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## Minister Fullerton Announces Plan to Fix Problem the Government Caused

The autism community has known for years that the government has been chronically underspending on autism services and Minister Merrilee Fullerton's announcement of an administrative decision of how to spend \$62 million dollars of the \$600M budget confirms this. The announced funding is not new or additional money. It is money the government is supposed to be spending on children and youth to receive autism services. This announcement should raise red flags about how much money remains unspent on this file while nearly fifty thousand children continue to languish on a waitlist for needs-based services—a waitlist that has doubled under the Ford government.

The Ford government's attempt to make part of this announcement seem like a step forward in building capacity to deliver services is a flimsy cover-up of the disastrous consequences of their own actions. Hundreds of jobs were lost as a result of a previous Ford minister's decision to end the needs-based autism program in early 2019. Hundreds more went from secure employment to precarious contracts. The lack of capacity in our province, particularly in Northern Ontario, is a direct result of their choices that killed jobs and damaged small businesses.

In Northern Ontario, where capacity is particularly challenging, offering short term solutions without long-term funding stability will do little to ease the burden on families attempting to find services for their children. What Northern Ontario needs, and what the province of Ontario needs, is a stable, well funded, needs-based program, that provides consistent and predictable funding for families to use on services their children need.

The autism community is still waiting for the needs-based program that was promised to be delivered over a year ago. An announcement that the government is going to use their budget to fix a problem they helped create simply isn't good enough.

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# #AutismDoesntEndAtFord

The Ontario Autism Coalition is a non-profit Ontario corporation dedicated to advocacy and political action on behalf of people with autism.  
[www.ontarioautismcoalition.com](http://www.ontarioautismcoalition.com)