

TIME TO SECURE OUR FUTURE

PLENTY OF CHANGES NEEDED TO STRENGTHEN OUR COUNTRY, WRITES MICHAEL CHONG



MICHAEL CHONG
Column

As the number of vaccinated Canadians continues to rise and restrictions are lifted, we need a plan to recover, make Canada better and secure our future.

We need to secure jobs. The pandemic has led to the loss of one million jobs. And over half a million Canadians are working fewer hours in the jobs they've managed to keep.

Conservatives are proposing a comprehensive economic plan to recover these lost jobs within a year's time.

We need to secure accountability. Until recently, we had no Governor General because of scandal. Eight senior leaders of our military have resigned or have been forced out because of scandal.

We have military procurement systems that can't seem to procure and payroll systems that cannot seem to pay.

New anti-corruption laws are needed to ensure government is held accountable and to strengthen our institutions.

We need to secure mental health. A 2020 Angus Reid Institute report found 50 per cent of Canadians have experienced a decline

in their mental health since the pandemic began, with one in 10 saying it had worsened "a lot." LifeWorks reported an even larger impact on workers, with 80 per cent saying the pandemic has negatively impacted their mental health.

We are proposing a Canada mental health action plan. The plan would increase funding for mental health care, offer employers incentives for providing mental health coverage and create a national suicide prevention hotline.

To prevent another pandemic, we need to secure our country. Canada needs to be better prepared for future disasters and pandemics. Our plan will ensure we are never short of essential health-care supplies by mandating a national strategic stockpile of essential products and building Canada's capacity for manufacturing vaccines.

Finally, we need to secure our economy. The pandemic is nearing its end, and we need to get spending under control — with a real plan to balance the budget. Our plan will ensure Canada avoids a structural deficit while ensuring Canadians are supported as emergency programs wind down.

The time to secure our future is now.

Michael Chong is the MP for Wellington-Halton Hills, and the shadow minister of foreign affairs for the official opposition. He can be reached at michael.chong.a3@parl.gc.ca.

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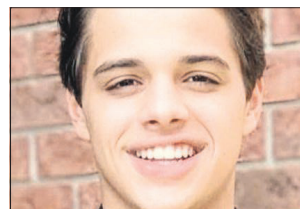


Anne Philpott photo

A wild turkey visits a backyard in the Argyll and Mountainview roads area. Do you have a great local photo you'd like to share? Send it to sleblanc@metroland.com, along with a brief description.

LEARN TO BE AN ECO HERO

VIRTUAL SUMMER CAMP OFFERS INVALUABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION, WRITES RILEY CEROVCEC



RILEY CEROVCEC
Column

My name is Riley Cerovcec. I am working as an environmental camp co-ordinator with the Halton Environmental Network, a non-profit organization that supports local climate action.

As a university engineering student, the Canada Summer Job program has helped me further my skills in project coordination and management, increased my involvement in the community and given me the chance to spread awareness about climate change.

This year, I am leading the Eco Heroes Virtual On-

planet and living sustainably.

I'm excited to lead this camp, with help from local student volunteers, and present educational content in a fun and enjoyable way.

I am a firm believer that you learn more with someone who is engaged and excited to share what they know.

This is what I strive to do.

I am looking forward to inspiring the younger generations to become eco-heroes in their own lives.

You can sign up by going to haltonenvironet.ca/special-events/hen-virtual-camp/.

I hope you will join me for this one-of-a-kind experience.

Riley Cerovcec is the Canada Summer Jobs Environmental Camp Coordinator at the Halton Environmental Network (HEN). Reach him at riley@haltonenvironet.ca.

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