

• OUR VIEW •

# Tax dollars deserve a little respect

**D**o you ever get the sense the various levels of government don't give our tax dollars the respect they deserve?

It's hard not to get that impression sometimes, especially when one looks at how the public sector spends our money.

Last week's report by Ontario auditor general, Bonnie Lysyk, for example, exposed several examples of questionable expenditures on the part of Premier Kathleen Wynne's Liberal provincial government including a number of poorly overseen public transit and transportation projects, nearly \$50-million on advertisements - some of which were described as "self-congratulatory" - and another \$8 billion on eHealth. The latter figure is especially frustrating both because the agency tasked with facilitating electronic health records has been at the centre of a billion-dollar scandal in the past, and because, after close to a decade-and-a-half in development, it isn't finished yet.

If you're looking for more local examples of taxpayers' funds being put to use in less-than-ideal ways, you'll find them.

For instance, just last week, East Gwillimbury council voted 3-2 to give itself and town staff a 2-per cent raise at a special meeting of council after a closed session. Not only did the timing of the decision afford the public scant opportunity to attend and voice their opinions on the proposal, but it was also based on a review that compared its compensation rates to municipalities that were considerably larger in size. Comparing East Gwillimbury, with a population of some 25,000, to Whitchurch-Stouffville is one thing; comparing it to Richmond Hill, a town of 216,000, is quite another.

That's not to say whether or not these raises are deserved, perhaps they are, but the discussion should have been more widely accessible to show taxpayers a modicum of respect especially when many in the private sector have forgotten what the term salary increase means.

At the end of the day, using taxpayer dollars in questionable ways, whether it's at the municipal, provincial or federal levels, only serves to breed apathy and cynicism.

Our elected representatives and public employees would do well to remember the money they're spending with the decisions they make comes from real people and the supply isn't infinite. We're entrusting them to use it wisely on our behalf.



## 'Coming soon' sign raises questions

Driving home from an appointment in Aurora, I was surprised to see a newly-erected sign proclaiming that a housing development was 'COMING SOON' to Ballantrae, particularly given that I had been to the council meeting when it was first proposed (and highly contentious given the record turnout of residents and the large number who spoke against it) and had just received an email update from my councillor assuring residents the project had yet to receive town approval and that further public input was required.

I immediately contacted my councillor about this apparent discrepancy and he assured me that the signage was simply advertising. I have at least two

## • LETTERS •

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issues with this 'interpretation'.

First, 'COMING SOON' is an assertion, a declarative statement that an event is imminent; it implies no probability, potentiality, or possibility as my councillor attempted to reason. Second, why is a project that could possibly not be approved being advertised as arriving shortly?

One possibility is that the decision to approve has already been made and that all the rest is simply theatre to pander to the (mis)belief that the public has input in what is supposed to be a 'representative' democracy. Perhaps one should ask who, exactly, our politicians are

'representing'?

**Steve Bull**  
Stouffville

### Political correctness threatens freedom, expression

*Re: Editorial: Divisive Politics unCanadian, Nov. 24.*

You demonize Kellie Leitch for her stance on screening potential immigrants for unCanadian values and presume those values would be defined by Leitch which of course she would not have the sole authority to do.

Certain cultural practices rampant in many

other countries are unquestionably barbaric: (FMG) Female genital mutilation, honour killings, underage girls married to mature, even old men, wife burning and acid attacks, LGTBQ abuse and murder, death for apostasy, stoning for adultery, many aspects of Sharia Law, and more.

If you refuse to recognize, talk or write about such practices in the name of so called political correctness, then you in effect condone them. The main stream media is guilty in this respect.

Political Correctness has become a threat to freedom of speech and expression, a primary Canadian value, and a revolt against it is growing rapidly.

**William Goldsmith**  
Newmarket

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