

Given the past, reader doesn't trust government to do what's right for students

Dear Editor,

For those who have not read Bill 160, I offer the following as my interpretation of events.

The government has insisted that its goal is to improve the quality of education. To justify this, they argue that Ontario students perform the worst on system-wide tests but receive the highest-per-pupil funding in the country. Both of these 'facts' are patently false.

Ontario students perform as well or better than other students international and nationally -- this fact can be checked through the testing agencies. In addition, Ontario ranks sixth in per-pupil expenditures in Canada -- this can be verified through Statistics Canada.

The fact that "Ontario is the richest province" as quoted from the Minister of Social Services, Janet Ecker on CBC Radio, yet its funding ranks sixth -- and will rank last if Bill 160 passes -- is an indication of the priority the Ontario government gives education.

Teachers argue that the goal of this legislation is not to improve education, but remove funding. Certain facts suggest this to be the case.

Teachers have insisted that during initial negotiations the government revealed an additional billion dollars was to be cut from education -- which the government denied. The opposition has asked the government to commit to reinvesting

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any savings from restructuring -- the government has refused.

The government, through Bill 160, is demanding a blank cheque be written for them and that we trust them to do what is right for the students. Given what has transpired over the past two years, I cannot trust this government to put pedagogical needs ahead of fiscal ones. I'm willing to

participate in an act of civic disobedience because I do not believe this government is truly interested in improving education.
Steve Bull, Stouffville

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