

Hello,

I'd like to bring you up-to-date on some of the arts issues I've been working on.

Tax changes to support artists

Despite the arts being a significant contributor to Ontario's economy, tax laws don't deliver the kind of support artists need. To help fix that, I introduced a private member's bill last year with wide support among artists and their unions.

Among the changes are tax-averaging for artists in recognition of large changes to income from year to year; and ensuring government grants to artists are tax-free. If you haven't had a chance already, please let your MPP know how important these changes are to making life viable for more artists.

You can also see Wendy Crewson speak in favour of them here:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R8In8GQPuEw&feature=player_embedded#

The government's own figures show the average worker employed in the arts earns about \$26,800 a year. That's 25 per cent lower than the average wage. We can and should do more to make the arts more economically viable for more people.

Tax credits for live performance

Another change I'm working on at Queen's Park is tax credits for live performances like theatre, dance, and music. Ontario already has tax credits for film and television. But we don't for live performance, despite its importance to our tourist industry and quality of life.

The changes I'm proposing are based on a Louisiana law brought in to help New Orleans's live performance industry after Hurricane Katrina. In the wake of the global financial crisis and on-going challenges for this important sector, it's time the provincial Liberals helped it recover. Across Ontario, about 6,000 people are directly employed in live performance.

These are just some of the arts initiatives I'm working on with many of you at Queen's Park. I look forward to winning a few battles this year, and continuing to improve the arts' role in our province's economy and daily life.

All the best,
Peter Tabuns, MPP