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Comment & Opinions

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EDITORIAL

Tax Freedom Day a farce

With politicians at all levels doing their best to paint a rosy financial picture, it's almost refreshing to get the annual dose of reality from the Fraser Institute through its ever-popular Tax Freedom Day calculations.



Viewpoint

Doug Devine

As the name suggests, Tax Freedom Day marks the day each year when Canadians have finally finished earning enough money to pay all their various income, sales and property taxes.

This year's Tax Freedom Day for Ontario residents was June 27, which means just under half of everything we earn winds up in government coffers at the federal, provincial or local level.

The institute says the average Ontario family earning \$67,060 a year will pay a total of \$32,215 in taxes.

Although Tax Freedom Day is an encouraging three days earlier than last year, the institute offers some sobering information that will put a damper on any thought of celebrating the fact most politicians are finally getting the message that taxes are killing the Canadian dream.

The most sobering fact is that American families reached Tax Freedom Day on May 3 this year—a date Canadians haven't seen since 1961. That means an American family earning \$67,000 gets to keep roughly \$10,000 more than a Canadian family earning the same amount.

Despite Ontario's 30-per-cent income tax cut, we're still more than a month behind Newfoundland, where Tax Freedom Day fell on May 24. In fact, only three provinces are behind us: Quebec at July 6, Saskatchewan on July 2 and B.C. on June 28.

Despite the fact Ottawa has finally balanced its budget after decades of deficit spending, Canadians will continue to pay far more on interest payments for our massive federal debt than we will on any other program, including health and education.

Which is why it was both maddening and frustrating that our Liberal MPs are deep in discussions about how they're going to spend this year's federal budget surplus, estimated to be \$10 billion.

Maddening because it became very clear that the lowest priority on their list is putting money back in the hands of the people who earned it.

Frustrating because the MPs all seemed to share the belief that the tax surplus is cause for celebration—with only Oak Ridges MP Bryon Wilfert seeming to recognize the reality that this country isn't close to being in a financial position worth celebrating.

He correctly pointed out it's wrong to use words like "surplus" and "windfall" when our nation is still \$575 billion in debt.

He may want to explain that to fellow Liberal MP Maurizio Bevilacqua, especially since the Vaughan-King-Aurora MP is chairing the standing committee on finance that has been handed the task of developing the government's budgetary priorities.

Using words like "healthy surplus," Bevilacqua said he will likely recommend a balanced approach to spending the extra \$10 billion, using some of it to reduce taxes and some to restore spending cuts on social programs, health and education.

That doesn't sound like someone who has a firm grasp just how big a mess our finances are in Canada. And it certainly doesn't sound like someone who knows or cares what a tremendous impact reducing our Tax Freedom Day by a week or two could have on the quality of life in this country.

Joe Who



Hugh Who



Yahoo



Let's not turn town into 'Clone City'

Dear Editor,

I understand Jim Priebe's concern (letter to the editor entitled Mayor asked to stop local development, June 27).

We are still lucky enough to enjoy country life here and I support every step to keep it that way.

It is very alarming to see the new home developments all over this region.

These houses have no character, they look like cigar boxes thrown onto a site and there is no sense of community in these suburbs because the planning is not done right.

Much research has been done about "suburbia" and all the occurring social problems, but people seem to be more concerned about profit than anything else.

It is a nightmare to drive down major roads and see all the quickly growing subdivisions.

"Clone City" seems to be everywhere.

LETTERS

Stouffville could and should be the first area to slow down the development and search for better solutions.

Let's get people involved who have more knowledge than the average planner and developer and let's learn from all the mistakes other regions (and countries) have made.

Imagine how good we would feel that we preserved this fertile land for us and future generations.

This area is already called the "bedroom" of Toronto. Let's change that to "family room" and develop it accordingly with the right insight.

Mayor Wayne Emmerson, I implore you to be different and make Stouffville an outstanding positive example for a different way of development in Ontario.

Margarita van Dorsser

Great to host Olympics

Dear Editor,

When I watch the Olympics, I feel so lucky for the people who live in the host country, because they can see the game whenever they want.

In the newspaper, I saw an article about having the Olympics in Toronto in the year 2008. I was so excited.

I couldn't sleep, so I wrote this letter the next day.

Toronto has never been an Olympics city before. If we can have it here, there would be a lot of tourists coming.

That means that Toronto could earn some money.

In my opinion, I think it's great to have Toronto having the Olympics held here in the year 2008.

Victor Ko

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