

Teachers not breaking laws, only contract

Dear Editor,

Re: "Teachers setting a bad example & bullies"

Please inform H.J. Davidson that teachers are not breaking

any laws.

Letters such as this one are indicative of a poor understanding of the system and his/her comments cause far more con-

fusion then anything else.

Teachers are staging an illegal walkout thereby breaching a mutually binding agreement between the Board and the

teachers. On the other hand the government is trying to give itself regulatory powers (Bill 160) to systematically shred / destroy all Board/Teachers agreements in Ontario and impose its own terms.

Such agreements were negotiated in good faith by all parties involved and this process epitomizes the foundations upon which a democratic society is built.

The teachers believe that if one party can go ahead and unilaterally invalidate a contract which was signed and sealed in good faith then the other party (the teachers) have the same right.

That, my friends, is DEMOCRACY: we all have equal rights! Also on the same page a letter writer talks about teachers being "bullies" because they defy a democratically elected government.

Remember that this government was elected using a "democratic process" which may not generate a true "democratic majority". Please note that even though this process may generate a majority government because a party has 50 per cent plus of the available seats in a legislature, it does not necessarily mean that it has received the majority of the votes of the people in Ontario.

For instance in the last provincial elections held in 1995 there were 4,158,370 valid ballots cast. Only 65 per cent of the eligible voters in

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Ontario decided to vote and about 40 per cent of the ballots cast were in favour of the current government. The last available census states that there are almost 11 million people living in Ontario and every single Ontarian is governed by a body which was elected with about 1.6 million votes.

Therefore asserting that this government speaks for all Ontarians or that this government "represents" the majority of Ontarians is a faulty statement.

If Kwan Ho Leung loves democracy so much as indicated in his/her article then he/she does not understand Bill 160 because one cannot be a defender of democracy and at the same time support Bill 160.

In conclusion I would ask your readers that before coming to a conclusion on this issue (teachers vs Bill 160) to do the same thing I ask my students: research topics using reliable sources and then formulate a conclusion which can be substantiated by facts. Our students are very knowledgeable and intelligent individuals, respect their opinions and let's not try to influence them with our own.

This letter is not intended to influence anyone, it is simply meant to be factual and clarify certain issues.

Lorenzo Rossi
via e-mail

Parent concerned over bill

Dear Editor,

I, as a parent of three children ages 9, 5 and 3, have been following the teachers' strike very closely. I am opposed to the government's Bill 160. I can not and do not believe these changes will improve my children's education. We have proof of this by all the changes that had to be made two years ago when the Government then cut 1/2 billion dollars from our children's education. We experienced class size increases and the cancellation of our Junior Kindergarten program. We lost a full time librarian and a full time physical educator. Our schools are down to the "bare bones". How much more can be cut? My blood runs cold when I hear Mike Harris on the television announcing: "What the teachers are doing is illegal!" What Mr. Harris is doing is morally illegal in forcing us to accept Bill 160. He denied that the Government had a plan to cut funding of over 1/2 billion over the next two years to our schools. This we now know is a lie. How can he be trusted? My belief that we live in a democratic society is wavering. We have seen the effects of his cuts by the closing of Hospitals and the recent school funding. He is leading us to believe that the teachers are the "bad guys". They are not asking for salary increases, they are not getting strike pay. They are making a stand by speaking out for our children and their children and the future of our children and their right to the best education available. This strike belongs to all of us and it is time we lend a hand and show our support by joining the teachers on the picket lines or calling our local M.P.P. Julia Munro at 640-3753 and voicing your opinion. You can also send it in writing by mail: Julia Munro, Felcher Blvd. Box 9, R.R. 3, Stouffville, Ont. L4A 7X4, Fax: 640-5180.

A concerned parent,

Carole Averill

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