

# Schools

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**Law secures Catholic  
high school funds**

lieve in."

Sterling first spoke out against the legislation in May 1985, three months after he was dropped from former premier Frank Miller's cabinet.

He urged Peterson to withhold the legislation until the Supreme Court of Canada had tested it.

The new law, which has already survived one constitutional challenge in the Ontario Court of Appeal and is still to be contested in the Supreme Court, calls for extension over three years of full public grants for grades 11 to 13 in the Catholic system.

The process began last September for Grade 11 under interim measures passed by cabinet order — a mechanism also challenged but upheld by the courts. Full funding is expected to cost about \$350 million when complete.

Under the amended bill, non-Catholic students who transfer to Catholic schools will be exempt from religious classes on request.

In addition, Catholic boards will not be allowed, after a 10-year transition phase, to discriminate in hiring policies against non-Catholic teachers or other employees.

Davis's announcement June 12, 1984, caused a furore among Ontario residents — as much, it seemed, for the arbitrary manner in which it was announced as what it actually proposed.

It was blamed in large part for the loss of 20 Conservative seats in the May 1985 election and the

eventual downfall of the Tory dynasty under Miller.

Sterling couldn't help but take a last shot at Davis, saying the Tory caucus found out about Davis's intention to support full funding only three hours before the announcement.

Full Catholic funding seemed to be a non-issue in last year's election campaign until Lewis Garnsworthy, former Anglican archbishop of Toronto, compared Davis's decision to Adolf Hitler's "government by decree."

It was the fear of massive erosion of funding for the public school system, job losses for teachers in that system and resentment of what opponents saw as preferential treatment for one religion that sparked bitter protest by many groups before the legislative committee holding public hearings on the bill.

Conway said he expects the Supreme Court — like the Ontario Court of Appeal — to uphold the right of the Catholic school system to maintain the unique religious character of its schools through discriminatory hiring.

The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation — one of the most vocal groups opposed to full funding — said the most serious flaw in the law is that it will "extend discrimination at public expense.

"June 23 may well go down in history as the day on which the public school system of Ontario was fragmented to the disadvantage of all Ontario secondary school students and at a cost of hundreds of millions of dollars to Ontario taxpayers," said Rod Albert, president of the 35,000-member federation.



The top student in grade 13 geography, Carolyn Dittburner, received a scholarship from teacher Stu Jack. She also received three other awards as well as being named an Ontario Scholar.

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