



# Hansard Official Report of Debates

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

38th Parliament

## JOHN YAKABUSKI, M.P.P. - RENFREW-NIPISSING-PEMBROKE

Member's Statement

November 17, 2005

### School Transportation Funding

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** It is unbelievable that the Minister of Education can come up with \$80 million of taxpayers' money to ensure big union compliance when he has not one red cent to assist those who are given the responsibility of getting our children safely to and from school each and every day.

For over two years now, this minister has done absolutely nothing to address the legitimate concerns of school bus operators with regard to reasonable compensation for service provided. While the operators struggle to stay afloat, their costs continue to rise. Aging fleets require increased maintenance to meet safety standards. They can't even think of investing in new fuel-efficient buses with new safety enhancements. Operators from my riding of Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, such as Chuck Sandrelli, Steve Murray and Jim Manion, have told me repeatedly that this must be dealt with or they simply can't afford to continue.

I say to the minister, take the politics out of this equation. Stop taking our children for granted. These operators have virtually no control over their costs. You must recognize that the transportation allocation given to school boards must be tied to the actual costs of operating a school bus.

You have broken your promise to keep rural schools open. You've gone back on your word. At least take the necessary action now to ensure that we can get our children safely to and from the schools that you have left open.