



March 10, 2019

Mark MacDonald
President
Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston
Constituency Association
PC Party of Ontario
Via email: mark@macdonaldlaw.ca

Dear Mark:

I am responding to your letter to Premier Ford dated March 4, 2019 and sent by you at 11:00 am on Tuesday, March 5, 2019 regarding the status of Randy Hillier, MPP. As you are aware, Mr. Hillier currently remains suspended from the PC Caucus.

To address your main concern directly, please know that Mr. Hillier's conduct in the Legislature on Wednesday, February 20, 2019 was not the sole reason for his suspension from Caucus. It was however, to many, including many of his caucus colleagues, the final straw in what has become a pattern of behaviour exhibited by Mr. Hillier over the course of the past year. For many of his veteran colleagues, they view this as a pattern that goes back many years.

I have been told that the environment of the House that day (February 20) was one filled with emotion and tension, as many parents of children with autism were in the gallery to express concerns on the issue of autism funding. Government members were asked by caucus leadership during the pre-Question Period caucus briefing (from which Mr. Hillier was absent) to maintain the most disciplined decorum during Question Period, so as not to inflame tensions and potentially "set things off." Everyone in attendance agreed to this course of action.

An analysis of the situation and agreed-upon approach to decorum was also communicated to Mr. Hillier when he eventually showed-up in the House. However, with just a few seconds before the end of Question Period that day, Mr. Hillier made flippant comments that indeed caused a great commotion. Many of the parents in the gallery, as well as opposition MPPs, were furious, and the media was now fully engaged.

Regardless of his intent, Mr. Hillier had lit a match in what had become a potentially explosive environment. His comments were viewed as an unnecessary provocation and became the breaking point for caucus leadership with respect to its patience with the MPP. It was for this and many more reasons that Mr. Hillier was suspended from caucus for an indefinite period.



To highlight some examples of his past behaviours that demonstrate an apparent lack of commitment to his caucus colleagues, and of the government for which he now represents, please note that Mr. Hillier:

- *Has the lowest meeting attendance of any of the members of the Ontario PC Caucus, and when he is present, often comes late and leaves early.*
- *Chose not to attend the 3-day Ontario PC Convention held in Etobicoke this past November.*
- *Chose not to attend the 3-day Caucus retreat held in Waterloo this past February.*
- *Was absent from the Legislature when it was recalled during the Christmas break to debate and vote on legislation to prevent a strike by the Power Workers' Union. Thankfully other members of the government caucus showed-up at Queen's Park to fight for the people of Ontario and helped to keep the lights on.*
- *Provides comments to members of the media - including the Toronto Star and the Globe and Mail - to express his dissatisfaction with the government on certain issues, rather than speaking within caucus or directly with the responsible minister.*
- *Is often not present for Question Period warm-up meetings where important items are discussed in advance of MPPs going into the Legislature (including the situation described above).*
- *Rarely highlights the Government's policies and agenda through social media and other communication channels, but rather, for the most part, chooses to further his own personal interests on those platforms.*
- *Provided a Liberal independent member (just last week), in his absence, with the ability to ask a question in the Legislature against our government - demonstrating his lack of desire to change his behaviour and return to his team.*

Despite all of this, Mr. Hillier has had more one-on-one meetings with the Premier and members of the Premier's staff than any other member of caucus, in order to discuss issues and concerns important to him. At the very beginning of this government, when he held no additional positions in the Legislature following his run for Speaker, Mr. Hillier was put forward



by the Premier to be the Chair of the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills – a position for which he had requested. Mr. Hillier was given a constructive opportunity to become a valued member of the team, but instead became very difficult to work with, and put forward unreasonable demands, that included increasing expenses for members of the Committee.

In late December Mr. Hillier brought claims that he was being muzzled and not permitted to speak to bills in the House. However, after reviewing his concerns, it was found that all formal requests sent by Mr. Hillier's office were being honoured, and in all cases Mr. Hillier had been given the opportunity to speak in the Legislature, demonstrating that his claims of being muzzled were completely without merit or evidence.

If Mr. Hillier wishes to have a place in the Ontario PC Caucus, my advice would be for him to accept responsibility for his past conduct and begin to demonstrate he is willing to change and be part of a team, rather than engaging in a public relations exercise as he has done for the past week in order to attempt to paint himself as some sort of victim. For example, please explain to me how your letter ended-up first with a Toronto Star reporter and was posted in an online Star story a day before it was even emailed by you to the Premier. To me, this highlights a lack of understanding of basic elements of teamwork and respect and displays a clear refusal and unwillingness for Mr. Hillier to acknowledge his own past transgressions.

Since being elected on June 7, 2018 our government has made a great deal of progress implementing our agenda for the people of Ontario. This is because of the hard work and dedication of the members of the Ontario PC team. While our desire would be to have Mr. Hillier play a role on that team, the process for his possible return can only begin to come about if there was at minimum an acceptance by Mr. Hillier of responsibility for his past behaviour as well as a drastic change in his conduct going forward.

The people of Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston deserve no less.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Patterson". The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

Brian Patterson
President
Progressive Conservative Party
of Ontario