

## Horwath's folly

Ontarians won't be heading back to the polls anytime soon and we have NDP Leader Andrea Horwath to blame/thank.

Premier Dalton McGuinty and Horwath hammered out a deal behind closed doors that would see a 2 per cent wealth surtax on 23,000 Ontarians earning \$500,000 or more a year.

The NDP-driven initiative was accepted by McGuinty's Liberals, once again proving McGuinty can't be believed when he promises voters no new taxes.

For Horwath, this was hardly a shining moment. While her 'tax-the-rich' scheme certainly sounds appealing to the average Joe, let's keep in mind a couple things:

First, those high wage earners likely earned their money by taking financial risks to start businesses that now offer employment to others.

Secondly, there are many in that tax bracket who perform specialized jobs requiring specialized skills. They likely paid their dues.

Thirdly, many economists believe this tax will bring in less than the \$470M the NDP claims.

As well, all this additional cash will go towards paying down the \$15.2B deficit and **not** to any pet NDP programs. The Liberals were forced to **add** \$242 million in funding for child care, \$20 million for northern and rural hospitals, and boosted welfare and disability benefits by 1 per cent at a cost of \$55 million in other moves to appease the New Democrats.

Then, after wresting these concessions from McGuinty, the NDP's 17-member caucus chose to abstain from voting on the spending plan, allowing the Liberals to defeat the Tories 52-37 on the motion.

Were the NDP-forced changes not even palatable to the NDP?

Horwath had McGuinty at her mercy and could have pushed for more cash for a jobs action plan, particularly with the unemployment rate expected to stay above 7 per cent until 2015.

Certainly no one wanted another election but one could have been avoided, and this budget vastly improved, with a little creativity on Horwath's part.

### WEB POLL RESULTS

(Go to [www.theifp.ca](http://www.theifp.ca))

Halton Regional Council has directed its staff to prepare for climate change, which could mean more heatwaves in the future.

What are you doing to prepare?

Nothing (50%)

Becoming more focused on the environment and energy conservation (42%)

Buying an air conditioner (8%)

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## Letters to the editor

### Need for food banks should spark outcry

Dear editor,

Kudos to *The Independent & Free Press* for bringing the bare shelves at the Georgetown Bread Basket to our attention.

Food banks are part of our new reality— as certain now as death and taxes.

Most have charitable status and are primarily staffed by volunteers. All face the same challenge— sustainability. And the need is only going to get greater, even in affluent and generous communities like Halton Hills.

It is not the chronically poor who are swelling the demand at food banks. It is the new class of 'working poor'— the underemployed— and the unemployed.

It is also seniors and those with disabilities who, despite changes to benefits, cannot keep up with the cost of living.

And where are those we have elected in all of this? Spending millions we cannot afford, at all levels. Advertising ad nauseum an 'Economic Action Plan' that simply does not deliver long-term jobs.

Choosing hockey rinks and gymnastics over affordable housing. Getting on the bandwagon about new highways. Trying to capture the spotlight about hospital funding. Defending unconscionably high pensions which are not even subject to market forces.

How ironic that on the same day as the front page story of our own food bank, we saw the smiling faces of Msrs. Michael Chong and Ted Arnott in a full colour political household bulletin attending the opening of a new food bank facility in Erin. What an odd occasion to be smiling.

Where is the outcry that this should bring? Appearing at photo ops is no substitute for real and genuine support for people in need.

Aileen Mair, Georgetown

### Haitian orphanage grateful for support

Dear editor,

We at Welcome Home Children's Centre, an orphanage in Haiti, are so very grateful to the many businesses of Halton Hills for their generosity.

Due to lack of space I'm not able to mention all but there have been, all told, 19 businesses stepping up to

the plate for a place like Haiti where many people eat not more than three times per week and is the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere.

I can only name a few of the businesses and they are, Georgetown Canadian Tire, West Jet, Resolve Apparel, Mountainview Animal Hospital, Jennifer Harvey of Curves, and three paintings by Shirley Deaville, William Band and Barbara Succo all of Halton Hills.

It is because of people like you who gave, that give the children of Haiti hope for a better future. We see them, with your help, not only becoming healthy young people, but being educated through to university, which is the only way that Haiti has a hope of being once again "the pearl of the Caribbean".

Thank you one and all.

Audrey Hoekstra,  
 Board Member,

Welcome Home Children's Centre

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