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**John Shaw, Editor**

## No, Preston Manning, we do not need a carbon tax.

**By Allen Small**

Leader, Ontario Libertarian Party

Toward the end of last year, Preston Manning, the godfather of Canadian conservatives, wrote an op-ed in The Globe and Mail. The piece was titled, “*How to communicate a good idea: carbon pricing*,” an idea that will likely appear in the Ontario Spring Budget.

Conservatives around the country may have been shocked by this position but should not have been. Manning, like any member of a mainstream political party, views the hammer of government as the primary solution to all social and economic ills, real or imagined. Why should it be any different?

In his sales pitch, Manning compared carbon pricing to “*water pricing to conserve water, garbage pricing to deal with waste, and road pricing to reduce traffic congestion*.” Those comparisons fail at a fundamental level. Clean drinking water, the ability to haul and dump garbage, and an adequate road system are all scarce resources and very costly for people to improve. It makes sense that providers should meter these services and charge users accordingly. However, burning fossil fuels that release the colourless, odourless gas called carbon dioxide, a vital ingredient of all living systems, is a totally different issue.

Continued Page 3.

## Libertarian Pub Nights and Events Calendar

**Toronto** Pub Night: Wednesday March 11th, 7:00 PM (2nd Wednesday each month) Granite Brewery and Restaurant, 245 Eglinton Avenue East at Mt.Pleasant Rd.. Contact Jim at 416-283-7589.

**Windsor** Pub Night - Thursday March 12 at 7:00 P.M. The Spitfire & Firkin 11828 Tecumseh Rd E.. Contact Marek (mwojtera@eurobasket.com)

**Guelph** Pub Night - Friday March 13, 7:00 PM Bobby O'Brien's Guelph. <https://www.facebook.com/LocalsForLiberty> Contact Andrew 519-362-7660.

**Kitchener-Waterloo** Pub Night - Thursday March 19, 7:00 PM Benny's Family Restaurant Contact Paul (paulherriotradio@hotmail.com)

**Hamilton** Pub Night - March 21 at 7:00 P.M. FLA Cafe & Bar, 660 Barton St. E. Hamilton - Contact Mark (mark.burnison@gmail.com)

**Stouffville** Pub Night - March 25 6:00 PM fourth Wednesday of each month) The Lion Of Stouffville 5917 Main St. Contact Allen (allen.libertarian@gmail.com)

**Ottawa** Meeting - April 5 - 2-4 pm (1st Sunday of the month) O'Brien's eatery and Pub, 1145 Heron Road. Contract Damien (j.damien.wilson@gmail.com)

**Niagara Falls** Pub Night - No March Meeting The Feathery Pub 420 Vansickle Road, St. Catharines. Contact Mark (mark.burnison@gmail.com)

If you would like to organize a Libertarian Pub Night in your area, please contact John Shaw 905 806 5170.

## Taxes, they Stink!

Taxes stink. We all hate paying them. Libertarians, however, are unique as we don't want anyone else to pay them either. Conservatives certainly talk about lowering taxes. For them, lowering taxes means offering "boutique tax credits" to targeted groups and special interests, while raising tariffs, excise taxes, and import duties. Libertarians don't want anyone to have to pay taxes, and ideally, nobody would.

In fact, many libertarians disagree with each other on the necessity of government itself. Anarchists seek to end the state monopoly on force by returning absolute power back to the individual--this means they don't support ANY taxation. However, the bulk of our party agree that at least SOME taxation is necessary, if voluntary means fail, to fund government's primary function--the protection of life, liberty, and property. But we all agree that we pay much more in tax than what is necessary to maintain this function.

The main issue I come across when I tell people I'm a libertarian running in Hamilton, a city dominated by conventional left-wing politics, is that of the seemingly irreconcilable gap in philosophy between the working class and the demographics of libertarians. I am often asked, "Why are you libertarian?" The rather principled answer to that question is, of course, not the pragmatic one they're looking for. They can't understand why someone in my financial position would support a movement the mainstream media considers "fringe" and "elitist". While this question is usually asked rhetorically, I always respond the same way. Taxes.

Most Canadians believe erroneously that poor people pay no taxes. For most Canadians, our understanding of government goes like this: government spends money, so they tax rich people to pay for it. An oversimplification at best, a fallacy at worst. Governments rarely take in enough tax money to afford its spending. The money must be paid somehow. And when total expenses exceed total revenues, the difference is added to federal debt. The government (read: taxpayers) must pay interest on this debt. This is where the Bank of Canada comes in.

The Bank of Canada is a privately owned institution, but it is also a crown corporation that has sole authority to issue currency in Canada. All of our paper (read: plastic) money come from it. The Bank lends money to the government, at interest. When the government runs a deficit (like the Conservative government has been doing for seven years now) it must borrow the difference from the Bank of Canada in exchange for future interest payments. When the government does this, it adds tens of billions of new dollars into the economy. When the government prints money, there is more money available to spend. When we spend more money on the same amount of goods, prices go up.

To measure price inflation, government uses the laughably inaccurate Consumer Price Index (CPI), but the CPI often reports inflation at rates much lower than what we experience at the checkout, and largely does not reflect the spending habits of low-income families. Instead, I use something a bit different...the Campbell's Tomato Soup Index.



The Campbell's Tomato Soup Index tracks the price of a single can of Campbell's Tomato Soup. A quick glance at the CTSI demonstrates a dramatic spike in prices since 2009, when tens of billions in new money was introduced through so-called "stimulus spending". Another example of the effect of price inflation at the checkout is bread, which has nearly tripled in price since before the recession. These hikes in food prices and cost of living make the inflation tax arguably one of the most harmful taxes levied, whether intentional or not.

The solution? Governments must stop taxing our purchasing power through price inflation. This can be done simply by balancing the budget.

By Mark Burnison

we do not need a carbon tax—continued from page 1

Carbon dioxide is absorbed by all green vegetation in the process of photosynthesis, which by fortunate happenstance produces atmospheric oxygen as a waste gas. Virtually all the food that people and other creatures eat is created this way, directly or indirectly. Add more carbon dioxide to any system and more will be absorbed, so more food is produced, to a point. Carbon dioxide barely constitutes a tiny 0.04% of all atmospheric gases.

But Manning says that in *“the production of energy, we should identify its negative environmental impacts, devise measures to avoid, mitigate or adapt to those impacts, and include the costs of those measures in the price of the product.”* It’s true, using any fuel, particularly fossil fuels, will cause unwanted pollutants, negative impacts, but to a large extent these can be removed at source by modern scrubbing devices or using low polluting fossil fuels like natural gas. The exhaust of modern day automobiles, for instance, is relatively pollution free, but of course, those are not the pollutants Manning is talking about.

The widely accepted assumption that Preston Manning shares, and few question, is that carbon dioxide is a pollutant. If that were true, one could easily suggest that the byproduct of photosynthesis, atmospheric oxygen, was also a pollutant. Fortunately no one suggests that, yet.

So this newly assigned “pollutant,” carbon dioxide, shortened to just “carbon” by the political class, to make it appear dirtier, is produced by normal respiration and burning, and is alleged to trap heat, raising the temperature of the atmosphere and the oceans, thus altering Earth’s climate. The theory is, as carbon dioxide increases, more heat is trapped and we get the “greenhouse effect.”

Once, this was called Global Warming. Now it’s called Climate Change because warming does not always occur and there are other hypothetical negative impacts. I say “hypothetical” because these are mostly forecast, and not real, negative impacts based almost entirely on computer models of Earth’s future climate. Each of the models forecast warming to a greater or lesser extent, some with potentially catastrophic consequences. This is where most of the alleged “negative” environmental impacts exist. Ask any scientist to point with certainty to a real catastrophic negative impact of “carbon pollution”—and few will. Most will hedge or speculate, simply because there is no definitive cause-effect certainty in such a short time frame, a threshold that still remains as a hallmark of science.

Virtually all of the so-called anomalous weather events that have been observed in recent years, some attributed to climate change, are within the parameters of ordinary weather variability.

There is no doubt that the climate is changing; it always has over the history of Earth. Ice has retreated in Polar Regions, and has been retreating in North America (for example), since the most recent continental glaciation about 12,000 years ago. Presumably humans have added to a general warming of the planet by producing greenhouse gases, of which carbon dioxide is just one. But why pick on carbon dioxide? Water vapour is by far the most abundant greenhouse gas, shouldn’t we tax it too?

If the serious negative impacts of “carbon pollution” are speculative, does it make sense to apply a carbon tax to mitigate them? Indeed, what if the impacts are positive, the greening of the planet for instance, and an increase in food sources as carbon dioxide is added? Moreover, how is the size of the tax going to be determined in view of the fact that carbon dioxide also adds benefits and is removed at a faster rate by the aforementioned greening?

Canadian law has provisions for damages, civil wrongs, to individuals and their property. Judges make certain that an offending party fully compensates the victims of these torts when the evidence is beyond doubt. Are we all to be considered offenders and victims simultaneously? Where is the evidence

... Continued from page 3

of damage in Ontario? Where in Ontario are the victims that need to be compensated? Why should carbon tax revenue go to government? Why should the imposition of a carbon tax on everything and everyone in Ontario be held to a lower standard than a simple property damage judgment in a court? I would say that if there is no measurable harm, there is no a reason for what amounts to a preemptive fine – a carbon tax..

Manning concludes his article with five bits of advice to help “communicate” this “good idea” to the general public, including, “avoid using the word tax”, and make sure scientists do the sales pitch, not politicians. For me, these are brazen statements for a politician of his supposed stature, which lend an entirely different meaning to the phrase “political science.” This type of chicanery is what gives all politicians a bad name.

A carbon tax really penalizes all of us, individuals as well as businesses, for alleged but unproven harms. There should be no penalty if there is no demonstrable violation of rights or no identifiable rights violator.

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### The position of the Ontario Libertarian Party on the new sex education curriculum guidelines.

#### - MEDIA RELEASE -

This week (Feb 24/15) Ontario’s Education Minister, Liz Sandals, released a long awaited update to the Ministry’s Health and Physical Education curriculum, which provide teachers with guidelines for nutrition, overall physical wellness and sexual education. It’s the first update on sexual education since the invention of *Google* in 1998 and we agree, that is a long time ago. The details around body parts and their functions, certainly have not changed; however social norms, values, laws and technologies have.

The sexual education part of the new curriculum has been met with considerable resistance from parents and organized groups. The major areas of concern center on the grade level at which sex subjects are taught and their age appropriateness. That is completely understandable.

Ontario Libertarians agree that education curriculum guidelines need to be revised periodically to keep up with new knowledge. We believe it’s important that children get the most up-to-date information on all subjects throughout their school years.

The question we ask is why should any curriculum be under the control of politicians or the provincial government? A curriculum should not be one-size-fits-all in a province as large and culturally diverse as Ontario.

There is little point in disputing the content, timeliness or appropriateness of the subject matter taught in school. We believe that is not the function of political parties or even governments.

If education is to be a service delivered by educators for the benefit of children, Libertarians believe it is the parent’s needs on behalf of their children that must be served, not the needs of the system.

The system that exists now must be reconfigured to serve parents so that they may direct their taxes to a school of their choice. Libertarians believe that the competitive situation that will result from this change will best serve the needs of Ontario now and in the future. Parents within their local community should have as much control as possible over the education of their children.

In the meantime, parents have the right to have their children opt out of objectionable information for personal or religious reasons. They may also remove their children entirely from the system opting for home schooling.

*The Ontario Libertarian Party has been a registered political party since 1975. We advocate for individual liberty through free markets, property rights, and limited government. Contact: [info@libertarian.on.ca](mailto:info@libertarian.on.ca)*