

# **Ontario Young Liberals**

## **Policy Submission for the Young Liberals of Canada**



**Chris Drew, OYL Policy Director – [chris@oyl.org](mailto:chris@oyl.org)**

Dear YLC Policy Committee,

It gives me great pleasure to present to you five federal policies adopted by the members of the Ontario Young Liberals (OYL) at our 2007 and 2008 annual policy conference, also known as “Summer Fling”. I have not only included the policies we are submitting, but have also added a letter from the policy authors to the members of the YLC Policy Committee on why their policies should go forward.

These policies have gone through a comprehensive and grassroots process where they were passed at regional policy parliaments, debated at Summer Fling, and then voted on by the members of the OYL. We had over 200 members present at the 2007 and 2008 Summer Flings participate in the policy debate and voting process. These five federal policies have all been scrutinized by our members, as well as compared and contrasted to other federal policies. The OYL takes pride in our policy process as we believe it provides excellent opportunities for grassroots involvement, therefore producing better quality policies.

The members of the OYL believe that these five policies should all be duly considered by the YLC Policy Committee. We believe that these policies are not just in the best interests of members from Ontario, but that they would benefit the lives of all Canadians.

I understand that the YLC Policy Committee has left three spaces open for Ontario’s policies and that the YLC VP Policy has stated that if the Committee feels that all five are worthy of going forward to Biennial, that all of them could potentially be included. I am fully confident that the YLC Policy Committee will carefully review and consider all of Ontario’s policies, and I can assure you that I will coordinate and work with all of you to ensure that all Liberal youth at Biennial campaign hard for the final YLC submission. I look forward to working with you, as does the OYL 2008-2009 Executive and all Ontario Young Liberal members!

Thank you for your time and effort considering these policies and please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Chris Drew,  
OYL Policy Director

cc: Policy Authors for the YLC Policy Committee Submission  
cc: OYL Executive 2008-2009  
cc: Shawn Kerr, OYL Policy Director 2007-2008

## **2008 OYL Policy Parliaments**

**Southwest Policy Parliament, Guelph, Ontario – 19 April 2008  
Host: Guelph University Young Liberals**

**Eastern Region Policy Parliament, Ottawa, Ontario – 19 April 2008  
Host: Ottawa-Vanier Young Liberals**

**Toronto Region Policy Parliament, Toronto Ontario – 17 May 2008  
Host: Young Liberals of Etobicoke**

**South Central Region Policy Parliament, Brantford, Ontario, 24 May 2008  
Host: Brantford Young Liberals**

**Central Region Policy Parliament, Aurora, Ontario, 25 May 2008  
Host: Newmarket-Aurora Young Liberals**

**Northern Region Policy Parliament, Live and Online, 8 June 2008  
Host: Young Liberals of Northern Ontario**

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## 1) A Policy to End the Atrocities in Darfur (Federal)

### Letter to the YLC Policy Committee from Terry Chemij, Etobicoke-Centre Federal Young Liberals, and author of the Policy to End the Atrocities in Darfur.

*A Policy to End the Atrocities in Darfur* is what being Liberal is all about. Liberals care for the less fortunate, Liberals advocate for human rights, and Liberals are leaders on the international stage.

Stephen Harper and the Conservatives have shifted their resources and priorities away from the African continent, and sadly Canada cannot take pride in our current role in Africa. It's time that we, Young Liberals urge the Liberal Party of Canada to change that. It is time for the Young Liberals to advocate for troubled countries in Africa. To give suffering nations hope and make all Canadians feel proud about the good-willed work that we are doing in the world.

This policy addresses what former UN General Secretary Kofi Annan described as "the world's worst humanitarian disaster". There is no other pressing issue facing the international community and humanity at-large than 5 years of continuous genocide in Darfur. How many more people will have to die before the world starts to pay attention and back up their words with action? Why not stand up and take action to stop the genocide in Darfur before it becomes the next Rwanda?

Although a UN peacekeeping force of 26,000 personnel has been mandated (July 2007) to secure the troubled region, as of Aug 2008 only 9,500 troops have been deployed. The mission is struggling to fulfill its mandate. This is where "A Policy to End the Atrocities in Darfur" and Canada fits in.

Although Canada has not been asked to send military personnel, member nations of the UN have been asked to help facilitate the mission. This policy is asking Canada to do just that. Canada can and should provide professional civilian personnel (eg. engineers, technicians, medical staff) to help facilitate the essential operations of the mission. Areas that Canada can assist with are communications, logistics and transportation for the mission. If Canada is able to provide a military role or presence, this policy allows for that option, since heavy lift aircraft used for transporting troops is the number one need for the mission. Unfortunately as of June 2008 Canada only has 5 personnel deployed to UNAMID. This is unacceptable for the country of Lester B. Pearson who invented modern day peacekeeping.

The OYL has been advocating and promoting peace in Darfur all year. Over 40 young liberals attended the Day for Darfur rally. At the OYL Summer fling it was voted as the number one federal policy. It time to take this policy and advocate for peace in Darfur to the national level, so that Mr. Dion and the Liberals can make a difference in this world and make all Canadians proud again.

I thank you for your consider and I hope I can count on your support for sending this policy to biennial.

Sincerely,

Terry Chemij  
Darfur Advocate

**Also, please visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wcdV4s858Lw> for more details.**

## 1) A Policy to End the Atrocities in Darfur (Federal)

**Submitted by: Terry Chemij, Etobicoke-Centre Federal Young Liberals**

**WHEREAS** reports suggest approximately 400,000 people have been killed as a result of the conflict in Darfur;

**WHEREAS** approximately 2.5 million people are displaced in Sudan, Chad, and the Central African Republic in refugee and internally displaced persons camps (IDP);

**WHEREAS** life in the IDP and refugee camps is decrepit due to a lack of basic life necessities, sporadic attacks from the Janjaweed, and an overall lack of security;

**WHEREAS** the World Food Program is severely under funded and is often forced to reduce aid rations;

**WHEREAS** violence against women, including acts of sexual assault and rape are commonly used as a tool of war within the camps and in Darfur;

**WHEREAS** the severely under equipped African Union (AU) troops have been unable to control the violence, or protect the people of Darfur and international humanitarian workers; therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the OYL urge the Canadian Government to contribute military and or civilian personnel to facilitate the essential operational policies of UNAMID to ensure an efficient and effective peacekeeping mission.

## 2) Reversing the Ban on MSM Organ Donation (Federal)

**Submitted By: Aaron GlynWilliams, Toronto Centre Young Liberals in collaboration with Michael Pelz, University of Western Ontario Young Liberals**

### Background Information on MSM Organ Donation Ban

- The recent changes to organ donations in Canada mandate that men who have had sex with other men in the past five years are no longer considered suitable donors.
- Although Health Canada claims this change merely formalizes existing screening procedures, it in effect discriminates against men on the basis of sexual orientation.
- This policy may have been formulated in response to 4 cases of organ donor recipients contracting HIV in the United States last year - however this may have been the result of inadequate screening procedures.
- This places sexually active gay men in the same category as intravenous drug users, prostitutes, and people recently jailed for various crimes.
- Importantly, this policy is at odds with the majority of Canadian Medical community.
- **Dr. Gary Levy**, the director of the transplant program at Toronto's University Health Network, has suggested that although sexual orientation is taken into consideration during the screening process, orientation alone should not exclude individuals from donating (*The Globe and Mail*, January 10, 2008, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20080110.wlorgan10/BNStory/specialScienceandHealth/home>)
- Levy continues by suggesting that the current restrictions "likely go too far in excluding all sexually active gay men" and moreover "[Levy] personally believe someone who has been in a monogamous relationship for 30 years, regardless of the gender of their partner, is a safe situation" (*Toronto Star*, January 9, 2008) <http://www.thestar.com/News/article/292289>
- Instead emphasis should be placed on risky sexual behaviour, and not on sexuality.
- **Dr. Philip Berger**, head of family & community medicine at St. Michael's hospital adds, "it's what the individual does in their sexual lives, whether gay or straight, (that) puts them at risk" causing this policy to be "scientifically unjustified, virtually unenforceable and could worsen critical transplant shortages" (*Toronto Star*, January 9, 2008) <http://www.thestar.com/News/article/292289>
- Former Ontario Health Minister **George Smitherman** referred to the policy change as "offensive" and suggested it may be the result of long standing bias within the Federal Health Department, and more importantly, ignored the medical professionals who deal with organ donations daily.
- Additionally, Minister Smitherman reiterated that "rigorous screening processes already exist for potential organ donations" and that it is inappropriate to exclude gay men from participating in the screening process. Smitherman believes that by barring gay men entirely it implies gay men are not intelligent enough to determine the risks involved in donating organs.

## OYL Policies for the YLC Policy Committee

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- According to **Dr. Markel**, head of the Trillium Gift of Life Network, Ontario's organ and tissue donor agency, Ontario needs "every donor we can get" and stated that "we have 1, 650 people on the waiting list, so we would not deny anybody the chance to be a donor if their organ can be used" (*The Globe and Mail*, January 23, 2008)

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20080123.worgandonorgays0123/BNStory/National/home>

Given the lack of scientific evidence, and inherent discrimination contained within Health Canada's organ donation policy, it is the duty of the OYL to have this policy overturned. All organs should be rigorously screened, with a focus on dangerous sexual practices for *all* sexual orientations. That is the only way to truly stop the spread of disease, rather than simply stereotyping specific groups.

## 2) Reversing the Ban on MSM Organ Donation (Federal)

**Submitted By: Aaron GlynWilliams, Toronto Centre Young Liberals in collaboration with Michael Pelz, University of Western Ontario Young Liberals**

**WHEREAS** Canada suffers from severe organ shortages and maintains one of the lowest organ donation rates in the world;

**WHEREAS** thousands of Canadians wait in hope for organs;

**WHEREAS** all donated organs undergo extensive tests to guard against transmission of HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis-C, and other debilitating diseases;

**WHEREAS** there have been no reported cases of organ recipients receiving HIV/AIDS and/or Hepatitis-C from organs donated by gay men;

**WHEREAS** as per the recommendations of Canada's medical community, screening efforts should focus on dangerous sexual activity independent of sexual orientation;

**WHEREAS** Health Canada's stipulation that gay men who have engaged in sexual activity since 1977 are ineligible to donate organs is counterproductive and void of credible scientific information, moreover, such policies avoid addressing unsafe sexual practices in the heterosexual community;

**WHEREAS** the Federal ban on organ donations from gay men promotes regrettable stereotypes which denigrate the gay community; and,

**WHEREAS** the ban on gay male organ donations reduces the already small amount of organs available for donation; therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the recent ban on MSM organ donations be overturned;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** Health Canada refocus its efforts on enhanced screening and education programs about potentially risky sexual activities for all groups, independent of their sexuality; and,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** Health Canada strive to promote equality and tolerance between all Canadians, and that all significant policy decisions be completed in consultation with the Canadian Medical community.

### **3) Amendments to the 1985 Indian Act (Federal)**

**Submitted By: Chad Cowie, University of Western Young Liberals**

Canada is a nation that is envied by many around the world. Canada is considered a progressive nation, a leading nation, and a tolerant nation of individual's differences. Canada however does have a dark past which it and its politicians have been continuing to correct over the last decade. This includes apologies for racist stances it has taken and for targeting minority groups during the great wars and other times of national crisis. However, there is a major group of people whose apologies seem to be constantly delayed and issues regarding them looked at in an untimely manner. This group is that of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people that exist in what are now the Canadian boundaries – and I am one of them. My name is Chad Cowie and I come from the Hiawatha First Nation, also known as the Mississaugas of Rice Lake, which is located just outside of Peterborough Ontario.

There are various areas of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit issues that do need to be addressed, the policy I am putting forth, "Amendments to the 1985 Indian Act," deals with two very simple areas of contention. The first area regarding the name of Indian Affairs, and all legislation pertaining to it, and the second regarding the accountability of Chief and Council within these communities. These areas are important areas to many First Nations people as one identifies them incorrectly, and the other prevents them from moving forward.

The term Indian and how it is defined in Canada has been a much contested word for many of the First people in what is now called Canada. Many have been hoping for, pushing for, and looking for a change to this name. The term Indian is rarely used anymore – except by those of racist groups, right-winged groups, or those who may not be fully educated on what this term really stands for. Indian Affairs also encompasses Métis people and Inuit people – who are not considered "Indian." This policy finally allows for their names to be included in this new name as these people will also be consulted. The name of this Ministry must include them – something like First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Affairs is an example. Media outlets do not use the term Indian, nor do political organizations or the political parties within Canada's Parliament, or within the Provincial Legislatures. Not even Stephen Harper used the term Indian during his apology to the First Nations groups for the atrocities of the Residential Schools.

Making Chief and Council accountable to their members is another major issue. I want to stress that not all Chiefs and their Councillors act corrupt, but some do. The laws for governing on reservations are far looser and undemocratic compared to those in the municipalities of Canada. Chief and Council are technically only accountable to one group of people and one person specifically – that is the bureaucrats in Indian Affairs and the Minister of Indian Affairs. If a Chief and Council decide to do what is best for their community, but find the Minister at odds with them – the Minister can null their election, and force a new election - because they were not doing what the Minister wanted. On the other hand, if Chief and Council do something the community disagrees to, but the Minister is ok with it – nothing is done about it. This could be from giving a job to a family member, or friend – and not the best suited person for the job. This could also relate to embezzlement of community money or changing bylaws on the reservation.

Canada believes in democracy, yet currently Canada allows a vassal-like governing system on the communities of the First Nations people. I again stress that the importance of this policy is that the ONLY changes that will be made are the previously stated ones, as well as the Federal government of Canada MUST CONSULTATE with ALL First Nations communities, their members, and organizations in order to come to a decision of how to implement a name change and adjust the accountability of Chief and Council. It is time for a party, the natural governing party, to make these proper and appropriate changes in order to help those affected continue on a positive path forward. If there is anything needed, please feel free to contact me at 519-834-2624.

### 3) Amendments to the 1985 Indian Act (Federal)

**Submitted By: Chad Cowie, University of Western Young Liberals**

**WHEREAS** Canada and its legislation continues to refer to those under the Indian Act as “Indians within the meaning of the Indian Act (Chapter 27, Statutes of Canada – 1985);

**WHEREAS** a majority of the Indigenous populations take offence to being referred to as Indians as the term is generally in meaning to those who are culturally/ethnically linked to the nation of India;

**WHEREAS** it is the 21<sup>st</sup> century and Canada continues to use a colonial and archaic term when referring to the first peoples of North America;

**WHEREAS** currently those elected to Chief and Council are not held accountable to the people who elect them into office;

**WHEREAS** the only people Chief and Council must report to/listen to are the Federal Government of Canada, specifically the Minister of Indian Affairs and those within the Ministry of Indian Affairs;

**WHEREAS** this clause has allowed many Chief and Councils to take advantage of those who elect them all in order to benefit themselves or those who they deem fit to;

**WHEREAS** the lack of accountability/recall to those who elect them has led to undemocratic methods and the current system allows them to continually do this with no negative consequences on themselves until their mandate is up;

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Federal Government of Canada meet with various First Nations groups, leaders, and communities to discuss a possible changing of name for the Ministry of Indian Affairs and all legislation related;

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Federal Government of Canada take no longer than one year to work on a name change for Indian Affairs in order to allow a proper amount of time to discuss what is best suited in the eyes of those who are within the Indian Act (Chapter 27. Statutes of Canada - 1985);

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** once a new name is changed, the Federal Government of Canada has up to five (5) years to amend/change any items that must be updated to reflect the name change;

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Federal Government of Canada amend the Indian act to enforce accountability of Chief and Council to the people who elect them into their offices;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the Federal Government of Canada only amend these two items with the consensus of the First Nations population who are recognized under the Indian Act (Chapter 27, Statutes of Canada – 1985).

## 4) GST Cut for Environmentally Friendly Products (Federal)

**Submitted By: Jonathan Pinto, Peterborough Federal Young Liberals**

### **Giving Green an Advantage: GST Cut for Environmentally Friendly Products**

*Kelly Jamieson, Policy Chair,  
Peterborough Federal Liberal Youth Association*

The “race to the bottom” is a real concern when it comes to the products Canadians consume. Typically items that yield higher profits for business have cost the environment a great deal of damage both in production and after sale use. Manufacturers react to public pressure as exemplified by the crackdown on CFC’s, but, Canadians should want the businesses we buy from to be proactive. Liberals understand that there is wealth we can make through going green in our daily lives: a cleaner environment for all and a marketable advantage for business. We need to start a “race to the top” amongst the producers we buy from.

The Conservative Party’s ecoAuto program has proven to be more politics than action on the environment. New car owners get a rebate to replenish money they have already paid to the dealer; we are indirectly compensating producers instead of the consumers. This program has, however, demonstrated that manufacturers will make more environmentally friendly products if they believe they can make a profit. The ecoAuto approved list has been expanding every year and the hugely popular Honda Civic was eligible in 2008. Removing taxpayer subsidization from the equations is the key to making this kind of producer response sustainable.

A consumer will use thousands of pounds of products throughout his or her life. The manufacture, use and disposal of everyday items has a profound effect on the environment. If a producer were to make a product that is top of its class in environmental friendliness in manufacturing in Canada or abroad, ensure a neutral effect when in use and an assurance of green biodegradation, then the Canadian Government should drop GST against this item and award it with a seal of approval. This measure will reduce the point of sale cost to consumers and gives the manufacturer a more marketable product.

No tax funded rebate necessary; this will be a real market transaction. Products that are more marketable as a result of being ecofriendly leaders create a race to the top. The government will control what products are GST exempt and make sure that the bar is raised higher so that business will continue to do the right thing as technology and cost improvements make a better product. This investment on the part of business can result in higher sales volume and a betterment of their brand with the backing of the Canadian government. Consumers will have the opportunity to save money buying green. The savings will be tangible for family shoppers; this exemption being applied to a weeks worth of groceries or even a single box of diapers. It will add up quickly.

After the Conservative GST cut for no apparent reason, we can appreciate cutting more for a good reason: going green in our daily lives. What better way to encourage Canadians to make the Green Shift?

## 4) GST Cut for Environmentally Friendly Products (Federal)

**Submitted By: Jonathan Pinto, Peterborough Federal Young Liberals**

**WHEREAS** the federal government has proposed rebates of up to \$2000 on the purchase of certain environmentally friendly vehicles. This neglects to take into account the high numbers of Canadians who either do not own a car or will not be purchasing one in the near future;

**WHEREAS** many products such as, but not exclusive to, cleaning materials and personal care products are products that Canadians more regularly purchase and often have a profoundly negative effect on the environment;

**WHEREAS** environmental friendly products are defined by the Ministry of Industry;

**WHEREAS** environmentally friendly household products are often passed over due to either a lack of awareness of their benefits, or a perception that they are more costly than their non-eco friendly counterparts; and,

**WHEREAS** a greater use of environmentally friendly household products will directly aid the health of the planet while making environmental conservation a daily part of Canadians lives; therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Ontario Young Liberals urge the Liberal Party of Canada and the Canadian Government to eliminate the five percent GST on environmentally friendly household products.

## 5) Enforcing Standards of Practice for Canadian Mining Companies Operating Abroad (Federal)

Submitted by: Danielle Tackacs, Brant Young Liberals

**WHEREAS** some Canadian mining companies operating in the developing world have been implicated in environmental and human rights violations; and

**WHEREAS** the Canadian Government is currently complacent with mere voluntary measures for mining companies to adhere to regarding international environmental and human rights standards; and,

**WHEREAS** the education and advocacy campaigns of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) addressing the issue are strongly resonating with Canadians, demonstrated by the efforts of international development agencies such as Development & Peace, whose efforts to date have accumulated well over 133,857 signatures from Canadians demanding that the Canadian Government “refuse support to mining companies that do not respect international environmental and human rights standards, and develop legal mechanisms that ensure mining companies are held accountable for their actions in the developing world.”; therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Liberal Party of Canada promote the March 29, 2007 recommendations of the “Mining in Developing Countries and Corporate Responsibility” report, which followed a series of four National Roundtables on Corporate Social Responsibility that included input from public, governmental and non-governmental experts on the issue; and,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the Liberal Party of Canada lobby the Canadian Government to implement mandatory corporate social responsibility standards to which Canadian mining companies are to adhere while operating in the developing world and implement these standards should they form the government themselves.