



October 6, 2007

Ms. Susan Swan  
Chair  
The Writers' Union of Canada  
200-90 Richmond Street West  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5C 1P1

Dear Ms. Swan:

Thank you for your questionnaire about arts and cultural issues across our province. I am pleased to have this opportunity to outline our government's record and the Ontario Liberals' future plans for arts and culture in Ontario.

**1. Do you support investing, to meaningful levels, in the Ontario Arts Council to ensure that Ontario's artists and writers can continue creating the works that have brought international recognition to Ontario?**

Under the previous Conservative government, "finding efficiencies" became code for widespread cuts in areas such as culture. As a result, our province's artists and arts organizations suffered. The arts community watched in dismay as the Harris government slashed support to the Ontario Arts Council (OAC) by 42 per cent, with no further funding increases during their mandate. In 2001-02, the OAC was only able to provide \$22.4 million to arts professionals and organizations across the province.

When Ontario Liberals came to office, we understood the importance of the OAC in supporting our individual artists and arts organizations across the province. That is why we committed to increasing annual funding to the OAC to almost \$55 million by 2009-10, the most funding ever provided by an Ontario government.

In addition to this commitment, our culture platform, *The Ontario Liberal Plan for Creative People, Prosperous Province, 2007*, proposes increasing annual funding by a further \$5 million per year starting in 2008-09. With this new unprecedented level of support, the OAC will be able to increase funding to

... 2

francophone and Native artists and arts organizations, strengthen community outreach and enhance arts education programming. We are proud to know that thousands of artists, hundreds of organizations and numerous communities have, and will continue to, benefit from the grants and assistance provided by the OAC.

**2. Do you support investing in literacy and libraries in Ontario's schools so our success can continue?**

Yes, Ontario Liberals are enthusiastic about investing in literacy and libraries in Ontario's schools. We have committed \$80 million for school library books and \$40 million more for librarians in elementary schools. This will mean 1.7 million new books each year — more than 430 per school. This is the most significant investment in school libraries in a generation. Ontario Liberals believe having access to good quality books and rebuilding our school libraries is an important part of instilling a love of reading in children.

**3. Will you open the door to consequential consultation with artists and amend the Status of Ontario's Artists Act in a way that will improve the lives of those whom status of the artists legislation is intended to assist. . . artists?**

For the arts to flourish artists must be supported — this is central to the Ontario Liberals' culture agenda. During the past four years, we held extensive consultations with thousands of individual artists, arts organizations, unions and others. We listened to the community and introduced and approved new legislation — the *Status of Ontario's Artists Act* — which, for the first time in our province's history, formally recognizes the importance of Ontario's artists. This act also supports the province's first arts and culture strategy and establishes the first weekend of June as "Celebrate the Artist Weekend."

Ontario Liberals know that there is still more to do. That is why we plan to create a three-year \$40-million culture capital program to provide artists with space to do their work. We will establish business training seminars in all Small Business Enterprises across Ontario to provide artists with the tools and knowledge they need to make sound financial decisions and effectively market their work. Ontario Liberals will also continue to encourage our municipalities to place more emphasis on local arts, culture and heritage by providing them with the funds, knowledge and tools for Municipal Cultural Planning (MCP).

**4. Do you support introducing Copyright-Income Deduction, based on the principle of no taxation under thirty per cent of the writer or creator's fee?**

I am pleased that our commitment to increase the OAC's base funding will provide more artists, including writers, with the critical financial assistance that they need.

Ms. Swan, thank you again for writing. Ontario Liberals do not want to see our great province go backwards under the Conservatives. Instead, we want to continue our work with Ontarians — including artistic and cultural organizations — to further promote artists and to keep our province moving forward. We hope to have that opportunity and we ask for your organization's support. Please accept my best wishes.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Dalton McGuinty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dalton McGuinty  
Leader of the Ontario Liberal Party  
Premier