



Ontario NDP Accessibility Critic signs housing pledge

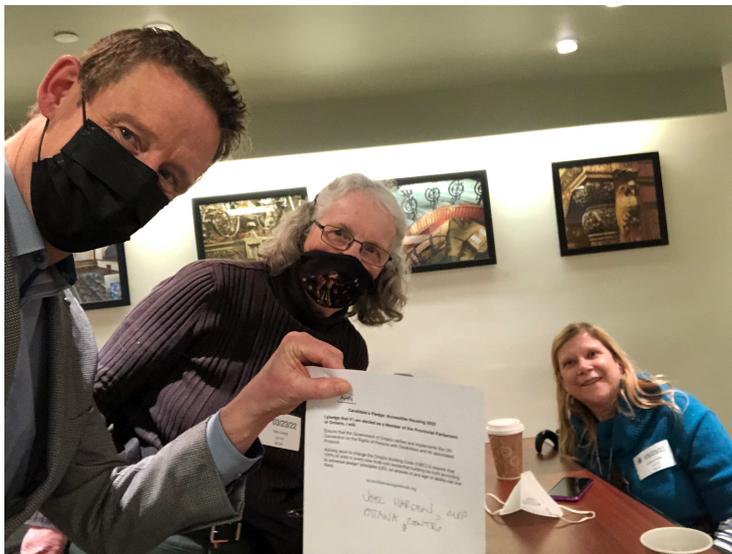
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MPP Joel Harden, NDP Critic for Accessibility and Persons with Disabilities, calls for Building Code change

Toronto - At Queen's Park last week, MPP Joel Harden, NDP Critic for Accessibility and Persons with Disabilities, signed the Pledge to “work to change the Ontario Building Code to require that 100% of units in every new multi-unit residential building be universal design”.

The Ontario NDP housing policy states: “We’ll mandate Universal Design building codes, which are standards that reflect the needs of people of all ages, sizes, abilities and disabilities.”



From left: MPP Joel Harden with the Pledge, Kate Chung, Andrea Hatala
Photo courtesy MPP Joel Harden

The Accessible Housing Network (AHN) is urging all candidates in the June Ontario election to make accessible housing a priority. The main commitments of the pledge are:

- Ensure that the Government of Ontario ratifies and implements the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and
- Work to change the Ontario Building Code to require that 100% of units in every new multi-unit residential building be universal design.

The AHN invites people all over Ontario to ensure that the candidates in their ridings sign the Accessible Housing Pledge, which can be printed from the AHN website.

“The Ontario Building Code currently requires only that 15% of new units be “visitable” - not accessible enough to live there”, says Kate Chung, co-chair of the Accessible Housing Network. “Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) reports that it actually costs the same to build a new apartment whether accessible or not. It’s renovations to existing housing which are so expensive.”

“In order to catch up with the huge pent-up need, we must make 100% of new housing accessible”, says Minette Samaroo, President of the Toronto chapter of the Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians (AEBC).

The Accessible Housing Network emphasizes that seniors and people with disabilities are voters. In Ontario, 24% of residents have a disability and millions of seniors also have one or more disabilities.

The **Ontario Human Rights Code**, the **Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms**, and the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**, all prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability, and they take precedence over all other laws. “This is ignored by governments”, says Chung.

Candidate's Pledge: Accessible Housing 2022

I pledge that if I am elected as a Member of the Provincial Parliament of Ontario, I will:

Ensure that the Government of Ontario ratifies and implements the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its associated Protocol;

Actively work to change the Ontario Building Code (OBC) to require that 100% of units in every new multi-unit residential building be built according to *universal design** principles (UD), so anyone of any age or ability can live there.

The **Accessible Housing Network (AHN)** is a non-partisan network working to support the human rights of persons with disabilities to end the extreme lack of accessible housing.

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