

OPINION
& EDITORIALS



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The CENTRAL NEWSPAPER

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It's time to reform Canada's automatic citizenship rule...

This week at the Committee on Citizenship and Immigration (CIMM), the Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner, Conservative Shadow Minister for Immigration, put forward a simple change to the Citizenship Act to fix Canada's outdated automatic citizenship rules. Right now, anyone born in Canada gets Canadian citizenship, even if both parents are only here on short-term permits or have no status at all. Canada is now an outlier on this issue. The UK, France, Germany, New Zealand and Australia all require at least one parent to be a citizen or a permanent resident. With over three million people here on temporary visas and an already backlogged system, this outdated rule presents yet another strain on our immigration system that Canada simply can't handle. The responsibility sits with the Liberals, who broke the system and pushed a post-national view that shrugs at the notion of a shared Canadian identity and the duties that come with it. Citizenship requires a real connection to Canada and it's just plain wrong that people are travelling to Canada with the express purpose of having a child, just to obtain citizenship - which has skyrocketed by 590% under the Trudeau-Carney Liberals. But even this whopping figure does not account for the number of children born to two non-permanent resident parents, such as international students or 'Temporary Foreign Workers'. With over 7% of Canada's population here on temporary status, something needs to change. This newspaper believes that being a Canadian is a great privilege, and we deserve clear rules that protect the value of citizenship. It is also worth noting that we need to protect the integrity of our healthcare system and make housing more affordable. We also need to ensure that rights and responsibilities are both taken seriously. Shamefully, the Liberals prefer the status over fixing their chain-migration legislation. We need to restore the value of Canadian citizenship and the immigration consensus that the Liberals broke by finally setting some clear rules.

Mark Carney recycles failed Liberal economic ideas...

Let's talk about the economy for just a moment. In 2015, the Liberals told us deficit spending was necessary to build affordable housing and create economic growth. After a decade of literally doubling the size of our national debt, inflation-adjusted investment per worker fell by an unbelievable 10.8%. That's the largest decline in the G7 group of nations. Meanwhile, in the United States, per-worker investment rose 22.9%. This means that Canadian workers now get just 55 cents of investment for every dollar an American worker receives. Despite his track record of failure, Mark Carney is choosing to double down, repackaging the same decade-old, Liberal ideas with shiny new slogans such as "Spend less and invest more." His massive deficits, disguised as investment, are creating the same disastrous results. How? Consider this: 86,000 more Canadians are out of work since Mark Carney broke his promise to somehow build a nation of prosperity. It's all because investment is fleeing - with \$610 billion of net investment going to the United States over the last decade. Every dollar of investment pushed out of Canada is a dollar that isn't creating jobs for our workers or delivering higher wages for our people. As federal Liberal Party policies push wages down, their out-of-control spending does nothing but push taxes and inflation up, taking more money out of our pockets. This newspaper calls on the Prime Minister to stop copying the failed Liberal Party playbook and to finally recognize his deficits are driving the cost of living to heights that are unsustainable. We can't afford more bait-and-switch political manipulation that simply promises one thing, but delivers quite the opposite. Time is running out.

The hope for a negotiated peace in the Gaza Strip...

The first phase of a US-brokered peace plan for the war-torn Gaza Strip has been agreed upon in general terms. It centers upon a ceasefire and a hostage-for-prisoner exchange. This initial step is considered urgent and necessary by many, but major obstacles to a lasting peace remain. Multiple parties hold different perspectives on the conditions required for a resolution and its potential for success. Those who support the current agreement or advocate for a broader peace deal cite the following reasons for its urgency. After two years of devastating conflict, the immediate cessation of violence is considered paramount to save lives. The ongoing war has led to immense casualties, and an end to the bloodshed would allow the rapid increase of food, water, and medical aid into the territory. For many Israelis and Palestinians, the end of active combat will offer a profound sense of relief, allowing them to hope for safety after prolonged violence and uncertainty. The recent agreement covers only the initial stages of a larger plan. Significant obstacles prevent it from being a comprehensive or guaranteed solution. The agreement does not address core, deeply contentious issues such as the disarmament of Hamas or the future governance of Gaza. Both sides harbor deep mistrust. Some Israelis fear that Hamas will rearm and that releasing prisoners will lead to future attacks, while some Palestinians are skeptical that the ceasefire will hold, given past failures. The success of the agreement is dependent on the ability of international mediators to enforce future phases, which past experience shows can be extremely difficult. While the recent ceasefire agreement offers an immediate, albeit fragile, end to the most intense fighting, characterizing it as the "best and only option" is an oversimplification. The deal represents a necessary and urgent step to save lives and address the humanitarian crisis. However, it is an incomplete solution, leaving the most difficult and divisive issues to future, highly uncertain negotiations. A lasting peace in the region remains a distant and challenging prospect.

Can Durham Region taxpayers afford rising policing costs?

There is merit in suggesting the current Durham Regional Police Service budget is unsustainable. Significant property tax increases driven by escalating policing costs have not always been met with proportional improvements in crime solving. The 2025 budget included a significant increase, and discussions continue about balancing these costs against the needs of other essential services for our rapidly growing region. Residents have spoken out against what many see as an unacceptable financial burden resulting from unrealistic and never-ending demands for more money. This suggests taxpayers may not be receiving an adequate return on their investment. The budget guideline for 2025 included significant cuts to balance the budget, implying that the initial request for taxpayer dollars was much too high, which is a trend we have born witness to year after year. Durham is a rapidly growing community, and the Police Services Board, chaired by Ajax Mayor Shaun Collier, continues to argue the substantial budget numbers are needed to manage the challenges of growth and to maintain current service levels. All the while, discussions at Durham Region Council and within their various committees have focused on the need for meaningful change to address unsustainable spending. The Region is suffering the financial challenges associated with rapid population growth, which makes it absolutely essential to balance investments in all essential services. The police are one of many such services.

The CENTRAL NEWSPAPER welcomes your submissions and letters
As The CENTRAL works to provide an interesting and accurate reflection of the communities that make up Durham Region through our weekly news pages, we invite local citizens to participate in the conversation through submissions and letters to the editor.
We truly appreciate and support your efforts to make The CENTRAL your own.
Letters and submissions are welcome at newspaper@ocentral.com

Letters To The Editor:

WHAT IS ON YOUR MIND? Send letters to newspaper@ocentral.com
Dear Editor:

A concerned resident recently made an urgent appeal to Scugog council to save the Blackstock arena, suggesting that the local residents and taxpayers believe their facility has been neglected for far too long. The appeal offers the wider community a better perspective on the cherished arena and its importance to the local community. They noted this township asset was recognized as a top priority in the 2018 Parks, Recreation and Culture Strategic Master Plan, as well as part of the Council's Strategic Directives, for enhancements to new and existing recreational facilities, to provide activities for all ages. All talk, no action.

The people of Blackstock are right to be upset about the lack of investment in their arena over recent years. At the September GPA meeting of council, it was noted that the potential failure of the 60-year-old refrigeration plant at the Blackstock arena would close down the facility, at least temporarily. It is astounding that a conversation was not started decades earlier about this ageing piece of infrastructure, with preparations made for its replacement. During the tenure of the last council, a conceptual drawing (now collecting dust) for a new state-of-the-art Blackstock arena, with an NHL size ice pad, cost Scugog taxpayers thousands of dollars. The idea for a new arena was predicated on obtaining grants from higher levels of government. However, with a population of fewer than 1000 people in Blackstock, it was no surprise the grant applications failed.

The people of Scugog are passionate about their public facilities. Last month our council ignored public opposition and hired a consultant at a cost of \$100,000+ to determine the future of the Port Perry fairgrounds park, a facility that has been managed successfully for well over 100 years by the Port Perry Agricultural Society (PPAS) at their own expense, saving the taxpayers untold dollars in maintenance costs. Council claim the hiring of a consultant will capture the voices from many more residents, particularly those who may not want their opinions and/or names made public. Will the latter win the day? It's a pity council did not apply their reasoning and capture the peoples' voice to determine if they wanted a consultant involved in the first place. Unlike other late emergency budget items, council did not engage in a lengthy discussion about the funding. The wheels of government usually move slowly but the hiring of this consultant for a visioning exercise was quickly arranged in favour of what council wanted.

The hiring of a consultant to engage the public while our paid representatives watch from the sidelines is a way to create division. In the end, our representatives may choose their own solution to settle the matter. It is an old play.

Scugog council should do the right thing, renew the PPAS lease and 'empower the new generation' (the mayor's gala theme this year) of young farmers to continue their vision and enhancement of the Port Perry fairgrounds, as presented to the public earlier this year. Stop wasting our money and cancel the Darwin Pivot consultant who may recommend, as stated by the mayor, "... to keep the fairgrounds exactly as it is..." Do we need to spend \$100,000 to find this out? It is an insult by council to the taxpayers of Scugog.

The most efficient way to gauge public opinion is for council to hold public open house meetings and determine directly from discussion and a show of hands what the community wants. If Blackstock arena meets the criteria to provide a service to the local people in its current form, council could use the savings from the maintenance costs of the fairgrounds, and the \$100,000 consultant visioning costs, and invest those monies into the Blackstock arena as a start toward rehabilitation. It's a win-win scenario for the Scugog community.

(It should be noted that if \$1M of our unused taxes had not been transferred into the Municipal Projects reserve last year, the hiring of a visioning consultant would likely not have occurred.)

Why are some politicians so reckless with the taxpayers' hard earned dollars? Recently at a Durham Regional council meeting, a number of residents expressed their frustration with yearly property tax increases which show little or no return. Quite simply, the delegates had had enough, a sentiment shared by many. Earlier in the year, the same council discussed a \$3 million request to further the second phase of the gondola (cable car) transit project for Simcoe Street in Oshawa. That project will cost billions of dollars if it comes to fruition, despite ridicule and consternation from the public. In that discussion, a councillor expressed a desire to be included in an investigatory trip to Paris, France, if offered, to take a ride on their recently installed gondola. In response, a fellow councillor made clear, that if such a delegation was needed, the personnel involved must have a solid understanding of the technology and ensure a good return on investment for the taxpayers. Public investment in the gondola project must not stretch to a trip to Paris just to tick another travel box at the expense of Durham Region taxpayers. Frivolous comments have no place in government when discussing projects funded from the public purse. It is disrespectful.

The Blackstock arena and the Port Perry fairgrounds are under threat. Community support for the renewal of the PPAS lease, and empowering the new generation of young farmers to enhance the fairgrounds will save taxpayer costs. Over \$5M of our unused taxes has accrued with interest in the township's coffers since 2019, monies that could be used to save Blackstock arena. To Scugog Council and staff, stop bleeding our tax dollars for unrealistic plans and bad ideas. Engage directly with the people you are supposed to represent and show fiscal responsibility. Politicians like to leave their mark before they leave office. Make Blackstock arena that mark

Sharon Dodgson-Smith

Dear Editor:

What is the Doug Ford PC Party "Skills Development Fund" really "funding"? Clients of lobbying firms linked to Ford and his family have been arbitrarily given tens of millions of taxpayers dollars of taxpayer money. Clients of a lobbying firm owned by Ford's campaign manager, Kory Teneycke, have received more than \$100 million of taxpayer money.

Two lobbying firms led by former chiefs of staff to Ford's nephew also secured millions of dollars of taxpayer money. And that's just the start.

Two clients of the lobbying firm Michael Diamond - who was undemocratically selected to be PC President by Ford after serving as Ford's leadership campaign manager in 2018 - received about \$31 million.

Six clients of the lobbying firm of Ford's former executive assistant Nico Fidani-Diker, were also given \$21.6 million of taxpayer money. Four clients of the lobbying firm of Ford's former deputy chief of staff Amin Massoudi, received almost \$21.5 million of taxpayer money.

The Ford PCs claim that the purpose of the \$2.5 billion in taxpayer money they have handed out is to supposedly "fund the training in workers in sought after fields." But of course, this is a lie. If the fields were "sought after," the funding by government using taxpayer money wouldn't be necessary.

In a scathing report by Ontario's Auditor General, the real motivation of this waste of taxpayer money has been revealed - it is simply a slush fund used as a tool by the Ford PCs to enrich their well-connected lobbyist friends.

While the Ford PCs continue to splurge on their friends by giving them millions of taxpayer dollars, Ontarians continue to struggle to keep up with increases in their daily costs - from rising hydro rates, to the Ford PC's provincial carbon tax - with no relief in sight offered by this disastrous Ford PC government. The Ford PCs are just like the Carney Liberals - two sides of the same corrupt coin.

Anthony Zambito