

## Candidates face election reform

By BRYN WEESE, SUN MEDIA

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The day of reckoning for election finance reformists is nigh.

City Hall's executive committee will vote on bylaw changes Tuesday that, if passed by council later this month, would ban corporate and union donations from municipal elections.

In Toronto, successfully elected councillors alone collectively accepted \$462,183 and \$69,475 in corporate and union donations respectively. The maximum allowable donation for a corporation, union, or individual to any one campaign is \$750, except for Toronto mayoralty candidates who can get \$2,500 donations.

Mayor David Miller didn't accept either corporate or union donations in his 2006 mayoral bid, and said he supports banning them.

### 'RIGHT TO VOTE'

"Why should somebody, because they own a company, be able to give in effect twice the amount of money -- one donation personally and one through their company. That's not fair," Miller said.

"People have a right to vote, and it should be people who make the donations, not businesses."

Councillors Cliff Jenkins, Pam McConnell, Joe Mihevc, Joe Pantalone, Kyle Rae, Karen Stintz, Adam Vaughan, and Michael Walker also didn't accept any corporate or union donations in 2006.

Councillor Doug Holyday, who only accepted \$1,050 in corporate donations from small local businesses he said "do not do business with the city," thinks the vote at council will be close.

"A lot of councillors rely on this funding for their re-elections," he said, noting \$750 isn't enough to "buy a vote.

### 'LOOKS TERRIBLE'

"But it looks terrible when corporations that do business with the city donate to candidates' campaigns," he said. "That definitely has to be stopped."

But Toronto relies far less on corporate and union donations than other municipalities in the GTA.

Corporate donations made up 76.7% of candidates' election finances in Pickering and 62.8% in Vaughan, but only 12.1% in Toronto. Oshawa had the highest percentage of union donations at 4%.

In late October, the province introduced an omnibus bill banning candidates from carrying over unspent campaign donations to future elections starting in 2014. It also limits to \$5,000 the total any corporation, union, or individual can donate in any one jurisdiction.

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## CAMPAIGN DONATIONS

### WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM

Although the City of Toronto will consider banning corporate and union donations next week, Toronto relies on such donations far less than other GTA municipalities. Here is a percentage breakdown of how heavily GTA municipalities relied on each type of campaign donation in the 2006 municipal elections, according to a study by York University prof Robert MacDermid for the Canadian Social Justice Foundation and Vote Toronto.

Municipality Corporations Citizens Unions Candidates

Ajax 22.4 28.1 0 49.5

Brampton 57.5 18.5 0 24

Markham 35.7 53.9 0.2 10.2

Mississauga 49.6 21.5 0.3 28.6

Oshawa 51.5 9.3 4 35.2

Pickering 76.7 18.1 0.5 4.6

Richmond Hill 62.2 19.1 1.2 17.5

Toronto 12.1 68.2 2.2 17.5

Vaughan 62.8 20.9 0.2 16.1

Whitby 50 13.2 1.8 35.1

SOURCE: CSJ FOUNDATION AND VOTE TORONTO

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