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39th Parliament

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

Member's Statement

September 15, 2009

Government Services – Closing of Licence Bureaus

Mr. John Yakabuski: Since my election to the Legislature in 2003, one of the many things I've fought for was the issuing of health cards through driver's licence bureaus. The idea that seniors living in Whitney, for example, would have to get to Pembroke to have their new health card issued was ridiculous. When the government recently announced that licence bureaus would now be able to issue them, I was pleased to say, "Yes, finally."

My sense of victory was short-lived. We found out that the Minister of Government Services went on to announce that he would be closing many of the privately operated licence offices. In my riding of Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, the offices in Pembroke and Renfrew will be closed, effective early next year.

What was the minister thinking? He should be well aware that the most efficiently run licensing offices are privately operated. His plan would see a reduction in service, at a higher cost to taxpayers, from his government-run offices.

Auto dealers are livid that he would opt for this idea. Two hard-working entrepreneurs, Belinda Goddard and Garry Cotnam, met with me to let me know that the minister's action will result in their employees being left without work. They lose their jobs, and their communities get less service.

This is unacceptable. It is time that the minister rescind this closure plan and stop this attack on small-town Ontario.