

Watchdog training, visits from Bermuda, Botswana and China, and more news from Ontario's Ombudsman.

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## **'WE NEED YOU FOLKS': FORMER BUDGET OFFICER PRAISES ADMINISTRATIVE WATCHDOGS**



Kevin Page, who served as Canada's parliamentary budget officer from 2008 to 2013, emphasized the importance of independent oversight at the Ombudsman's annual training course for administrative watchdogs, "Sharpening Your Teeth," on October 16.

Page, who now heads the [Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy](#) at the University of

Ottawa, borrowed some words from Canadian poet and singer Leonard Cohen to describe the work of oversight officers: "There is a crack, a crack in everything/That's how the light gets in."

In his keynote address, Page likened oversight professionals to the ones who find the cracks in the system. "Who else does this sort of work? Shines a light, looks for the cracks?" asked Page.

The economist shared some of his personal experiences setting up Canada's first parliamentary budget office and maintaining the office's independence when publishing findings on issues such as Canada's participation in the war in Afghanistan, or the 2008 economic downturn.

"I am humbled you do this work," Page told the course participants. "Thank you for doing this sort of work ... We need you folks."

Since 2007, our office has offered the course for ombudsmen and professional investigators across Canada and around the world, always on a full cost-recovery basis. This year we welcomed more than 70 participants from as far as Botswana, Bermuda and the U.K.; from ombudsman offices in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia; and from other ombudsman and public sector bodies in Ontario. Sessions included training in conducting systemic investigations, interviewing, report writing, and best practices for media engagement.

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## OMBUDSMAN IN THE NEWS

- [Family of man killed by police 'dumbfounded' officers don't get mandatory mental health training](#) - CBC News
- [Should all cops carry Tasers? Toronto police board meeting to review use of lethal force](#) - CBC News
- [Ontario's correctional system needs overhaul, report says](#) - Hamilton Spectator
- [De-escalation, containment is goal in tense situations: Halton police](#) - Inside Halton

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## INVESTIGATION UPDATE: DRIVERS LICENCE SUSPENSION NOTICES

Progress continues on our office's investigation into [how the province communicates](#)

[licence suspensions and reinstatements to drivers](#). The field work is now complete and the Ombudsman's findings and recommendations are now being drafted. Ombudsman Paul Dubé announced the investigation this past May in the wake of several complaints by drivers who had no idea their licences were invalid. The investigation looked at how the Ministry of Transportation monitors and communicates with drivers whose licences are cancelled or suspended, including how it co-ordinates with ServiceOntario.

**“We have heard from drivers who went for years without knowing their licences were suspended. When they finally found out, it was through their insurance company or police, not the Ministry – which then treated them as brand-new drivers, requiring them to go through the graduated licencing program to have their licences re-instated.”**

**- Ombudsman Paul Dubé**



#### SEE YOU IN NOVEMBER!

You'll spot Ombudsman staff at Scarborough-Agincourt MPP Soo Wong's annual health and government services fair at Bridlewood Mall on November 18, and at the [Health and Wellbeing in Developmental Disabilities conference](#) at the University of Toronto conference centre on November 29 and 30. Come say hello and get the latest resources from our office.



#### VISITS FROM FAR AND WIDE

Ombudsman Dubé and colleagues welcomed several foreign delegations to



the office in October including [Bermuda Ombudsman Victoria Pearman](#) (in photo, second from right), Botswana ombudsman Augustine Makgonatsothe, and a delegation of administrative staff from Guangdong province in China who stopped by the office to learn more about our best practices in complaint resolution and promoting administrative fairness.

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### OMBUDSMAN OUTREACH

This month, the Ombudsman attended the [United States Ombudsman Association conference](#) in San Antonio, Texas. Our general counsel Wendy Ray and Laura Pettigrew trained staff from several investigative agencies in St. John's, NL, and Ombudsman staff answered the public's questions at the Developmental Services Ontario Toronto chapter's [information fair](#).



Training in St. John's, NL. From left: Bruce Chaulk, NL Chief Electoral Officer; Ontario Ombudsman General Counsel Wendy Ray; Jackie Lake-Kavanagh, NL Child and Youth Advocate; Ontario Ombudsman General Counsel Laura Pettigrew; Donovan Molloy, NL Information and Privacy Commissioner; and Brad Moss, NL Assistant Citizen's Representative.



### RUN FOR THE CURE

The Ombudsman and our staff team, the [Ombudsman Watchdogs](#) (shown here in front of the Legislature), laced up their sneakers and sported a lot of pink for the tenth year in a row at the Run for the Cure on October 1, to honour colleagues and loved ones who have dealt with breast cancer. The Watchdogs raised more than \$3,600 to support the Canadian Cancer Society.





Our materials are available online for print and download! Questions about [when to close a municipal meeting](#)? Wondering how to file a [complaint about a school board](#)? Want to read our [latest investigation reports](#)? Find tip cards, brochures, posters, reports and more on our [website](#).



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#### CAREERS WITH THE OMBUDSMAN

Are you an energetic problem solver with an interest in public policy and who thinks outside the box? Our office is hiring! [Click here to learn more.](#)

#### CASE SUMMARY

A woman contacted our office after waiting more than 10 weeks and making repeated requests for her marriage certificate from ServiceOntario. The woman, who had married an American citizen, was unable to get access to the U.S. military base where her husband worked, or apply for a visa, until she had the marriage certificate. We contacted

ServiceOntario and found out the delay was due to missing information on the application. Once the woman provided the updated information, ServiceOntario expedited her request and issued her marriage certificate. Read more successful case resolutions [here](#).

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### **BROADER PUBLIC SECTOR CASES**

The Ombudsman's mandate was expanded to include school boards on September 1, 2015, and to municipalities and universities on January 1, 2016.

To date, we've received 1,845 cases about school boards, 5,504 cases about municipalities and 384 cases about universities.

Like most of the 21,000-plus cases we receive each year, all but a few of these have been resolved without need for formal investigation.

[Learn more here](#)

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**[File a complaint or contact us here](#)**

**The Ombudsman is an independent officer of the Ontario legislature who conducts oversight of provincial government agencies and municipalities, universities and school boards. Ombudsman Paul Dubé began his five-year term on April 1, 2016.**

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