart decisions, including tax cuts for hard working Ontarians and a positive environment for new jobs and investment, have paid off. Now, Ontario is reaping the rewards of all that effort. However, all it would take is one big spending spree to put us right back where we started.

Seizing Tomorrow’s Opportunities

In January of 2001, our Party launched the largest public policy consultation in Ontario history - Seizing Tomorrow’s Opportunities. Over more than two years, we asked Ontarians of all walks of life, of all political persuasions and in every region about their vision for the future of Ontario.

Hundreds of formal consultations were held across the province, along with thousands of informal talks around Ontario’s kitchen tables, church basements and community centers. We started with the core principles and values that should guide our actions, then worked on solid, practical policies to put those ideals into action.

The results of this enormous process were hundreds of practical ideas and suggestions for building a better Ontario. We have taken the best of these ideas, along with input from the grassroots of our Party, to create The Road Ahead.
**Choosing The Road Ahead**

All of the things we value most - dependable health care, quality education, safe communities, jobs for ourselves and our children - depend on our continued economic success.

Dalton McGuinty’s Liberals will promise you anything and everything to get elected. They would take us back down the road to a time when the people of Ontario suffered through high unemployment, staggering welfare rolls and unsustainably high taxes, deficits and debt. Just as any family trying to balance its household budget knows all too well, you can’t have it all by spending beyond your means. It takes difficult choices and careful planning. It means listening to each other, resolving differences, setting priorities and then pulling together to make those priorities a reality through disciplined, principled decision-making.

The alternative is to waste Ontario’s hard-earned potential on a one-time spending spree that will leave us unable to sustain our prosperity in the future.

Ontario simply cannot afford for that to happen . . . not financially, not politically and not for the terrible impact it would have on our quality of life in the future.

Only by working together can we realize the benefits of our strong economy; identify and invest in the priorities that matter; and fulfill the promise of Ontario.

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**Ontario Is Back On The Right Track**

- Well over one million jobs created since 1995, the best job creation record in Canadian history.
- From the worst welfare rate in Canada to more than 600,000 people off welfare.
- From high taxes and debt growing by a million dollars an hour to one of the strongest, most competitive economies in the world.
- From an outdated, wasteful health care system that failed to meet people’s needs to a modern system with a record $28 billion a year in funding.
- From ignoring the voice of the people to responsive policies that have created real standards in education and greater protection for victims of crime.
- From a ‘Lost Decade’ under the Liberals and NDP to an era of prosperity and hope for the future.
The Promise of Ontario

Ontarians have always known about that promise. They have seen it in our province’s natural resources, in our proud and productive businesses and in our strong social fabric.

Most of all, however, they have seen the promise of Ontario in each other, in our children, whose lives will be shaped by strong schools, sheltered by safe neighbourhoods and surrounded by opportunity.

Ontarians have seen it in the diversity of new immigrants, who find the promise of a better future in our province... in our seniors, whose experiences and sacrifices and wisdom guide us... and in our children and all the generations yet to come. We have worked too hard; we have come too far to turn away from that promise now.

The promise of Ontario is ours - it guides me and our Party as we work to build a better future for all Ontarians. The Road Ahead is our plan to take us into that brighter future and help to fulfill Ontario’s promise.

PS - The Road Ahead is a summary of our detailed plan for Ontario’s future. We’d be glad to send you a free copy of any of our Policy Papers on specific issue areas. You’ll find details on the last page of this document, on our website at www.ontariopc.com, or by calling our toll-free info line at 1-866-822-EVES (3837).

The Road Ahead for All Ontarians

Our plan to build a better province and a brighter future includes benefits for ALL Ontarians:
- For seniors, breaks on property taxes, support for caregivers, an end to mandatory retirement and better health care services.
- For children, better basic education and access to advanced education, more jobs for the future and increased support for children at risk and in need.
- For urban communities, an end to gridlock, safer streets and better schools.
- For rural communities, funding to help keep rural schools open, more access to health care services and more support for farmers.
- For Northern Ontario, new programs to strengthen the economy and give young people a future at home, as well as health, education and tourism improvements.
- For all Ontarians, our plan for The Road Ahead will mean tax cuts to create more jobs, better priority services and more accountable, responsible government.
Here are the key commitments we are making to you, and how they will help build a better Ontario:

We’re proud of the progress we have made, the hope and prosperity we have helped bring back to Ontario, and the reputation we have earned for fulfilling our commitments.

In this summary of our plan, and in all 18 of our Policy Papers on specific issue areas, we make a new series of important commitments to the people of Ontario. Here are the key commitments we are making to you, and how they will help build a better Ontario:

**Mortgage Interest Tax Deduction**
We have cut taxes 225 times since coming to office, and helped create more than 1 million jobs as a result. We’ll introduce a mortgage interest tax deduction to help homeowners, a property tax break for seniors, greater tax deductions for caregivers, and more tax relief for job-creating businesses.

**New Rights for Taxpayers**
We created the *Taxpayer Protection Act* and new standards for accountability to protect Ontario taxpayers. We will give taxpayers new rights, including protection against municipal tax increases without their consent, and powerful Quality Auditors to make sure hospitals, school boards and municipalities spend tax dollars wisely.

**A Balanced Budget With Less Debt**
After five balanced budgets in a row, Ontario’s economy is strong, balanced and growing fast. We’ll maintain that strength and promote growth by continuing to balance the budget and paying down Ontario’s debt. Good fiscal management, sensible labour laws and reliable, affordable, sustainable energy will help keep our economy strong.

**Shorter Waits for Health Care**
We have invested billions of dollars to expand health care services for Ontarians. Now, we will provide shorter waiting times for priority services such as surgery and MRI scans, guaranteed to be within recommended medical limits.

**More Doctors, Nurses & Hospitals**
Despite a lack of fair funding from Ottawa, we now invest a record $28 billion a year in our health care system. We’ll provide even more of the priority services Ontarians and their families value most - doctors, nurses and hospitals.

**No Diploma if You Can't Read and Write**
We introduced standardized tests and other reforms to make sure every student has an equal opportunity for success. We’ll give as much remedial help as needed, but high school students must prove that they can read and write or they will not graduate.

**No Strikes During the School Year**
Providing our children with a good education is as important as providing them with a good health care system. We will put students first and prohibit education strikes, lockouts and work-to-rule job action during the school year.
**1,000 More Police On Our Streets**
We’ve supported the front lines of law enforcement with tougher laws, more resources and funding for more police, probation and parole officers. We will provide even more support, including funding for at least another 1,000 front-line police officers across Ontario.

**Drunk Drivers Off the Road**
We will increase the penalties for illegal racing and drunk driving, the two most dangerous forms of abuse of driving privileges. A second conviction for either offence will mean automatic loss of the driver’s licence for LIFE and seizure and sale of the driver’s vehicle.

**Skilled Immigrants In, Criminals Out**
Ontario is home to 60% of new immigrants to Canada — an incredible source of strength and opportunity. We will negotiate a made for Ontario immigration deal with the federal government to give our province the power to bring in the skilled immigrants we need, and to secure our borders against criminals and terrorists.

**The Highways and Transit We Need**
Our Smart Growth plan for Ontario will allow us to meet the demands of growth while protecting the environment and farmland. As part of that plan, based on the growing needs of Ontarians, we will build the highways and transit that will help keep our economy moving and reduce gridlock, pollution and wasted time.

**Responsible Care for the Homeless**
We will reach out to people in need through Shared Care Teams of outreach workers, nurses, doctors and psychiatrists to bring health and mental health services to homeless people. We’ll give those Teams the power to remove people from the streets and take them into care when, in the Team’s opinion, it is necessary for their protection.

**Stop Abuse of Welfare, OHIP and Legal Aid**
Publicly funded benefits are supposed to go to Ontario citizens who are truly in need, and who play by the rules. We’ll prevent illegal immigrants and deportees from using OHIP, end legal aid for refugee and immigrant claims, and crack down on welfare fraud.

**Strong Consumer Protection Laws**
Hard-working Ontarians deserve protection from fraud artists and shoddy consumer goods. We’ll pass a ‘Lemon Law’ that requires manufacturers to replace cars and other goods they cannot fix in three attempts, as well as tough new laws on telemarketing to stop unwanted phone calls and fraudulent sales.

All of these key commitments are part of an integrated plan for The Road Ahead. Keep reading to see how each of these commitments fits in to our road map for Ontario’s future.

If you are interested in the details of our policies, you can find The Road Ahead policy papers on our website at www.ontariopc.com, or simply ask us for a free copy by calling 1-866-822-EVES (3837). (You’ll find the complete listing of our policy papers and their highlights on the last pages of this document.)
More Tax Cuts For Jobs

We’ve cut more taxes than any other government in Ontario history - a total of 225 tax reductions! These cuts, in everything from personal income tax rates and payroll taxes, to property and business taxes, have helped fuel the strongest economic and job growth ever seen in Canada. They have also given the people of Ontario their first real tax relief in nearly a generation.

We will continue to reduce taxes on hard-working Ontarians and the companies that employ them on The Road Ahead -

**Tax Cuts for People**

Over the next five years, we will cut the following taxes to reward and encourage hard work, and to put money back into peoples’ pockets:

- Complete our cut in provincial personal income taxes by January 1, 2004. For a typical Ontario family this will mean total tax savings of **$2,575 a year** compared to 1995! (see box - ‘The Most Important Tax Cut’)

- Allow all Ontario home owners to deduct mortgage interest costs from their income. When fully implemented in five years, it will save homeowners up to **$500 per year** in provincial income tax (see box - ‘A Break for Homeowners’)

- Eliminate the provincial portion of property taxes for seniors, saving the average seniors household **$475 a year** (see page 47)

- Eliminate the surtax for people earning up to $75,000 per year by January 1, 2005

- Provide $50 million in tax credits for disabled people and for family caregivers who are supporting disabled or elderly family members. This will mean an average annual savings of **$300** for family caregivers (see page 48)

- Put the Equity in Education Tax Credit in place faster, to help parents who send their children to independent schools (see page 30)

- Remove another 45,000 low- and moderate-income earners from Ontario’s income tax roll, bringing to 825,000 the number of people who will not pay Ontario income tax at all

- Rebate the provincial sales tax on energy efficient appliances and light bulbs to help encourage conservation
The Most Important Tax Cut

We’re proud to have given working Ontarians a major break on the most significant tax in their lives - income tax. When our next cut (20% by January 1, 2004) is completed, we will have slashed the provincial portion of personal income tax greatly since coming to office in 1995! For a typical Ontario family earning $60,000, this will mean tax savings of $2575 per year -- money that they can save, invest, or spend on their family’s priorities.

Since 1995, we have also been reducing the impact of the surtax on working Ontarians. By the time we raise the surtax limit to $75,000 on January 1, 2005, we will have put $105 million back into the hands of middle class Ontarians.

Tax Cuts for Job-Creating Businesses

Over the next five years, we will also cut the following taxes to help create more jobs and stimulate economic growth:

• Corporate income taxes on the smaller businesses that create most of our new jobs will be reduced to 5% in 2004 and 4% in 2005

• The corporate income tax rate for manufacturing and processing firms will be cut to 10% for 2004, 9% for 2005 and 8% for 2006

• We will reduce the general corporate income tax rate to 11% for 2004, 9.5% for 2005 and 8% for 2006

For details see The Road Ahead policy paper on “Keeping Our Economy Strong”
At an average of 405 new jobs a day since September 1995, we've proven that tax cuts help create jobs.

• The capital tax on employers will be cut 10% next year, as part of our plan to scrap this tax entirely.

• Companies or farmers that invest in generating their own electricity through alternative or renewable energy sources will get breaks on their corporate income tax, property tax, sales tax and capital tax (see our policy paper on ‘Providing Reliable, Affordable, Sustainable Energy’).

**Encouraging Job Creation**

With more than 1 million new jobs (an average of 405 new jobs a day!) since September 1995, we’ve proven that tax cuts help create jobs. Our tax cuts over the next five years will have a direct, positive impact on employers who employ millions of Ontarians, stimulating them to expand their operations, as well as encouraging businesses, entrepreneurs and investors from outside of Ontario to bring more jobs to our province.

**More Taxpayer Protection**

We were proud to create the Taxpayer Protection Act, which prohibits the provincial government from increasing your overall tax burden without getting your permission through a referendum or election.

Now, we will extend that protection to your municipal taxes as well. Whatever municipality you live in, your local government will not be able to introduce a new tax or hike an existing one without the permission of the majority of voters.

**A Break For Homeowners**

Owning their own home remains the ‘Canadian dream’ for most Ontarians, and a home mortgage is the largest debt most people will ever have. Our historic mortgage interest tax deduction will help more Ontarians realize their dreams and better handle their mortgage expenses.

The deduction will be limited to the first $5,000 of mortgage interest paid, so that this tax break will have its greatest impact on moderate-income families. We will phase in the deduction over five years. Once fully implemented, homeowners will be able to deduct up to $5,000 in mortgage interest payments from their incomes, resulting in provincial income tax savings of up to $500 per year.
While decisions about local taxes should be made by the people who live in the municipality, municipal leaders have also been asking for greater flexibility in generating the revenue to meet the needs of their residents. So, we are offering a ‘Fair Deal for Municipalities’. (For details, see our ‘Fair Deal’ policy paper)

We will allow them to propose new local taxes on gasoline, hotel/motel rooms and parking space charges to raise money for a specific local project or program. However, the proposed taxes must be approved in a referendum by a majority of voters in the municipality and can only be spent on the specified project.

Under our ‘Fair Deal’ arrangement, we will also purchase and take responsibility for municipal bridges in Ontario, ensuring these vital links between communities are properly maintained. This is especially important in rural Ontario (see page 21).

Tax breaks to help Ontario compete and prosper.
We have to always be working to spend smarter, remain competitive, live within our means and keep the economy growing.

A strong economy is the foundation of a great Ontario. All of the services Ontarians cherish most - world class health care, quality education, safe communities and protection for our natural environment - are built on our economic strength.

A healthy economy means more jobs and better jobs, more money for hard working Ontarians and their families, and more revenue to fund our priority services. And, in these uncertain times, keeping our economy strong is more important than ever.

Dalton McGuinty’s Liberals and Howard Hampton’s NDP say the job is done. They want to cash in on our hard-earned progress and go on a spending spree. That may sound tempting in the short term, but in the long term it means going back to tax hikes, deficits and a struggling economy again. The thrills of a one time spending party will leave the province with a long-term hangover.

Maintaining our economic strength and prosperity is a job that never ends, and one that requires strong, experienced leadership. We have to always be working to spend smarter, remain competitive, live within our means and keep the economy growing.

Ontario: Strong and Prosperous

Since coming to office in 1995, we’ve taken decisive action to build Ontario’s economy into a powerhouse -- cutting taxes, balancing budgets, paying down the debt and investing in our priority services like health care and education.

The result? Ontario has led the Industrialized World in economic growth since 1995, and well over one million new jobs have been created. That’s 405 new jobs a DAY since September 1995!

In fact, if Ontario were a separate country it would be the second most prosperous place on Earth, behind only the United States!
We will keep Ontario’s economy strong, so that you and your family can continue to enjoy an ever-improving quality of life on The Road Ahead.

- We will keep the budget balanced as we have for the last five years in a row. The balanced budget law we introduced will automatically dock the pay of the Premier and Cabinet Ministers if the province runs a deficit!

- We will reduce the provincial debt by a further $5 billion over the next five years. We’ve already paid down the overall debt by $5 billion since the last election (twice as much as we had promised), saving Ontario taxpayers $791 million a year in interest payments.

- We will introduce a Workers’ Bill of Rights to support working Ontarians, giving them a real, democratic vote in major union decisions, and the right to detailed information about union finances and operations.

- We will maintain the price freeze on hydro rates for consumers and small businesses until at least 2006, while building up Ontario’s supply of clean energy and promoting conservation. As explained in our policy paper on ‘Reliable, Affordable, Sustainable Energy’, our plan includes building more generating capacity, Ontario Green Power Bonds to stimulate investment, and programs for government to lead the way in reducing consumption and in buying power from ‘green’ sources.

**Good Fiscal Management**

We have turned the finances of the Ontario government around. In 1995, Ontario faced a deficit of $11.3 billion and suffered a million dollars an hour in increasing debt. In 2003, we have brought in our FIFTH balanced budget in a row (for the first time in nearly a hundred years) and have made significant payments along the way to reduce the province’s debt and maintain our credit rating.

This is the result of sound, prudent management of the public purse, and the stimulating effect of tax cuts on the economy. Although Dalton McGuinty’s Liberals claimed that cutting taxes would cost Ontario money, we have cut taxes more than 225 times, and government revenue is up by $16 billion, allowing us to increase spending on health care and education to record levels.
This groundbreaking new law will protect working Ontarians by ensuring that their unions operate on principles of democracy, transparency and accountability. It will give workers the right to know where their union dues go, to have a say in how their dues are spent, and to obtain access to union information. It will include:

- requiring a binding vote of the members on all expenditures outside of normal operational costs,
- requiring a clear majority of the bargaining unit to approve strikes, ratify contracts or change union dues or fees,
- allowing union members to sue their unions for negligence, breaches of contract and torts,
- giving members access to key union records such as financial statements,
- strictly enforcing the ‘sunshine laws’ that require government, public institutions and unions to reveal the salaries of their top managers and anyone on their staff making more than $100,000 a year,
- requiring unions to provide members with an annual audited financial report, and
- giving members of Ontario union locals greater freedom to end their relationship with an American parent union.

A Workers’ Bill of Rights
Smart Growth in Ontario

Governments have been talking about Smart Growth (integrating long-term planning for ALL of a community’s needs in one vision) for many years. Our government actually took action and appointed Smart Growth panels to look into the future needs of all of Ontario’s regions.

These panels have done an incredible amount of work...meeting with experts in every aspect of municipal and rural life...speaking to farmers, business owners, environmentalists and commuters...hearing from local governments, people, organizations and leaders all over Ontario...and doing needs assessments of our urban areas, highways and prime farmland.

Through our Smart Growth program, we have looked into the future - where people will be living, working, going to school, driving and much, much more. The results are detailed proposals for making sure that every part of our province, from rural areas to big cities, will be prepared for future trends and the needs of our people, from the commuting office worker to the family farmer.

In order to implement these ideas on The Road Ahead, we will -

• Build, expand or improve Ontario’s highways in order to meet today’s needs and tomorrow’s growth (see page 17)

• Support the growth of public transit, particularly in the GTA where the demand is greatest and the system most in need of reform (see page 18, 19)

• Protect Ontario’s environmental treasures and prime farmland

• Work to resolve key challenges such as waste management, brownfield redevelopment and affordable housing, as part of an integrated plan for the future.

• Create a powerful Smart Growth Board for each of Ontario’s five regions to lead the way in putting Smart Growth principles into action, with enough resources to be independent and enough power to get the job done.

How Smart Growth Works

The principles of Smart Growth are simple:

• The people of Ontario will decide where and how they want to live

• It’s our job to provide the infrastructure they will need

• Growth can’t be allowed to threaten our environment or quality of life

• Hard work and planning today will allow us to meet these challenges tomorrow
Environmental responsibility and sustainability will be integrated into all of our Smart Growth plans for every region of the province. That’s just one way that we will safeguard the natural environment on The Road Ahead.

• **Ontario will have and enforce the toughest clean water standards in the world.** We are investing $750 million to ensure safe drinking water for Ontarians, including more inspectors, upgraded water systems and enforcement of our tough new standards.

• **We are introducing stringent emissions limits for fossil fuel burning power plants, and closing all coal-burning plants in Ontario.** Emissions linked to acid rain and smog will be cut by 45% by 2010. We are starting now to close all coal-burning power plants by 2015 - a realistic deadline experts agree won’t leave us short of power - and implement the comprehensive green energy strategy outlined in our policy paper on ‘Reliable, Affordable, Sustainable Energy’.

• **We will meet all of Ontario’s obligations under the Kyoto protocol for limiting greenhouse gas emissions.** Our Drive Clean program alone is expected to reduce 186,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions annually - the equivalent of taking more than half a million vehicles off the road permanently.

• **We will build and improve on Ontario’s Living Legacy, the largest expansion of protected lands in Canadian history.** Ontario’s Living Legacy has created 378 new provincial parks and protected areas more than all previous Ontario governments put together! We will create a major new protected area by combining protected coastal areas from Northwestern to Central Ontario as the Great Lakes Heritage Coast.

You’ll find details of our plans to provide Ontario with clean air, clean water and an environmental legacy for future generations in our policy paper on ‘Safeguarding the Natural Environment’.
Environmental Responsibility

- We will protect Ontario’s environmental treasures - like the Oak Ridges Moraine, the Rouge Valley, the Niagara Escarpment and the Lynde Marsh. We will also ensure that future growth occurs in an environmentally sustainable way.

- We will protect Ontario’s prime farmland and our rural way of life from excessive development.

- We will simplify Ontario’s system for environmental assessments to make sure that projects with serious implications, such as hazardous waste facilities, chemical plants and oil refineries, are ALWAYS subject to full review. Projects with known impacts, such as a dry cleaning shop or a highway widening, would only require detailed notice to the Environment Ministry.

The Highways We Need

- We will meet the most pressing needs for new highways in Ontario as quickly as possible by tackling projects such as:

  **Southern and Central Ontario**
  - Extend Highway 404 past Lake Simcoe and build the Bradford Bypass
  - Complete Highway 407 through Durham to Highway 35/115
  - Widen Highway 401 and make safety improvements through Southwestern and Eastern Ontario
  - Build a mid-peninsula corridor linking the GTA with Niagara’s border crossings, through Halton, Hamilton and the Niagara Peninsula
  - Extend Highway 427 past Barrie
  - Extend Highway 410 to at least Highway 89

  **Northern Ontario**
  - Complete the four-laning of key highways
    - Highway 11 from North Bay to Huntsville
    - Highway 400/69 to Parry Sound
    - Highway 69 from Parry Sound to Sudbury
  - Widen key highways and bypasses
    - Highway 11/17 between Thunder Bay and Nipigon
    - Highway 17 between Kenora and the Manitoba border
    - The Sudbury southeast and southwest bypasses
  - Upgrade the Thunder Bay Expressway
  - Construct the new Shabaqua Highway
We will tackle our province’s biggest public transit challenge first - the Greater Toronto Area.

• We will speed up the environmental assessment process without compromising quality by simply holding federal and Ontario assessments at the same time wherever possible (Thanks to the wide-ranging work of our Smart Growth panels, much of the provincial environmental assessment work has already been done for our priority projects.)

• We will learn from other nations around the world that have found ways of building the highways they need faster and more efficiently than we have traditionally done in Ontario. Our government will adopt and adapt these kinds of methods wherever they will be helpful in meeting Ontario’s needs while protecting the best interests of users and taxpayers.

• We will base our province-wide highway construction plan on the principle that everyone is entitled to free access to world-class highways, and that no tolls will be forced on Ontario motorists. Tolls will only be applied to new roads, and only where there is a non-toll alternative.

The Public Transit We Need

• We will tackle our province’s biggest public transit challenge first - the Greater Toronto Area. We will build or expand public transit to cover major access corridors in and out of the GTA.
• Start work immediately on the $200 million first phase of a bus rapid transit system across the Greater Toronto Area;

• $50 million for York Region’s Quick Start program to develop rapid transit in four heavily travelled corridors;

• $75 million to construct high-occupancy-vehicle lanes on portions of Highway 404 and Highway 403 and bus-bypass shoulders on Highway 403;

• $430 million to improve GO Transit and other commuter services across the Golden Horseshoe including:

  • modernizing the track and signal infrastructure in the Union Station corridor,

  • adding a third track to sections of the Lakeshore corridor,

  • extending GO train service to Barrie,

  • increasing track capacity in the Georgetown and Milton corridors, and

  • introducing new commuter service to Peterborough, Cambridge, Niagara Falls and Guelph-Kitchener-Waterloo.
We will mandate the powerful new Smart Growth Board for Central Ontario to immediately tackle GTA gridlock as their first priority.

The new Central Ontario Smart Growth Board will also design and implement a Riders First Pass that will integrate the fares of all GTA Transit Systems. A passenger will be able to travel on public transit anywhere within the GTA by paying only ONCE. The Board may well decide that fares should be tiered so that a person travelling longer distances would pay a higher fare than somebody travelling a short way.

We will use the lessons learned in this process to tackle the transit challenges of other cities and regions across the province, using our Smart Growth Panel reports as the basis for planning.

- We will change the provincial tax rules - and ask the federal government to do the same - so that transit passes subsidized by employers will not be treated as a taxable benefit. Our government will take the lead in helping get cars off the road and encouraging transit use among our own employees.

**Busting GTA Gridlock**

- We will mandate the powerful new Smart Growth Board for Central Ontario to immediately tackle GTA gridlock as its first priority. As you can see from our plans for highways and transit outlined above, we will increase the capacity on high volume routes and through the GTA’s bottlenecks. We will move quickly, using existing corridors for easily implemented solutions such as express buses travelling on revamped highway shoulders. In the meantime, we will start the planning, design and construction of the longer-term transit and transportation solutions for the GTA.

- We will direct the Central Ontario Smart Growth Board to co-ordinate and integrate the transit systems and the road construction and expansion in the GTA. We will also appoint private sector experts in transportation financing, planning and construction to support the Board.

- We will bring all the funding for GTA transit together into a single, $2 billion commitment to ensure the region’s Smart Growth Board has the resources to carry out its important and ambitious mission. The Board will also have the freedom to engage the private sector in innovative financing methods, provided they can make a sound business case for it.

- We will triple the fines for drivers who add to the gridlock problem by blocking intersections or parking on major routes during rush hour. Municipalities will be directed to use the extra money from those fines to hire more police and parking control officers to keep the traffic moving.
As the Smart Growth panels produce their final reports, we will be implementing their ideas based on local input. We know that our plans for rural and Northern regions of the province will include:

- Creating tax incentive zones to help attract new and growing businesses as well as investment capital. More job-creating businesses will come to or start up in tax incentive zones to get the important competitive advantage of tax breaks. That will mean diversification, more economic activity, opportunity and growth in rural and Northern Ontario.

- Improving health care services, with more doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners and hospitals for under-served areas, and allowing nurse practitioners to perform a wider range of services, while maintaining our commitment to small and rural hospitals.

- Investing nearly $6.5 million to support the Electronic Child Health Network North (see page 26).

- Maintaining educational services with equal funding for pupils across Ontario and $50 million a year to help keep rural schools open.

- Taking over responsibility for municipal bridges in Ontario and ensuring these all important links between communities are properly maintained.

- Preserving our rural heritage with support for Agricultural Fairs, 4-H clubs, snowmobiling, historic communities and rural arena projects.

- Supporting Ontario’s farmers with a $2 billion farm support program, a ban on unionizing family farms and a guarantee that small farmers will get the funding they need before nutrient management practices are changed.

- Spearheading new economic development programs, including a Northern Ontario Youth Retention Initiative, new tourism and agri-food marketing programs, and development of un-used Crown Lands.

You will find details of these and other plans in The Road Ahead policy papers for Northern Ontario and Rural Ontario. See pages 60, 61 for more information.
The most essential service government can provide is universal access to excellent, publicly-funded health care. That’s why our plan includes a commitment to guarantee health care funding at record high levels.

We will invest $28 billion into health care this year, almost half the total provincial budget, to meet the needs of our growing and aging population, and the demands for new and more expensive drugs and medical technologies.

Thanks to the strength of our economy, we are able to afford these massive extra investments without raising taxes or borrowing more money (and even without fair funding from the federal government).

**Ontario’s Fair Share**

Despite what Dalton McGuinty’s Liberals would like you to believe, we have increased health care funding in Ontario by leaps and bounds. In fact, we have invested record levels of money in health care every year since 1995.

Altogether, we’ve increased annual funding by more than $10 billion, despite the continuing lack of fair health care funding from the federal Liberals. Ottawa used to match Ontario’s spending on health care—it was a fifty-fifty proposition. Now, they provide only 17 cents of each health care dollar Ontario spends, and this share will decline even further next year.

**Ontario’s Health Spending, 1994-95 to 2003-04**

Source: Ontario Ministry of Finance.

**Supporting Medical Professionals in Ontario**

After years of neglect under the previous government, which cut back on medical school enrolment and reduced the number of specialists in Ontario, we have made real progress in undoing the damage.

Our programs to train and recruit more doctors have helped ease the shortages of specialists, we are attracting more doctors to under serviced areas, and enrollment in medical schools is increasing by 30%!
Dalton McGuinty’s Liberals are not prepared to tackle their federal cousins to stop health care under-funding. We are. We will continue to fight for Ontarians until Ottawa restores its support of health care to a fair share.

In the meantime, we pledge to continue providing the health care funding and quality the people of Ontario need, with or without Ottawa’s help.

However, adequate funding is just the beginning of providing better health care for you and your family. An Ontario Health Quality Auditor will make sure that funding is being spent wisely to improve access and quality. We will measure the success of our health care system by its results: by the waiting times for services, the health of our people, and the access you have to doctors, nurses, hospitals and new health care technology.

We will create a better health care system, one that provides better services to Ontarians, on The Road Ahead -

**More Doctors**

We will help every Ontario family get access to a family physician by

- increasing access for international medical graduates, bringing 650 more physicians into practice over the next five years

\[\text{We've increased annual funding by more than $10 billion, despite the continuing lack of fair health care funding from the federal Liberals.}\]
• paying the tuition for medical students who agree to enter primary care family practice ANYWHERE in the province

• building Ontario’s first medical school in 30 years (in Northern Ontario) to increase medical student enrolment

• expanding our Family Health Networks program to include more physicians in more communities

**More Nurses**

We will improve Ontarians’ access to nursing care by

• creating another 8,000 new positions for nurses who will graduate within the next three years

• hiring another 1000 nurse practitioners over the next five years

• allowing nurse practitioners to refer patients to specialists and to admit patients to hospital

• paying the tuition for nursing students who agree to practise in under-served areas

• implementing an aggressive strategy to recruit and retain nurses

**More Hospitals**

We will meet the need for more hospitals and clinics across Ontario by

• building new, state of the art public hospitals in fast growing communities

• using innovative partnerships and financing to build facilities faster while continuing to cover all of the medical services provided under OHIP

• expanding existing facilities where it makes sense and meets people’s needs

• maintaining our commitment to small and rural hospitals

• providing 40 more MRI machines and 50 more CT scanners across Ontario over the next five years

• allowing more private clinics to open and offer high demand services such as blood tests and dialysis, with services to be covered by OHIP

**Shorter Waiting Times**

• We will guarantee that waiting times will not exceed medically recommended limits for general surgery, cataract surgery, cancer treatment, hip and knee replacement and MRI scans.

Our waiting time guarantee will apply in every part of the province. We’ll do anything needed to meet that guarantee, even flying patients or doctors to or from other cities, provinces or U.S. states.
We will bring responsible care to the homeless to make sure that those who require care and support are actually receiving it.

To help reach out to these people in need, we will increase our funding of the Shared Care Teams (teams of outreach workers, nurses and physicians supported by psychiatrists) that bring health and mental health services to the emergency shelter system.

Shared Care teams will be directed to make sure that people without a place to stay get the care they need, whether it’s medical attention, addiction treatment or a shelter bed. When cold weather alerts are issued in Ontario communities, people living on the streets MUST be provided with adequate shelters, and should not be allowed to sleep outdoors.

Legislation will give the Shared Care Teams the power to remove people from the streets and take them into care when, in the Team’s opinion, it is necessary for their protection.

Allowing people to suffer frostbite or death by exposure is a simple cruelty, not compassion. The police would be called in only as a last resort if necessary to protect the individual or members of the team.

**Investing In Priority Health Care Services**

- We will invest $1 billion to create an institute dedicated to finding a cure for prostate and breast cancer (see box on next page).

- We will invest $250 million over five years to reform mental health care, including children’s mental health.

- We will create an expert task force to put together an Infectious Diseases Emergency Plan for Ontario, so that we are ready to handle outbreaks of serious diseases such as SARS and the West Nile Virus. In the meantime, our SARS Assistance and Recovery Strategy will help overcome the impact of SARS on Ontarians and their businesses, and we will spend $100 million over the next five years to fight West Nile and help keep Ontarians safe.

- We will target extra funding to the treatment of cataracts ($10 million) and osteoporosis ($7 million).

- We will improve access to hip and knee replacement surgery and to arthritis care.

- We will extend OHIP funding to cover the most common test for prostate cancer.
We will create a Children’s Health Network, linking all of the children’s hospitals across Ontario to share resources, knowledge and capabilities to provide the best possible health care for our children. To support the health care needs of children in the north, we will invest nearly $6.5 million to support the Electronic Child Health Network North, providing an electronic link between health care professionals and families in the north, and hundreds of pediatrics and health care professionals in southern Ontario.

- We will commit funding for hospitals on a three-year basis, allowing hospital administrators to plan in advance for the public’s needs. Increases in funding will be based on economic growth, federal funding contributions and, above all, the hospital’s performance.

Funding will be based on the real world challenges each hospital is facing — how many patients it is expected to treat and the number and complexity of the procedures it will perform — and how well it is meeting those challenges, including patient satisfaction and the success of patient treatments.

As part of our reforms, hospitals will be prohibited from diverting funding from its intended target. For example, money provided to expand an emergency room must be spent only for that purpose.

- We will crack down on OHIP cheats. We will make it an offence to present a false OHIP card, and we will revoke the OHIP billing privileges of any doctor convicted of criminal fraud. Money stolen by those who cheat comes at the expense of those who are truly in need.

- We will deny OHIP coverage to people who are awaiting deportation or are otherwise in Canada illegally. Ontario’s law-abiding citizens won’t have to subsidize those who refuse to play by the rules.

**Working Towards Cures For Breast and Prostate Cancer**

After decades of effort, science is very close to cracking the cancer challenge and developing effective treatments for a wide range of these diseases. We want to help put this vital effort over the top.

As the late Dr. Charles Hollenberg, world-renowned cancer researcher and former head of Cancer Care Ontario said, "Finding a cure for breast and prostate cancer can be done. It just takes leadership.”

Over the next decade, we will invest $1 billion in the Cancer Research Institute of Ontario to help find cures for prostate and breast cancer. We will create a world-class facility that will attract top researchers from around the world, as well as keeping our best and brightest here in Ontario. The Institute will be given the challenge of playing a leading role in the global effort to find cures for cancers.
Today, more than ever before, our children’s future success and ability to pursue their personal dreams will depend on the quality of their education. Every child should have an equal opportunity for success and be given the tools he or she will need to reach their full potential.

In 1995, we inherited an education system that was failing students and parents, and we turned it around by focusing on high standards and measurable results. Now, Ontario stands at a crossroads. Dalton McGuinty’s Liberals would take us back to inequality and the failed systems of no standards, no tests and no accountability.

On the other hand, we intend to move forward: to help students achieve success by building on our reforms, and by holding our schools and school boards accountable to deliver results.

We will help students achieve success and make the system more accountable to parents and taxpayers on The Road Ahead.

Putting Students First

We’ve made historic reforms to the education system in order to put students first:

- Introducing standardized province-wide tests to measure how well students were learning, to compare results and performance, and to find those who needed extra help to succeed
- Creating clear report cards so that parents can understand how their children are doing in school
- Requiring teachers to meet high standards as well, with mandatory testing of their knowledge, and requirements to keep upgrading their skills
- Putting resources towards students, instead of the education bureaucracy. The amount of money paid to consultants and bureaucrats was reduced, while the amount spent inside the classroom was increased
- Introducing a rigorous and comprehensive curriculum, with clear year-by-year expectations in core subjects and basic skills, leading to advanced knowledge and abilities

For details see The Road Ahead policy paper on "Helping Students Achieve Success"
We are increasing annual education funding by an additional $2 billion to $16.2 billion, the highest in Ontario’s history. That increased funding is being shared fairly with students in every part of Ontario and our resources are now focused on the classroom, where funding matters most.

Putting students first is paying off:

• Recent international literacy test scores show Ontario in the top five, ahead of jurisdictions such as the United States, Germany and Singapore.

• International math and science tests show Ontario improved significantly between 1995 and 1999, moving ahead of England and the U.S.

• Provincial Grade 3 Math test scores have increased by over 35% since 1998.

• High school students taking the new four-year program are graduating in record numbers, well prepared for their next important steps.

No Diploma if You Can't Read and Write

Under an Ernie Eves government, high school students who cannot read and write will not graduate. We introduced the high school literacy test to make sure no graduate lacks these basic skills. We will provide generous remedial help to those who fail the test but, ultimately, a student must prove his or her literacy in order to graduate.

Equal Funding for Students

It used to be that students in Toronto or Ottawa got more funding than those in a small rural or Northern community, just because big cities have more large businesses and corporate headquarters paying local taxes. We made history by introducing funding that was equal for every student across Ontario. We changed that unequal system so that ALL Ontario students could get a good education, regardless of how much or little property tax their parents pay.

Urban or rural, north or south, public or separate, English or French - for the first time, all Ontario students now have equal funding and an equal opportunity to succeed.

Dalton McGuinty’s Liberals voted against equal funding and want to return to the old system. The recent Rozanski Task Force spoke to 500 groups concerned about education across the province and heard loudly and clearly that per-pupil funding works - people don’t want to go back to the old days of unfair funding and high local taxes.
Since we introduced student-focused funding in 1998, 226 new schools and 291 additions have created more than 200,000 new spaces for students for the 2003 school year. As a result, nearly two thousand portable classrooms will have been removed from the system.

**Outside Experts**

We will pass legislation allowing outside experts to run a club, coach sports and lead other extra curricular activities. For example, musicians could lead a band and actors could mentor a drama club. Students should not be deprived of extra curricular activities such as sports because of union or school board rules against bringing in non-teachers as volunteers or expert instructors.

**No Strikes During the School Year**

We agree with parents that providing children with a good education is as essential as providing them with medical care. Children should not be made to suffer because of labour disputes, or become pawns in power struggles between school boards, unions and government.

So, we will pass legislation making it illegal for teachers (and other school employees) to strike or stage work-to-rule campaigns, and for school boards to lock out their employees, during the school year.

**School Report Card**

We will require that every school board provide parents with an annual report on each of its schools, including staffing, salaries, enrolment, average test results and details of a plan to improve student performance. The government will post these School Report Cards (including average student test results) on our own Education Ministry web site, allowing everyone in the province to hold schools accountable for results.

**PER PUPIL FUNDING BEFORE OUR STUDENT-FOCUSED FUNDING FORMULA**

- Ontario’s least affluent rural school boards - $4,800
- Ontario’s most affluent urban school boards - $7,500

**PER PUPIL FUNDING BEFORE OUR STUDENT-FOCUSED FUNDING FORMULA**

- Ontario’s least affluent rural school boards - $4,800
- Ontario’s most affluent urban school boards - $7,500
At the same time, we'll encourage school boards to use outside experts to supplement the work of certified teachers in Ontario classrooms, and make it easier for them to do so.

We will create certification and standards for all outside experts, and require that they pass rigorous background checks.

**Phonics-based Reading**

We will require that phonics tools (which many parents and educators believe are best for teaching literacy skills) be made available for all teachers in all schools, so that they can use the best methods for their students. We will also work with faculties of education to ensure that graduating teachers know how to teach both phonics and whole language reading.

**Supporting Teachers**

Ontario has thousands of outstanding educators who make a difference in the lives of our children. We will support Ontario’s teachers by:

- creating an **Award For Teacher Excellence** to recognize the top teacher in each school district, as nominated by students and parents
- offering provincial scholarships to elementary school teachers who upgrade their skills by earning specialist certification in math
- increasing the resources available for provincial education inspectors and directing them to frequently drop into classrooms unannounced to evaluate teacher performance

**Parental Choice**

- We will speed up and legislate the schedule for providing the Equity in Education Tax Credit to help parents who choose to send their children to independent schools, such as those with a strong religious or cultural basis. When fully implemented, it will save those parents up to $3,500 per year in taxes. The independent schools will be required to assess students in core subjects and tell parents how progress is measured.

- We will expand the range of choices open to students and parents by supporting publicly-funded Innovation Schools within the public and separate school systems. Each Innovation School would operate within the current system, directly funded by government based on the number of students enrolled. These schools would always teach the core curriculum using certified teachers, but would offer unique programs or teaching, and enjoy significant flexibility in their operations.

- We are investing $50 million a year to help keep rural schools open for the benefit of students and parents in smaller communities. School Boards will be required to spend the money for this specific purpose only.

**Accountability**

We will insist on financial accountability from school boards. Right now, the money we give to boards does not always get used for the intended purpose — helping students achieve success.
We will require that school boards submit their spending plans in advance to see where taxpayer money will be going before they receive it. As well, when grants for things like textbooks and learning software are approved, the money will have to be spent ONLY on those items.

The new Ontario Education Quality Auditor (see page 58) will help make sure that taxpayer money is being spent wisely in education.

**Advancing Education**

More funding, more innovative ideas and a new focus on real, measurable results . . . we are proud of our achievements in post-secondary education:

- The creation of the first new medical school in Ontario in 30 years, and the first new university in 40 years
- Record numbers of people enrolled in post-secondary institutions, including medical/nursing degree courses
- Cooperation between colleges and universities to offer joint degrees
- More than $7 Billion of investments with the federal government into research and development at Ontario universities since 1995
- Increased funding to the Ontario College of Teachers to help improve and share teaching practices
- The historic Learning Opportunities Task Force that helped open the door to accommodating the learning disabled in all post-secondary institutions

**Providing Advanced Education**

Whether it’s college or university, an apprenticeship for a skilled trade or some other career-oriented training, the quality of post-secondary education has a direct impact on a person’s success in getting and keeping a good job, and in fulfilling their personal dreams.

We have already made major investments in post-secondary education, and taken steps to make the system accountable for results. Part of our funding for universities and colleges is tied to their performance and we require them to publish job placement statistics.

Our plan to improve our post-secondary education system to make it accountable for excellence on *The Road Ahead* includes the following commitments:

- **We guarantee a place in a college or university program for every willing and qualified student in Ontario.**
• Ensuring accessibility with more than $2.6 Billion in funding to create more than 135,000 new student spaces - the biggest capital investment in post-secondary education in nearly half a century.

• New investments of up to $300 million a year in the quality of education in colleges and universities. That’s in addition to the nearly $450 million in funding increases we have already given them to support advanced education for Ontario students.

• Doubling the size of our student assistance program with another $400 million in funding. As a result, the Ontario Student Opportunities Trust Fund will be able to help an additional 40,000 students per year to enter college or university over the next decade.

• Allowing internationally based schools to offer university programs and grant degrees in Ontario, as long as they meet our strict standards.

**Support for Apprenticeship**

We will act decisively to increase the number of skilled tradespersons on *The Road Ahead* -

• We will create a new refundable *Apprenticeship Tax Credit* for employers to create jobs and increase the supply of skilled-trades workers in Ontario.

• We will add flexibility for young people who might choose trades training by developing a new model combining a college diploma and apprenticeship.

• We will train workers using the latest technology, through a Lifelong Learning Challenge Fund that supports interactive, online training projects that meet workplace needs.

• We will offer special programs to help women who face labour market barriers obtain apprenticeships in the skilled trades, and skills and jobs in the information technology sector.

• We will create high school co-op programs that give real-world, job-site access to students seriously interested in the skilled trades. Young people should have a direct opportunity to speak to skilled tradespeople, to see the exciting and rewarding opportunities available to them, and to find out how they can get started on a trades career path.

• We will invest $90 million in our high schools over the next four years to renew technological equipment, to train teachers and to develop partnerships with employers and colleges.

• We will raise the status and profile of the skilled trades by exposing high school students to these careers just as we do with others, helping them to understand that these are valuable, fulfilling and rewarding choices, NOT just alternatives or second options.

• We will work with unions and employers to write materials that will help students make informed choices about a future in the skilled trades.
Ontarians need and deserve a strong justice system - one dedicated to the safety of our communities and the security of our province.

Our justice system must make it clear that crime does not pay in Ontario, with strong penalties to punish and discourage criminals.

Finally, the people of Ontario must be confident that our justice system has victims’ rights, and the rights of all Ontarians to be free from the threat of criminal elements, as its top priorities.

The safety of our communities, and the ability of people to feel safe and secure, is an important measure of the quality of our lives and a key component of Ontario’s prosperity.

We will continue our effective campaign to put the rights of victims and the safety of society first, to deter crime with strict and clear consequences, and to make the justice system more accountable to the people it serves and protects. We will do so despite the fact that the federal Liberals still refuse to toughen sentencing, bail and parole for serious federal offences.

We will provide Ontarians with the safe communities they deserve for themselves and their families on The Road Ahead - "Supporting Victims Of Crime"

- We are strengthening the voice of victims of crime by providing them an absolute right to speak at parole hearings. Whether or not the criminal consents, we will also allow the public and media to attend parole hearings as observers.

We will also give victims the right to be told of any plea bargaining involving their case BEFORE deals are made, and require the Crown to take any Victim Impact Statements into account during the plea bargaining process.

The federal government must follow our lead and expand the right of victims to be heard during trials. Ottawa should give victims of crime an absolute right to speak before sentencing, even in cases involving pleas bargains.

- In order to make sure that crime doesn’t pay, but criminals DO, we will launch a ‘Crime Won’t Pay’ program to focus on collecting the outstanding restitution orders that criminals have failed to pay to their victims. Anyone coming up for parole will not be allowed to apply if he or she has failed to pay the victim any outstanding restitution.

- To protect victims from being harassed by the criminals, we will give them the right to block calls placed to their number for details see The Road Ahead policy paper on “Safe Communities in a Secure Ontario”
from any jail in the province. To prevent offenders from running criminal operations out of their jail cells, we will give jail officials the power to monitor their phone calls.

- We will expand our community-based victims’ services across Ontario, with the goal of having local services easily available for every Ontarian, no matter where they live. We will increase the victim surcharge added to fines for provincial offences, and continue to direct the money collected through the Victim’s Justice Fund to support these programs.

- We will further strengthen the Victims’ Bill of Rights that we created by adding a world leading Victim Services Standard.

The Standard will put the force of law behind the Bill of Rights, making it a legal requirement that all parts of the justice system honour the rights of victims (see box below).

- We will overhaul the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board to eliminate bureaucratic red tape and dramatically speed up the payment of compensation to victims. We will require the Board to hold hearings sooner, and to issue a decision within 30 days of each hearing. To better reflect its purpose, we will change the name of the Board to the Crime Victims Compensation Board.

- We will instruct prosecutors to seek tough sentences for all hate crimes and will support police efforts to increase security at places of worship.

**Strengthening the Victims’ Bill of Rights**

By creating a Victim Services Standard, we will make it a legal requirement that victims are entitled to:

- information about the progress of the investigation

- notice when the criminal has applied for early release (even temporary release), been granted release or escaped

- in cases of sexual assault, the right (upon request) to deal with law enforcement officials of the same gender

- prompt return of their property when the justice system no longer needs it
Supporting the Front Lines in The Fight Against Crime

We have always been proud to support the women and men who face potential danger each day in order to keep our communities safe. Our support for the front lines of our justice system will become even stronger on The Road Ahead.

- We have already funded the hiring of 1,000 more police officers for communities across Ontario since 1998. Now, we will provide the funding for at least ANOTHER 1,000 front-line officers over 5 years to help keep our communities safe.

- We have already hired 165 new provincial probation and parole officers across Ontario. Now, we will hire at least ANOTHER 100 to help keep track of criminals out on probation and parole.

- We will make it a provincial offence for a lawyer to obtain and suppress evidence of a crime, or to reveal the evidence disclosed by the prosecution prior to a criminal trial. The penalty will include automatic disbarment.

Receiving prosecution evidence prior to a trial will also be an offence, and if the evidence is published for profit, we will seize the proceeds and give them to the victims or their families.

- We will strengthen Ontario’s parole practices, making it tougher for violent criminals to obtain parole.

When a criminal IS let out on bail, probation or parole, the conditions for that release will be strictly enforced. We will crack down on violations of those provisions, sending criminals straight to jail and/or collecting the fines and penalties involved.

We will also pass a law making it possible for a police officer to immediately arrest someone seen breaching the conditions of parole.

- We will increase accountability for parole decisions. If a released criminal kills someone, we will allow the parole officer or Parole Board member involved in their release to be compelled to testify at the resulting inquest. As well, the rate of repeat offences by released criminals will be a key factor in judging the performance of Parole Board members.

- In order to help protect our police, and our entire society, from criminals using firearms, we will introduce a package of reforms designed to effectively fight gun-related crime:
  - We will instruct Crown Attorneys to seek the toughest sentences and the strictest bail conditions for criminals who use a gun (or even have one in their possession) while committing a crime.
  - We will step up our efforts with the federal and U.S. governments to fight the smuggling of guns from the United states, the source of most of the illegal handguns being used by criminals in Ontario.
  - We will set up special courts for firearms-related offences to ensure they are treated as extraordinary, more serious crimes.
A second conviction for drunk driving or illegal racing will mean automatic loss of the driver’s licence for LIFE and seizure and sale of the driver’s vehicle.

We will instruct our police and Crown Attorneys that gun crimes are a priority and will be vigorously prosecuted. However, federal paperwork and registration rules will NOT be a priority for provincial prosecutors.

**The Liberal Gun Registry Boondoggle**

This out of control program is going to cost taxpayers an estimated one billion dollars to implement, and ANOTHER estimated one billion dollars to enforce.

Instead of harassing law-abiding hunters, farmers and sports shooters, Ottawa should spend that money on effective measures such as combating gun smuggling and theft, and keeping gun-using criminals behind bars.

- We will increase the penalties for illegal racing and drunk driving, the two most dangerous forms of abuse of driving privileges.

  A second conviction for drunk driving or illegal racing will mean automatic loss of the driver’s licence for LIFE and seizure and sale of the driver’s vehicle. (To keep people from selling their cars before they are convicted, the vehicle would be impounded as soon as the charge is laid.)

- We will help end the danger of major crime cases falling through the cracks because of a lack of cooperation or information sharing among police forces. We will develop standards for a unified, province-wide information sharing system for municipal police forces and the OPP, and require all Ontario police to be using the system within five years.
Protecting Consumers
• We will give Ontarians the power to put their phone numbers in a non-telemarketing registry, and prohibit telemarketing companies from calling anyone on that list. The telemarketing industry will have to develop the comprehensive registry and keep it complete and up to date.

We will also crack down on telemarketing fraud with aggressive investigation and prosecution. Those convicted will have the proceeds of their crimes seized to help compensate their victims.

• We will pass a ‘Lemon Law’ to protect Ontarians against faulty consumer goods. If your new car or other product requires major repairs for defects three times within the first twelve months, the dealer must offer you a brand new replacement at no charge.

• We will raise the limit for claims in Small Claims Court from $10,000 to $20,000 to allow easier access to quick, simple and inexpensive justice for everyday disputes. You don’t even need a lawyer to go to Small Claims Court.

Keeping Ontario Secure
In recent years, we have all seen global terrorism hitting closer to home. Ontarians were among those who lost their lives in the September 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Centre. The connections to Canada of people who assisted those terrorists make the potential threats to our nation all the more real.

Unfortunately the threats of organized crime and terrorism to the safety of Ontario’s communities cannot be ignored. These dangers may have started outside Ontario, but we are all now more aware.

Youth Crime
The good news is that the federal Liberals have finally replaced the weak and ineffective Young Offenders Act. The bad news is that the new law (the Youth Criminal Justice Act) is even worse.

The new act is costly, complex (3 times as long as the YOA) and full of awkward rules and requirements. More importantly, it will hold young people LESS accountable for their offences, as well as increasing costs for our justice system.

We proposed 100 amendments to improve the legislation, including tougher sentences for serious crimes, increasing maximum youth sentences, stricter conditions after release from custody, and adult time for adult crime. Not one of these important ideas was accepted by Ottawa.
of the possible threat to our own families. Strong action is needed if Ontario is to maintain its security and prevent international criminals and terrorists from establishing operations in our province. On The Road Ahead, we will -

• Create a Fugitive Squad to identify, track down and apprehend fugitives within Ontario. This will be based on an expansion of the ROPE (Repeat Offender Parole Enforcement) program used by the Ontario Provincial Police to track down parole violators and repeat offenders.

• Introduce a special program to identify people living in Ontario who are wanted on international arrest warrants, including those who are currently in jail or in prison in our province. We will then direct whatever resources are needed to have those people brought before federal authorities and deported to face justice as quickly as possible.

• Demand that the federal government listen to the experts and bring in a law that makes membership in any identified criminal or terrorist organization a crime with a hefty sentence. Prosecutors would not have to prove the individual committed a crime, only that he or she belongs to the outlaw motorcycle gang, organized crime group or terrorist organization. This new law should also include the power to seize the assets of these organizations, hitting them directly in the pocket book.

• Create an integrated Security Perimeter Strategy that will help protect North America while keeping our vital trade links with the U.S. open.

“Premier Eves, your government has been enormously cooperative and responsive and together we have been able to enhance the security of our people and, at the same time, the free flow of commerce so that prosperity can continue to grow along our border.”

– N.Y. Governor George Pataki, Queen’s Park, April 9th, 2003

• Negotiate a made-for-Ontario immigration system with the federal government that will allow us to take control of our own border security and immigration policies (see next page). We know that we can do a better job than has Ottawa in bringing good people into Ontario while keeping bad people out.

Federal Fugitives On The Loose

Earlier this year, the federal Auditor General reported that there are as many as 36,000 deportees loose in the country. These are people who were ordered deported then lost track of by Ottawa.

These deportees are in addition to some 500 fugitives from federal bail, parole and custody (prison escapees, etc.) on the loose in Ontario on any given day.
**A Passport to Ontario**

Ontario is one of the most culturally diverse places in the world. We come from 120 different countries and speak 60 different languages. Except for the First Nations of Ontario, all of us are within a few years or generations of being immigrants to this province.

This diversity is an incredible source of strength and opportunity. Ontario - home to 60% of the newcomers to Canada - has benefited enormously from immigration. We continue to welcome the experiences and skills that new Canadians bring and the contributions they will make.

Because immigration is so important to this province - indeed, vital to its future - Ontario deserves a hand in shaping the policies that bring newcomers here. Quebec and the federal government have already negotiated a special agreement governing immigration to that province. Several other provinces also have agreements with Ottawa.

On The Road Ahead, we will negotiate our own immigration agreement with the federal government, using that made-for-Ontario agreement to achieve the following:

- Ensure that more new immigrants to Ontario settle outside the GTA to help meet the need for skilled labour across the province
- Test potential immigrants BEFORE they come to Ontario to identify those with the skills and qualifications our province needs most - using Ontario standards as the benchmark
- Give first priority to fully-trained medical professionals, business investors and skilled workers who agree to settle where the need for their services is greatest
- Do a much better job than Ottawa has of keeping out security risks, including people tied to terrorist or criminal organizations, those who have been previously deported, and anyone else who poses a security threat
- End free legal aid for immigration and refugee cases. Stop illegal immigrants from using OHIP. Prevent welfare recipients from sponsoring immigrants.
- Allow ‘special circumstances family reunification’ for immigrants who normally would not qualify under Ontario rules, but whose families have agreed to provide for their needs.

To learn more about how our made-for-Ontario immigration system will help bring good people into Ontario while keeping bad people out, see our policy paper on ‘A Passport to Ontario’.
Helping Families and Children

Like people around the world, Ontarians feel the most important measure of the quality of their lives is their ability to protect and provide for their families and children. The next generation of Ontarians embodies our future, with all of our hopes and dreams in their hands.

That’s why we have nearly doubled our investments in children’s social services since 1995 to more than $2.2 billion a year (see box below).

Our investments are making a difference in the lives of Ontario children:

- Created the Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families to help low- and moderate-income families participate in the labour force
- Made far-reaching changes to the Child and Family Services Act and substantially increased resources to Children’s Aid Societies
- Built a network of Early Years Centres across the province to support parents and children and connect them with important services
- Introduced the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program
- Expanded speech and language services for preschool children
- Introduced immunization of school-aged children against measles and Hepatitis B.
- Implemented an infant hearing screening program
- $7 million for initiatives to stem the growing problem of eating disorders
- $11 million contribution to establish and expand the Electronic Child Health Network
- Increased funding to Children’s Treatment Centres by $20 million annually

For details see The Road Ahead policy paper on “Helping Families and Children”
Many aspects of our plan for The Road Ahead will help benefit and protect Ontario’s children, from quality reforms for education to preserving our natural environment. (We invite you to request your free copies of our Policy Papers on these and other important issue areas. You’ll find a complete listing on the last page of this document.)

In addition to those positive steps for the future lives and careers of today’s youth, our commitments to Ontario’s families and children include:

- We will create a new Cabinet post of ‘Minister for Human Development’. The new Minister will be responsible for all human development programs now in place at the Ministries of Health and of Community, Family and Children Services, including the Early Years program and Healthy Babies, Healthy Children.

The Minister will also have a broad and powerful mandate to review ALL proposed government policy (including education and health policies) from the human development perspective, helping us make sure that all services and programs work together for the benefit of the next generation of Ontarians, and better meet their needs in the future.

From infancy to university age and beyond, Ontario’s children will be supported in reaching their full potential.

- We will increase social assistance support for children with a new Ontario Child Benefit, effectively taking Ontario children off welfare and giving them a higher benefit designed to meet their needs. Unlike adults, children on social assistance cannot provide for themselves by getting a job. They should not be subject to the stigma of being ‘on welfare’.

Under the Ontario Child Benefit, a family on social assistance with one child would receive nearly $1,500 more per year. A second child in the family would increase their annual benefits by almost $1,300, and each additional child would mean about $1,200 more per year. This is money that parents or guardians can use to better provide for children on social assistance.
We will increase the support for our most vulnerable citizens by hiking our payments to disabled persons who are unable to work.

• We will provide provincial support directly to parents of children with special needs, rather than to agencies. That way, parents can choose the care that best suits their children. At the same time, we will ensure that services continue to be available in all parts of Ontario.

• We will introduce the Family Caregiver Tax Credit for those caring for disabled children at home. The value of Ontario tax credits for caregivers will be increased and extended to recognize family members who care for any aged, infirm or disabled dependent relatives living in their own homes.

This increased tax support will provide some 165,000 family caregivers with average annual savings of about $300 each.

Providing A Hand Up

Whether born with disabilities or rendered unable to work by illness or injury, some Ontarians simply cannot work and need our society’s help. We will increase the support for our most vulnerable citizens by hiking our payments to disabled persons who are unable to work by 5% immediately, helping them meet the increased cost of living and improve their quality of life.

The funds for this and future increases in benefits will be taken directly from the savings we have made through cracking down on fraud and abuse of the system. We are taking from those who refuse to play by the rules and giving more to those truly unable to work.

When we promised to crack down on welfare fraud, the Liberals and NDP predicted we would find only a handful of cases. In fact, four years after our crackdown began, we had found nearly $277 million in social assistance payments that people were not entitled to. Taxpayers also avoided $123 million in future costs to ineligible recipients.
Helping Families Cope

We are making significant investments in helping families with children cope with many different challenges:

**For Special Needs**
- $100 million by 2006 for programs to support children with autism
- $27 million annually for specialized programs and services that help children whose complex special needs are not being fully met within their communities

**For Children’s Health**
- A Children’s Health Network linking the Hospital for Sick Children, Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario, Children’s Hospital of Western Ontario, Kingston General Hospital and Hamilton Health Sciences Centre (see page 26)
- Increasing our support of children’s mental health services, providing $50M in funding over the next three years to ensure that we can attract, recruit and retain the best possible mental health workers for these vulnerable children. To help support this important work, we are creating a centre of excellence for Children’s Mental Health at the Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario.
- You’ll find our detailed plans for recruiting, training, retaining and supporting family physicians in Ontario, and for expanding the availability of Family Health Networks and nurse practitioners, in our policy paper on ‘Better Health Care for You and Your Family’.

**For Modest Incomes**
- Over $200 million in benefits annually to help low- to moderate-income working families with children under age seven
- Annual supplement of $210 per child under age seven provided to low- and moderate-income working single parents

**For Community Support**
- Our Ontario’s Promise program has mobilized communities and organizations in support of children and youth. To date, partners have committed over $46 million
Supporting Early Childhood Development

The landmark Early Years Study that we commissioned confirmed the evidence that early childhood development is one of the most important investments you can make in the future. Children given these opportunities achieve more of their goals and reach more of their potential.

That’s why we have launched 103 Early Years Centres across Ontario that offer core universal programs such as parenting classes, early literacy programs and workshops on child development. They also offer tailored programs that are community driven such as child care, special programs for dads, and child care registries.

Early Years expert Dr. Fraser Mustard suggests that the next step is to better integrate our Early Years programs with the education system, and to start transforming the Early Years Centres into early child development and parenting centres.

We agree, and we’ll strengthen our support for early childhood development on The Road Ahead.

• It is always sad when a children’s aid society is forced to remove a child from its natural parents in order to protect the child. Compounding the tragedy is that sometimes the child loses contact with other loving, responsible family members. These relatives often face complex bureaucracy and must hire lawyers if they want to care for the child themselves.

We will implement a Kinship Care program that makes it easier for grandparents and other loving family members to care for a child taken from its parents - provided that these family members are responsible, competent and pass rigorous background checks.

• We are investing an additional $164 million this year to enable Children’s Aid Societies to protect children at risk of abuse or neglect. This brings our commitment to the protection of Ontario children to over $1 billion in 2003-04.
**Early Childhood Development**
We will strengthen our support for early childhood development by building on the success of our landmark Early Years program:

- Increasing funding for the Early Years program for this year to $192 million
- Creating strong linkages between our successful Early Years Centres and the education system
- Requiring that all Early Years Centres be run by a team of professionals in early child development, including at least one manager with a university degree in Early Childhood Education.
- Integrating all of our early learning and human development programs under the new Minister for Human Development, and linking them with other programs across government.

**Protecting Our Children**
We will provide a special level of protection for children, the most vulnerable members of our society, from predators and other criminals, including:

- More than doubling the front line resources for fighting child pornography
- Creating special courts for child exploitation cases, and expanding our system of child friendly court facilities across Ontario
- Targeting Crown resources to cases involving sex crimes against children in order to help get them to trial faster
- Fighting the threat of the sex trade to children and minors by strengthening the *Rescuing Children from Sexual Exploitation Act*, a new law we brought last year to forcefully punish people and companies involved in the child sex trade. This will include
  - vigorously prosecuting employers who hire persons under 18 in the adult entertainment and sex trades,
  - creating safe houses for children whom we rescue from the sex trade (funded in part by the proceeds of crime seized from those convicted of the sexual exploitation of children), and
  - insisting that anyone convicted of ANY crime involving sexual exploitation of children serve their full sentence without chance for early release.
- Expanding the *Ontario Amber Alert* program to include more media outlets and to liaise with volunteer groups, so that we can help find abducted children faster. This program, adopted from the United States and named after an abducted child, uses electronic highway signs and a network of radio and television stations to alert the public when a child is abducted and to provide details of the victim and suspect.
The Nightmare of Bullying

Assault, extortion, intimidation and threats of violence are not a ‘natural part of childhood’, but that is how some people describe the problem of bullying.

The more we study bullying among children and youth, the more evidence there is of increasing violence and of long-term, serious damage to victims. We have young people who drop out of school, become alcohol or drug addicts, or even commit suicide because of bullying.

We will work to stop the nightmare for victims and their families. Our young people should not be afraid to go to school, and bullies should not be learning that violence and threats can be used without consequences.

All Ontario schools will be required to have effective anti-bullying strategies, and repeat bullies will be required to complete so-called *scared straight* programs that use prison tours and meetings with hardened criminals, as well as victims and their families, to show the consequences of violent, abusive behaviour.
More than 1.5 million of Ontario’s 12 million residents are aged 65 or older, and that number is growing all the time. With longer life spans and more active lifestyles, the role of seniors in Ontario society has changed dramatically in this generation.

Today, many more people are able and willing to continue contributing to society as working people, mentors and volunteers past age 65. After their working careers, Ontario seniors need more years of support, care and protection to match their longer life expectancies. Much of that support and care often comes from their own family members, who take on the extra responsibility for aging relatives and could use added support.

We will meet these changing needs of Ontario seniors and their families on The Road Ahead -

**Keeping Seniors Financially Secure**

• After a lifetime of contributing to society, seniors deserve support in being able to stay in their own homes. Our Seniors’ Property Tax Rebate will eliminate the provincial portion of property taxes for seniors (about 25% of the average bill) as of July 1, 2003.

For the average senior household in Ontario, this will mean an **annual savings of $475**. In total, this tax cut will put $450 million a year back in the hands of Ontario seniors.

We will also exempt life leases sponsored by a registered charity or a non-profit organization from land transfer taxes.

These reductions will NOT affect our commitment to increase education funding by another $2 billion.

• Those aged 65 plus have much to contribute to Ontario, and it’s wrong to prevent those wanting to work. We will **eliminate mandatory retirement** and employment discrimination for people 65 and older. We’ll keep existing collective agreements in place and make exceptions for legitimate occupational requirements and bona fide pension plans.

Of course, anyone who WANTS to retire at 65 will remain free to do so. It’s also important to understand that this change will NOT affect anyone’s pension rights. You can always choose to retire at 65 and still receive your full pension.
Protecting Seniors At Risk

• We will establish TELE-SENIOR, a toll-free line providing one-stop access to all the information seniors require. People often find it frustrating to try and navigate through all of the seniors’ services provided by government. Whether it’s information about long-term care, access to programs in your community, or filing a complaint about age discrimination, you’ll find the help you need at TELE-SENIOR.

• We will step up efforts to combat unsafe medication. Among other things, we will work with pharmacists and drug stores to expand the availability of "Brown Bag Days" - when seniors can bring their different medications to pharmacists and get advice about the effects.

• We will crack down on telemarketing fraud and require the telemarketing industry to create a registry of people who do NOT want to receive telemarketing calls (see page 37).

• We are spending $4 million to fund our Elder Abuse Strategy that helps ensure seniors are treated with respect and are protected from harm or abuse.

Caring For The Elderly

• We know the sacrifices made by those who care inside their homes for aged, infirm or disabled relatives. Rather than placing loved ones in institutions, many choose to look after them at home. Those who make that difficult choice deserve our support and encouragement.

We will introduce the Family Caregiver Tax Credit for those caring for aged, infirm or disabled dependent relatives inside their own homes.

The value of Ontario tax credits for caregivers will be increased and extended to include infirm spouses and common-law partners, and to recognize family members who care for dependent relatives living in their own homes. Tax assistance for individuals with disabilities will also be increased to help them afford more dignity and independence.

This increased tax support will provide annual benefits of $50 million to about 165,000 family caregivers and people with disabilities, providing average savings of about $300 each.

• Retirement homes become the living spaces for many of our seniors, offering both accommodation and care for the elderly, but they are currently unregulated. We will introduce a system of province-wide regulation that protects the seniors who live in retirement homes. Seniors, their families, retirement home operators and other stakeholders will all be consulted so that we can all have faith in the new system.
Seniors' Health Care

• We will make the treatment of osteoporosis (a condition that affects tens of thousands of seniors) a funding priority. Our Osteoporosis Action Plan includes $7 million in annual funding to support a comprehensive plan to improve prevention, management and treatment.

• Through an innovative new program, we will expand the number of facilities that offer cataract surgery and provide $10 million in annual funding to give seniors access to more cataract surgeries. By paying for treatment at state of the art facilities run by the private sector, our government will provide 15,000 additional cataract surgeries every year at convenient locations through the province.

• Our government has already announced locations for 20,000 new beds in nursing homes and homes for the aged - the largest increase in Ontario history. We will build on our record and increase funding by $400 million to enhance supports for residents in long-term care facilities and continue the expansion of beds. In addition to creating new openings in these facilities, we will renovate another 16,000 beds to bring them up to high provincial standards.

Helping seniors live better, healthier, more productive lives.
It’s no secret that people are losing faith in many of their institutions these days, and that government is near the top of the list of institutions people would like to see changed.

We understand the frustration felt by many citizens who feel their political institutions are out of touch, ineffective, or both.

We have taken many steps to strengthen democracy and public input into government in Ontario, but we also agree that the way government works right now is simply not good enough.

**Putting Public Interest First**

Since 1995, we have introduced a long list of important reforms to strengthen the voice of Ontarians and to better reflect the public will in policy decisions and everyday government operations:

- We introduced a ‘sunshine’ law that reveals the salaries of top bureaucrats, politicians and public officials
- We reduced the number of MPP’s from 130 to 103, scrapped their gold-plated pension plan and put decisions about their salaries in the hands of an independent decision-maker
- We brought in a law that allows municipalities to hold referendums on important issues for their residents
- We introduced tough new rules on conflict of interest and on expense claims for Ontario politicians
- We created a lobbyist registration system that allows anyone to see which companies, organizations and individuals are trying to influence public policy
- Every Ministry must now prepare an annual business plan showing how it will use taxpayers’ money efficiently and effectively in the year ahead

For details see The Road Ahead policy paper on “A Stronger Democracy for Ontario”
Now, we will further strengthen democracy and help restore people’s faith that their provincial politicians are truly listening, representing them, and acting effectively on their behalf on *The Road Ahead* -

- We will give the public a chance to consider and comment on significant new regulations *before* they become law. All proposed major regulations will be made public and Ontarians will have 30 days to provide their comments.

- We will allow members of the public to set up ‘virtual petitions’ for electronic signatures on the Internet and to file them directly to the Ontario Legislative Parliament, to be presented by a willing MPP or the Speaker of the House. The government will have to provide a public response to each petition within 24 sitting days of the Legislature.

- We will put provincial politicians back in touch with all regions of our province by requiring them to meet at times outside of Queen’s Park. The Provincial Cabinet will travel and hold at least one "town hall" meeting quarterly in a different region of the province. Community leaders, interest groups and ordinary citizens would be able to attend these meetings and make presentations directly to the Premier and Cabinet ministers.

**Your Vote - The Cornerstone of Democracy**

We will preserve the people’s right to directly elect their representatives. Dalton McGuinty’s Liberals are toying with — and the NDP supports — a system called "proportional representation," in which you would vote for a political party, not for your local MPP. We completely reject this idea, because MPPs elected in this manner would be accountable only to their party’s leadership, not to any constituents. This would weaken the role of individual MPPs and remove your access to a directly elected representative.

We believe that real democracy means being able to elect a specific representative for your community...someone to call when you have a problem or a suggestion, and someone directly accountable to you and your neighbours.
We will help restore the REAL role of the Legislature as a place for MPPs to be working for the public interest and representing their constituents, not scoring political points off one another or simply voting the party line.

- We will use more ‘ad hoc’ committees created to handle specific legislation or policies. Committee members will be those with genuine interest or expertise in the subject matter.

- We will allow MPPs to elect the chairs and vice-chairs of committees by secret ballot, and give chairs a modest budget for independent research.

- We will allow more free votes by MPPs. Votes related to money or fundamental policy will remain issues of confidence but, in all other cases, members will be able to vote as they see fit, even against the official position of their own parties.

- We will improve the scrutiny of government spending by Members, so that they can hold government ministries accountable for results.

- We will allow MPPs of all parties to co-sponsor bills.

- We will double the time devoted to private members’ bills, and make it easier for such bills to become law. A bill supported by at least 75% of all MPPs will be fast-tracked and put to a vote at all stages necessary to become law.

- We will reform the budget process to provide greater public input and understanding of what government plans to do with public money.

We will require that government consult with the public before tabling a provincial budget. Real, democratic consultation will allow government to explore options, discuss the potential impact of proposals and get helpful input from members of the public and knowledgeable stakeholders.

Obviously, some budget proposals will still have to be kept confidential to stop people from taking advantage of advance knowledge. Budgetary proposals that do NOT need to be kept confidential should be on the table for open discussion and public debate during pre-budget consultations. Government should be free to talk about its ideas and make sure they reflect the needs and concerns of the people of Ontario.

- Believe it or not, there is no requirement that the budget be presented before the start of the new fiscal year each April 1st. This has led in the past to the absurd situation of a government announcing its spending plans when the fiscal year was already underway! We will require that provincial budgets be presented before April 1st of each year.
Better Government Service

Customers of banks or book stores benefit from new technologies, convenient hours and customer-driven service when they shop. So should taxpayers when they use government services.

It’s time to reorganize the way government works and to utilize all the technology that successful people and businesses are using at work and at home. To provide efficient government services that are available where, when and how people need them on The Road Ahead, we will:

- Open key government offices to the public during evenings and weekends. Working Ontarians often don’t have the time to line up for important documents like drivers’ licences and birth certificates, and services such as driving tests, during normal office hours.

- Integrate government services in smaller communities. For example, new health cards will be available at driver’s licence centres, where photo equipment is already in place.

- Quadruple the number of Service Ontario kiosks over the next five years. We will make more of them available in smaller municipalities and in tourism offices, LCBO stores and other government-owned operations across Ontario. Every public government service that can be offered electronically will be, either at a kiosk or via the Internet.

- Make it easier for people and small businesses to access the services, forms and programs they need on-line. We will have one, easy to navigate e-government portal for small business, and all of our web sites and on-line services will use the same simple and user-friendly standards.

- Strengthen regulations that protect people while getting rid of red tape and needless regulations that kill jobs:
  - We will establish the Ten Principles of Regulatory Excellence (see box on next page) in law and make all new regulations consistent with them.
  - We will pay special attention to listening to and protecting Ontario’s farmers and small businesses - our economic engines - from being harmed by red tape, and we will consult with all groups most directly affected by regulations.
  - We will report annually to the public on our progress in preventing job killing regulation and cutting red tape.
  - We will give the public a chance to consider and comment on new rules before they become law (see ‘A Stronger Democracy for Ontario’ on page 51).
Eliminating Waste & Increasing Efficiency

We have worked hard to get spending under control, to reduce the size of the bureaucracy and to eliminate waste in government, but there is still more to do. In fact, the job of being as efficient as possible never ends, as we keep learning how to better meet challenges, adapt new technologies and adopt good ideas.

Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals don’t believe that it’s possible to find further savings in government - their solution is to hike your taxes. On the other hand, we believe that your taxes are high enough, and that we can always do more to root out wasteful spending and make government more productive and efficient.

On The Road Ahead, we will save at least $700 million a year (about a penny on the dollar) through measures such as the following -

• Freezing the size of the Ontario Public Service for at least two years. The Ontario Public Service is one of the most efficient in North America, having won numerous awards for good public service, including a 2002 Gold Award from the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management.

We will hire new employees where required, but the overall size of the public service will NOT increase. We think government is already big enough to meet all of Ontario’s needs.

Ten Principles of Regulatory Excellence

• Regulations should be clear and understandable.
• Persons affected should be consulted in advance.
• There must be a strong and effective means of enforcing the regulation.
• Before making a regulation, government must clearly identify its objective and how the regulation will achieve it.
• The costs of a regulation (both to government and to those who are regulated) must be calculated and made public before the regulation is made.
• The benefits of a regulation must outweigh its costs.
• Before making a regulation, government must examine how other places in Canada and in the world address the same problem. Regulations must be based upon the best and most up-to-date knowledge in the world.
• A regulation’s potential impact on jobs and the economy must be disclosed in advance.
• The government should report to the public on implementation.
• Regulations must be regularly reviewed to ensure that they are still effective. If they have become obsolete, we will scrap them.
• Appointing a Government Waste Elimination Task Force to find waste and inefficiency anywhere in government. This will include an anonymous e-mail/phone tip system where civil servants and others can report any instances of taxpayer money being wasted. If the Task Force cannot find enough savings in a given year to cover its own expenses, it will be scrapped.

• Using public service expertise and inside knowledge. We will tap into the front lines of public service for ideas on saving money and improving service. If a government worker finds a practical way to cut costs without cutting corners or compromising quality, he or she will be entitled to share in the resulting savings. Employees who propose improvements to service, with no cost savings, will also be eligible for awards.

• Continuing to restructure and refinance government assets for the public good.

• Reducing our labour costs. We will cap the fees paid to government consultants the same way we already do with lawyers, and we will reduce the amount of overtime for the civil service (with exceptions for workers involved in public health and safety, such as jail guards, or for special services to the public).

Waste Gone and Dollars Saved
Since 1995, we have saved hundreds of millions of dollars for taxpayers by finding and eliminating the fat in government programs. Some of our accomplishments, and the taxpayer dollars saved, include:

Reducing the number of MPPs from 130 to 103

$55 million a year

Eliminating corporate welfare

$90 million a year

Cracking down on welfare fraud

$40 million a year

Switching to an electronic corporate filing system

$3.5 million a year

Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals don't believe that it's possible to find further savings in government - their solution is to hike your taxes.
• Zero-based budgeting. Each branch and agency of our government will have to re-justify every item in its budget every year, starting from zero. This prevents programs that are inefficient, wasteful or no longer needed from slipping through the cracks. After all, just because money was spent on a program last year doesn’t mean more should be spent this time around.

• Provide all of Ontario’s hospitals, school boards, colleges, universities and municipalities the certainty of their funding on a multi-year basis. Because government and its partners should be accountable, our approach will be to guarantee a minimum level of funding. Beyond that, the level of funding will be subject to economic growth, the level of federal government support and results to be achieved through greater accountability. Our government will reward excellence in Ontario’s public services while remaining fiscally responsible.

• Selling unneeded government real estate and properties. Dalton McGuinty’s Liberals objected when the Ontario Realty Corporation started selling off a stock of unnecessary real estate - including vacant lots and office buildings we no longer use. We believe that government has more important priorities than spending your tax dollars on land it doesn’t need.

Ontario owns a total of $70 million worth of land that has already been declared surplus. A thorough review is sure to identify millions more that serves no useful purpose and can be sold.

Of course, we will sell these and other assets for the best possible return for taxpayers, and Crown land will continue to be protected for future generations.

Cutting Through The Red Tape

Since our government created the Red Tape Review Commission in 1995, it has helped us to identify and eliminate more than 2,000 un-needed, out-dated or harmful regulations and rules, saving countless tax dollars and sparing Ontarians untold amounts of frustration. In fact, officials travel from all over the world to see how Ontario reduces red tape and promotes excellence in regulation.

Until we established the Commission, there had NEVER been a complete inventory of Ontario’s laws and regulations.

Some of the pieces of red tape we found and cut were almost unbelievable, including the Oleomargarine Act that prohibited margarine containers from bearing pictures of cows, and the Hypnosis Act governing the activities of hypnotists in travelling road shows.
More Accountability
to You

We’ve worked hard to set higher standards for government - better service to people, smarter use of taxpayers’ money and a more open process for making decisions that affect people’s lives. But, just like in education, setting high standards is only half the story - government also has to be accountable for achieving those standards.

We’ve made greater accountability, to taxpayers and the people who use government services, one of the cornerstones of our plan for The Road Ahead.

Throughout this document and our 18 policy papers, you’ll find new measures to hold government more accountable, including:

• Extending the Taxpayer Protection Act to cover your municipal taxes

• A Workers’ Bill of Rights that gives union members more democratic powers

• The Smart Growth program that makes government responsible for meeting future growth demands while protecting the environment and farmland

• A guarantee that waiting times will not exceed medically recommended limits for general surgery, cataract surgery, cancer treatment, hip and knee replacement and MRI scans

• School report cards and a fiscal responsibility policy for school boards

• A Victims Services Standard that puts legal teeth behind our Victims’ Bill of Rights

• A new Minister for Human Development to take responsibility for all of our human development programs for Ontario children

• Democratic reforms that give people more of a direct say in public decisions and free up their MPPs to be more independent and representative

• Annual reports to the public on our progress in preventing job killing regulation and cutting red tape

• Appointing a Government Waste Elimination Task Force to find waste and inefficiency anywhere in government

In addition, we will create three powerful new watchdog positions to look after the public interest in the key public services of health and education, and at the local government level:

For details see The Road Ahead policy papers on Health, Education & “A Fair Deal for Municipalities”
**The Ontario Education Quality Auditor**

We’ve already moved education funding from the bureaucracy to the classrooms, but we know there is more that can be done at the school board level to make sure that students get a larger share of that funding. Last year, the government sent auditors to check the books of three different school boards; the auditors found serious waste and mismanagement in all three boards examined. To address waste and mismanagement across the education system—allowing us to focus spending where it will help students succeed—we will appoint an **Ontario Education Quality Auditor**.

The Auditor and team will have the power to investigate how all school boards spend their money, and to require that wasteful or inefficient spending be eliminated. The resulting savings will be re-invested in the classroom.

**The Ontario Health Quality Auditor**

We are spending more on health care than ever before in Ontario’s history. It only makes sense that we take extra care to ensure that the money actually goes to services for patients.

We will appoint an **Ontario Health Quality Auditor**, with a mandate to ensure that money intended for patient care is being well spent. The Auditor and team will be empowered to identify waste and inefficiency at hospitals, nursing homes and other health institutions. They will also have the mandate to ensure that special purpose funding is actually used as intended, for example that funding to reduce emergency room waiting times, expand a clinic or buy a new diagnostic machine is not used for other purposes.

Savings that result from the audits will be reinvested in patient services.

**The Ontario Municipal Services Quality Auditor**

If municipalities are allowed the power to propose new revenue ideas to their residents, they must also accept the responsibility for spending that new money fairly and effectively, and for being more accountable to taxpayers.

As part of the Fair Deal for Municipalities on *The Road Ahead*, we will appoint an **Ontario Municipal Services Quality Auditor**. This independent official will have the same powers of investigation, auditing and reporting as the Provincial Auditor.

The new Auditor will review the spending of large municipalities every year, and look at smaller municipalities (less than 50,000 people) when requested. The Ontario Municipal Services Quality Auditor will be the local taxpayers’ watchdog, rooting out waste, mismanagement and inefficiency.
I have always believed that the definition of a progressive conservative is someone who believes in fiscal responsibility, while having a social conscience to provide for the less fortunate in society - those who, through no fault of their own, find themselves in difficult circumstances. Every individual in our society should be treated equally.

Every child must be provided with an equal opportunity to fulfill his or her potential in life. That opportunity should not and cannot be diminished by economic disadvantage, geographic location, ethnic background or religious beliefs.

Ontario is a diverse and tolerant province in which discrimination of any kind has no place. This is a province where no one is left behind - where the weakest among us are protected by our compassion while the strongest are encouraged to prosper.

Together, we have achieved so much already. We have come so far, but we cannot afford to become complacent. We cannot allow past successes to prevent us from moving forward on The Road Ahead.

We must have the courage and determination to maintain our progress, to stay competitive, to make changes and tough decisions where necessary, and to ensure that all Ontarians can share in the rewards of our journey.

You need more than a wish list and a chequebook to sustain prosperity and improve people’s lives. Ontario needs strong, experienced leadership and deserves a practical, effective plan for The Road Ahead.

It is time to secure Ontario’s future, to build on our hard-earned gains, and to continue working towards the goal we all share...to make Ontario the best place in the world to live, to work, to invest and to raise a family.

We are offering you a clear, practical road map for The Road Ahead, backed up by the leadership and the team commitment to make it happen.

With your support, we will succeed.

We must have the courage and determination to maintain our progress, to stay competitive, to make changes and tough decisions where necessary, and to ensure that all Ontarians can share in the rewards of our journey.
The Road Ahead
Policy Papers

Each of these documents contains our detailed policies for building a better Ontario in one of 18 key areas. You’ll find the complete contents of these papers on our website at www.ontariopc.com. Free paper copies are available simply by calling us toll-free at 1-866-822-EVES (3837).

#1 - Keeping Our Economy Strong
Includes tax cuts to help create jobs...balanced budgets...paying down Ontario’s debt...cutting waste and improving efficiency

#2 - Better Health Care for You and Your Family
Includes more doctors, nurses and hospitals...shorter waiting times...accountability to patients and taxpayers...investments in priority services

#3 - Helping Students Achieve Success
Includes mandatory literacy...phonics-based reading...no strikes during the school year...school report cards...outside expert volunteers...more choice for parents

#4 - Providing Advanced Education
Includes a place for every student...quality assurance funding...more student assistance...more new schools...apprenticeship growth...high school co-op

#5 - Safe Communities in a Secure Ontario
Includes new rights for victims...more police on our streets...tough action on crime...securing our border...consumer protection

#6 - Safeguarding the Natural Environment
Includes clean air...clean water...Ontario’s Living Legacy

#7 - Helping Families and Children
Includes a Minister for Human Development...helping families cope...early childhood development...investing in children’s health...fighting child exploitation

#8 - Supporting Ontario’s Seniors
Includes a break on property taxes...investments in health care...support for caregivers...support for working seniors

#9 - Reliable, Affordable, Sustainable Energy
Includes protecting consumers...building the supply...using clean energy...promoting conservation

#10 - Smart Growth in Ontario
Includes the highways and transit we need...the cities and towns we want...environmental responsibility...fighting GTA gridlock

#11 - A Fair Deal for Municipalities
Includes a stronger voice...more flexible revenue sources...more accountability

#12 - The Road Ahead for Rural Ontario
Includes better health care...support for schools...support for farmers...preserving our rural heritage
#13 - The Road Ahead for Northern Ontario
Includes a stronger voice...a stronger economy...better health care...support for schools...safe communities

#14 - Providing a Hand Up
Includes more accountability...more benefits to the disabled...responsible care for the homeless

#15 - A Passport to Ontario
Includes a made-for-Ontario immigration system...better security at our border...the skilled people we need...fighting fraud and abuse

#16 - Better Government Service
Includes service where and when you need it...effective regulation, less red tape

#17 - A Stronger Democracy for Ontario
Includes more public input...parliamentary reform...more independence for MPPs...opening up the budget

#18 - A Workers' Bill of Rights
Includes a stronger voice for workers...access to union information