

Catholic trustees uphold stringent school fundraising guidelines

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Halton Catholic trustees have upheld their decision to ban board donations to charitable and nonprofit organizations which violate church teachings.

At the Jan. 16 board meeting, Oakville trustee Helena Karabela's motion to disallow donations to any group that supports, either directly or indirectly, abortion, contraception, sterilization, euthanasia or embryonic stem cell research, passed.

Halton Hills trustee John Mark Rowe, who initially voted in favour of the motion, asked for it to be reconsidered at the Feb. 20 meeting, where the motion was defeated, then reinstated.

"At a time when taxpay-



ers expect very little from politicians, it is refreshing that some Catholic trustees chose to promote the Catholicity of the Catholic institution and students under their care," commented Karabela.

In response to trustees who felt the policy would deny funding to groups which may violate these moral beliefs, but otherwise provide good services, Karabela said it is always the right time to do the right thing.

"We must not be bystanders to today's gross violations of human life.

This motion ensures that as a Catholic institution we will vet our charities and nonprofits to ensure they are compliant with a fundamental tenet of our faith, the sanctity of life in all stages and the fundamental right to life."

Rowe voiced his concerns about the "nebulous" nature of the word 'indirectly' in the motion, and that constituents he heard from were confused as to how that word would be interpreted.

Students are particularly concerned about schools having to abandon charities and nonprofits (such as WE) that provide a sense of community in schools and with which schools have deep rooted traditions, commented student trustee, Ingrid Schwecht.

Much discussion ensued about a "blanket motion" that would tie students' hands in helping people less fortunate through high profile charities; would students be allowed to fundraise for a hospital's child and youth mental health program if the facility performed tubal ligations, for example.

There were suggestions that a letter from the board accompany donations to ensure funds raised would

'I do not believe the board has reasonable grounds to impose this regulation upon our schools. We have always been taught to serve others; aiding others when they are struggling is a fundamental aspect of our Catholic values.'

— Ashwini Selvakumaran, Bishop Reding Catholic Secondary School student

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