

# STATEMENT BY MINISTER MARCI IEN

## TO MARK THE START OF CANADA'S PRIDE SEASON

The Honourable Marci Ien, Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, issued the following statement to kick off Pride Season in Canada. "Today marks the start of Pride Season, which encapsulates a wide range of events held around the world from June to September. It is a time for 2SLGBTQI+ communities and allies to come together to celebrate the resilience for the Pride movement, to show the beauty and talent of the community, while also continuing to advocate for a safer and more inclusive Canada.

It is necessary for us all to keep in mind that while it is important that we take the opportunity to recognize the hard-earned victories of the Pride movement, we must continue pushing back on the sharp rise in anti-trans hate and anti-2SLGBTQI+ legislation, protests at drag events, the banning of educational books in schools, and calls against raising the Pride flag. These regressive actions are not merely symbolic – they directly impact 2SLGBTQI+ people, and have devastating impacts on people with intersecting lived experiences: including Indigenous, Black, and racialized communities, people with disabilities, and especially our young people. That is why, in August 2022, we launched the 2SLGBTQI+ Action Plan to address the persistent inequalities faced by 2SLGBTQI+ communities, to prevent discrimination, while advancing rights and equality. We are committed to this evergreen work through listening to leaders, experts, and advocates to find solutions that respond to the community's needs.

We are taking this work a step further, by moving forward with the development of a new Action Plan to Combat Hate – that will address hate faced by 2SLGBTQI+ communities, and specifically, hate faced by trans people.

We have taken many steps forward, but there is still much more work to be done.

This Pride Season, I encourage everyone to take some time to speak with the 2SLGBTQI+ people in your life – especially our young people. Immerse yourself in the history of Pride, and if you have the opportunity, listen to the lived experiences of the Trans people in your city or town.

For those in Ottawa, on Thursday, June 8 at 9am, I'll be raising the Pride Flag on Parliament Hill, and highlighting the incredible work of local community leaders. Stay connected with all the latest by checking out our Pride Season toolkit.

Enjoy the celebrations, and Happy Pride everyone!"





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### OPSEU/SEFPO LAUNCHES HEALTHCARE ANTI-PRIVATIZATION CAMPAIGN WITH CLEAR MESSAGE TO ONTARIO PC GOVERNMENT: OUR LIVES ARE NOT FOR PROFIT

The Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU/SEFPO) has launched a province-wide advertising campaign called 'Save Public Healthcare' to warn against the Ontario Conservative government's recent actions to expand private healthcare delivery.

[For-profit healthcare is already seeping into Ontario, even if you're not noticing it. This is increasingly dividing those who have from those who have not. If we continue to let the Ontario government work behind the scenes to privatize our public healthcare system, our lives will increasingly be at the mercy of profit.]

The campaign kick-off video 'Our lives are not for profit', which is reminiscent of a Black Mirror-esque world, was viewed by over 700,000 members of the public in the first 24-hours of its release and has sparked widespread conversation.

"The Conservative government is trying to deceive the public by offering privatization as the solution to a crisis it created by starving public hospitals and cutting healthcare workers' pay," said JP Hornick, OPSEU/SEFPO President. "We needed a campaign to create discomfort and disrupt this scheme - to bridge the gap for those who don't yet realize the damage that privatization will cause to our healthcare system and to communicate the urgency of taking action."

The massive staffing crisis in public healthcare has lengthened wait times for essential surgeries and diagnostics, resulted in numerous ambulance code zeroes, and produced many hospital emergency room closures.

"A real investment in the public system – one that addresses decades of government underfunding – is the way to solve problems like long wait times and the severe retention and recruitment crisis. Our provincial health dollars must be spent on patient care; not on padding wealthy investors' pockets," said Joel Usher, OPSEU/SEFPO Ambulance Division Chair and paramedic. "Paramedics and ambulance communications officers want to deliver high quality, efficient service, but this government's privatization agenda is only leading to more offload delays and fewer workers available to respond when lives are on the line."

The union's healthcare members warn that the Conservative government's healthcare privatization legislation, Bill 60, will pull funding and staff away from the public system, worsen wait times in hospitals and ultimately hurt the public.

"What the PC government is not telling the public is that private clinics cost taxpayers significantly more. All Bill 60 does is prioritize private profits in healthcare, and private clinics will be finding ways to upsell and cut corners to make their profits," said Sara Labelle, OPSEU/SEFPO Hospital Professionals Division Chair and medical laboratory technologist. "Our public hospitals are understaffed in hundreds of healthcare classifications. The focus needs to be on funding the public system; not draining it even more."