

COOPER INSTITUTE ACTIVITIES REPORT 2022



With the support of many generous donors Cooper Institute has been active in the community for more than 35 years.

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PEI Working Group for a Livable Income

The PEI Working Group for a Livable Income (WGLI), after the challenges of two years of online meetings, had an active 2022. The Working Group expanded its base by engaging a group of about 50 people who now receive regular reports of progress in various aspects of livable income, and especially of Basic Income Guarantee. Supporters wrote four Letters to the Editor, adding to WGLI's three OpEds and other media coverage.

Importantly, WGLI revised its Statement of Principles to include: *“Indigenous autonomy and self-determination is predominant. It is the right of Indigenous people to determine whether a basic income is delivered in their communities and, if so, what form it will take and how it will be implemented”*.

WGLI members created a slide show for community presentations. It was the basis of two church organizations' programs: a series presented to the Social Justice and Outreach Committee of St. Paul's Anglican Parish followed by a presentation to the whole congregation, and to the NS-PEI Anglican Diocese, and an online forum on Basic Income Guarantee for the spring education session of the Latin America Mission Program of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Charlottetown. A WGLI member shared the presentation with the CEO of Health PEI.

During the year the Employment Standards Act Comprehensive Review Panel was formed to oversee the revision of the Employment Standards Act and the Youth Employment Act. Members of the Working Group, namely the Advisory Council on the Status of Women and Cooper Institute, made submissions in the early stages of the process. WGLI will make a presentation to the Review Panel in January 2023.

The Working Group, being engaged in the national movement for basic income, participated in cross-country interests. The group hosted three federal politicians; Senator Kim Pate, NDP leader, Jagmeet Singh and NDP Member of Parliament, Leah Gazan. As well, six members of WGLI participated in a

national Advocacy Week, lobbying federal politicians to support basic income and specifically promoting PEI for a basic income demonstration program launching place.



Members of WGLI with MP Leah Gazan

The PEI Working Group for a Livable Income has had no response from the current PEI Government for almost 4 years. Since 2021, the Group has repeatedly requested a meeting with the Minister and Deputy Minister of Social Development and Housing. A new minister was appointed in July 2022. Even with urgent matters to discuss around the current progress of the basic income movement relating to PEI - and the needs of the most vulnerable people in PEI, there was no response as of year-end.

Coalition Canada basic income – revenu de base: A Cooper Institute member represents the PEI Working Group for a Livable Income on the national basic income advocacy network, *Coalition Canada basic income-revenue de base* which now has representatives from all provinces and territories, and specific youth representation.

Since its beginning in 2019 the Coalition has engaged in a lobby to convince politicians, especially MPs and senators, of the efficacy of guaranteed basic income as a social program to eliminate poverty in

Canada. Advocates make it clear that such a program would benefit society as a whole and have positive economic impacts. The current lobby effort is exclusively dedicated to promoting Guaranteed Basic Income (GBI) for Prince Edward Island. The Coalition backed up its advocacy with research and engagement, including: the nationwide Green Resiliency Project; the production of a wide range of “Cases For” basic income; numerous studies and submissions; and the engagement of municipalities as public supporters of basic income.

From its beginning Coalition Canada has identified Prince Edward Island as an ideal launching place for a province-wide basic income 5-7-year demonstration program. The rationale for this is the small size of the province, and the engagement of the population. Both community and politicians, over many years have championed the benefits of basic income for PEI and the rest of Canada. The demonstration program would involve a meticulous evaluation process which would provide critical knowledge for a similar development in other provinces and all of Canada.

In 2021, members of Coalition Canada formed the PEI Proposal Committee. They engaged five politicians (three ex-MPs from three national parties and two active MLAs from PEI). Eight pro-basic income economists from across the country accepted the work of developing an economically feasible proposal for basic income in PEI. They devoted untold hours to this work. Also, a number of policy analysts from the PEI and federal civil service provided direction from their perspective.

After 18 months the committee reached a consensus to approve its report, *A Proposal for a Guaranteed Basic Income Benefit in Prince Edward*. Aimed at federal and provincial policy makers, the report underscores that basic income is feasible. Although it does not meet all the aspirations of the PEI WGLI, the group says, “However imperfect, the Proposal is breaking ground; this has never been done before; it is an historical moment”.

The Proposal aims to create solid ground for engaging politicians at all levels and especially bringing the Governments of PEI and Canada to the same table. It is a proposal calculated to *start* the conversation. It is intended to avoid closing down the conversation before it begins.

Basic Income NOW Atlantic: A Cooper Institute member also represented the PEI WGLI on a newly formed NGO. To start, Basic Income NOW, Atlantic Canada developed a position paper which was endorsed by over 40 organizations and 274 individuals. The coalition describes itself as a

“coalition of Atlantic Canadian organizations and individual advocates working in solidarity to call for the implementation of a basic income. We have reached consensus regarding the approach to a basic income program that we believe would greatly benefit the lives and well-being of Atlantic Canadians, as well as the social, economic, and cultural prosperity of the region. We present this consensus statement as a shared vision that allows us to strive together for a basic income guarantee as a poverty elimination strategy which is vital to future-proofing Atlantic Canada.”

In November, Basic Income NOW Atlantic held a summit to bring together elected and appointed policy makers in the region, including MPs; senators; MLAs; Indigenous leaders; and municipal officials. The well-attended summit focused on how BIG could benefit the Atlantic provinces. A highlight of the summit was a panel of diverse policy makers discussing ways to improve collaboration among the jurisdictions for the future of basic income in Atlantic Canada.

PEI Fight for Affordable Housing

Tenants in Prince Edward Island continued to be affected by low vacancy rates, high rents and overall lack of affordable housing in 2022. The effects were compounded by alarming increases in costs of living and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The project, *Tenant Empowerment in Prince Edward Island*, came to an end in October. This was a project led by the PEI Fight for Affordable Housing (PEIFAH) in partnership with Cooper Institute. Over its 18-month course, countless tenants were helped to navigate the often-intimidating system of appeals and hearings as they faced threats of unreasonable rent increases and evictions.

Several meetings, online and in-person, brought other tenants together to identify common issues and possible actions to address those issues. Failure of landlords to address repair and maintenance issues was often at the top of the list.

When IRAC announced in September that it was setting the maximum allowable rent increase for 2023 at 5.2%, or 10.8% if the rent included oil heat, the PEIFAH organized what turned out to be a successful and well-attended rally in protest. Later, MLAs passed a bill that limited the increases to 0%. However, as had become painfully clear over the course of our project, landlords could – and would – still apply for greater than the maximum allowable rent increases. PEIFAH has since been contacted by many tenants who have received notices of significant, unaffordable increases.



Fight for Affordable Housing rally against rent increases in October

As a result of the connections with tenants that were made over the course of the project, tenants had their voices heard in several ways. Over 100 tenants participated in the consultation around the rent increase for 2023, and several hundred either wrote letters or participated in meetings as part of the consultation regarding the Residential Tenancy Act.

The Residential Tenancy Act was finally passed in the Legislature in December. While it contains some improvements over the existing legislation, the PEIFAH has expressed disappointment over several provisions. It was noted, among other things, that the act diminishes landlords' obligation to keep premises well maintained, does not include a rent registry, and still allows for tenants to be evicted for repairs and renovations.

As coordinator of the Empowering Tenants project, Connor Kelly, working with Cooper Institute, maintained a media presence, highlighting at all times the impacts of policies, decisions, and prevailing economic and social conditions on low and modest-income tenants. *Tenant Empowerment in Prince Edward Island* was made possible with funding from the Community Housing Transformation Centre. We thank Connor Kelly for coordinating the project and wish him luck in his new position in New Brunswick.

Livelihoods, Incomes and Community Resilience for a Net-Zero Canada

In January, Cooper Institute and the PEI Working Group for a Livable Income hosted a community conversation aimed at better understanding how the uncertainties brought on by climate change, income insecurity, inequality and discrimination overlap in

the lives of PEI residents. The gathering was a chance to consider the strengths we can draw on, and the barriers we must overcome as we build resilient communities. It was one of many conversations taking place in Canada under the umbrella of the Green Resilience Project greenresilience.ca.

The 45 people who participated were generous in their listening and thoughtful in their comments. Out of the deliberation emerged five themes for movement toward a resilient community: intersectionality; convergence; truth and reconciliation; decolonization; resisting the oppressive and invasive power of the capitalist system; collectivity/inclusion. Following the conversation, a report was written and included in the national report, which can be found on the Green Resilience website.

Remembering Father Eddie Cormier



Eddie Cormier, an outstanding Islander, died in 2022.

Eddie joined Cooper Institute in 1986. He worked tirelessly, and often quietly, on behalf of people and individuals who are left on the margins of society whether in PEI or in the Dominican Republic.

Eddie was a prominent Acadian with a limitless commitment to promoting Acadian and French speaking communities. He was immensely proud of the culture which has grown out of the pains and triumphs of Island Acadians over those four centuries. His generosity of spirit prompted him spontaneously to share with everyone how great a gift the Acadian people and culture are to PEI.

Thank you, Eddie, for walking with us.

Coalition for the Protection of PEI Lands

Major issues of the year were: how the potato wart disaster makes evident the need for the Government to take action around land ownership and use; damage to the seed potato industry; the need for transparency (Government and IRAC) concerning land transfers; the impact of the Federal Government's Beneficial Ownership Registry; emphasis on the role of industrial agriculture, a major greenhouse gas emitter, in PEI's "Net Zero by 2040 Framework"; the need to adjust carbon tax exemptions so that they do not disproportionately benefit industrial agriculture.

The Coalition made several unanswered attempts in 2022 to communicate with the PEI Government. There is lack of clarity about the current government's plans for lands protection. The proposed land use planning appears to be a covert operation and the lack of enforcement of regulations is shocking.



Point Deroche following Hurricane Fiona

With a commitment to keep the community engaged in the power and politics of PEI lands, the Coalition plans a series of forums with the general title **Whose Land is it Anyway?** with the intention of emphasizing that every Island resident is responsible for land protection. The first forum, held in November about the "Disaster at Point Deroche", was attended by a large and enthusiastic crowd. It was followed up by a full-page ad in the media and a petition to the Premier and two lead ministers. Over 2,000 people signed the petition demanding effective action.

The second forum to be held early in 2023 will concentrate on land grabbing, some glaring examples of it, and how governments aid and abet land grabbing, PEI style.

The Coalition identifies the following as examples of Land Grabbing where Ministerial (or Executive Council) discretion is an enabler: Irving acquisition of lands beyond the Lands Protection Act; a corporation building on wetlands in Grand Tracadie; current developments in Fairview, Buddhist land acquisitions

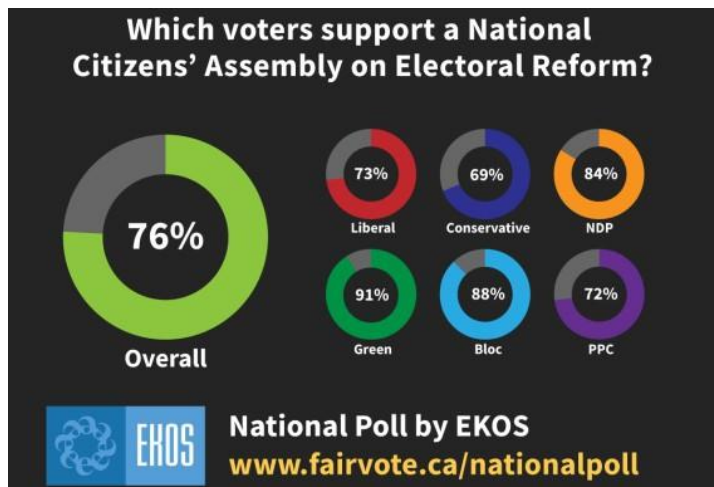
through the operation of seven of their corporations in Eastern PEI; and the lack of transparency and accountability relating to Brendel Farms.

Islanders for Proportional Representation

In 2022, Islanders for Proportional Representation (IPR) was still the only organized community voice for the need to restructure the electoral system. Though many voted in favour of PR in 2019, they seem to have since lost hope. Now PEI is far from adopting a system in which the percentage of parties' seats in the Legislature would mirror the percentage of the popular vote received.

It was a relief, however, when MLA Steve Howard of the Green Party brought a motion to the floor, proposing a Citizens' Assembly for proportional representation. The motion passed on October 28. IPR submitted a detailed costing to the Department of Finance, but the item did not appear in the provincial budget. Steve Howard asked three times if money was, in fact, set aside for the creation of a Citizen Assembly. The Premier answered on each occasion that the money was set aside for this. Still without clarity about financing, the formation of the Citizens' Assembly was promised for early in 2023.

Meanwhile Fair Vote Canada conducted a cross-party survey which indicated a high percentage of Canadians including supporters of major political parties favour the creation of a Citizen Assembly.



A strong majority of Canadians including supporters of all political parties back the formation of a national Citizens' Assembly on electoral reform

Islanders for Proportional Representation will continue to promote proportional representation despite the loss of the leadership of Brenda Oslawsky who moved to New Brunswick in 2022, for family reasons.

Migrant Justice

This year was, quite frankly, difficult. Beyond the lost hope at the beginning of 2022 with the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic, was the revelation of the extent of abuse that some migrant workers were experiencing on PEI. The decision of those experiencing abuse to share their experiences and seek help is never easy. This is particularly so for those who depend on their employer for their legal status in Canada, a condition of the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Program. The hopes and dreams that workers have, to provide for their families and potentially have the chance to live here permanently can be quickly taken away if they do not comply with what is being asked of them.

One case of abuse of multiple workers was featured in local and national news in 2022. Headlines suggested that people had been rescued and that the Federal Government had admitted they must do better. Later, the names of the farms involved in the abuse were published. There was a collective sigh of relief - the abuse had been dealt with. But the problem extends beyond the actions of these individual farms.

The structure of the TFW Program allows this type of abuse to happen. Workers who have participated in the TFW Program have stated this from the beginning. Advocates, academics and others in the general population have added their voices in support of those with first-hand experience. But still, the TFW Program continues on, and was even broadened in 2022 to allow more employers to access more migrant workers.

Although the year was difficult, the relationships that were built stand out. We experience both the joys and difficulties of being in relationship with others. Supporting people to start fresh and to share their stories was a great joy. We also celebrated with people who received permanent residency throughout the year. The granting of this simple piece of paper represents the culmination of many years of work and the possibility of hope for themselves and their family. Being present for these moments would not be possible without also experiencing the challenges together. We thank those who have trusted us with their stories and have been in relationship with us.

The relationships we've built extend to our colleagues in other organizations. We thank all of those who have supported us in building relationships, gaining knowledge, and sharing information. We appreciate the trust that has been granted to us. We have been able to build stronger relationships with organizations supporting migrant workers in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and across Canada.

Though the realities differ slightly between provinces, our overall goals are much the same. We look forward to continuing to work together in 2023.

We would also like to thank the volunteers from the PEI Action Team for Migrant Worker Rights, as well as many other volunteers, including current and former migrant workers. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has made it hard to gather in person, we continue to benefit from their dedication to this work.

The relationships we've built include those with our funders who make this work possible. Thanks to KAIROS, Campbell Webster Foundation, LUSH Foundation and individual donors, we have been able to continue our work. We thank those who have continued to see the importance of this work and have donated their time and money.



Getting ready for Farm Day in the City

At the federal level, calls have increased for Status for All. In September, we held an event in Charlottetown calling for Status for All and asking those present to reimagine our communities if everyone were afforded the same rights. We are hopeful that the Federal Government will bring in some form of regularization program in 2023 for those who do not have status in Canada.

Through the relationships that we've built, we've been able to realize some success in our advocacy efforts. After more than a decade, the *Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act* passed in the provincial Legislature in May. We are hopeful that

protection for migrant workers from unscrupulous recruiters and employers will be in place in 2023.

We continue to research and document the experience of temporary foreign workers in PEI. In partnership with Dalhousie University and St. Thomas University, we've interviewed migrant workers about their experience with the permanent residency process, and have interviewed service providers as well. We look forward to continuing this work in 2023.

Lastly, we'd like to thank the current and past Coordinators of the Migrant Worker Program. Thanks to the relationship building and previous work of Josie Baker and Paola Flores, our current staff were able to continue the work with relative ease. We'd also like to wish Eliza MacLauchlan good luck as she returns to her studies full-time.

Trade Justice PEI

In December, Trade Justice PEI held a public forum to honour the vision of Ron Kelly. Ron, who died in 2021, was active in many Island groups dedicated to social and environmental justice. These include Trade Justice PEI and the PEI Public Transit Coalition, Islanders for Proportional Representation, and the Supported Decision-Making Coalition. Ron was a strong promoter of the importance of public ownership of key public services and enterprises in a successful and worker-friendly transition to a carbon-free economy, particularly in the areas of energy and public transit.

The event, *Beyond Maritime Electric: fighting climate change through public energy and transit*, drew a good crowd, and featured presentations by Scott Edgar, an activist with *It's More Than Buses*, a group that lobbies to extend and improve the Halifax transit system and turn Halifax into a city for people rather than a city for cars, Tynette Deveaux, with the Sierra Club's *Beyond Coal* campaign, who spoke about how we can bring PEI's energy grid into public or community ownership, and Blair Weeks, who spoke on behalf of Karen Jackson, President of PEI Union of Public Sector Employees (UPSE) on the topic of labour and social responsibility.

The forum followed Hurricane Fiona, which left many Island residents in the dark for up to three weeks and brought into question how Maritime Electric (owned by the multinational Fortis) balances its need to satisfy shareholders with efforts to strengthen PEI's energy grid. As Tynette Deveaux pointed out, PEI represents a small portion of Fortis interests.

While there were positive developments regarding

public transit in 2022 including expansion of T3 Transit to some rural communities, PEI still lacks a truly public system that meets everyone's needs. Scott Edgar pointed out that a public system also needs to be democratically organized and controlled.

Trade Justice PEI advocates for an international trade model that is democratic, environmentally sustainable, supportive of a transition to a carbon neutral economy which benefits workers, and which respects the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Supported Decision-Making

In May, in response to concerns raised by the Coalition for Supported Decision-Making (Cooper Institute is a member), the PEI Legislature referred the Supported Decision-Making Agreements Act to the Standing Committee on Health and Social Development for further study and consultation.

Coalition concerns were primarily related to a definition of capacity contained in the legislation, specifically the requirement that an adult would need to be able to understand the nature and effects of an agreement, which would exclude people with profound disabilities, those who are most at risk of losing their autonomy.

As a result of the referral of the legislation to committee, members of the Coalition for Supported Decision-Making spent much of the summer preparing its presentation. Members of PEI People First were supported by a member of Cooper Institute to prepare their own presentation.

In November members of the Coalition were happy to learn that their recommendations had been included in the Standing Committee's report. Namely, that the Act be amended to include an updated definition of capacity that is consistent with human rights law and affirms the right of legal capacity for all; that the principles and purposes section be developed to reflect an updated definition of capacity and guide the interpretation of the legislation; that government establish a community-based, non-profit supported decision-making centre, and an online registry of SDM agreements; and that Adult Protection be designated as the body through which concerns regarding supported decision-making agreements can be taken for assistance and resolution.

It remains to be seen how the committee's report will be received, and how close we are to meaningful supported decision-making legislation being enacted and implemented in Prince Edward Island is still uncertain. But we do know we are closer than we were a year ago!

Organizational Support

Members of the Cooper Institute collective support many organizations in various ways:

La Société acadienne et francophone de l'Île

Parkinson Society Maritime Region (PEI)

**Breaking the Silence Maritimes-Guatemala
Solidarity Network**

P.E.I. Supported Decision-Making Coalition

Voluntary Resource Council

National Farmers Union

Coalition for the Protection of PEI Water

Coalition for the Protection of PEI Lands

Coalition Canada Basic Income - revenu de base

Latin American Mission Program (LAMP)

PEI Action Team for Migrant Workers' Rights

Lennon House Association

PEI Fight for Affordable Housing

PEI Seed Alliance

Fundraising Committee

Once again, the 2022 fundraising efforts had amazing outcomes. Des Duffy and his spouse, Yvonne Gallant, continue to be big Cooper Institute supporters. Des always seems proud to ask family and other friends for donations for our work in PEI. This year's fundraising effort \$40,847.50, which includes exchange on an American contribution. This amount helped pay for the wages of two part-time staff. Des and Yvonne also have many ways of expressing their appreciation of our work and of us personally. A heart-felt thank you to Des and Yvonne!

Irene Burge, a founder and current member of Cooper Institute, is another fundraiser. She takes on an annual mailout in which she encourages people to sign up as sustaining monthly donors. This work over the years results in an assured revenue of over \$18,500 per year which covers our overhead costs. The annual mailout also results in many one-time donations. As well, this year, as in other years, Irene directs donations to Cooper Foundation, which helps to provide long term support for Cooper Institute's work. Thank you, Irene! All the donors are great spirit boosters. Thank you all.

The Cooper Institute Fundraising Committee encourages donors to continue with their generosity. With your help we can continue our current work and expand it when needed. Donations can be made by using the "donate" button on our website www.cooperinstitute.ca. Contributions can also be made in the following ways: pre-authorized monthly donations; an annual contribution; a memorial for a deceased family member or friend; a bequest in your Last Will and Testament. Cooper Institute is a registered charity (Registration #10114 4541 RR0001). For information on donating to Cooper Foundation, which is also a registered charity, contact ireneburge7@gmail.com

Members of the Cooper Institute Collective

Eliza MacLauchlan	Maureen Larkin
Irene Burge	Leah MacLeod
Marie Burge	Reg Phelan
Joe Byrne	Selvi Roy
Debbie Theuerkauf	Josie Baker
Irene Doyle	Ann Wheatley
Michelle Pineau	Ryan MacRae

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Student Placements

For a short time in the spring, Cooper Institute staff were joined by Kelly Rivera, a student in the Masters of Island Studies program at UPEI. As part of one of her courses, Kelly chose a placement with Cooper Institute, and to focus on the challenges that international students face in finding and maintaining housing. Participants in her research spoke about problems of affordability and stability, and the challenge of finding a place to rent from outside the country. Kelly's report, *International Students and the Lack of Affordable Housing in PEI Community Report* can be found on our website.

In the fall, we were joined by Luis-Antonio Woldu, a student in the UPEI Environmental Studies program. Luis spent his time looking at agriculture and climate change, in the context of Prince Edward Island's plan to get to net-zero. Luis produced a user-friendly policy brief, *Carbon-neutral Agriculture: Prince Edward Island's 2040 Plan*.

We are grateful to both Luis and Kelly for spending time with us, and appreciate that we were able to provide some space to explore issues that are of importance to us as well as to them.

Safer at Home

According to a 2020 Ipsos poll conducted for the Canadian Medical Association, 85% of Canadians agree that they will do everything possible to avoid long-term care as they age. The portion of people who share these thoughts only increases with age, as 89% of Generation X agreed with the statement in addition to a whopping 94% of Baby Boomers. This is especially concerning because, since the mid 1970's, Canada's demographic is becoming increasingly skewed towards seniors. As of July 2022, Statistics Canada reports that 18.8% of Canadians are over the age of 65. Atlantic Canada is well above the nation's average, where 22.4% of the population is aged 65 years or older. With an aging population who is adamantly discontent with its country's long-term care model, it's time Canada and its provinces take a hard look at how they care for seniors.

Maureen Larkin, longstanding member of Cooper Institute and advocate for remodeling the long-term care system, says that the nursing home model on PEI is based on a parent-child relationship. "It is a very outdated and paternalistic model," she writes in an OpEd published in the Guardian in May of 2022, "Rules, regulations and order take priority over a resident's right to make their own choices, where they can. I often feel that long-term care residents are less valued and respected as adults who bring with them a lifetime of experience. The model is broken." The dignity to make one's own decisions should be at the root of any care model.

One of the best ways to ensure this is to keep people in the space where they feel the most comfortable and independent, their homes. Many residents in PEI's long-term care homes are not there by choice, but by necessity, due to a lack of suitable alternatives. While the PEI government does offer public home care services, these are usually only available at specific hours for a few times per week. Personal care cannot be systematized, and different people have different needs at different times, which must be reflected in the care model in a way that respects and dignifies those receiving it. The systematization of long-term care homes, where residents wake up at the same time, eat at the same time, and go to bed at the same time, is run akin to a business, and upon looking at provincial funding of homecare services and long-term care, it is clear which of the two is prioritized.

In Health PEI's 2021-2022 Annual Report, home-based care services represented 3.3% of annual health expenditures, while long-term care expenditure was nearly five times higher at 15% of annual health expenditures. With proper investment in public home care services, people can be supported to maintain their independence while getting the assistance and companionship they need. In the absence of this, unpaid caregivers must step into these roles, often causing a significant amount of stress while trying to keep their loved ones comfortable at home. In 2020, the Canadian Institute for Health Information reported that 96% of individuals receiving long-term care have an unpaid caregiver and more than 1 in 3 of those caregivers reported being distressed. Unpaid caregivers reported spending an average of 38 hours a week providing care, equivalent to a full-time job.

This isn't to say that there isn't a need for long-term care – in the summer of 2022, two hundred people were waiting for places in Prince Edward Island – but there is a need to address what is a paternalistic system, which is amplified by an increased push towards privatization. Nationally, 29% of long-term care homes are privately owned businesses. In PEI, nine of the nineteen long-term care homes fit into this category. Privately run, for-profit homes are responsible solely to shareholders who benefit from selling more services, paying less for contracted services, and limiting as much as possible staff hours, diminishing the quality of care that residents need. The COVID pandemic highlighted the difference in care between for-profit homes and those which were publicly operated. In the early stages of the pandemic, for-profit homes reported 78% more deaths than their non-profit counterparts.

While some negligent politicians may claim that the private sector will breed high quality care through increased competition, the argument falls flat when you see the list of 38,000 people nationwide waiting to access a bed. There is no competition. For-profit long-term care homes drain the public system of funding and personnel, while offering lower standards of care at often outdated facilities. It is no wonder why, when offered a choice, most Ontarians tend to choose a non-profit or municipal home.

Seniors are adults with a lifetime of experiences, knowledge and wisdom and they deserve the same dignity, respect and decency as everyone else. This must be reflected in a remodeling of our care system backed by significant public investment to support it.