

Ontario Young Liberals

**OYL Submission to the
OLP Policy Committee**

August, 2008



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Carol Golench
OLP Vice-President Policy

Dear Carol,

The OYL is pleased to submit our policies for consideration for the OLP Policy Rally. The OYL welcomes the opportunity to be included in this process and we are grateful for the assistance you have provided.

These policies have gone through a comprehensive and grassroots process where they were passed at regional policy parliaments, debated at SummerFling, and then voted on by the members of the OYL. We had over 200 members present at the 2007 and 2008 Summer Flings participate in the policy debate and voting process. These policies have all been scrutinized by our members, as well as compared and contrasted to other provincial policies. The OYL takes pride in our policy process as we believe it provides excellent opportunities for grassroots involvement, therefore producing better quality policies. The members of the OYL believe that these policies should all be duly considered by OLP. We believe that these policies are not just in the best interests of the youth members of the Ontario Liberal Party, but that they would benefit the lives of all citizens of the great province of Ontario.

I have done my best to match up the ratified OYL policies to the 'sub-themes' that were developed. In two cases, we have more than one policy per sub-theme. However, I have included proposed solutions for these two cases.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. On behalf of the authors of these policies, the OYL 2008-2009 executive, and all members of the OYL, we look forward to an exciting policy debate in the near future.

All the best,

Chris Drew
OYL Policy Director, 2008-2009

cc: Policy Authors for the OLP Policy Committee Submission
cc: OYL Executive 2008-2009

OYL POLICY INDEX

Poverty Sub-themes:

1. Every Child Counts

Description: Few issues are as important as ensuring that all children in Ontario have the opportunity and ability to truly fulfill their potential. How do we ensure that every child in Ontario comes to school ready to learn and leaves with the skills and experiences necessary to compete in a knowledge economy?

- i. OYL Policy “J”: Awareness and Reduction of Anxiety Disorders Among Youth - PAGE 7

Author: Kate Hatcher, McMaster Young Liberals

- ii. OYL Policy “I”: Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Post-Secondary Students – PAGE 8

Author: Meghan Spika O’Keefe, Guelph University Young Liberals

Note: the OYL requests that either these policies be consolidated with other policies, or be allowed to merge into one policy dealing with children with autism and anxiety disorders.

2. Navigating the Transitions

Description: The first step in moving forward is knowing which direction to take. For many people, some of the most difficult periods in life to navigate are the transitions. Which programs and policies will help people make critical changes such as moving from social assistance to work or from high school to post-secondary education?

- i. OYL Policy “L”: Policy on Enhancing Civic Education (Provincial) – PAGE 9

Author: Damien O’Brien, Brock University Young Liberals

3. Strengthening our local communities

Description: Vibrant communities are led by local champions who bring business, NGOs, and governments together to plan and respond to local needs. What can government do to promote local leadership or help our communities deal with issues related to poverty?

- i. OYL Policy “Q”: Northern Youth Strategy (Provincial) – PAGE 10

Author: Joey Montpellier, Nickel Belt Young Liberals

Prosperity Sub-themes

1. The Green Economy

Description: We are at the dawn of a new era of green innovation. Ontarians know that higher energy prices and global climate change present us with challenges, but they also recognize them as economic opportunities for our innovators and entrepreneurs. How do we ensure that Ontario becomes a green technology leader, turn good ideas into marketable products, and best leverage our capacity for green innovation into an economic advantage for the 21st century?

- i. OYL Policy “P”: Tax Shifting for Ontario: Providing Bold Leadership for Addressing Climate Change (Provincial) – PAGE 11

Author: Joey Montepellier and Danielle Tackas, Nickel Belt and Brant Young Liberals

- ii. OYL Policy “E”: Recycling Policy (Provincial) – PAGE 12

Author: Ryan Dyck, Ottawa-Vanier Young Liberals

Note: the OYL requests that either these policies be consolidated with other policies, or that OYL Policy “E” is taken for this sub-theme as it received a higher number of votes at the 2008 OYL SummerFling.

2. The Skills Opportunity

Description: Ontario’s greatest asset — and the key to future economic growth — are the education and skills of our people. Many high-paying jobs in Ontario remain unfilled due to a shortage of skilled workers. How do we take advantage of this tremendous opportunity and ensure our workforce remains the best educated and most highly-skilled in the Western world?

- i. OYL Policy “B”: Increase Early Outreach and Information about Post-Secondary Education – PAGE 13

Author: Ryan Dunn, St. Paul’s Young Liberals

3. The Infrastructure Foundation

Description: Our roads and bridges, transit networks, electricity grids, border crossings, and water and sewage systems are the foundation of Ontario’s economy. How do we continue to support investment in infrastructure, ensuring that we create jobs in the short term and lay the groundwork for economic growth in the future?

Note: None submitted

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OYL SummerFling Policies (Provincial) Not Included:

- i) OYL Policy “F”: Policy to Amend the Ontario Human Rights Code to Include ‘gender identity’ and ‘gender expression’ as Prohibited Grounds of Discrimination (Provincial)

Author: Ryan Dyck, Ottawa-Vanier Young Liberals

Rational: this policy could not be placed into a ‘sub-theme’ as none are compatible with this policy.

- ii) OYL Policy “K”: First Person Consent Organ Donation Policy (Provincial)

Author: Jill Roberts, McMaster Young Liberals

Rational: this policy could not be placed into a ‘sub-theme’ as none are compatible with this policy.

- iii) OYL Policy “H”: Childhood and Youth Obesity (Provincial)

Author: Meghan Spilka O’Keefe, Guelph University Young Liberals

Rational: this policy was not adopted at SummerFling by the members and therefore other policies for this sub-theme must be considered.

- iv) OYL Policy “M”: Proactive Health Regulations (Provincial)

Author: Husain Aboghodieh and Peter Howie, Mississauga Erindale Federal Young Liberals and Oak Ridges-Markham Federal Young Liberals

Rational: this policy was not adopted at SummerFling by the members and therefore other policies for this sub-theme must be considered.

OYL Policy “J”: Awareness and Reduction of Anxiety Disorders Among Youth (Provincial)

Submitted By: Kate Hatcher, McMaster Young Liberals

WHEREAS anxiety disorders affect 12% of the population causing mild to severe impairment. While there are 6 types of anxiety disorders, as a group they represent the most common of all mental illnesses’;

WHEREAS anxiety disorders are more prevalent among women, 16%, as opposed to men, 9%, it is among youth where anxiety has significantly increased. Between 1987 and 1994 there was a 52% increase in hospitalization for girls under the age of fifteen with anxiety disorders; a 49% increase for boys;

WHEREAS a study for 1999/2000 shows that the hospitalization for youth of both genders between the ages of 15-24 reached 8.4 million across the country for anxiety disorders;

WHEREAS anxiety disorders are common they have a detrimental economic impact. Anxiety disorders contribute to lost productivity due to both time away from work and unemployment. Other associated costs include claims on insurance;

WHEREAS anxiety disorders can be taxing on the health care system due to heavy use of the emergency department and primary care this contributes to significant health care costs;

WHEREAS anxiety disorders can be effectively treated in the community setting. This treatment is imperative in order to enhance the quality of life of individuals with anxiety disorder. Proper treatment can also help to prevent common secondary disorders, such as depression and substance use and abuse; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Ontario Young Liberals advocate on behalf of creating community networks. These networks shall be where medical experts and professionals within the school systems can receive education, have access to adequate resources, and work in collaboration in order to properly diagnose and treat young individuals with anxiety disorder; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the OYL encourages the provincial government to organize and run campaigns on youth anxiety to raise public awareness among parents and youth alike.

Category: Poverty – Every Child Counts

OYL Policy “I”: Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Post-Secondary Students (Provincial)

Submitted By: Meghan Spilka O’Keefe, University of Guelph Young Liberals

WHEREAS autism spectrum disorders (ASD) is a complex neurological disorder that usually appears during the first three years of life;

WHEREAS people with ASD tend to have difficulty relating to others, problems with speech and non-verbal communication, and limited and repetitive interests and behaviour, such as hand flapping and rocking;

WHEREAS ADS affects nearly 1 in 165 children;

WHEREAS the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) provides funding for services to families with children that have ASD. Some of these services include summer and March Break camps;

WHEREAS a partnership between MCYS and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) has led to the creation of the Ontario College Graduate Certificate Program in Autism and Behavioural Science at six colleges or college consortia across the province;

WHEREAS more than 100 students graduated in 2006 from the Ontario College Graduate Certificate Program in Autism and Behavioural Science, and by 2008-2009 the target enrolment will be at least 200;

WHEREAS students attending school and working towards their Graduate Certificate Program in Autism and Behavioural Science need summer employment, preferably in their field; and,

WHEREAS Ontario has invested more than \$3.9 million this year in seasonal camps and other services that provide breaks for families of children with ASD; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT another partnership is formed between MCYS and MTCU for summer camps for children with ASD and students studying towards their Graduate Certificate Program in Autism and Behavioural Science;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this joint initiative between MCYS and MTCU provide grants for students working towards their Graduate Certificate Program in Autism and Behavioural Science to work for their summer acting as ‘camp councillors’ to ‘campers’ with ASD; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the families of children with ASD receive grants to attend these summer camps.

Category: Poverty – Every Child Counts

OYL Policy “L”: Policy on Enhancing Civic Education (Provincial)

Submitted By: Damien O’Brien, President, Brock Young Liberals

WHEREAS in any democracy, a citizen has rights and responsibilities;

WHEREAS it is essential that in a democracy, citizens must be empowered through impartial education and knowledge to accurately vote their conscience;

WHEREAS when any citizen chooses not to vote, our democracy suffers for their voice having not been counted;

WHEREAS there is an unacceptable lack of emphasis in the public education system regarding democracy, civics and a practical knowledge of politics; and,

WHEREAS there is a great opportunity in the Province of Ontario to enhance the public education system to empower elementary and secondary school students in advance of them gaining the right and assuming the responsibility of voting; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Ontario Young Liberals call for the Government of Ontario to place demonstrably greater emphasis on civics and civic education in public education curriculum in both the elementary and secondary levels;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the OYL believes that new and existing teaching methods, including extra-curricular activities that are designed to emphasize the value of democracy, an appreciation of citizenship and a practical knowledge of politics should be used in addition to conventional methods of education;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the OYL believes that this curriculum, its development and delivery must be free of any partisan bias, and a code of ethics must be developed to enforce this; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the OYL calls on the Government of Ontario to create a terms of reference for a body to be established to steward the implementation of this policy including all relevant and necessary stakeholders (including but not limited to youth stakeholder groups).

Category: Poverty – Navigating the Transitions

OYL Policy “Q” Northern Youth Strategy (Provincial)

Submitted By: Joey Montpellier, Nickel Belt Young Liberals

WHEREAS the 2001 Census Research Series produced by the Northern Boards from 2002 to 2004 showed that Northern Ontario is a region undergoing important transformations;

WHEREAS Economic growth in Northern Ontario has been significantly less than the provincial average since the 1970s;

WHEREAS workforce development is seen as crucial to economic development by most people in the region;

WHEREAS the rate of youth out-migration has increased substantially since 1996;

WHEREAS according to available data, current rates of youth out-migration has declined since 2001, however it remains extremely high;

WHEREAS Northern Ontario represents more than 88% of Ontario’s land mass, however, it only represents 6.5% of the province’s total population (2006 Census);

WHEREAS this percentage represents a decrease from 6.9% in 2001;

WHEREAS study shows that only a small segment of youth out-migrations is not related to economic issues; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the provincial Liberal government aggressively attack this issue on two axes; education subsidies and diversification of the northern economy;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the provincial Liberal government offers significant education subsidies to students who are ready and willing to work in northern Ontario for 5 years after the completion of their post secondary degree; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the provincial Liberal government increases its investments to help diversify the northern economy so that our youth can find employment in other areas than the resource based industries.

Category: Poverty –Strengthening Our Local Communities

OYL Policy “P”: Tax Shifting for Ontario: Providing Bold Leadership for Addressing Climate Change (Provincial)

Submitted By: Joey Montpellier, Nickel Belt Young Liberals and Danielle Takacs, Brant Young Liberals

WHEREAS numerous scientific experts and reports have documented that man-made climate change is occurring due to large increases in greenhouse gas emissions over the past several decades;

WHEREAS these same experts have warned that if worldwide greenhouse gas emissions are not very soon stabilized and reduced by at least 20 percent below 1990 levels by 2020 then there is a greatly increased risk of more severe natural disasters, species extinction, food crop devastation, rising sea levels that would force island and Arctic indigenous communities to migrate and a host of other factors contributing to human suffering;

WHEREAS with each passing year the cost of acting on climate change becomes much more expensive as the “Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change” noted that failure of countries to invest at least 1% of their GDP into environmental initiatives risks global GDP being approximately 20% lower than it might have otherwise been;

WHEREAS the Ontario Liberal Party committed in the 2007 Ontario Election to reduce emissions that cause climate change by 6% below 1990 levels by 2014, 15% below by 2020 and 80% by 2050;

WHEREAS many environmentalists and economists agree that, while the planned closing of coal power plants will reduce emissions, it will also be required to put a real price on carbon in order to achieve the emissions reductions Premier McGuinty has committed to; and,

WHEREAS British Columbia and Quebec have put in place carbon taxes that have been widely praised and well received; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Ontario Young Liberals lobby the Ontario Government to adopt a revenue neutral tax shifting plan that would place new taxes on energy use (but not gasoline at the pumps), while giving all the resulting revenue back in income and corporate tax cuts, additional financial support for the manufacturing sector, and enhanced income supports for those with lower incomes, fixed incomes and those living in rural and northern regions of Ontario; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT in the event that the Liberal Party of Canada forms the next government of Canada and implements a tax shifting plan at the federal level, that the OYL lobby the Ontario Liberal Government to embrace this plan and work to harmonize its environmental policies with those of the Liberal Party of Canada.

Category: Prosperity – Greening the Economy

OYL Policy “E”: Recycling Policy (Provincial)

Submitted By: Patrick Levesque, Ottawa-Vanier Young Liberals

WHEREAS apartments often do not provide adequate recycling facilities for their tenants and many residents do not recycle simply because the service is not adequately offered to them;

WHEREAS there is often little impetus for landlords to provide such services, as there is no legal framework or ramification for not providing recycling facilities; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the provincial government establish a fund to assist municipalities with implementing extensive and easy recycling programs in apartments and other multi-unit residences, where none already exist;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this program extend to other apartments and residences that have substandard recycling programs as well; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this campaign act as a regional pilot program that would eventually expand to other regions and sectors.

Category: Prosperity – Greening the Economy

OYL Policy “B”: Increase Early Outreach and Information about Post-Secondary Education (Provincial)

Submitted by: Ryan Dunn, St. Paul’s Young Liberals

WHEREAS low-income students tend to have low participation rates in post-secondary education;

WHEREAS recent government initiatives seek to address the financial barriers to postsecondary education for low-income students;

WHEREAS low-income students do not have access to the same cultural capital as middle and high income students;

WHEREAS early outreach and increased information about post-secondary education for low-income students can reduce the void in cultural capital; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Ontario Liberal Party look to increase early outreach and information about post-secondary education to all students in grade 7 and 8.

Category: Prosperity – The Skills Opportunity

Background Research: Increase Early Outreach and Information about Post-Secondary Education

Definitions

Cultural Capital: The concept of cultural capital is simple: children pick up the attitudes, habits and modes of thought and speech from one’s parents and other family members. Therefore, parents and family members who are educated tend to have a greater degree of cultural capital. Moreover, parents who are educated tend to have higher income levels. Therefore, income tends to be, but not always, directly correlated to education levels.

Relevance

The concept of cultural capital affects children in two ways: vocabulary and comprehension, and ambition.

Vocabulary and Comprehension

Children from more educated families tend to hear more words than those from poorer families, in that same vein, the level of discussion that occurs and the comprehension of abstract ideas that children pick up is increased. Evidence shows that at age 15 students from more educated families have a higher reading comprehension than those in poorer families. In Canada, this gap is equivalent to one year in schooling. This gap can curtail the participation rates of youth from poorer families because of the classroom divide that occurs.

Ambition

Children who come from educated families are assumed to take the same educational path as their parents. At a very early age it is projected that children will go off and complete at least one post-secondary degree. This is not the same for students who come from families without post-secondary education. The assumption that one will go on to pursue post-secondary studies subconsciously shapes the way they approach their studies, namely, high school is a step before university. In order to take that step certain academic standards must be achieved.

The Power of Information and Early Outreach

Early out reach programs such as Head Start and No Child Left Behind are aimed at closing the cultural capital gaps. These programs aim at giving students the necessary skills, confidence, and environment to examine all possibilities with the utmost potential. More recently, Dr. Phil Oreopoulos from the University of Toronto has been conducting research about financial information and behavioral changes among low income families.

He has started to expand his research to measure the impact of information on postsecondary participation. Preliminary results from the financial information study indicates that low-income families tend to have less information about social services and financial assistance than middle and high income families. The preliminary research about education and information indicates that low-income families do not possess accurate information about the costs and benefits to education.

References

Looker, Dianne, and Graham S. Lowe, 2001 "Post-Secondary Access and Student Financial Aid in Canada: Current Knowledge and Research Gaps," A Background Paper for a Canadian Policy Research Networks Workshop on Post-Secondary Access and Student Financial Aid, 1 February 2001, Ottawa.

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Oreopoulos, Phil. "Helping Complete College Financial Aid Applications: Evidence from a Randomized Trial with H&R Block" (with Eric Bettinger and Bridget Long) (in progress)

Usher, Alex (1998). "Income-Related Barriers to Post-Secondary Education," Council of Ministers of Education, Canada Working Paper as part of Postsecondary Education Project, Learner Pathways and Transitions, October, 1998.