

Martha Hall Findlay - MP, Willowdale

North York Towers, May, 2010

Thank you to all of the residents of the North York Towers community for allowing me the privilege of contributing to your newsletter. I am proud to represent you in Ottawa, and to be able, in turn, to be the voice of the federal government back to you.

My primary responsibility as Official Opposition Critic for Government Operations and Government Services is to ensure that the Government is held to account, and that it is spending your taxes effectively, efficiently, in your best interests, and without undue influence or conflict.

One of my biggest concerns right now is that it is tough to do my job, to keep the government to account, without information. Unfortunately, government has become increasingly "dark". The Information Commissioner just recently issued a very strong report, expressing serious concern about the lack of transparency and accountability in the government. Several departments, including Foreign Affairs, rated "F", a failing grade, in the level of secrecy and refusal to disclose information. I believe very strongly that government information and transparency are fundamental, basics in any democracy, and I have been one who has been working hard to challenge the government, to require a much higher level of information disclosure. Canadians cannot properly judge their government, or hold their politicians to account, when government operations are kept so secret.

I am also personally concerned about the country's finances. As a businessperson before entering politics, I support efforts to make government more efficient. I am, however, worried that "across the board" freezes may cut

certain services that are very important, without strategically finding areas where greater efficiencies can be found. We are monitoring these developments at the House of Commons Standing Committee on Government Operations, and I hope to continue to report to you on our progress in subsequent newsletters.

Issues that are specifically relevant to Willowdale include infrastructure, immigration, recognition of foreign credentials and support for more language training, and I continue to work for improvements in these areas as well.

But most importantly---I can only do my job as your Member of Parliament if I hear from **YOU**, to know what issues and concerns you have about the federal government and our work in Ottawa, and how I and my team can improve and better meet your needs. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 145 Sheppard Avenue West, Willowdale, M2N 1M7, 416-223-2858, HallFindlay.M@parl.gc.ca.

And feel free to stop by and say hello!

Martha Hall Findlay
Member of Parliament for Willowdale
Official Opposition Critic for Government Operations and Government Services