

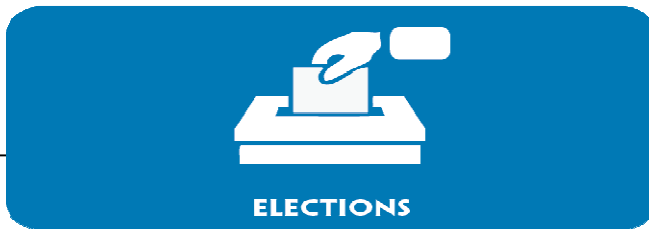


Spring 2018

AFTERWORDS
Newsletter of Active Retired Members
Chapter 11



AfterWords is the official publication of the Active Retired Members of OSSTF, Chapter 11 Thames Valley (ARM C11). Opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policies of ARM C11 or OSSTF.



And your choices are...



Mark your calendars now!
Our ARM Spring Luncheon and AGM will occur on Wednesday, April 11th, 2018 at the Best Western Lamplighter Inn with Ontario Health Coalition Director Natalie Mehra providing important pre-election information about the state of health care in our province.
RSVP to armpresident@osstf11.com asap.



Update

An election is coming and it's time to pay attention

Posted on February 16, 2018 by [OSSTF/FEESO](#) in [EDITORIAL](#) // 0 Comments

In Ontario's last provincial election, in 2014, voter turnout was just 52.1 per cent. That means that almost half of the eligible voters in the province simply didn't bother to vote. It means that more than 4.4 million Ontarians were perfectly okay with letting others decide what kind of government they would be saddled with in the following years.

It is difficult to imagine any reasonable excuse for so many citizens to be so disengaged from the democratic process that they would not even undertake the simple act of casting a ballot. We do not need to be political junkies to understand that the kind of government we elect impacts countless aspects of our lives. Everything from the quality of health care we receive to the state of public infrastructure to the kinds of regulations that govern our transactions as consumers—all of these things and many more are affected by the policies of the government at Queen's Park.

For those of us who work in public education, at any level, there is even more reason to be politically engaged. Our experience has shown us, over and over again, that the government we elect has a direct impact on our daily working lives. From the kinds of challenges we face when it comes to bargaining new collective agreements to the curriculum we work with to the availability of resources for our students with special needs—all of these are affected by the policies and the disposition of the provincial government.

That's why, leading up to every provincial election, OSSTF/FEESO develops and releases our own election platform, highlighting the most significant education-related issues that we believe the next Ontario government should be prepared to address. **The platform we've released in advance of this June's election is called "Public Education—It's For Everyone," and it identifies seven key issues related to education at all levels, from early learning through to post-secondary. It lays out the reasons that those issues are important to OSSTF/FEESO members, and it specifies clear actions that we believe the next government should take to improve public education in Ontario.**

Every OSSTF/FEESO member should take the time to read the platform and understand the issues it raises. And, as the election approaches, we need to pay attention. We need to pay attention to what the parties and local candidates are saying about those issues, or whether they're addressing those issues at all. We need to use the platform as a catalyst and a guide for dialogue with our co-workers and our neighbours, and maybe even with the candidates in our ridings.

At the very least, we need to learn about the issues and make a commitment to ourselves, to our colleagues and to our communities that we will vote in the June provincial election, and that our vote will reflect our commitment to quality public education.

You need to be the voice of education in your community

– H. Bischof

Opening OSSTF's Election Readiness Consultations with members, Political Action Committees, District Presidents, ARM representatives, and activists, OSSTF President Harvey Bischof was clear. **"It's work we need to do"**, he said, describing the uncertainty in Ontario as a provincial election approaches.

The polls showed the Conservatives in a lead despite the chaos around their former and not-future leader, Patrick Brown. The Tories are expected to cut \$6B from the budget. When education is the second largest provincial expenditure after health, you can expect any PC government to look there for cuts, especially since they are also planning to cut a \$50M revenue item – carbon taxes. The Liberals win the most-hated leader award but are not to be counted out. Never underestimate their ability to comeback as they did after (Remember that Mike Harris won a re-election against all expectation). The NDP's last election platform had little on education, and a 2018 one has yet to be released.

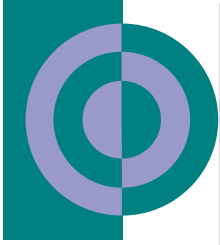
In light of that we have to understand "how critical the conversations are" when ARM members talk to "family and friends, with fellow OSSTF members". Given that ARM members are in the age group with the highest percentage voting in elections, it is clear that making our voices heard among friends, acquaintances, family and fellow OSSTF members can lead to thoughtful voting around issues with impact on the future of the community and workforce, on health care, as well as on education, the subject of our long standing dedication.

You need to be the voice of education in your community, with family and friends, with fellow OSSTF members – H. Bischof

CIVIX and Student Votes

I know, I know, that the spelling of CIVIX is enough to send proper spelling advocates among ARM members looking for a red pen to circle it. In the context of multiple "threats to democracy", voter apathy is something that will require work. What if our working colleagues actually became better informed about democracy, better able to talk about it and more willing to discuss issues surrounding election campaigns in a non-partisan way? Would that not be a good thing for students, working teachers and ARM members?

"We have a fact problem now" said Taylor Gunn of Student Vote and CIVIX, stating the obvious if anyone has watched American news. We also have a dangerous lack of engagement in decision-making about our society (something that is often called politics). In order to solve some of that, informed adolescents are an asset. Apparently, students who have participated in parallel votes have impact on the way their parents vote, are more accurate predictors of voting results than many polls, and defeat the cynicism that says that politicians don't care about young people (and vice versa).



To get the facts, visit www.student.vote.ca. CIVIX provides free resources. To share them, remind working colleagues that Elections Ontario has student voting as a priority to prepare them for citizenship and that “Teachers are the last hope we have in this world to build the skills of citizens”. That would help us maintain a civil society. Civics at work.

“Teachers are the last hope we have in this world to build the skills of citizens”

What can ARM 11 do during an Election?

New rules from Elections Ontario eliminate donations from union groups and limit financial support from individuals. That has some people worrying how we can affect the provincial election outcome. Those same new rules restrict OSSTF locals from providing food, equipment, materials or release time for work in campaigns. There are practices of the past we cannot do anymore. ***That does not mean, however, that ARM 11 members cannot be influential in the upcoming provincial election.***

There are significant things we can do today and into the election campaign which will help us, our working colleagues, our children and grandchildren. We can participate in pre-election conversations with nominated candidates for the multiple parties to determine if their policies are useful for education. That lobbying is happening now. We can assist in communications with all OSSTF members about the seven-point education policy mapped out with broad consultation among members by OSSTF’s Provincial Office. Any sort of internal communication, including around engaging in the election and voting wisely, within the union addressed to its members is fine. As retirees from education know, however, there is no need to release us to work on political campaigns once they begin. Retirement released us from daily classroom and cafeteria duty giving us time to engage in our community. With strong skills sets in organization and communication, ARM 11 members are potential full-time volunteers for campaigns which support our goals.

“We have a very unsure political landscape”, OSSTF’s Domenic Bellissimo tells us. Paul Kosta, OSSTF’s representative monitoring Queen’s Park knows we have new rules, and advocates for following them very carefully, though at the same time, engaging actively with our union as union members and with the public as individuals. We can only be certain of favourable election results if we truly contribute.

ARM Chapter 11 Executive 2017-18

President: Mary Lou Cunningham

Vice President and Newsletter Editor: Daina Janitis

Secretary/Treasurer: Kae Ackland

PAC Representative: Bryan Smith

Member-at-Large: Joe Wilson

“If it works for you, do it” – Paul Kosta

“Build the knowledge; build the relationship” – Paul Kosta

“It’s not going to be the same in every riding or district” - Lori

From a *Toronto Star* article written by Martin Reg Cohn, preparing to moderate a Ryerson University brainstorming session that included the four leaders on how to boost democratic engagement in this province:

...And yet Queen’s Park is the second-biggest government in the country, with a budget exceeding \$140 billion a year to pay for what matters most in peoples’ lives: health care, policing, road building, universities and schools, nuclear power and alcohol distribution. We know that many Ontarians come from countries where the right to vote is a matter of life and death — a struggle I chronicled during a decade abroad [as a foreign correspondent](#). How to explain that foreign passion for democracy versus apathy at home?

Wagging our fingers won’t help. Making people feel guilty won’t make them vote. What will it take to revive the democratic impulse at a time when the pulse is especially weak? The polling by Campaign Research provides interesting clues:

- The biggest single reason people don’t vote — cited by more than one-third of all Ontarians — is they believe they can’t, because they are somehow not registered. This belief is almost certainly wrong in most cases, because voter rolls are compiled automatically using tax filing data. A majority of college or university-age voters (18-24 years old), and the vast majority of newcomers (five to 10 years in Canada) also think they can’t vote, when they probably can. This finding cries out for targeted information from the media, electoral authorities, political parties, and activist groups.
- Mandatory voting is the law in Australia, but remains a long shot here — Ontarians are evenly split on fines for those who don’t cast ballots. Yet, interestingly, nearly two-thirds of those born outside Canada support compulsory voting — more evidence of their sense of civic duty and democratic engagement, which could be harnessed with greater outreach. Where there is a will, we need to show the way — even if it remains voluntary. Better campaign platforms and information are also the top reasons cited by voters for what would make them more likely to participate. Bottom of the list: electoral reform, cited by only 1 per cent in the survey.

A question for readers: Why don’t you vote, and what would make you turn up for the June 7 Ontario election? What do you believe our political parties and leaders should do differently? The Ryerson Democracy Forum is sold out, but you can follow our news coverage and a live broadcast on thestar.com Wednesday at 3 p.m., and on other outlets. I hope you’ll tune in — and turn up on June 7 — because no matter what your partisan sympathies, we need to re-engineer democratic engagement.

Democracy is an opportunity. Which is why a vote is a terrible thing to waste.



Pharmacare: A Plan for Everyone

Now that the federal government has committed to studying the implementation of national pharmacare, it's up to all of us to make sure the government gets it right.

Every Member of Parliament needs to know that millions of Canadians want a pharmacare plan that is universal, accessible, affordable, portable, and national.

That's where you come in.

We need all of our supporters – including you! - to encourage friends and family to add their voice to this campaign. Ask them to sign our petition right now. We need everyone.

www.aplanforeveryone.ca/sign_the_petition

New! ARM Chapter 11 Facebook Group

Do you have a Facebook profile?

If so, you are invited to join the brand new OSSTF ARM Chapter 11 Facebook Group. ***Go to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ARMChapter11ThamesValley/> and click the “Join” button. It is a “Closed Group” which means that only members of the group can see the postings there, but others can find it on Facebook and see the description of the group.***

We will be posting

- information about upcoming ARM meetings/events,
- links to websites and resources provided by speakers at those meetings, and ARM Chapter 11 newsletters,
- as well as information from the OSSTF provincial office, including links to new issues of *Update* and *Education Forum*,
- media releases and various other important communication to help keep you informed.

For your own knowledge-and to insure a better Ontario for your children and grandkids- go to this site (or copy and paste it into your browser) to know all you need to know about

OSSTF/FEESO's education platform 2018

<http://osstfupdate.ca/2018/02/16/public-education-its-for-everyone/>

Public Education—It's For Everyone

has seven key points

- 1.to support EARLY LEARNING- a recognition, with adequate support, of the importance of a qualified teacher, a classroom assistant, and a play-learning environment for kindergarten students.
- 2.to provide MORE PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR ALL STUDENTS by increasing access to school and community mental issues services, more speech and language support, mental health advocacy education for teachers, and appropriate violence prevention resources and space.
- 3.to foster PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT AND COLLABORATION, make a commitment to include teacher committees in all planning for new initiatives **and to end EQAO testing, investing the money saved into student learning.**
4. to change the present FUNDING FORMULA based on enrollment to make it reflect student diversity, special education needs, advances in technology, and inflation.
5. to recognize through UNIVERSITY FUNDING AND OVERSIGHT that Ontario has the most expensive post-secondary education in Canada and that oversight is needed to insure spending in higher education is directed mainly to benefits for students.
- 6.to change Ontario education to ONE PUBLIC SYSTEM FOR EACH OFFICAL LANGUAGE.
7. to review the purposes of the SCHOOL BOARDS COLLECTIVE BARGAINING ACT and insure that all central bargaining be limited to unions (teachers and support staff) and the government, with school board associations being heard in a consultative capacity only.

OTIP coverage– another benefit of ARM Membership

Why do you need a Life Plan?



are expected to die from cancer.



are not expected to live past the age of 65

AND
YET...



households would face financial struggle if the primary earner were to pass away

Don't wait. Get started on creating your Life Plan today.

OTIP LifePlan insurance is a way to protect your family's future by providing your beneficiaries with a tax-free lump sum payment in the event of your death. LifePlan can help your loved ones avoid relying on their own savings or assets to maintain their current lifestyle and cover costs such as:

- ▶ Mortgage payments
- ▶ Outstanding debts and bills
- ▶ Child care and education fees (i.e. tuition)
- ▶ Replacing lost income and health benefits
- ▶ Funeral costs, estate and legal fees

Protecting your family with OTIP LifePlan Insurance is fast and easy. With OTIP's online tool, you can get a quick quote, select the amount of coverage that is right for you and purchase a policy in only a few minutes. You are not required to have a medical exam, and coverage is instant.

Visit otip.com/YourPlan to learn how you can quickly and easily set up LifePlan insurance.

