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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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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Online spying law costly, unnecessary

Despite being very outspoken on the question of crime, Prime Minister Stephen Harper seems far from eager to discuss the "lawful access" legislation he promised to pass within 100 days of taking office — legislation that will allow online spying without a warrant.

The proposed legislation will force every phone and Internet provider to allow "authorities" to collect the private information of any Canadian, at any time, without a warrant.

This will create legislation that is:

- **Warrantless:** A range of authorities will have the ability to invade the private lives of law-abiding Canadians and our families using wired Internet and mobile devices, without justification.
- **Invasive:** The laws leave our personal and financial information less secure and

more susceptible to cyber-crime.

• **Costly:** Internet services providers may be forced to install millions of dollars worth of spying technology and the cost will be passed down to you.

Canada's privacy commissioner, Jennifer Stoddart, has voiced concerns about online spying repeatedly and has called for strengthened oversight and privacy safeguards in the bills.

Any proposals to expand telecommunications surveillance must be based on a clear need for new powers, which must be demonstrated by verifiable evidence.

And these new powers must include comprehensive internal controls, clear oversight, meaningful deterrents and a system of enforcement.

No judicial oversight in obtaining our personal information. None.

MIKE PATTERSON
STOUFFVILLE



Premier Dad calls credit counselling for help

A cheerful call-taker answers the phone in an office way east of Toronto.

Call taker: Credit counselling, Gloria speaking.

Caller: Hi, Gloria, how are you? It is a wonderful day here in Ontario! I feel truly energized by your vote of confidence.

Gloria: I'm not in Ontario. They outsourced this job overseas. They just tell me to say I'm in Collingwood. Anyway, how may I help you? Are you looking for credit counselling, bankruptcy trustees or maybe the number for SA?

Caller: What's SA?

Gloria: Spendaholics Anonymous.

Caller: I'm calling for advice on a little problem I have regarding a credit situation I'm in that might have a bit of an impact on, well, let's say, my future.

Gloria: Sir, you've called the right place. Our number is toll free and so are our services, thanks to a huge provincial grant. But first, can you tell me where you're calling from?

Caller: Queen's Park.

Gloria: And your name?

Caller: Do I have to give that?

Gloria: Just your first name will do.



Bernie O'Neill

Or make something up. I did.

Caller: It's Dalton.

Gloria: Dalton? (Odd choice.) All right then, "Dalton", how can I help you.

Dalton: I have a little problem with spending money I don't have.

Gloria: And now you are in debt.

Dalton: You might say that.

Gloria: By how much?

Dalton: About 250.

Gloria: \$250,000? Wow! That's a lot. You aren't standing on a ledge somewhere, are you? Shall I call 911?

Dalton: Actually, it's \$250 billion. I'm adding about \$16 billion every year — or a little over a billion a month.

Gloria: More than \$30 million a day.

My goodness!

Dalton: Ya, quite a chunk of change.

Gloria: Let me guess, gambling problem? And now you are in Vegas and some mafia-type is trailing you, trying to collect.

Dalton: No, not Vegas.

Gloria: I know, you're spending it all on a mistress.

Dalton: Who, me?

Gloria: Well, OK, you don't really sound like the type.

Dalton: Thanks.

Gloria: I know — drugs and alcohol. It happens to the best of them.

Dalton: No, it's nothing "disturbing", although a Conservative might say it is.

Gloria: Shoes! You have a propensity for shoe shopping! It's a very modern addiction, although not usually for men. You are a man, aren't you?

Dalton: Yes, I am a man, a man who likes to think of himself as the fatherly type, Premier Dad and all that.

Gloria: Premier Dad, like the No. 1 Dad, you mean?

Dalton: Like the Premier of Ontario.

Gloria: Oh, yes, that guy. His wife's a teacher, no?

Dalton: Yes, she is.

Gloria: And Premier Dad is spending like crazy on new hospitals and

all-day kindergarten for four-year-olds and tuition cuts and soccer fields and community centres and rinks and Pan Am Games and you name it because he wants to keep the economy stimulated and teachers and civil servants employed while giving the people everything they ever wanted, even though the world economy is in the toilet.

Dalton: That's me!

Gloria: So the money's not coming in in sufficient amounts to support this.

Dalton: No, it's not.

Gloria: And you won't raise taxes.

Dalton: No, I won't.

Gloria: And you may not curb spending, not even on all-day kindergarten for four-year-olds, your top priority, despite advice from your friend Dwight.

Dalton: I'd rather not.

Gloria: Have you considered the Opposition's 12-step program?

Dalton: You mean go to roof of the building I'm in now, stand two feet from the ledge, then take 12 steps?

Gloria: That's the one!

Dalton: Hey, is this Andrea Horwath?

Stouffville resident Bernie O'Neill is a York Region Media Group editor.