



POLICY GUIDE

2019

Fellow Ontario Liberal,

This is the first edition of the new Ontario Liberal Party policy guide to help support Ontario Liberals in having their voices heard on the issues that matter to you. It represents the first time we've changed how we engage with each other on policy in many years.

Public policy has been described as anything a government chooses to do or not to do. In this way, public policy has the power to impact all of our lives. In developing *good* public policy, there is no substitute for verifiable facts, engagement, and collaboration. In short, good public policy needs public input.

A political party, the Legislature and the Government are each separate things. No one should replace another. However, our Leader, our caucus & candidates, and our membership all have important roles to play in how the public policy of the Ontario Liberal Party is developed. Our policy development and engagement framework respects the roles of each and encourages open participation and engagement.

If you've got ideas, we want to hear them.

The framework is rooted in the principles of openness and respect, and is designed to be accessible, accountable and action oriented. That doesn't mean it's perfect, there will be some bumps along the road. There will be opportunities for improving our process, and I look forward to your feedback.

Anyone, and at anytime can send their thoughts to policy@ontarioliberal.ca

The future belongs to everyone, and every Ontario Liberal has a role to play in making sure that future is a bright one.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Damien O'Brien', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Damien O'Brien
Vice-President (Policy), Ontario Liberal

Policy Forums

A policy forum is any gathering of Ontario Liberals where;

1. Policy ideas are discussed,
2. An organizer (or organizers) are identified,
3. notice is given (either by email, facebook, twitter), including to the Ontario Liberal Party
4. There's a summary provided to the party.

That's it. Anyone can attend them, any member can organize them, it can be held anywhere (even online) and can be on any topic. Email policy@ontarioliberal.ca to get started or fill out this Google Form - [OLP Policy Forum - Information](#)

Once you've held your Policy Forum, use this form to submit the feedback - [OLP Policy Forum - Feedback](#) or again email it to policy@ontarioliberal.ca

Theme Prioritization

When Ontario Liberals get together for regional meetings, it's important to take stock of the themes we're hearing at the door step and in our communities to make sure the work we're doing has impact. The top themes prioritized from each regional meeting will be reported back to the Leader and caucus as well as the OLP Policy Committee and Executive Council.

Attend your OLP Regional Meeting to make sure the top themes you're hearing are included.

Policy Resolutions

A policy resolution is a specific proposal to address a public policy issue in Ontario and may be proposed at anytime. What you need is an affiliated Ontario Liberal association (riding association, OWLC club, and/or OYL club) to sponsor it, this is done by getting the President of your association (riding, OWLC, OYL) to email policy@ontarioliberal.ca stating that a resolution has been approved by their association. How policies are sponsored is up to each individual association.

If you can't find or contact an affiliated association to sponsor your resolution, email policy@ontarioliberal.ca with the proposed resolution for next steps.

You can use this Google Form to submit your resolution, [OLP Policy Resolution - Submit](#) or email it to policy@ontarioliberal.ca

Here are the guidelines for policy resolutions:

Policy resolutions must:

- be within the jurisdiction of the Government of Ontario,
- contain objectively verifiable facts,
- focus on a specific policy objective or goal, and
- be no more than 250 words in total.

Policies can be rejected if:

- the proponent, or the supporters of a policy resolution have engaged in harassment or harassing behaviour (see [OLP Code of Conduct](#) for details)

- The policy resolution, if passed, would stand in opposition to the objects of the Ontario Liberal Party (see [OLP Constitution](#), Section 1 for details)
- The policy resolution is deemed to be vexatious or spurious, and/or,
- The proponent(s) have not followed the [OLP Policy by-law](#)

Here's a breakdown of each section of a policy resolution:

TITLE: should be concise and quickly convey the subject of the resolution

PROPONENT: The name(s) & riding(s)/organization(s) of the proponent(s), contact information to be provided to the Vice-President (Policy) (contact information may be displayed at the discretion of the proponent)

SPONSOR(S): The sponsoring Ontario Liberal association (riding association, OWLC club, and/or OYL club) - associations may only sponsor three resolutions per policy plenary.

PREAMBLE: the situation or context that gives rise to the policy idea and why it is important; statements based on objectively verifiable facts that start with "WHEREAS"; identify third parties & sources consulted in preparation of policy proposal.

DIRECTION: identify the policy position or action the proponent wants OLP to take in a statement or series of statements starting with, the phrase "BE IT RESOLVED"

...but wait, there's more!

Twice a year, the Ontario Liberal Party will send out a **membership survey** to determine the top policy issues you have as members. The results of the membership survey will help shape the work of the party as well as our Leader and caucus. **Policy working groups** are small teams that are being set up to work on the policy priorities identified through surveys, policy forums, regional meetings, policy resolutions as well as those of the Leader and to help support our caucus. While the groups are small, you're welcome to sign up for regular updates on any policy working group and contact the group to provide input and feedback.

Frequently Asked Questions

What happens with the feedback/policy resolutions?

All policy feedback & input received and resolutions passed is reported on back to the membership at various stages (AGMs, Provincial Councils) and ultimately presented to the Leader, caucus and if nominated, Ontario Liberal candidates so that it can inform our policy direction.

Are these policies binding on caucus, candidates or the Leader?

A legislative caucus and the government are each separate entities from a political party. Ontario Liberals elect leaders and nominate candidates, but it's all Ontarians that vote those candidates to Queen's Park. Each candidate, whether for a nomination or for Leader, can choose whether to be guided by, or to reject the policies the party develops - just as Ontario Liberals are free to choose whether to support them for a nomination or leadership. An ongoing policy development and engagement process means that there will be regular opportunities for Ontario Liberals, our members, our Leader, caucus & candidates (if nominated), to share ideas and work together.

Who is responsible for the policy process? Who do I talk to if I have specific questions?

The Vice-President (Policy) of the Ontario Liberal Party is responsible for the administration of the process and can help answer questions. They can be contacted at policy@ontarioliberal.ca. They are supported by the OLP Policy Committee. The Vice-President (Policy) is accountable to the OLP Executive Council (the Party Executive), the OLP Provincial Council (riding presidents, plus the Party Executive), and ultimately the membership.

Can policy resolutions be rejected? What is the criteria?

Policy resolutions may only be rejected under a specific set of criteria before reaching a policy plenary on the recommendation of the Vice-President (Policy) to the OLP Policy Committee:

- the proponent, or the supporters of a policy resolution have engaged in harassment or harassing behaviour (see [OLP Code of Conduct](#) for details)
- The policy resolution, if passed, would stand in opposition to the objects of the Ontario Liberal Party (see [OLP Constitution](#), Section 1 for details)
- The policy resolution is deemed to be vexatious or spurious, and/or,
- The proponent(s) have not followed the [OLP Policy by-law](#)

The rationale for rejection must be communicated to the proponent, and may be appealed to Executive Council.

I want to hold a Policy Forum, how do I do that?

Use this Google Form if you'd like to hold an OLP Policy Forum - [OLP Policy Forum - Information](#)

You can also email policy@ontarioliberal.ca with a time, date and location as well as an organizer and how the forum will be publicized (email, facebook, twitter, etc.). Make sure someone takes notes, and send a summary, including the number of attendees, to policy@ontarioliberal.ca

No approval is required but the organizer must be an Ontario Liberal, they and all attendees are subject to the OLP Code of Conduct - no harassment or harassing behaviour will be tolerated, and the event must be open to all members. See the [OLP Code of Conduct](#) for more details.

Once you've held a policy forum, you can send the feedback to policy@ontarioliberal.ca, or you can use this Google Form - [OLP Policy Forum - Feedback](#)

Policy Working Groups - I'd like to know more...

Policy Working Groups are teams of volunteers with expertise in specific areas of public policy that work with the party membership, the Leader, and caucus to support policy development.

These groups are still being set up, but once they're established, a call will be put out for members. Each group will have a mailing list that any member can sign up for to receive updates, and where you can send their own input.