



Ontario Catholic School
Trustees' Association

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November 23, 2009

Pat Hoy
Chair, Standing Committee on Finance
& Economic Affairs
99 Wellesley Street West
Room 1405, Whitney Block
Queen's Park, Toronto, ON M7A 1A2

Dear Mr. Hoy:

The Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association appreciates this opportunity to present a written submission to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs regarding *Bill 212, the Good Government Act, 2009*.

We regret that the extremely short timelines associated with the consideration of this very substantial piece of legislation have made it necessary for us to focus our attention on only one aspect of the Bill, that being the proposed changes to the Municipal Elections Act. If passed, these changes will have a significant impact on candidates for the position of school board trustee in the 2010 municipal election.

OCSTA is generally supportive of the proposed changes regarding the elections calendar, campaign finance and contribution limits, the voting process, and election compliance and enforcement. We are also very supportive of the proposals that will help to make the election campaign and the voting more accessible for both candidates and electors.

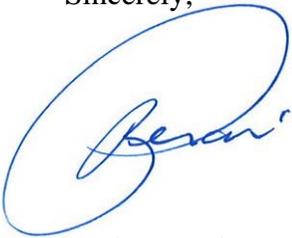
We are particularly pleased to see those aspects of the Bill that will contribute to a more accurate voters' list. OCSTA, together with our three partner school trustee associations, has been strongly advocating for a number of regulatory and legislative changes to improve the quality of the voters' list in regard to school support data. These changes would enable Ontarians to more easily exercise their democratic right to vote and to run for the office of trustee. Although the changes proposed in Bill 212 do not address this particular issue, we are pleased to endorse all efforts to produce a more accurate list.

OCSTA would like to draw to the Committee's attention one important issue arising from the 2006 municipal election but not covered in the current Bill. This deals with a candidate for school trustee changing their school support at the time they file their nomination papers. Such a change appears to be for the purpose of increasing the candidate's chances of election as a trustee by allowing him/her to run for a seat on a board where he/she will have little or no competition. Such a last minute change raises important questions regarding the candidate's actual commitment to that board and its students. Good governance requires the election of trustees truly dedicated to furthering the mission and vision of their school board and not simply their own political ambitions.

OCSTA recommends that the Municipal Elections Act and/or the Education Act be amended to state that candidates for election as school trustee must be qualified for election to the school board for which they are running as of September 1 in the year of an election, after which they may not change their school support until after the election.

Thank you for your attention to our comments on Bill 212. We trust they will be given due consideration by the Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peroni", enclosed within a large, loopy blue oval.

Paula Peroni
President