

Issue #2 - January 4, 2011

STAND UP

News & Information about the Commission on Quality Public Services & Tax Fairness



After several hectic weeks of preparations and organization the Commission on Quality Public Services and Tax Fairness is ready to hit the road and the first stop is this Thursday Jan. 5 in Kingston.

OPSEU project staff in Toronto and regional staff in Kingston have been working with member-activists and community partners to ensure that the Commission's public hearings and town hall forums will be a memorable success. Already more than a dozen presenters have been confirmed, with more scheduled to have their names added.

"We've been working under some pretty tight deadlines to pull everything together but I'm pleased to say everything is coming together for a fantastic kick-off to the Commission," said OPSEU Region 4 vice president, Dave Lundy. "We've lined up an interesting program that will hammer home the message that good public services are key to a healthy community and reduces inequality."

The Commissioner to the Commission on Quality Public Services and Tax Fairness is Judy Wasylycia-Leis, a former Member of Parliament from Winnipeg from 1997 to 2010 and previously a member of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly from 1986 to 1993.

The afternoon public hearing will take place in the Wilson Room of the main branch of the Kingston Library, 130 Johnson Street. The evening town hall forum is scheduled for the same location starting at 7:00 p.m.

A partial list of those who are confirmed for the Kingston hearings and town hall include:

Debbie Wells , Executive Board Member, Kingston Economic Development Council; President of the Kingston Labour Council	Tom O'Neill , Quinte Detention Centre, Corrections Officer
Dennis Howlett , Coordinator, Canadians for Tax Fairness	Cam Jay , Operator, Ministry of Government Services
Prof. Kathleen Lahey , Faculty of Law, Queen's University	Barb DeRoche , Kingston Hospital
Jim Neill , Councillor, City of Kingston	Pat McGregor , Child and Youth Worker, Pathways for Child and Youth Services
Prof. Paul Young , President, Queen's University Faculty Association	Mike Ladouceur , Scientist, Ministry of Environment
Wendy Shannon , Developmental Services Worker, Ongwanada Hospital	Chris Cormier , Residence Counsellor, Ministry of Education

Message from Smokey

My hometown of Kingston boasts some of the finest educational institutions in Ontario, great recreational facilities, excellent health care facilities, a vibrant commercial core and federal and provincial regional offices that serve not only the residents of the city, but those who live across the eastern part of the province.

All of which makes Kingston a very appropriate choice for the inaugural session on Jan. 5 of the Commission on Quality Public Services and Tax Fairness. That's because the presence of public sector workers and the programs and services they deliver make Kingston the enviable and prosperous community it is.

Much of that is at risk if, as we fear, the Drummond Commission on the reform of public services in Ontario follows through with its marching orders from the McGuinty government to eliminate the provincial deficit by attacking, downsizing, eliminating or privatizing many of our provincially-funded services and programs.

Remarkably, until now there has been no organized response to the Drummond Commission as it marches along its path of destruction. I am delighted, therefore, that the Public Services Foundation of Canada, working with the organizational support of OPSEU, will finally take a very public stand by saying 'no!' to the work of Don Drummond.

We couldn't have a finer Commissioner supervising the

Commission on Quality Public Services and Tax Fairness than Judy Wasylycia-Leis, a longtime elected public servant, first in Manitoba, and then from 1997 to 2010 in the House of Commons in Ottawa. Throughout that time Judy made a name for herself as a selfless advocate for greater public services that brings about equality for all.

I look forward to attending the Commission's first public hearing and town hall forum in Kingston and I will make every effort to attend sessions elsewhere in the province as it goes about its work;

The McGuinty government needs to hear the voices of public sector workers loud and clear. We won't stand by idly as a private sector economist like Don Drummond goes about the task of systematically tearing apart public services that have taken generations to build.

I urge each of you to become involved in the work of the Wasylycia-Leis Commission by making a presentation and by encouraging your members to attend the hearings and town halls when they come arrive in a community near you.

Warren (Smokey) Thomas,
President

Commission visit to Windsor re-scheduled to Feb 2-3

The Commission on Quality Public Services and Tax Fairness has re-scheduled to Feb 2-3 its hearings and town hall forums in Windsor.

Under the original Commission schedule the Windsor visit had been set for January 9. That date has now been pushed back to February. An evening town hall forum is scheduled for Thursday Feb. 2 with the daytime public hearings the following day.

Details on the venue for the Commission will be announced shortly.

The Commission in the news

On Dec. 29 the Kingston Whig Standard published an Opinion piece written by Judy Wasylcia-Leis, Commissioner to the Commission on Quality Public Services and Tax Fairness. Her article explains why, in the face of dramatic cutbacks or privatization of public services courtesy of the Drummond Commission, it is necessary that an alternative viewpoint is needed before the McGuinty government begins

Commission project team

OPSEU has seconded several staff members to the Public Services Foundation of Canada to organize and implement the Hearings and Town Hall Forums. They bring considerable experience to their work and sector leaders and member-activists are encouraged to contact team members for assistance in the preparation for the Commission visiting your community.

Name	Role	1-800-268-7376	Email
Heino Nielsen	Administrator	ext : 8315	hnielsen@opseu.org
Pam Doig	Project Manager		pdoig@opseu.org
Randy Robinson	Strategic Research	ext : 7441	rrobinson@opseu.org
Greg Hamara	Communications & Media Relations	ext : 8777	ghamara@opseu.org
Luisa Quarta	Campaigns & Mobilizing	ext : 8628	lquarta@opseu.org

dismantling public services to meet its deficit targets.

To read the full Opinion essay, please visit: <http://m.thewhig.com/articleDisplay.aspx?e=3420269>

Beware of the ‘Drummond bombshell’

Under a Dec. 30 headline in the Globe and Mail titled “**Don Drummond’s bombshell**” this is what the paper’s Queen’s Park correspondent Adam Radwanski wrote about the work of Don Drummond and his one-man study into “reforming” Ontario’s public service:

“The Liberals have put a lot of eggs in one basket: former bank economist Don Drummond’s commission on reforming public services. Early in the new year, we’ll find out whether they’re still as keen once they see what Mr. Drummond has come up with.”

The whispering suggests he’ll be unsparing in his diagnosis of the province’s fiscal woes, and offer remedies that might be less than politically palatable. The government will have to either accept some of his controversial recommendations, or quickly come up with its own ideas.”

Wendy Elliott	Research/Campaign Member Outreach	ext : 8703	welliott@opseu.org
Cindy Forsyth	Support	ext : 8762	cforsyth@opseu.org
Manzur Malik	Research	ext : 5513	mmalik@opseu.org
Steve Crossman	Research	ext : 5511	scrossman@opseu.org
Christiane Devaud	French Translation	ext : 8269	cdevaud@opseu.org

The Commission on Quality Public Services and Tax Fairness is coming to a community near you. Check out these dates and places and be sure to attend! *Additional dates & locations may be added to the schedule of the Commission*

Kingston - January 5	Toronto - January 30
London - January 10 Town Hall (pm), Jan. 11 Hearings (am)	Hamilton - February 1
Ottawa - January 16	Windsor - February 2-3
Peterborough - January 17 Town Hall (pm), Jan. 18 Hearings (am)	Owen Sound - February 7
Oshawa - January 18 Town Hall (pm), Jan. 19 Hearings (am)	Sudbury - February 9
Thunder Bay - January 23	Sault Ste Marie - February 14

Stay connected!

Be sure to stay up-to-date with the Commission on Quality Public Services and Tax Fairness by visiting www.standupontario.org for the latest news. Learn how you can help OPSEU and the Public Services Foundation of Canada deliver a powerful voice in support of public services and tax fairness. Or call OPSEU at 1-800-268-7376 and ask for Wendy Elliott for more information.

Please post and circulate

This publication is authorized for distribution by:

Warren (Smokey) Thomas
President, OPSEU

