

Media Release



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Bay Ward Councillor Alex Cullen tables 4 reports in June to City Committees & Council

- **Essential Health & Social Support (EHSS) and Home Help Asset Limits**, to June 1 Community & Protective Service Committee
- **Ottawa Living Wage Policy**, to June 1 Community & Protective Services Committee
- **Use of City Facilities for Military Trade Shows**, to June 2 Corporate Services & Economic Development Committee
- **Reforming Ottawa’s Municipal Election Finances**, to June 2 Corporate Services & Economic Development Committee

Bay Ward Councillor Alex Cullen has tabled 4 reports to be considered at City Council Committees this June. At the June 1 meeting of the City’s Community & Protective Services (CPS) Committee, Councillor Cullen has tabled a report entitled *Essential Health & Social Services (EHSS) and Home Help Asset Limits* (on behalf of citizen advocate Earle Rheume), which seeks to make more accessible to low income disabled and seniors a program to assist them to get vision care, hearing aids, home help services, etc. Currently access to this City program by low income persons is limited by their asset levels (i.e. the value of RRSPs, homes, etc.) to \$5,000 – Councillor Cullen is proposing to increase this limit to \$10,000 in non-cash assets, in order to make this program more accessible to low-income residents who otherwise could not afford these basic health services. To access a copy of this report go to the City’s web site at www.ottawa.ca and go to Community & Protective Services Committee June 1 agenda.

Also at the June 1 CPS Committee meeting Councillor Cullen, on behalf of ACORN (the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now), has tabled a report *Ottawa Living Wage Policy* that recommends establishing a “living wage” i.e. a wage rate that would bring Ottawa’s working poor up to the poverty level – estimated to be \$21,666 a year before taxes (i.e. \$13.25 an hour) – for City of Ottawa employees and for those companies that do business with the City of Ottawa. Said Councillor Cullen: “The City should ensure that it provides, and that the companies it contracts with to deliver City services should provide, an adequate wage that would enable people not to live in poverty. We should not be condoning poverty wages”. To access a copy of this report go to the City’s web site at www.ottawa.ca and go to Community & Protective Services Committee June 1 agenda.

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At the June 2 meeting of the City's Corporate Services & Economic Development (CS&ED) Committee Bay Ward Councillor Alex Cullen has tabled a report *Use of City Facilities for Military Trade Shows* to re-instate a previous City of Ottawa policy that banned military trade shows from City facilities. Currently CANSEC 2009 - a military trade show sponsored by the Canadian Association of Defence and Security Industries (CADSI) - is scheduled for May 27 and 28 at Lansdowne Park. CADSI represents 700 companies which sell products, technologies and services to military and security customers in Canada and abroad. The *Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade* (COAT) – a coalition of some 75 community and faith groups - has protested the loss of the previous City of Ottawa policy – imposed in 1989 following an arms trade show called ARMX, and is organizing protests against CANSEC 2009. Said Councillor Cullen: “Ottawa is a peace-loving city which supports Canada's role in peace-keeping missions in the world, and we should not be condoning these arms trade shows that produce components that are exported for use in wars where millions of innocent civilians are killed as a result”. To access a copy of this report go to the City's web site at www.ottawa.ca and go to Corporate Services & Economic Development Committee June 2 agenda.

Also at the June 2 meeting of CS&ED Committee Councillor Cullen has tabled a report *Reforming Ottawa's Municipal Elections* which recommends eliminating corporate and union campaign contributions to Ottawa's municipal election campaigns. According to an analysis of both the 2003 and 2006 municipal election in Ottawa, corporate contributions create an uneven and unfair election process by being largely directed to incumbents, forming the bulk of their campaign funding. These campaign contributions also create an unfair advantage to individuals who control these corporations and unions, as they can contribute twice – once as individuals and again through the corporations they control, whereas most voters can only do so once. And it raises questions about the integrity of municipal campaign contributions, as the bulk of these corporations do business with City Hall (i.e. developers, construction companies, waste disposal firms, etc.) and concentrate their largess to incumbents, which get re-elected. Said Councillor Cullen (who does not accept corporate or union contributions to his election campaigns): “The basis of democracy is one person one vote. Corporate contributions violates this principle by creating a special class of donors who can give twice – this is undemocratic. And it raises questions about the integrity of campaign financing, as these companies have a business motive to make these contributions.” To access a copy of this report go to the City's web site at www.ottawa.ca and go to Corporate Services & Economic Development Committee June 2 agenda.