



Legislative Assembly

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NEWS RELEASE

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Yakabuski: End of Lord's Prayer in Legislature, wrong approach

(Pembroke) Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke MPP John Yakabuski today criticized Premier McGuinty for comments made regarding his plans to eliminate the recitation of the Lord's Prayer from legislative proceedings in the Ontario provincial assembly. This tradition, which has stood the test of time and reflects Ontario's historical roots, may be done away with to move towards, what the Premier calls a more inclusive, 21st century approach, reports say.

In his comments Yakabuski noted that he is troubled by this revelation and noted his heavy opposition to the idea. He cited that the historical traditions of the Legislature must be respected, not eliminated, and as a result the government should work to build upon tradition rather than obscuring it.

"I find it very discouraging, that after a two month break, the best that this government can do is muse about ending the recitation of the Lord's Prayer," Yakabuski said. "In one fell swoop and with no warning whatsoever, this Premier is prepared to eliminate an age old tradition sacred to the institution of the Ontario Parliament when there are other, critical problems and issues that need fixing in this province."

In his comments Yakabuski cited a few critical examples of late including the overcrowded emergency rooms and bed shortages that forced two Ottawa hospitals to cancel scheduled surgeries yesterday, the ongoing losses to manufacturing jobs in the Kitchener Waterloo region, and revelations about the abuse of the welfare and social benefits system, to name a few.

Yakabuski went on to say that what is even more disappointing is the fact that outside of the Premier's office, very little opposition to the Lord's Prayer has even been registered. He noted his discouragement saying that the government's priorities of the day don't reflect Ontario's real needs in any effective way as this example shows.

"Everyday, I hear from constituents in my riding of Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke who are looking for help from the provincial government," Yakabuski said. "These people work hard, contribute to their communities, pay their taxes, and expect a government to deliver the results that they and their families require. When those same individuals open their newspaper and see that their Premier would rather order an all-party committee to review the necessity of the Lord's Prayer in the legislature, then deal with the critical issues of the day, that is a loss for everyone," Yakabuski said.

"I urge Premier McGuinty to call the Legislature back, return to business, and get to the bottom of the real issues, the way Ontarians expect and deserve," Yakabuski said.

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