



FEDERATION OF
URBAN
NEIGHBOURHOODS
OF ONTARIO

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An Umbrella Group of
Community Associations
throughout Ontario

*Communities count.
Civic matters.*

*Guelph
Hamilton
Kingston
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Waterloo*

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Annual General Meeting
Saturday, May 6, 2006
Guelph, Ontario

Queen's Park Report

FEDERAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT TO TOUGHEN THE LAWS AROUND THE FINANCING OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND CANDIDATES

On April 11, 2006, the Government of Canada introduced the *Federal Accountability Act* and Action Plan. Bill C-2 will toughen the laws around the financing of political parties and candidates to reduce the opportunity to exert influence through large donations. Specifically, the *Federal Accountability Act* will:

- impose a complete ban on contributions by corporations, unions, and organizations;
- lower from \$5,000 to \$1,000 the annual limit on contributions an individual can make to a particular registered party;
- lower from \$5,000 to \$1,000 the annual limit on contributions an individual can make to the local entities of a particular registered party (candidates, nomination contestants, and district associations);
- lower to \$1,000 the contribution that a candidate, a nomination contestant, or a party leadership contestant can make to his or her own campaign; and
- make it an offence to give or wilfully receive a cash donation of more than \$20.

In addition, other legislative changes are being made to ban secret donations and gifts to political candidates. Bill C-2 will ensure that positions of public trust cannot be used as stepping-stones to private lobbying and it will provide protection for whistle-blowers who show great courage in coming forward to do what is right.

The Act will strengthen the capacity and independence of officers of Parliament, including the Auditor General, to hold the Government to account. It will increase the transparency of appointments, contracts and auditing within government departments and Crown corporations.

Bill C-2 can be found at http://www.faa-lfi.gc.ca/faa-lfi/faa-lfi00_e.asp.

F.U.N. COMMENT: We are pleased that The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, has recognized the need to reform the financing of elections and accountability at the federal level.

F.U.N. has requested reforms in the financing of elections at the federal, provincial and municipal levels. Unfortunately, there appear to be no actions by the Ontario Government to amend the *Ontario Elections Act* or the *Municipal Elections Act*.

F.U.N. is pleased that many candidates for municipal office are refusing to accept donations from corporations and trade unions.

F.U.N. believes that elected representatives at all levels of government should owe their allegiance to the people living in their communities rather than to special interests such as developers, businesses and unions doing business in the area or contracting with the government. Thus F.U.N. believes that contributions from these special interest groups should be prohibited.