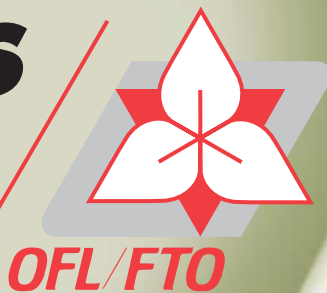


IT'S YOUR MONEY



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Provincial and municipal plans to let profit-seeking companies take over publicly-provided services affect every city, town, village and township in Ontario. With municipal elections coming up on November 13, 2006, you should ask your local candidates if they would advocate or support using public money in our taxes — to divert public services into private profits.

Ask your municipal candidates and school board trustees:

1. Do you support public control and accountability of public schools, including public ownership and operation?
2. Do you support publicly-administered not-for-profit health care, including public ownership, operation and accountability of new hospital facilities?
3. Do you support keeping vital water services as not-for-profit, municipally-run and owned services?
4. Are you willing to pressure the provincial government to provide stability in the home care sector by eliminating competitive bidding and reducing the share of profit-driven delivery of home care services?

Every community needs high quality public services, publicly-owned and operated, like hospitals, schools, roads, water systems, transit systems. Private companies are diverting much needed public funding used to run these services into ever-increasing corporate profits.

Take, for example, what has happened to home care, a service that is vital to seniors and persons with disabilities. For-profit companies have taken over a majority of home care services, replacing trusted not-for-profits, such as the Red Cross and the Victorian Order of Nurses (VON). The result is a dramatic escalation in costs, forcing government to make deep cuts to housekeeping and personal support – measures that have long kept patients in their homes and out of more expensive institutional beds. As taxpayers, we are denied access to any information on how much these companies are paid for these services.

Over and over privatization of public services fails to live up to its promises. This is what happened in Brampton at the new William Osler Health Centre. The building of this Centre is a public-private partnership deal – the public pays the private partner to finance, build and operate the facility. The details of the ‘deal’ remain a secret to taxpayers. Yet we do know that upon completion, the Brampton hospital was more than a year late, it is smaller than planned, has fewer beds and ran over budget by \$174 million.

Privatizing public services is not good for working families. It won’t make health care or education better quality, more efficient or less expensive. Costs will go up, quality will go down, good local jobs will be lost, user fees will increase and information about how taxpayers’ money is being used will continue to be kept secret.

Some municipalities are beginning to learn from their mistakes. Hamilton City Council voted to return its water system to public hands in 2004 after the city and its residents suffered through a decade of high costs, risk avoidance by private operators, environmental damage and secrecy.

In this election, beware of municipal politicians who claim that private solutions are the only way to afford public services. There are public alternatives that provide better service at a cost well below these complex private deals.