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Welfare rates rise in Ontario and drop everywhere else over last four decades, new study says

NP BILL GRAVELAND, CANADIAN PRESS | February 14, 2014 2:11 PM ET
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A University of Calgary study has found that the percentage of people using social assistance is lower than it was four decades ago in every province, except Ontario. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Chris Young

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CALGARY — A University of Calgary study has found that the percentage of people using social assistance is lower than it was four decades ago in every province, except Ontario.

Ron Kneebone and Katherine White of the School of Public Policy looked at social assistance data for people under the age of 65 from all of the provinces between 1969 and 2012.

Kneebone said he was surprised to find the rate had fallen in every province but one.

“The reliance on social assistance in Ontario is now higher than in any other province, except Newfoundland and Labrador.



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In every Maritime province, it's lower than it is in Ontario," said Kneebone.

The percentage of those receiving assistance in Ontario in 2012 was 7.6 per cent, up from the four per cent it was in 1969.

Newfoundland and Labrador's social assistance rate was nine per cent in 2012, but half what it was in 1969 at 18 per cent. Alberta had the lowest welfare rate in 2012 at just 3.2 per cent, down from five per cent in 1969.

Even Quebec, a province with a similar size and economic force as Ontario, has also seen its rate fall to seven per cent two years ago from just under 10 per cent in 1969.

The study doesn't look at the reasons for the disparity.

“What someone needs to do is go through and figure out how Ontario's rules differ from what is done elsewhere

But Kneebone said the Ontario case begs the question of whether policy missteps have played a role in the province's high social assistance usage rate. He said the question is whether its social assistance programs are too robust and encourage individuals to go on welfare as opposed to pursue other options.

“Social assistance is a provincial program and everyone has a different set of rules and regulations that determine if you can collect social assistance and for how long,” he said.

“What someone needs to do is go through and figure out how Ontario's rules differ from what is done elsewhere.”

It has not been a straight downward trend in the provinces over the years. During recessions, the numbers have risen dramatically but dropped off once recovery starts to take hold.

During the economic downturn in the 1990s, Ontario's social assistance rate hit nearly 15 per cent, while both Quebec and Nova Scotia were closing in on 13 per cent.

British Columbia was also near 12 per cent in the 90s, but Kneebone said its number dropped to 4.7 per cent in 2012.

“What drives people on and off of social assistance is the business cycle,” said Kneebone. “We run into recessions and people go on. There's recovery and it goes off.”

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Cherry, despite his protests, wished her well. And continued protesting

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Jack Russell · 10 months ago

Let's see who's formed the governments during the past 12 years in Ontario, shall we? Oh, yes, Dalton McGuinty... two-faced liar, legendary overspender and enabler of public unions (especially teachers), notable yellow-spined coward who turned his back on the citizens of Caledonia when terrorized by the "First Nations" hoods; who tried to buy the last election by closing 2 power plants to the tune of 1 billion \$ and then fled the country when the going got hot. Oh, and the redoubtable laughingstock, fool and twit, Kathleen Wynne, who ran around with bags of groceries to bemused residents of Toronto shortly after the Ice Storm, and who's continued to blow our grandchildren's money on noble, extravagant Liberal schemes decades before they're around to ask why they're so poor.



William Foley said that Wayne Gretzky, who is a friend of his, is acting as an "advisor"

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According to the Algemeen Dagblad newspaper, the girlfriend said "yes" anyway. After speaking with police, the pair traveled to Paris to celebrate

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Tracy Morgan has won the latest round in his effort to sue Wal-Mart and others over a fatal crash in New Jersey

Former Blue Jay Brett Lawrie surprises young fan who cried when he was traded



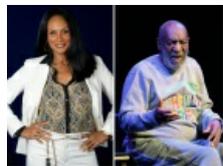
When one young fan heard the Blue Jays traded Brett Lawrie to the Oakland Athletics, she burst into tears

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In a Vanity Fair essay, the former model says Cosby physically removed her from his home after she made him aware she knew she'd been drugged

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There has been a puzzling outbreak of mumps in the NHL, so when Sidney Crosby raised a few eyebrows when he met with the media with a swollen face/neck

Rory McIlroy hopes possible Sports Personality of the Year award can drive golf into a new era

Yes, it makes sense that welfare rates, along with the debt, unemployment and everything else bad is going up in good ol' Ontario.

167 ^ | v · Share >

p_guy → Jack Russell · 10 months ago
And yet the losers of Toronto will vote for them again.
80 ^ | v · Share >

Jack Russell → p_guy · 10 months ago
That's pretty much a given.
29 ^ | v · Share >

Guest → Jack Russell · 10 months ago
Shockingly, dependence on welfare soared to over 1 million people under Bob Rae -- about 10% of the population of the entire province. It dropped precipitously under Mike Harris, partly because of a strong economy and partly because of policies that made employment more attractive than idleness.

Since Ontario has been afflicted with Liberal government, the relative attractiveness of welfare vs. work has changed yet again, even though welfare payouts have not increased all that much in inflation-adjusted dollars.

The Wynne government has characteristically commissioned "consultation" with far-left pressure groups that contend that we should pay people generously to be idle, and has given strong signals that it is open to their recommendations. Once can only hope that the premier stays true to form and commissions a commission to study the commission, rather than actually taking action on these misguided and ideological proposals.

51 ^ | v · Share >

cwby10 → Guest · 10 months ago
During Harris' years cheats were cut off from the system and criminally charged. McGuinty and his clan pretty much ended welfare fraud investigations and cut the purse strings loose to make up for the 'mean' Harris years. Drive by the public housing projects at election time - the free loaders love the Liberals.
5 ^ | v · Share >

Fortranz → Guest · 10 months ago
"It dropped precipitously under Mike Harris, partly because of a strong economy and partly because of policies that made employment more attractive than idleness."

I got to ask Rethink_downtown --- When was it that welfare was a better paying [or at least an equal one] way of gaining an income than having a job? [in Ontario or any where in Canada]

My answer to this is that it's never been that welfare is more attractive an income than a job.[despite what government(s) may be in power] What's your answer?

4 ^ | v · Share >

Guest → Fortranz · 10 months ago
The biggest problem was that under Bob Rae's regime, people lost their welfare benefits almost dollar for dollar when they began earning employment income -- and then on top of that they lost a variety of other benefits like free drug coverage under the Ontario Drug Benefit plan, and preferential access to subsidized housing. Under Bob Rae, welfare recipients even got preferential access to government-funded daycare -- that's right, if you had no job the government gave you more help looking after your kids than if you were poor and had a job.

It's not as simple as saying that if secure full time work puts more money in the bank account than welfare, there's no incentive problem. When you count the benefit losses, the



At the end of 12 months in which Rory McIlroy has lifted trophies for himself —and even his continent — he now wants to raise one for his sport

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effective marginal tax rate for a welfare recipient taking a job that wasn't guaranteed to be full time was astronomical, and then on top of that, it was an enormous risk to lose welfare eligibility by taking a job that might not be permanent. Harris improved the situation significantly, by letting people earn about an extra 30% on top of their welfare benefits without any benefit reduction at all, and then ramping down the claw-back more gradually beyond that. It's still too steep, but it's much better than it was in the early 1990s. That's a big part of the reason welfare didn't spike as much in this recession as in the 1990 recession, even though this recession was more severe.

4 ^ [v] · Share >



nrfnrd → Jack Russell · 10 months ago

And the two down votes are welfare bums. Or union thugs.

8 ^ [v] · Share >



Guest → Jack Russell · 10 months ago

I thought the headline said 4 decades, not 12 years. Are you bad at math?

6 ^ [v] · Share >



joeinvestor → Guest · 10 months ago

The points made above indicate under which government did welfare rates/dependency increase. It doesn't take much to see that welfare rates in Ontario increased substantially under Liberal/NDP governments, but declined under PC leadership.

13 ^ [v] · Share >



OverTaxedOntarian · 10 months ago

Katie, Dalton, Georgie.... Great legacy, highest debt, highest electricity rates, have-not status, highest rate on welfare.... GO Lieberals, go....

78 ^ [v] · Share >



SQQ · 10 months ago

wait... Ontario even beat Quebec? the Liberals should get a Nobel Prize in Economics for this

39 ^ [v] · Share >



Guest · 10 months ago

Guess where most of the 250,000 unemployable new immigrants per year choose to locate?

- a) Ontario
- b) Island of Misfit Toys
- c) Northwest Territory
- d) bottom of the Bay of Fundy

86 ^ [v] · Share >



policynotparty → Guest · 10 months ago

Toronto!

51 ^ [v] · Share >



Jack Russell → Guest · 10 months ago

Guess who's not telling us the cost to the taxpayers of Ontario of bringing in masses of immigrants unable to "adjust" ie. work in said province?

57 ^ [v] · Share >



citizenfirst → Jack Russell · 10 months ago

There is a sh!tload of these workers in Alberta and BC, too.

12 ^ [v] · Share >



windsurfer → citizenfirst · 10 months ago

And they're working.....

5 ^ [v] · Share >

koconor100 → Guest · 10 months ago

I'm going to go with "The Island of Misfit Toys"

:)

14 ^ | v · Share >

CSIAM → Guest · 10 months ago

"I'll take bottom of the Bay of Fundy for \$200.00,Alex"

13 ^ | v · Share >

Trained Harper Seal #815 → Guest · 10 months ago

Around 100k of them are in Ontario, but that is not "most". Manitoba, Alberta, and Saskatchewan take in far more, proportionally, than Ontario., although the ones in the prairies are somewhat more employable than the ones going to Ontario. With that qualification, Ontario does seem to get most of the unemployable ones.

5 ^ | v · Share >

Mr_C_ → Guest · 10 months ago

Wait, isn't that ALL the immigrants that Canada gets every year?

Because a lot of them are VERY employable. The family they bring with them, maybe not so much, but many of the spots on our list go to well educated professionals that we can always use more of.

2 ^ | v · Share >

M19704 → Guest · 10 months ago

Actually, that's not true. Ontario's and Toronto's share of new immigrants has dramatically dropped since 2009 and Ontario became the unemployment capital of Canada. Recent study released by the Canadian Centre for Immigrants also confirms that immigrants are moving to the west in massive numbers for jobs. Your share of those immigrants is still dropping fast as Calgary and Edmonton are preferred choice now. This will keep up as it's obvious that the decline of Toronto and Ontario is really speeding up. The unemployment there is getting worse and worse.

2 ^ | v · Share >

crankyolfart666 → M19704 · 10 months ago

Those immigrants that wanna work move to Alberta or BC or Saskatchewan, just like the Canadians who move outside the province who want to make money & those who sit around move to Ontario, specifically TO. Until governments federal, provincial and cities grow a set welfare will increase. It's so easy to collect and work.

7 ^ | v · Share >

cwby10 → M19704 · 10 months ago

and the gang bang homicides are going up out west - go figure.

2 ^ | v · Share >

Guest → Guest · 10 months ago

I specifically asked the National Post to sort starting with the best comment at the top. This can't be it, or maybe a Misfit Toys has broken loose. I just hope he rethinks his attitude towards immigrants and sees how pathetic his words are. To the others that gave this simpleton a voice, you should be ashamed..

7 ^ | v · Share >

VonHeaterBox → Guest · 10 months ago

Its not all because of immigrants of course, but its a big part of the problem. The liberals have for years made it a priority to bring in immigrants that can't speak the language or handle the cold. The only reason they want to come here is for what they percieve is free medical and everything else in between . Canada needs skilled trades people, not goat herders. It looks real good on Ontario and the Liberal party of Canada.

20 ^ | v · Share >

 **Earl Oliver** → VonHeaterBox · 10 months ago
Immigrants in the US founded half the fortune 500 companies, just saying....
2 ^ [v] · Share >

 **cwby10** → Earl Oliver · 10 months ago
Yes and back then people migrated for work and a better life. Now they migrate for freebies.
5 ^ [v] · Share >

 **Guest** → Guest · 10 months ago
It is not I guarantee you b} Island of Misfit Toys, so they have space for you.
^ [v] · Share >

 **NotMyDayJob** · 10 months ago
As good as the Harper Government is for Canada it still cannot make up for the disastrous decade long Liberal reign in Ontario.
56 ^ [v] · Share >

 **Q_Impact** → NotMyDayJob · 10 months ago
Harper has destroyed our country economically, democratically and socially. Yes the Liberals in Ontario have been bad, but Harper Inc. is going the wrong way.
12 ^ [v] · Share >

 **Argos03** → Q_Impact · 10 months ago
LOLLLL right...
36 ^ [v] · Share >

 **Guest** → Argos03 · 10 months ago
Granted nobody's destroyed anything yet, but it will take an effort on everyone's part to repair the "Mould" the Conservatives have let grow. Are you with us argos03? Come on, that sweater look at Christmas-time is getting stale.
5 ^ [v] · Share >

 **Eve Stevens** → Q_Impact · 10 months ago
Did you want us to vote Liberal federally and destroy the whole country? Isn't it enough that the Liberals have destroyed Ontario?
24 ^ [v] · Share >

 **Earl Oliver** → Q_Impact · 10 months ago
Liberals in Ontario are incompetent, but Harper is a cheat!
3 ^ [v] · Share >

 **LewisDodgson** · 10 months ago
When the government pays people to not work, they shall do exactly what you pay them for.
93 ^ [v] · Share >

 **ThatBCGuy** → LewisDodgson · 10 months ago
A little bit backwards. The government and related assistance groups earn a significant income from ensuring the poor stay poor. Look at the Vancouver DTES the government spend \$1M/day in this area for the past decade or more.,
34 ^ [v] · Share >

 **mike ditto** → ThatBCGuy · 10 months ago
exactly!! the left would cease to exist without the poor hence why they make every effort to keep them poor.
30 ^ [v] · Share >

 **Trained Harper Seal #815** → mike ditto · 10 months ago
There will always be poor people when you have income

ranges. This is simple statistical fact. The only way to solve this is to pay everyone exactly the same, which is communism.

The free market creates poor people; there will always be people whose skills are not valuable to the economy. There is no non-left wing solution to this.

9 ^ [v] · Share >

highparkgirl → Trained Harper Seal #815
· 10 months ago

My parents fled the Soviet Union where there is income equality but privilege inequality. For example my mother's relative who worked in a food co-op was just as important as another of my relatives who was the chief accountant for the co-op. She controlled who got the rare food supplies that citizens actually coveted. I don't know if she got kickbacks. There was income equality, privilege inequality, few consumer goods that were actually worth acquiring. Also, the Soviet Union killed about 20 million citizens, mainly farmers and minorities to gain this income equality.

6 ^ [v] · Share >

VonHeaterBox → Trained Harper Seal #815
· 10 months ago

Left wingnuts are the entire problem.

12 ^ [v] · Share >

Trained Harper Seal #815 → VonHeaterBox
· 10 months ago

How so? Or are you just being a jerk for the sake of being a jerk? You know, there is no reason whatsoever for this sort of behaviour, It has no productive outcome whatsoever. It reflects poorly on you, it reflects poorly on your parents who clearly raised you poorly, it reflects poorly on your political affiliations. In general, if that is all you have to say, don't bother because nobody needs to hear it.

2 ^ [v] · Share >

VonHeaterBox → Trained Harper Seal #815
· 10 months ago

The other part of the problem the idiots in denial of the true problems in this country. Problems we're not allowed to speak about. My political "affiliations" reflect poorly on themselves. My attitude towards the looney left is none of your business.

6 ^ [v] · Share >

cwby10 → Trained Harper Seal #815 · 10 months ago

and communism didn't do so well as they had their won 1% types and everyone else was poor.

1 ^ [v] · Share >

Trained Harper Seal #815 → cwby10
· 10 months ago

I don't think anybody has actually ever tried pure communism. The Russian/Chinese/North Korean version tends more towards corrupt dictatorship that pretends to be communist than anything else.

I might even go so far as to say that the degree of quiet co-operative near-socialism seen in certain parts of Canada (Sask. and Manitoba, and in a slightly different way, Quebec) is probably closer to "textbook" socialism than anything to come out of your favourite tinpot despot's territory.

^ [v] · Share >

Share

ThatBCGuy → mike ditto · 10 months ago
There are enough opportunistic members on both sides of the spectrum to take advantage of the situation. Like the prisons down south that profit from keeping people locked up.

One of the reasons socialism is inefficient is that people work the system....one of the reasons capitalism is inefficient is people work the system.

2 ^ [v] · Share >

cwby10 → ThatBCGuy · 10 months ago
Based on the tens of millions murdered in Russia and China - I like my chances in a capitalist world. I may not drive a Ferrari or own a private plane but I have a comfortable life which is more than can be said for those living under communism.

1 ^ [v] · Share >

highparkgirl → ThatBCGuy · 10 months ago
The poverty industry is the second largest industry in Toronto after the financial services industry, so it accounts for a lot of jobs that people employed there want to keep. But there are also a lot of people on government assistance who have never worked, do not work and will never work.

13 ^ [v] · Share >

cwby10 → highparkgirl · 10 months ago
The Liberals use it as a dealer does his drug - dependency ensures a repeat customer.

4 ^ [v] · Share >

ThatBCGuy → highparkgirl · 10 months ago
Why?

^ [v] · Share >

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