



COMMENTARY

“The Voice of Manitoba Farmers”

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Cities Show Support for Education Tax Campaign

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By David Rolfe, KAP President. Cell: (204) 483-0502.

Farmers who have felt that they were alone in the fight against property-based taxes for education can count another ally in their corner.

Just last week, the City of Winnipeg passed a motion asking the province to separate their property tax bill and get education taxes off of the city tax rolls. They also called on the government to fund education from general revenues in the future – a position shared by the Education Finance Coalition, a group that includes KAP and a number of other urban and rural organizations across Manitoba, representing over 200,000 people.

The City of Winnipeg joins the City of Brandon in its support of funding education more equitably. Last year, Brandon’s City Council also passed a similar motion.

It’s clear that this is a growing concern for urban and rural people alike. The pressure is being felt on the municipal level, and it’s only a matter of time before the public’s opinion will have an impact on the provincial government as well. To help keep this a top-of-mind issue for government, send an e-letter to your MLA today by visiting the Education Finance Coalition web site at www.letspayfair.com

letspayfair.com

Wednesday, March 21, 2007

City Council Passes Motion to Get Education Taxes off the Property Tax Bill

After a lengthy debate Winnipeg’s City Council passed a motion today asking the Province of Manitoba to separate their property tax bill and get education taxes off the city tax rolls.

This rare move is an important message for the Province, said Lorne Weiss a spokesperson for the Education Financing Coalition.

"Clearly councillors at the City of Winnipeg like the hundreds of Manitobans we hear from every day, realize that the Province can not continue to fund education on the backs of property owners. The Education Financing Coalition congratulates council for taking this stand today," Weiss said.

Weiss had gone down to city hall today to ask councilors to consider just such a motion and join a growing number of Manitobans who support the **letspayfair.com** campaign.

The motion was passed nine to five and was moved by Councillor Pagtakhan and seconded by Councillor Smith.

Voting in support of the motion were Councillors Browaty, Clement, Fielding, Nordman, Pagtakhan, Smith, Vandal, Wyatt and Lazarenko.

Voting against the motion were His Worship Mayor Katz and Councillors Gerbasi, Leipsic, Swandel, Thomas.

The motion read:

WHEREAS School taxes now represent 53.5% of all property taxes collected in Winnipeg;

AND WHEREAS Education falls directly under Provincial jurisdiction;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Winnipeg Council call upon the Manitoba Provincial Government to remove the Mill Rate for the Education Support Levy and Special Levy from the City of Winnipeg's Municipal Property Tax Bill;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Education be funded in the future from the Province's General Revenue.

Last year Brandon City Council passed a motion calling on the province to fund education from general revenues but today's City of Winnipeg motion is even stronger and clearer, Weiss said.

The Education Financing Coalition, which launched the **letspayfair.com** campaign in January, believes that education is a core service and should be funded from general revenues in a way that allows everyone to support education in a more equitable way. Right now one-third of the education funding comes from property owners. The supporters of **letspayfair.com** are calling on the provincial government to begin the tax shift in the provincial budget that comes down April 4 and make a commitment to shift education taxes to general revenues over the next four to five years.

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