

# POLICY PRIORITIES FOR ONTARIO'S 2022 ELECTION

April 2022

## APPROACH

Cardus believes that governments have an important but limited function that includes enabling other civil-society institutions to thrive. As a non-partisan think tank, we do not advocate for any political party or candidate. In the lead-up to Ontario's 2022 election, we are sharing our existing research with everyone equally and seek to collaborate with all people of goodwill. In this spirit and based on our existing research, we have identified several policy priorities for legislators and voters to consider in this election.

## COMMUNITIES RECOMMENDATION

### Policy Recommendation: Further reduce barriers to volunteering

The Government of Ontario recently announced a policy to absorb the cost of police record checks for volunteering. However, charities or volunteers will still have to pay for Vulnerable Sector Checks (VSCs). The existing policy should be extended to fully absorb the cost of VSCs.

- VSCs are the most comprehensive type of police check and are required for volunteers who will be working with vulnerable populations. The cost of VSCs for volunteers can range from \$15 to \$35. Fingerprinting is sometimes required for these checks at an additional cost.
- **Why it matters:** The financial burden of VSCs is onerous for smaller charities or volunteers with a low income, especially if each organization requires a separate check. Absorbing these fees would further eliminate barriers to volunteering.
- **Details:** Fully subsidize the cost of VSCs and associated fingerprinting requirements (if needed) when accessed for volunteer purposes. This should go beyond the current legislative elimination of fees. The province should transfer funding to police services based on the number of checks processed each year. This change would cost \$8 million, representing 0.0004% of the province's \$173 billion budget for program expenses in 2021–22.

For more details read Cardus's forthcoming report [Vulnerable Sector Check Costs Remain a Barrier for Volunteers](#).

## **ABOUT CARDUS**

CARDUS is a non-partisan think tank dedicated to clarifying and strengthening, through research and dialogue, the ways in which society's institutions can work together for the common good.

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