



Kristyn Wong-Tam

MPP TORONTO CENTRE

July 20, 2023

Honourable Steve Clark
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
17th Floor, 777 Bay Street, Toronto, ON M5S2G2

RE: Act Now to Support Small Businesses and Residents in Toronto's Church and Wellesley Village

Dear Hon. Minister Clark,

I am writing to you today because small businesses and people in my riding of Toronto Centre need government action. A long-established and widely beloved hardware store — Dudley's Hardware, Paint and Decor— could close because of inaction from all orders of government on the overlapping crises of chronic homelessness, untreated mental health and addictions and a failed justice system. I visited Dudley's owner Steve Dawson to discuss what next steps he needs to rebuild trust with all levels of government and prevent his business from closing. You must choose to act on these crises and prevent Dudley's closure, and other businesses like it.

Community health and public safety are top of mind for many Toronto residents. Over the years, in speaking with many first responders, including the Toronto Police Service and Toronto Paramedic Services, they comment that they make daily emergency calls that deeply affordable and supportive housing would have prevented. First responders' message is clear: adequately housing vulnerable people with robust wrap-around supports to keep them housed would empower first responders to focus on enhancing public safety.

As a founding member of the Church-Wellesley Village Business Improvement Association (CWVBIA), I deeply love the Church and Wellesley Village and the small businesses of Toronto Centre. I want to see people and businesses thrive. When I owned and operated a Timothy's World Coffee store

on Church Street from 1999 to 2007, I saw the need for better and smarter support for people and small businesses. I know firsthand the hard work and financial output it takes to be a successful small business owner. Those small businesses need more government support today as they recover from COVID-19 to realize their potential.

Toronto Centre businesses give so much to Ontario. Church Street hosts the most exciting and widely attended Pride festival in Canada. Our businesses cultivate community and are an incredible safe haven for 2SLGBTQI+ communities across Toronto and Ontario. Ontario should stand strong in countering trends of anti-2SLGBTQI+ hate spreading into Canada from the United States by ensuring that businesses in Toronto Centre demonstrate the economic and social potential of letting people be their authentic selves.

My constituents need urgent action to ensure that no businesses contemplate closing because they do not have faith that their government is on their side. Real action from the provincial government that would give my community members hope include:

1. Committing to attend a summit of Toronto downtown Business Improvement Associations so that all orders of government can hear firsthand what Toronto businesses need to succeed.
2. Fully funding the provincial responsibilities in [the Downtown East Action Plan](#) — a multi-year plan that I worked with community members on to enhance public health and community safety in the Downtown East.
3. Fully funding the provincial responsibilities in the City of Toronto's upcoming mental health and addiction strategy — an initiative that I began with the support of the previous Mayor and City Council
4. Fully fund new supportive housing and addiction treatment beds so that housing and mental health care workers can help people break cycles of problematic drug use.
5. Funding Toronto's shelter system in a way that is commensurate with demand for shelter beds. Our shelter system is operating at or above 100% capacity every single night.
6. Implementing real bail reform to ensure timely access to justice so that violent and repeat offenders who threaten community members and

small businesses do not have the chance to cause preventable harm, without compromising fundamental rights.

While those solutions are clear to me, there will be other solutions that need to be explored and advanced. To achieve this outcome, I want to ensure my constituents are brought into this conversation in a meaningful and action-oriented manner. I would welcome the opportunity to host you and your staff in Toronto Centre to meet stakeholders, including small businesses, service providers, and community members, to hear what changes they believe must be made firsthand. Our community is vibrant, diverse, and burgeoning with creativity that requires government support to reach its fullest potential.

Please do not hesitate to contact my office if you have any questions. I can be reached at KWong-Tam-QP@ndp.on.ca or 416-972-7683.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Wong-Tam', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kristyn Wong-Tam
Member of Provincial Parliament for Toronto Centre
120 Carlton Street, Suite 401
Toronto, Ontario M5A 4K2

Cc: Minister for Children, Community, and Social Services Michael Parsa
Minister of the Solicitor General Michael Kerzner
Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions Michael Tibollo
Minister of the Attorney General Doug Downey
Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade Victor Fideli