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## LETTERS POLICY

The Sun-Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The Sun-Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

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# OPINION

**Stouffville Sun-Tribune**

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### No raise for councillors

Re: Politicians underpaid: councillor, Nov. 4.

Our politicians are not underpaid. If they envy East Gwillimbury, by all means move there and run.

Councillors are part-time workers. If they want more money, they should get a full time job.

Some of you, including Rob Hargrave, do have full-time jobs. How can you have full-time and part-time jobs at the same time?

I was a councillor and I was happy with my part-time job and pay.

Councillors, be careful. Remember what Mike Harris did to the school board trustees. He fired them all and the new trustees had a flat salary of \$5,000 a year.

If you want a raise, don't work part time. Positions are open in all the other departments within the municipality.

Do not elevate yourselves;

you may become legends, in your own minds.

STEVE PLIAKES  
WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

### Artists appreciate support

On behalf of the artists of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Studio Tour, thanks to the community for making this year's 11th annual tour such a successful event.

The artists enjoyed meeting an encouraging and supportive audience in their studios. Many of you are familiar faces and have become friends.

We wish to thank our generous sponsors who help to make this event possible. The town staff also deserve our thanks for putting up our banners to decorate Main Street.

Many thanks also to The Sun-Tribune for your promotion and coverage of the tour.

We look forward to seeing you all again in 2012.

MARGARET GRANDISON  
STOUFFVILLE



# Politics can become more representative

If you follow politics at all, you'll have noticed the diversity of our government doesn't even come close to mirroring the multicultural face of our communities.

The fact is confirmed by a new report this week that states while "visible minorities" comprise 40 per cent of the Greater Toronto Area population, their representation in political offices is only 11 per cent.

We would need to elect almost four times as many visible minorities, across all levels of government, for visible minorities to hold elected office in proportion to their share of the population, according to the report's author, Ryerson University professor Myer Siemiatycki.

He examined the diversity of candidates and those who won in recent federal, provincial and municipal elections in the GTA, under the auspices of DiverseCity: The Greater Toronto Leadership Project.

The results show our provincial government is best represented, be it only with 26 per cent of MPs comprising visible minorities.

It's a different story for local government, with only 7 per cent — or 18 politicians — of all GTA municipal councillors being visible minorities in a population of 5.5 million, according



Debora Kelly

*Let's get involved, because the reality is, we will only be stronger and more prosperous if our leadership is more representative of, and sensitive to, both the opportunities and complexities of our diverse communities.*

to the Diversity Gap report.

In York Region, Markham grabbed headlines after the last census, laying claim to the highest proportion of visible minorities in the country at 65 per cent of its population. Thirty-one per cent of councillors (four of 13) represent visible minorities — the highest percentage of the 25 municipalities in the study.

Richmond Hill, with a visible minority population of 45.7 per cent, has two of nine minority members, representing 22 per cent of council.

With a visible minority population of 26.5 per cent, Vaughan council's tally is 11 per cent, with one of nine councillors being a visible minority.

Newmarket (15 per cent visible minority), Whitchurch-Stouffville (13.5 per cent), Aurora (13 per cent), King (4.6 per cent), Georgina (4 per cent) and East Gwillimbury (3.5 per cent) have no — as in zero — visible minority representation on council.

Some would say studies such as this only encourage voters to make diversity the primary qualifier of their support. Some may even suggest this report will only create racial tension.

I — like most of you, I'm sure — am offended by the idea we would put politicians into office based on the colour of their skin rather than for the beliefs, values, skills and leadership qualities important to us both personally and to the future of our communities and

country.

But Mr. Siemiatycki and his sponsors will tell you this report is the impetus to create opportunities for new leaders in diverse communities.

In particular, the report recommends municipalities become more pro-active in promoting civic engagement within diverse communities.

DiverseCity, a project of Maytree and Greater Toronto CivicAction Alliance, funded in part by the Ontario government, is already working to bring about change in the face of leadership in the GTA.

It has created leadership development initiatives that are enabling hundreds of new leaders to emerge across the public, corporate and non-profit sectors.

We have to make sure that is happening in York Region.

Let's get involved, because the reality is, we will only be stronger and more prosperous if our leadership is more representative of, and sensitive to, both the opportunities and complexities of our diverse communities.

You can read the report at [www.diversecitytoronto.ca](http://www.diversecitytoronto.ca).

Start the conversation on Twitter with @dlkyorkeditor