

TORONTO CITY COUNCILLORS

MICHAEL WALKER

ST. PAUL'S – WARD 22

CLIFF JENKINS

DON VALLEY WEST – WARD 25

CHIN LEE

SCARBOROUGH-ROUGE RIVER – WARD 41

The Honourable Jim Watson
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
17th Floor
777 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M5G 2E5

December 18, 2008

Dear Mr. Minister,

Re: Election Campaign Finance Reform for the City of Toronto

Further to our meeting of November 24th with you and our earlier letter of November 26th, we submit the following comments. We thank you for your reply letter of December 12, 2008.

To a point you raised on November 24th, we confirmed that the City of Toronto may pass a bylaw to make all municipal election campaign surpluses the property of the municipality (*Section 82.(5), Municipal Elections Act, 1996*). We will be moving a Notice of Motion to that effect at the next City Council in January 2009.

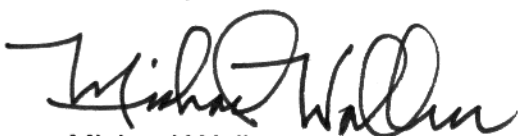
Also, we discovered that the Municipal Elections Act definition of "contribution" does not include the payment of an employee by an employer for work on a political campaign; this is a major issue in Toronto's elections with trade unions paying employees to volunteer (work) on various candidates' campaigns. To close this loophole, "*Section 66.(2) 2.ii*" of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, would need to be deleted and other amendments would need to be made to include this practice in the definition of "contribution" as an in-kind contribution, thereby allowing the City of Toronto to prohibit this practice with a bylaw. We respectfully request that you, Minister, consider making the appropriate amendments to the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.

Lastly, and also further to our meeting of November 24th, the Notice of Motion that we moved in November, "*Election Finance Reform: Bylaw to Prohibit Contributions from Corporations and Trade Unions*", was referred by City Council to the January 5, 2009 meeting of the Mayor's Executive Committee. This referral is particularly unfortunate due to the justification for this new bylaw, including City Council's past support for this initiative, as time is running short to make amendments to our bylaws before the next municipal election in 2010. This issue of electoral reform is just as important to the citizens we represent as when we started in 2002, possibly more so now.

We respectfully request that you consider our points for reform and our timeline.

We look forward to any news on this issue from your office.

Sincerely,



Michael Walker
Councillor – Ward 22
St. Paul's



Cliff Jenkins
Councillor – Ward 25
Don Valley West



Chin Lee
Councillor – Ward 41
Scarborough-Rouge River