



JOHN FRASER, MPP/DÉPUTÉ

Ottawa South / Ottawa-sud

Michelle DiEmanuele
Secretary of the Cabinet
Cabinet Office, Government of Ontario
99 Wellesley Street West, Whitney Block, 5th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N3

Greg Essena
Chief Electoral Officer, Elections Ontario
26 Prince Andrew Place
Toronto, Ontario, M3C 2H4

J. David Wake
Integrity Commissioner of Ontario
2 Bloor Street West, Suite 2100
Toronto, Ontario, M4W 3E2

25 January 2025

Dear Ms. DiEmanuele, Mr. Essena and Mr. Wake:

I write to raise urgent concerns regarding potential violations of the *Ontario Election Finances Act*, the *Public Service of Ontario Act*, and the caretaker convention in Ontario. As you know, Premier Doug Ford has indicated his intention to call an early election, while continuing to conduct government business. We are deeply concerned that it is the Premier's intention to use government resources and taxpayer funds to advance his own political interests.

As a former Secretary of the Cabinet [wrote](#) in 2018, "*The caretaker role requires that there be no new policy or program initiatives, and restricts ongoing work, consultations, appointments, regulatory postings, public engagement, announcements and ministry events. Prior approval to engage in these activities does not provide authority to continue once the caretaker period has begun.*"

Specifically, this memorandum states, "*Ministers will be asked to exercise care and avoid any perception that they are using their ministerial offices, resources or portfolios for political purposes.*"

In particular, the Premier's stated intention to travel to Washington, DC, and continue to serve as Chair of the Council of the Federation on taxpayers' dime, and with the support of government



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staff, has “*a potential for the work to be raised as a political issue during the election*”, and violates the intent and explicit policies of the caretaker convention. The Premier in calling the election has triggered the caretaker convention, and it is no longer appropriate for him to travel to Washington or participate in the Council of Federation.

In the context of an early election, this work would be explicitly partisan in nature, given the Premier’s stated rationale for sending Ontario voters to the polls a year and a half early. Allowing the Premier to conduct government business for political purposes would harm trust in our public institutions, and violate a basic principle of our democracy.

Any expenses incurred as a result of the efforts of public servants in assisting the Premier in making public statements at all relevant to this election while on this otherwise publicly funded trip to Washington should be properly paid as election expenses by the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario.

To the Secretary of the Cabinet, I respectfully urge you to ensure that Government of Ontario resources are only used in strict compliance with the caretaker convention. Further, we ask that you publicly re-issue guidance on the convention, in the context of Premier Ford’s stated intentions.

To the Chief Electoral Officer and to Integrity Commissioner, I respectfully urge you to state publicly that any improper use of taxpayer dollars in violation of the caretaker convention would be construed as an improper contribution under the *Ontario Election Finances Act, 1990* to the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, and subject to compliance and/or integrity review by your respective offices.

Given the Premier has stated his intention to call the election this Wednesday, we ask that you reply publicly as expeditiously as possible to safeguard our democratic norms and ensure a free and fair election.

Sincerely,

John Fraser
MPP for Ottawa South