

February 1, 2008

RE: Family Day

To: Ted McMeekin, Sophia Aggelonitis, Andrea Horwath, Tim Hudak & Paul Miller.

The Hamilton Chamber of Commerce and its members understand the importance of families, and the value of maximizing time spent with them, both for ourselves and our employees. Therefore, it is only with careful consideration that we share our concerns about Family Day, as the first such Statutory Holiday looms before us.

Our concerns lay, not just in the cost of this additional holiday (a cost borne by employers throughout this province, both private and public sector) but also with the process by which the decision was made.

Cost estimates of an additional statutory holiday, an 11% increase to the previously legislated paid holidays, have been varied but, according to members of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, will be significant. **It is estimated that the impact to Hamilton "will cost the city upwards of \$750,000 in extra wages. If it snows on Feb. 18, the price jumps another \$200,000."**

Additionally, a Guelph manufacturer has estimated it will cost his company \$160,000 in lost productivity; the Timmins Chamber of Commerce has estimated businesses in its city will incur \$1 million in lost wages; and the City of Brantford has calculated the holiday will cost its taxpayers \$400,000 in lost city production and \$40,000 in overtime.

As the government has stated on many occasions, including during announcements regarding the staged increases of the minimum wage, the most important thing for businesses is stability, and to have the ability to plan ahead for their upcoming business cycle. Sadly, in this case, insufficient time was provided for employers in this province to factor in such dramatic cost increases. Furthermore, information regarding the new holiday has been incomplete and confusing, perhaps as a result of the haste with which this legislation was enacted, making planning even more difficult.

The Government of Ontario has justified the additional holiday by correctly pointing out that British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan, each enjoy 9 statutory holidays. While this is true, Ontario companies do not face their strongest competition from companies in these three provinces. They're competing with the world. And every incremental increase in the cost of doing business in Ontario, further undermines the abilities of our entrepreneurs to create jobs here in this province.

The true economic impact of this decision will not be known for some time. However, what is most disheartening to the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce and our members is the lack of study and consultation prior to the October 2007 announcement regarding Family Day. Nor has the government clearly demonstrated that it had exercised due diligence prior to the announcement, in determining the true ramifications of implementing the additional holiday.

We know that you value the opinions of Ontario businesses and the contributions they make to the economy and quality of life of this province. Therefore we hope and expect that in the future, there will be more effort made by members of the government to contact constituents prior to the announcement of any similarly broad based measures.

Sincerely
Tyler.....

cc:
Premier Dalton McGuinty
Mr. John Tory, Official Leader of the Opposition
Mr. Howard Hampton, Leader, Ontario New Democratic Party
Mr. Len Crispino, President and CEO, Ontario Chamber of Commerce