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FACE-TO-FACE: New Democrat leader Bob Rae gets a big hug from his daughter Eleanor, 5, at the Sundays for Families picnic at the Columbus Centre on Lawrence Ave. yesterday.

Families deserve day together, Rae says

By William Walker
TORONTO STAR

A New Democratic Party government would legislate a province-wide common pause day on Sundays to benefit families, leader Bob Rae says.

"Unlike the Liberals we believe there should be a common pause day for families to take some time off and to be together," Rae told the crowd of 300 at the Sundays for Families picnic at the Columbus Centre on Lawrence Ave.

He was accompanied at the picnic by his wife Arlene Perly-Rae and their three young daughters. Last night, Rae rested at home with his family before beginning the gruelling final week of the campaign for Thursday's election. Rae has made his point about a

pause day previously during the campaign, telling cheering members of the United Food and Commercial Workers union that Premier David Peterson is selling out working families to the trendiness of Sunday shopping.

Yesterday, Gerrit de Boer, owner of Idomo furniture and one of the leaders of Ontario's anti-Sunday shopping lobbyists, said most who oppose the concept will support the NDP.

"From all the three parties, the NDP is the only one that has said it's opposed to Sunday shopping and for some people, that will make quite a difference," said de Boer, who attended the picnic.

Rae told reporters the common pause day concept he favors would allow smaller convenience

stores to remain open and would also protect the tourism exemption to allow store openings in certain tourist areas.

But Rae said tourism would be defined more clearly to avoid abuses.

He said there would also be provided sabbath exemptions for religions which don't recognize Sundays.

"What we're trying to do is keep a little area of time when you don't have to dance to the boss' tune, you can spend time with your family and you don't have to shop till you drop or work 'til you drop," Rae said.

Earlier, Rae met with tenants and NDP supporters on Walmer Rd. in the Annex area, where he attacked Liberal rent review legislation.