

EDITORIAL

Act can't be allowed to die

A few years ago, a stunning Toronto Star investigation revealed that tens of thousands of Canadians have police records, despite never having committed a crime.

Cases in which people were found innocent, charges were withdrawn, mental health incidents, even baseless accusations, remained in police records.

Queen's Park took action in 2015, but apparently, little has changed.

Statistics from the John Howard Society show that charges were stayed or withdrawn in 51,000 cases in Ontario in 2016.

These records remain in databases, to be used at the discretion of police.

Three years ago, the provincial government passed legislation, the Police Records Check Reform Act, by a 93-0 vote, to stop this practice.

But the Kathleen Wynne Liberals have failed to proclaim the legislation into law. So, some police organizations are simply ignoring it.

Not only is the act not being enforced, but its very existence is now in jeopardy, warns criminal defence lawyer John Struthers. He told The Star if the act is not made law before the June election, it could die.

"Years have passed without the work being done to develop the regulations in the face of police resistance," Struthers said. "This Liberal government has let us down."

The nuts and bolts of the regulations may not be sorted yet, and that is inexcusable after all this time, but a 93-0 vote in the legislature certainly delivered a clear message that this practice is unacceptable.

Victimizing people for non-existent crimes is not how a civilized society behaves.

So, why does it continue? Unfounded charges can severely impact a person's life.

Innocent Canadians have been refused entry to the U.S. because of charges that were dismissed in court (police records are made available to American border officials).

Many employers require police background checks in their hiring process and prospective volunteers are also vetted.

One man in his 70s was prevented from visiting his daughter, hospitalized with cerebral palsy, because of an unproven allegation (that he threw a diaper) made by his late wife, who was suffering from dementia at the time.

Even police notes in a file, possibly describing someone as "uncooperative" can be damaging.

This has to change, but time is running out for the government to do the right thing and ensure the Police Records Check Reform Act becomes law.

No one who is innocent of any crime should be treated like a criminal.

SNAPSHOT



Grant Davidson photo

Champion reader Grant Davidson shares this photo he snapped of what resembles a black-capped chickadee. "After sending the photo to a couple of bird experts, I learned that this is a black-capped chickadee with a genetic condition called leucism," he wrote, adding leucism is a condition that causes the partial loss of pigmentation to feathers. Do you have an interesting, fun or cute photo taken in Milton that you would like to submit to be considered for Snapshot? Send submissions to cohara@metroland.com. Please include the name of the photographer for publication and a description of the photo, including the location where it was taken.

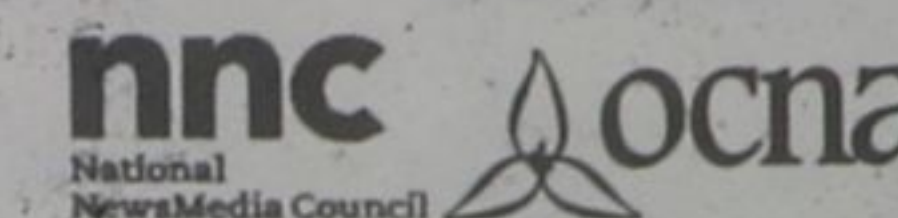
ABOUT US



The Milton Canadian Champion, published every Thursday, is a division of the Metroland Media Group Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Torstar Corporation. The Metroland family of newspapers is comprised of more than 80 community publications across Ontario.



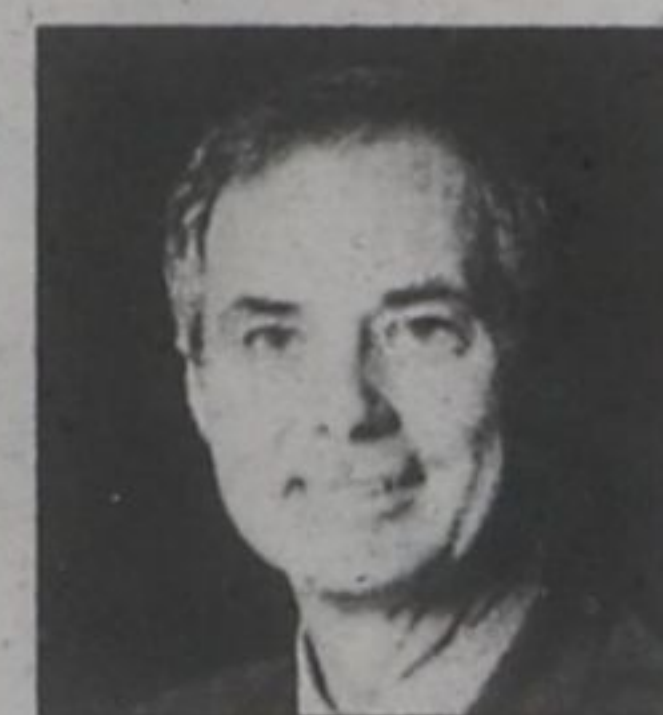
The Milton Canadian Champion is a member of the National NewsMedia Council. Complainants are urged to bring their concerns to the attention of the newspaper and, if not satisfied, write The National NewsMedia Council, Suite 200, 890 Yonge St., Toronto, ON M4W 2H2. Phone: 416-340-1981 Web: www.mediacouncil.ca



editor@miltoncanadianchampion.com
MiltonCanadianChampion
@Milton_Champion

Region achieves top credit rating - again

Earning distinction a key objective, writes Carr



GARY CARR
Column

Moody's Investors Service has once again upheld their top credit rating for Halton Region.

Earning the highest possible credit rating from Moody's Investors Service (Aaa) and S&P Global Ratings (AAA) is an important achievement, because it provides us with access to the best capital financing rates available. This enables the Region to continue to fund major infrastructure projects at the lowest possible long-term costs, helping your tax dollars go further when we invest in road, water or

wastewater assets.

In short, this distinction helps us maximize investments in your community while minimizing their tax impact on individuals, families and businesses.

Moody's credit opinion report confirms that we continue to succeed through diligent planning and transparent reporting. This approach to fiscal responsibility has allowed us to keep tax in-

creases at or below the rate of inflation while maintaining strong performance year after year.

The report highlighted the following credit strengths:

- excellent track record of posting strong fiscal results each year, supported by stable operations and an effective multi-year budgeting process;

- forward-looking operating and capital plans to address pressures and spending requirements early on.

S&P Global Ratings upheld its top credit rating for Halton in June 2017, and earning this distinction from both agencies is a key objective of 2018 Budget and Business Plan.

The relationship between the Region's top credit rating and infra-

structure investment is essential to maintaining our strong long-term financial position. It enhances every program and service we provide while supporting sustainable growth, creating ideal conditions for business investment and helping us build healthy, complete communities with a high quality of life.

Our future is dependent on the strong long-term financial position that has placed us at the high end of Canadian municipalities. By preserving this advantage, we help keep Halton a great place to live, work, raise a family and retire.

To learn more, visit halton.ca/budget.

— Gary Carr is Regional Chair of Halton Region. He can be reached by email at gary.carr@halton.ca.

CONTACT US

Milton Canadian Champion
2-5046 Mainway
Burlington, ON L7L 5Z1
Phone: 289-293-0615
Classifieds: 1-800-263-6480
Digital/Flyer/Retail: 289-293-0624

Letters to the editor
All letters must be fewer than 200 words and include your name and telephone number for verification purposes. We reserve the right to edit, condense or reject letters.

Delivery
For all delivery inquiries, please e-mail kmossman@metroland.com or call 905-631-6095.



WHO WE ARE

VP and Group Publisher
Neil Oliver

Regional General Manager
Kelly Montague
kmontague@metroland.com | 289-293-0614

Managing Editor Catherine O'Hara
cohara@miltoncanadianchampion.com | 289-293-0615
Circulation Manager Kim Mossman
kmossman@metroland.com | 905-631-6095
Director Advertising Daniel Baird
dbaird@metroland.com | 289-293-0624