

Comment & Opinions

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Send your letters
to the editor
to the address below

EDITORIAL

Local politicians facing tough tasks

Now that we know who our councillors will be for the next three years, it's time to think again about some of the very tough issues they will be facing.

The voters have made their choices as to who they want to guide the town through what promises to be a very interesting three years.

We don't envy our municipal politicians that task. It's a tough job, and it's going to get a lot more difficult.

The changes which the provincial government intends to bring down on the regions is profound.

The jury seems split on whether regional amalgamation will come, and how it will be received by the various municipalities. And that's just at the politician level.

As usual, when it comes to big changes in the way government operates, the last people to be asked how they feel are the residents.

What if we don't want regional amalgamation? Will it be shoved down our throats the way the megacity was in Toronto?

Municipal governments in the 905 area are under the impression they have the ear of Premier Mike Harris and his Tory government. Over the next couple years we'll find out if that's true. We'll also find out just how valuable the votes — and seats — in the 905 area are to the Tories. It promises to be an interesting few years.



Bill 160 is nothing but a Tory power grab

Dear Editor,

Re Julia Munro's letter ("MPP clarifies government position on Bill 160"):

Julia Munro fails to explain how cutting another \$670 million and 7500 teachers will improve the quality of education for our students.

LETTERS

She implies that the provincial government has been forced to assume budgetary control because of the ineptitude of the school

boards. By the same token, then, should provincial responsibilities be assumed by the federal government in light of their dismal record?

Is spending \$1.3 million on advertising for Bill 160 fiscally responsible? How much money was spent developing "the new curricu-

lum," which looks suspiciously like the old?

Bill 160 is nothing but a Tory power grab. Public hearings are useless when they fall on the deaf ears of this majority government.

Terry Cariglia-Bull
Stouffville

Paper shouldn't give government so much space

The Letters to the Editor section of any newspaper is, arguably, the heart of western democracy. Anybody with a point to make, a view espoused (rational or not) can have their moment.

It is unfortunate, then, when approximately 1/3 of your editorial page is devoted to what amounts to an unpaid ad for the the government, which, in your Nov. 11 issue, took the form of a letter from Julia Munro, the local MPP and member of the Progressive Conservative Party.

Misrepresenting herself as someone who is informed and who cares, Munro fails to communicate anything beyond the ruling party's shallow and dishonest public position on education, which purports to have quality as its goal. When that position is subjected to

informed reflection, (read Bill 160), it is quickly revealed to consist of nothing but an arrogant, simple-minded, authoritarian appeal to trailer-park ignorance and greed, an example of demagogic cynicism in its most unappealing extreme.

All in all, what she had to say is insignificant. (So, I would add, is she, and the number of votes she gets in the next provincial election will make that clear.)

But you, dear editor, are the subject

of our contempt for having given the government such space.

Shall we refer to you in future as the Ontario PC organ?

Did your willingness to publish her letter result from the revenue you gained from the government ad in your last issue?

Is Metroland (your real publisher) somehow indebted to the Tory party? (That's Torstar Corp., not some friendly local good ol' boy, no matter how they try to present themselves.)

So if Julia Munro and Torstar Corp. like Bill 160, we should accept it?

My advice in the face of that kind of opposition — keep your back to the wall, friend.

Matt Douris
Stouffville

Editor's Note: Just for the record, since the strike we were accused of completely ignoring the government stand on its education reforms, instead, publishing only pro-teacher letters. Funny, isn't it?

MPP's letter propagates Tory myths

Dear Editor,

I am compelled to respond to Julia Munro's "clarification" of Bill 160.

In her attempt to justify the government's proposed legislation, she has propagated further a number of myths created by the Tories.

She implies school board bureaucracy is extremely bloated and the government has requested that this end. Data from the government's own School Board Reduction Task Force found that boards spend less than 4% of the education budget on administration and governance — hardly excessive. And cutting more than \$1 billion in transfer payments to the boards, and admitting about 10,000

teachers will lose their jobs is a strange way of asking for the classroom to be a priority and putting students and teachers first.

She states the government has had no control over how education dollars are spent locally. This is pure nonsense.

The provincial government, through the Education Act, has legislative and regulatory powers over most aspects of the education system. The province sets the agenda and the boards carry it out.

Munro implies that the government will be responsible in ensuring that dollars are spent "in the classroom". However, in reports the government

has defined the following items as out of classroom expenses: pupil transportation; school construction, maintenance, and renovation; adult and continuing education; secretarial staff; and school administrators. Does Munro mean that each of these items will be eliminated?

This government has misled the public and put forward the Education Quality Improvement Act which has virtually nothing to do with improving education. It is designed to reduce education expenditures.

Shame on the government for continually lying about its intentions.

Steve Bull
Stouffville

Bill is threat

Dear Editor,

Re: Bill 160

A democratically-elected government must govern democratically. Bill 160 provides for government by regulation, a situation that I view as a totalitarian threat. There is no place in democratic Ontario for a "Star Chamber" attitude.

Roger Glazin
Stouffville

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