



OPSEU ActionFax is an electronic publication of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union

OPSEU message on taxes hits home

Is it time to restore taxes in Ontario to rebuild public services?

More and more Ontarians are saying “yes” since OPSEU put the issue on the agenda last month.

Tax talk was definitely out in the open at the Ontario Liberal general meeting in Windsor this weekend. During the first plenary session, one Liberal challenged the Premier in front of 800 delegates, asking why the party wasn’t talking about restoring taxes. In breakout discussions, grassroots Liberals were asking, “Why not the tax option?”

Executive Board Members Gino Franche and Evelyn Anger joined Local 143 president Marisa Forsyth and Legislative Liaison Tim Little to get the OPSEU message out. They put OPSEU literature in the hands of every delegate over the weekend.

Toronto *Star* on board

Canada’s largest newspaper has endorsed OPSEU’s position on taxes in three editorials in the last nine days. “It’s a revenue problem,” the Toronto *Star* said today. Editorials last week noted that Tory tax cuts accounted for “the entire fiscal mess [Premier McGuinty] finds himself in. . . . To make Ontario a better place to live requires that everyone make a contribution, not just those who are on the public payroll.”

OPSEU president Leah Casselman agreed. “We are willing to pay our fair share to rebuild public services, but we’ll do it on our tax bills, not at the bargaining table,” she said.

Casselman made the case for restoring taxes in an opinion piece published in the *Star* last Tuesday. Read it at <http://www.opseu.org/rebuild/torstarfeb17.htm>.

The *Star* sells 460,000 copies a day.

“People in London were pretty damn vocal”

Perhaps the best endorsement yet of OPSEU’s position came from participants at a “town hall” meeting in London on Wednesday night, Feb. 18.

The town hall meetings the government has organized to talk about the budget aren’t supposed to discuss restoring taxes, but participants in London didn’t care.

“People in London were pretty damn vocal,” said Lynne Easter-Froats, president of OPSEU Local 116 at the Children’s Aid Society of London and Middlesex. “We talked about the need to raise taxes, particularly as it related to rebuilding public services. That was the general consensus.”

Teachers, nurses, and even bankers were on side with restoring taxes, she said. One passionate speaker said that “it costs more money to maintain poverty than it does to eliminate it. We don’t have a deficit crisis in this province, we have a social crisis.”

Easter-Froats, Local 102 president Jayne McKenzie, and Local 101 president Ann Tavares handed out the OPSEU leaflet, “Basic arithmetic,” which was praised as a “fabulous” resource and was on every table.

Also in attendance were three Liberal MPPs: Chris Bentley, from London West; Deb Matthews, from London North Centre; and Laurel Broten, from Etobicoke-Lakeshore.

Bentley, the Minister of Labour, sits at the Cabinet table. Broten is Parliamentary Assistant to Premier Dalton McGuinty. Matthews was elected president of the Liberal party at the Windsor meeting this weekend. OPSEU’s message is definitely getting around.

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More town halls to come

The government plans five more town hall meetings in the days ahead: in Etobicoke Feb. 24, in Hamilton Feb. 25, in Kitchener-Waterloo March 2, in Strathroy March 4, and in Ottawa on a date to be decided. You are supposed to register beforehand. Phone 1-866-608-4824 to do so.

Some Liberal MPPs may also be holding consultations of their own. Call your MPP's office to find out.

For more information on other consultations, visit <http://www.townhallontario.gov.on.ca>.

Fill out the survey on line

If you can't make it to one of the town hall meetings, you can fill out the survey on line. Go to <http://www.townhallontario.gov.on.ca/english/survey.asp>. Feel free to give the answers you want – even if the survey asks the wrong questions.


Get involved – and get active!

The next provincial budget will not be tabled for another six to eight weeks. There is still plenty of time for OPSEU members to influence the government's course. Use the OPSEU web site at www.opseu.org to send a message to your MPP or a letter to the editor of your local newspaper. Just click on the big red button that says, "Rebuild our Public Services – Join the Campaign."

To find out how you can do more to promote OPSEU's message, contact the OPSEU Executive Board campaign coordinator for your region. Contact information is listed at <http://www.opseu.org/rebuild/coordinators.htm>.



Authorized for distribution:


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