

## EDITORIAL

# Canada's social contract is unravelling into a crisis

The basic fundamental necessities of a modern, healthy society are in a state of despair. The social contract has been broken while the wealthiest are thriving.

Essential goods and services are the things people need to sustain and maintain a basic standard of living in society. Some examples are food, housing, healthcare, education, transit, telecoms and anti-poverty programs.

These needs have been slowly eroded without society noticing just how dire the situation has become.

It is not unlike the story of the boiling frog, which dies due to failing to perceive the danger posed by the water it is immersed in and is slowly raised to a boil.

Food insecurity is soaring as food prices continue to rise and reports show food bank usage rising as a result. In Toronto, lines outside of food banks often wrap around entire blocks and food banks are not a sustainable long-term solution.

Agriculture relies on the exploitation of temporary foreign workers, which the United Nations describes as modern slavery. Temporary workers often face exploitative living conditions, which are difficult to address since their status is tied to their employers. Earlier this year, Jamaican workers were deported after staging a one-day strike protesting their "substandard living conditions."

Housing affordability remains out of reach despite dominating headlines. Shelters are turning away hundreds of people per night and encampments are popping up across the city. Instead of solving the crisis, the city continues to violently displace encampment residents.

The York-South Weston Tenant Union occupied the management office of 1440 Lawrence Ave. W. near Keele Street in Toronto on Thursday night in protest of the eviction of an elderly woman allegedly being ousted without notice.

The erosion of healthcare continues. Thou-

sands of Ontarians are dying, waiting for surgeries and diagnostic services. Nursing shortages show no sign of improving and nurses are burning out trying to keep up.

Post-secondary remains afloat on the back of exploited international students who face challenge after challenge while attempting to secure their status after graduation. The student debt crisis puts thousands at a disadvantage from the moment they leave school. Educators are denied job security and are being squeezed for every drop.

Toronto Transit sees users pay among the highest prices in the world for both single fares and monthly passes while racialized and impoverished areas of the city are underserved. Look no further than Scarborough, where the death of the SRT leaves the underserved borough even further behind.

Canadians pay among the highest prices anywhere in the world for both internet and cellular plans, a market dominated by an oligopoly.

How did we get here?

It did not happen overnight. These crises are the result of decades of cuts and underfunding that occurred under both Liberal and Conservative governments.

It happened so slowly that it was easy to ignore those who have been sounding the alarm bells for years.

Looking forward, there is little reason to believe that we will find a way out of this mess anytime soon.

We are staring down a climate crisis that will send shockwaves across the world in the form of global famine and mass displacement.

At the same time, newsrooms across the country have been gutted, making it harder for the public to stay informed about the issues that affect them.

Answering these questions is the major challenge of the time and it will require radical change unlike anything this country has seen in generations.

Remember the frog. Turn down the heat before we all boil together.

