

March 28, 2013

Dear Trustees,

I am writing you to today on behalf of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation (CTF) in support of transparent and democratic elections for your respective school boards.

Recent changes to the *Local Authorities Elections Act (LAEA)* have had a profound effect on the standards to which school board trustee candidates are held to in their election campaigns.

Section 2(4) of the *LAEA* states that,

The elected authority that is responsible for the conduct of the election under an agreement referred to in subsection (2) has all the rights, powers and duties of the elected authorities that have entered into that agreement respecting the conduct of the election in the area to which the agreement applies, including the power to pass bylaws and resolutions but not the power to pass bylaws under section 27 or 118.

Section 118 was a recent addition to the *LAEA* and means that municipalities operating elections on behalf of boards (typically the town or city) no longer have the authority to define standards around disclosure of campaign contributions, expenses or the direction of campaign surpluses.

As a result, all boards must pass individual bylaws by no later than April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013 in order to ensure that school board candidates disclose campaign finances publicly. Boards should also look at imposing bylaws regarding campaign surpluses in order to ensure donated funds are used in a manner consistent with the public interest.

Campaign financial disclosure is critical for the democratic integrity of all public offices. Voters and taxpayers have a right to this information.

As such, I ask that you take action to immediately pass bylaws before April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013 based on the example set by the Calgary Board of Education during its March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013 meeting.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Truly,



Derek Fildebrandt  
Alberta Director,  
Canadian Taxpayers Federation