

Saturday or Sunday One Day Closed

Where's the fairness, David Peterson, for the retail employees whom you are legislating to work on weekends? We need our family time, not wide-open Sunday shopping!

Strong language? Talk to retail employees and some employers, and see how thrilled they are with your proposals. You're abdicating your responsibility by passing the Sunday Closing Laws to the municipalities.

We love our children. So should you.

We love our wives and husbands. So should you.

We love our Moms, Dads and friends. So should you.

David, we know you work many hours. But how would Shelley and the children feel if you were working in the Legislature every Saturday and Sunday as well as three weekday evenings. That's what you're forcing on many retail employees and employers.

Yes David, because many will have no choice. That's why such an overwhelming majority of retail employees disagree with you.

With Sunday openings and a growing trend to two-income families, it's not nice if parents have two different days off in the middle of the week. David, put yourself in our position and try to recharge your family ties when your spouse and friends are at work and the kids in school. And then we haven't even talked about single-parent families. Is there no concern for some of the values we have?

Some retailers will open both on Saturday and on Sunday when they fear they will lose a competitive advantage. Employees will be forced to go along.

An extra day open will not increase sales. Does your discretionary spending power go up just because stores are open longer? We can't spend more, if we don't earn more.

An extra day open will not create jobs. Retailers will keep their same sales labour cost ratio per product. They cannot afford to do otherwise. Employers who say they create jobs, create only part-time jobs on the weekend at the expense of full-time jobs during the week.

You have created issues that divide retailers. You have created issues that divide shoppers. We would like you to realize that Sunday shopping is an issue affecting the human rights of employees and employers. We would like you to protect family values and a lifestyle we also have a right to enjoy.

Mr. Premier, EMPLOYEE RIGHTS ARE YOUR PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY.

Don't bother bringing in legislation to protect retail employees from having to work on Sundays. Because you can't; it simply won't work. Employees would be discriminated against anyway. Employers are interested in employees who give them flexible hours. If there is a shortage of staff or sickness, there will be that subtle pressure to "please" help out. Pay raises go to those who are the most flexible and promotions go to those who work when the company needs them. Retail employees understand that. Your legislation wouldn't work.

Where will all this end? Should all provincial employees also work around a seven day week? Should the people also have the right to get their driver's licence on Sunday? Must commercialism have such an overwhelming priority over family life?

We shouldn't have checkerboard local municipal closing by-laws. Abdicating your responsibility by passing your "hot potato" on to intense lobbying between local community groups will create still more division.

Your Solicitor-General has said that she would consult the municipalities before changing the laws. She'll get a resounding NO. Why should local politicians be saddled with what is a provincial responsibility?

You talk local referendum. Try it first with retail employees. You won't have to go further.

We don't appreciate your wild-west approach — when you act as if you are above the law. As a legislator, you are under oath to uphold the laws of Ontario. Giving your blessing to people breaking the law on Sunday, December 27, was not upholding these laws. The Supreme Court of Canada recently ruled that the Retail Business Holidays Act is constitutional and should be upheld. Your government spent hundreds of thousand of dollars defending the Act. The retail industry was coming to terms with the Act except for some notorious examples.

You were not elected to float your trial balloons by condoning the breaking of the law. What does your oath of office mean? Will this attitude characterize your term in office?

The all-party Committee of the Legislature on Retail Store Hours was concerned. After studying hundreds of briefs, these MPP's unanimously recommended a common pause day so that families can get together. Liberals on this Committee also supported this major recommendation unanimously.

David, whatever happened to principles? Your own Solicitor-General Joan Smith signed that Committee report. She worked on it. She agreed with it. Why does she talk differently now?

David, listen to what the all-party Committee said:

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

The Committee supports the principle of a common pause day in Ontario. Legislation regulating retailing on holidays, including Sunday, should therefore be structured to support the maintenance of such a common pause day, or day of rest.

Let's have a common pause day.

Let's give those who want to be closed on Saturday the right to be open Sunday, giving their employees Saturdays off.

Let's give employers and employees the Sunday off when they work on Saturday.

Employees would then be guaranteed at least one weekend day with their families and friends since companies would have to be closed on either one of those two days. And Sunday would remain the common pause day for most retail employees and their families since most companies would choose the traditional Saturday to be open.

We should show fairness to all.

Thank you.

Gerrit de Boer
and the Idomo Employees

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P.S. If you feel like we do, express your concerns to Premier David Peterson, Solicitor General Joan Smith and your local MPP.
(You can contact them at Queen's Park, Toronto M7A 1A1) We can get fairness if we all act now!

Write to all newspapers. Place an ad yourself.