

Stouffville Tribune

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OPINION



Roy Green

Isn't workfare just practising for a real job?

I guess I totally misunderstood the concept of Ontario's workfare program.

I thought the idea was to help able-bodied welfare recipients to recover (or discover) workplace habits.

Habits like getting up in the morning, going to a workplace, staying there and performing a task for a designated period of time.

I was under the impression it didn't even matter what the workfare position might have been.

Silly me.

A report from York Region staff states that the program, called Ontario Works, isn't working here, largely because there isn't enough money to train people for jobs.

According to one of the agencies charged with implementing the program in York Region, many of the people sent to them were not "job ready."

Many of them have barriers to employment, "like personal problems that will interfere with their ability to get focused or hold a job," said one spokesperson.

That would explain why they can't get jobs, but not, it seems to me, why they can't perform workfare — which isn't a job, but more like practising to have a job, isn't it?

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Training on how to act in case you happen to get a job, right?

Apparently not. The report, in fact, seemed to deal almost exclusively with the problems in finding jobs for people. Jobs — not workfare placements.

Hey, we already know it's tough to find jobs. And that's not just an Ontario problem. It's so tough that thousands of people across Canada are getting employment insurance and thousands more are on welfare.

Some of the people collecting welfare have never had a job, and have no idea what it's like to have a job.

Which is why Ontario launched the workfare program. At least, that's what I thought.

Apparently not.

Views ON THE News

A FORUM FOR PUBLIC OPINION

Q: Property assessment has created financial hardship for hundreds of York Region businesses. Should local, regional and provincial politicians find some way to offset the burden of skyrocketing property taxes, or should the business owners be forced to pay up?

No business should be forced. They already pay too much. I had my own landscaping business and I know how hard it is. The government should not spend so much.

HANS GIESEN, MARKHAM

Our governments are not very good at spending properly. We should not, and businesses should not, have to pay more in taxes due to political stupidity. We should elect people who are honest and smart enough to use tax money wisely, although I feel our choices in that regard are quite limited.

BOB MCCANN, MARKHAM

I feel politicians are caught between a rock and a hard place, but businesses shouldn't be forced to foot the bill. Since it looks like property assessment is going to increase by some measure for some, they (politicians) should implement a payment plan that all can live with — incremental increases over time as opposed to one huge bill.

JUDY COWIE, RICHMOND HILL

All levels of government should work together to offset business tax increases. Some have gone up 300 and 400 per cent. Small businesses are the foundation of York Region and would bear the brunt of the tax problem. Large businesses may even feel a dent.

JULIE CLARE, STOUFFVILLE

I think it's very important to pay our fair share of taxes. But some of these hikes are very high and will force small companies out of business. Some are just holding on as it is. Some sort of phase-in payment period might work.

ROBYN TEW, STOUFFVILLE

I realize paying fair taxes is important. But why can't people who are supposed to be intelligent (politicians and tax departments), and those with economic backgrounds, see a 300-per cent increase in taxes is ludicrous. Why don't they get it? I think we, as a people, need more than a single vote every three or four years to voice our opinions on this type of sham. This will kill some small area businesses.

SHERRY HALL, MARKHAM

THIS WEEK'S QUESTION

In light of the fact the separate school board strike is entering its third week, and public high school teachers are holding rotating strikes, should teaching be declared an essential service, taking away teachers' right to strike?

Submit contributions to Views on the News, fax: (905) 640-5477
E-mail: thetrib@istar.ca

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Practice what you preach

I was reading through the Code of Conduct sent home by the York Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board last school year. Under common expectations, it reads:

• All members of the school community have the right to an education in a friendly school environment free of violence, prejudice, harassment and all forms of abuse. They can expect disagreements to be settled in a fair, non-violent manner.

• All members of the school community are expected to personally and actively encourage positive behaviours, co-operation and the incorporation of Catholic values into daily school life.

• All members of the school community are expected to attend school regularly and to be punctual.

• It is expected that all members of the school community will accept the consequence of their own actions.

If our children do not live by this code they face various levels of discipline, and we, as parents, are expected to support the school's disciplinary procedures.

Our teachers should be role models of this code. It appears to me they've broken many of the above rules. Where is their credibility when they discipline a child for breaking any one of these rules? Do they really expect us to back them up?

Perhaps it's time the teachers learned what they preach.

L. HICKS
UNIONVILLE

Fire striking teachers

The simplest solution to the education crisis would be to wait for all of the teachers in the province to go on strike.

When they do, fire every last one of them. If there are no teachers teaching, their unions would quickly dissolve. With no unions, teachers could be hired back at the \$7 per hour that I make.

This would save millions of dollars that could go into paying the debt, health care, the newly reformed education system, and further tax cuts.

Tell the teachers to shut up and stop whining.

CHARLES TOPPING
STOUFFVILLE

Don't miss Terry Fox run

Tomorrow will mark the 18th annual Terry Fox Run. Participate in memory of an exemplary young Canadian who, 18 years ago, attempted to run across this great country of ours. Or participate for those who cannot — those you've lost to cancer or those who are suffering. But perhaps more importantly, participate for the very reason Terry Fox did: To find a cure for cancer.

Pledge sheets are available at the rec centre, library, Bank of Montreal, Cadet Cleaners, LCBO, and Schell Lumber.

Walk, run, cycle, or blade on the 10-km route starting and finishing at the rec centre. Registration begins at 12:15 p.m. with the official start getting underway at 1 p.m. Call 640-4705.

SANDY SCHELL-KENNEDY,
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