

Our Readers Write

Politicians need to account for their actions, says reader

Dear editor,

As a taxpayer in the Region of Halton I am disappointed at recent events that have transpired, most recently in Halton.

Politicians of various political stripes and levels of government have been involved in several run-ins with the law over actions they have taken as sitting members.

It seems now is the time for some changes.

It has been customary in the past for those that hold an important office to step aside from their normal duties while an investigation into their actions is conducted.

Recently, I have seen some examples of those unwilling to step aside unless they are forced to by public opinion. I have spent all of my adult life, in one capacity or another, striving to make the political system in this country a structure that can be admired the world over.

I volunteer my time for those that I believe can do the greatest good as an MP, MPP, or councillor and I expect

they will always do what is in the best interest of those that have elected them.

Whether innocent or guilty, decisions not to step aside when charged dishonour the positions they hold.

Media outlets annually report that the participation rate in this country continues to fall when it comes to elections.

Fewer people are deciding not to volunteer. The pursuit of public office is not even on the radar for most young people in a post-secondary institution and the number of people actually taking the time to vote is in decline.

A politician must be honest, humble and respect the opinions of others, and when their actions compromise their integrity or make them open to compromise, they should step aside until the matter can be settled.

It is about time that legislation is brought forward, at all levels, to bring some uniformity to these situations and to maintain confidence in our elected representatives.

Rob Demille, Georgetown

Job growth a key priority as we head into 2014

In December, the Canadian economy lost 45,900 jobs, increasing the national unemployment rate to 7.2 per cent, from 6.9 per cent in November.

While there is significant volatility in the month-to-month job numbers, these numbers are nevertheless disappointing.

Despite the decline in December, more jobs have been created than have disappeared over the last 12 months.

For all of 2013, the Canadian economy created 102,000 jobs.

The December national job numbers demonstrate that we must remain focussed on creating an environment where job creation can flourish.

While there are many factors outside of the federal government's control — the ongoing challenges in the U.S. and Europe are just two examples — there are things that can be done.

Important reforms have been made to the Temporary Foreign Workers Program to ensure that Canadians are given the first chance at available jobs.

The federal government continues to refine the plan for the Canada Job Grant, to help close the gap between those looking for work and high-skilled jobs that are going unfilled.

The Canada Job Grant will

provide up to \$15,000 to those seeking to re-train and upgrade their skills (up to \$10,000 from the federal government, to match up to \$5,000 from an employer, for a total of \$15,000).

This will help unemployed and younger Canadians acquire the skills necessary to fill the jobs currently unfilled because of a lack of skills.

Locally, the job picture is much rosier. Due to the strength of our local communities, job creation remains robust and unemployment low.

The unemployment rate in Wellington County was 5.5 per cent in December, well below the provincial and national rates. Even better, Halton Region's unemployment rate stood at 4.0 per cent in September 2013. We are fortunate to live in the communities we do.

Since the global recession ended in 2009, the Canadian economy has produced about a million new jobs, almost 600,000 above the pre-recession peak.

Nonetheless, as the December job numbers remind us, we must remain focused on implementing further measures to foster economic growth and job creation.

The upcoming federal budget in February will be a chance for the government to do exactly that.



**MICHAEL
CHONG
WELLINGTON-
HALTON HILLS MP**

From our readers **A GESTURE OF CARING**

Carol Ploughman and her daughter, Aimee, cut their hair recently to donate to wigs for cancer patients with the help of Daniel Rodrigues and Mikaela Lohnes of Fringe Hair Salon in Georgetown.

Got a photo you want to share?
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