

Gerard Kennedy

Member of Parliament
Parkdale-High Park



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Wasteful attack ads banned

Residents, taxpayers and environment all win as House of Commons finally agrees to ban abuse of free postage and printing

Gerard's longstanding opposition to the wasteful, often shameless, use of out-of-riding advertising by MPs bore fruit on March 31, when the 4 year old practice was banned by a House of Commons vote.

At an annual saving of \$20 million the practice cost more than the combined annual spending on advertising by all the political parties.

Commonly called "ten-percenters," the long-standing practice that allowed MPs to print and send infor-



Gerard answering questions from constituents at his annual Budget Breakfast on March 5. Full story on page 3

mation to up to ten per cent of constituents was changed by a closed door decision by three of the political parties following the 2006 election.

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Free tax clinics help more constituents

Dozens of Parkdale-High Park constituents living on low incomes had their tax-time worries relieved at nine different free clinics co-sponsored by Gerard and the Certified General Accountants (CGA's) throughout the riding. As of early April, 148 area residents had their tax returns completed through the program, over 50% more than the year before.

Gerard's office organized the centers to ensure low income seniors and families get the most out of their tax return and avoid the grips of tax discounters.

"It's terrific to have so many committed volunteer CGA professionals working to

ensure that our most vulnerable neighbours will get the full benefit of government programs," said Kennedy. "I hope we can grow the program even more next year."

"Our goal is to help make the system work. Everyone - government, taxpayers and beneficiaries - are better off if people are able to get their taxes done in a timely and accurate manner," Gerard added, noting that tax-discounters prey on people with little resources by taking as much as 25% of re-funds.

Eligible participants were adults with an income under \$25,000 and families with an income under \$30,000.

Gerard brings Solving Homelessness campaign to Newfoundland and Labrador

In his role as Liberal Housing Critic Gerard has stepped up the pressure in his national campaign to compel the Conservative government to provide long overdue support for successful efforts to prevent and eliminate homelessness across Canada.

On March 18, Gerard led a roundtable with the St. John's Housing and Homelessness Network with local MP Siobhan Coady. Newfoundland and Labrador agencies estimate they only have half the resources needed to meet local needs.

“The recession is creating new home-

less individuals and families but the Harper government has refused resources for society's most vulnerable,” said Gerard.

A small win took place in mid-March when the Harper government renewed funding for 2011 following calls by Gerard and housing groups. “There is enough uncertainty in the lives of homeless people without having it made worse by the federal government.”

Federal anti-homelessness funding has not increased in 10 years while Canada's National Secretariat on

Homelessness has estimated that homelessness affects approximately 150,000 people, although other reports identify as many as 300,000 homeless in Canada.

“Homelessness is a solvable problem but the creativity and hard work of civil society groups needs to be matched by federal leadership that can work in partnership with our provinces, territories and cities,” said Gerard.

Gerard and Coady also met with local city councils as well as students at St. John's Memorial University to discuss housing, infrastructure and other issues.



Gerard speaking to students at York University youth leadership conference on March 21



Gerard hosting the Infrastructure Roundtable on Parliament Hill on February 11, 2010

Liberals Ban use of Partisan Mailings

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“I'm glad to see this get fixed. From any perspective – ethical, cost or environmental – this was a terrible practice,” said Gerard. “I think it shows a difference in character between the political parties.”

The number of items sent out in the program rose dramatically by 400% to 402 million pamphlets in 2009.

“Millions of Canadian doorsteps were being soiled by some of the worst products of political backrooms with the sole idea of interfering with reasonable debate,” said Gerard.

Kennedy has long been against the misuse of ten-percenters and was the second lowest user of 308 members in the House of Commons last year. Gerard's printing costs were \$963 (although costs are higher in the year just ending). Conservative MPs, who voted to hang on to the destructive practice, accounted for 69 per cent of the printing costs in 2008-09 – compared to 13 per cent used by Liberals. The Conservatives spent an average of \$49,680 per MP on printing costs per year, while NDP's came in at \$33,825, almost double the Liberal MP average of \$18,400 per MP.

Gerard's continual calls for an end to the practice represented the concern in his Parkdale-High Park riding.

“Many constituents complained to me about the pamphlets they were sent by other MPs, calling them examples of ‘American go-for-the-throat politics,’ ‘a particularly outrageous waste of taxpayers money,’ and ‘blatantly partisan...outright electioneering,’” said Gerard, citing emails received.

If you would like to receive Gerard's electronic MP Reports (free of partisan attacks!) please be sure to sign up for the community council (see back page).

Federal Budget a “recipe for paralysis for our country”



Early Friday morning, March 5, the day after the Federal government tabled the new federal budget, about 75 community residents turned out at the Loyola Arrupe Seniors Centre near the corner of Bloor and Keele Streets.

Gerard Kennedy, arriving with a box of freshly printed budget documents (in English and French) said that, with tabling the 2010 budget, the government has missed an opportunity to speak about what they are doing with our money.

“The big question is whether Canadians will get value for the billions more being borrowed this year,” said Mr. Kennedy. “The Harper government failed to create the jobs it said it would in 2009-10 and there may be serious cost over-runs and incomplete projects in the year ahead as a further result.”

The 2010 budget is part two of last year’s federal budget, he explained. Last year’s budget promised \$32 billion in spending. However, so many didn’t work out the government has restated almost every initiative they started last year.

“We gave them a chance, but once the budget (for last

year) was posted they stopped working with us.”

“We realized last summer that the government wasn’t being honest. Now it is up to the opposition to create awareness and make sure Canadian know that their government needs to be accountable and provide good value for their money.”

“In my view the recession has been worse than it needed to be,” he added “This particular budget paralyzes Canada for the next three to four years.”

“There has to be an end to the disconnect between what government says is going to happen and what actually happens.”

“The government’s message is that the current economic situation is a temporary blip and everything is going to get better, however, the countries Canada does business with aren’t going to come out of it so easily.”

If you would like to be involved in Gerard’s project of tracking infrastructure projects in Toronto and across the country, please contact our Ottawa office at kenneg@parl.gc.ca.

SELECTED RIDING MEETINGS & EVENTS

February 18 – Gerard’s Community Council on Federal Issues
 February 23- Swansea Town Hall Annual General Meeting
 February 24 – Workplace Institute Meeting
 February 25 - West Toronto Diamond Pile Drivers Meeting
 February 28 – Pia Bouman Dance Studio Tour
 February 28 – Arts Reference Group Meeting
 March 5 – Gerard Kennedy’s Budget Breakfast
 March 6 – Income Tax Clinic, 3735 Dundas Street West
 March 8 – International Women’s Day Celebration in Parkdale, Masaryk-Cowan Community Centre*
 March 8 – Income Tax Clinic, Swansea Town Hall
 March 10 – Tibetan Uprising Day at Queen’s Park
 March 10 – Income Tax Clinic, Gerard’s Community Office
 March 12- Tibetan Women’s Uprising Day*
 March 15 – Income Tax Clinic, 3725 Dundas Street West

March 16- Income Tax Clinic, 100 High Park Avenue
 March 20- Income Tax Clinic, Copernicus Lodge
 March 20- Ukrainian Canadian Social Services (Toronto) Gala
 March 26 – HumberSide Collegiate Visit to Parliament Hill*
 March 27 – Income Tax Clinic, 100 High Park Avenue
 March 27 – Earth Hour Walk*
 March 29 – High Park Family Fun Place Meeting
 March 29 – Eritrean Detainee and Human Rights Meeting
 March 29 – Mexican Refugee Situation Meeting
 April 1 – Parkdale Tenants’ Association Meeting, Roma Tenants*
 April 3 – High Park Family Fun Place Grand Opening

*Attended by Official Representative

UCSST Award Gala - March 20, 2010



Victor Hetmanczuk , Executive Director of the Ukrainian Canadian Social Services (Toronto) (UCSST) and Gerard with Victor Malarek receiving the Humanitarian Award from the UCSST to honour his work against international human trafficking.

Epilepsy Awareness Statement

Statement in the House of Commons on March 30, 2010:

Madam Speaker, March is Epilepsy Awareness Month in Canada.

Epilepsy is not well understood despite afflicting 300,000 Canadians. The public's lack of knowledge creates fear, discrimination, and stigma surrounding those with this condition.

Each day 42 of our fellow Canadians learn they have epilepsy; 60% of them will be either young children or senior citizens. They face no formalized diagnosis system.

There is a need for an effective and improved means of control and a need for accurate diagnoses. They face the prospect of having behaviour and emotional issues simply from a condition that is so little understood. One-third of people with epilepsy do not yet have an effective treatment.

I invite my colleagues to join with my constituents Margaret Maye, Gary Neumann, and their son Thomas of Epilepsy Cure Initiative, to help give thousands of Canadians control back over their lives.

Gerard secures House of Commons Committee study of infrastructure stimulus problems

The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will study issues related to the \$11 billion federal infrastructure program for the first time as the result of an initiative by Gerard. On March 25th, Gerard's motion to study the impact of the Harper government's deadline for the completion of infrastructure stimulus projects was adopted by the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. In the previous 47 sittings the Conservative and Bloc party members of the committee had combined to block consideration of infrastructure issues except for Estimates.

Across Canada, many municipalities are struggling to meet the artificial deadline of March 31, 2011 due to original delays by the federal government. Cities and towns face extra costs, project reductions or even cancellation of projects they have been promised.

Gerard, in his role as Official Opposition Critic for Infrastructure, Cities and Communities, has conducted and published extensive studies that showed very low levels of jobs generated and high levels of partisanship in the first year of the expensive program.

The committee hearings will give Canadians a chance to hear directly from municipalities tasked with making the program work, with as much as 80% of funds to be expended in the second year.



Margaret Maye, Gary Neumann, and their son Thomas of Epilepsy Cure Initiative with Gerard in Ottawa office

Selection of government bills		State of Legislation	Vote
C-2 (Formerly C-23)	Canada - Colombia Free Trade Agreement Implementation	1 st Reading	Against*
C-3	Gender Equity in Indian Registration Act	2 nd reading and referred to Cmtee	For
C-4	Sébastien's Law (Protecting the Public from Violent Young Offenders)	1 st Reading	For*
C-5 (formerly C-59)	Keeping Canadians Safe (International Transfer of Offenders) Act	1 st Reading	For
C-8 (formerly C-57)	Canada-Jordan Free Trade Act	1 st Reading	For
C-9	An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 4,	1 st Reading	Against
C-10 (formerly S-7)	Constitution Act, 2010 (Senate term limits)	1 st Reading	Against
C-11	Balanced Refugee Reform Act	1 st Reading	For*
C-12	Democratic Representation Act	1 st Reading	For
Selection of Private Members Bills			
C-241	An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (removal of waiting period)	Cmtee Report tabled in HoC	For
C-268	An Act to amend the Criminal Code (minimum sentence for offences involving trafficking of persons under the age of eighteen years)	2nd reading in Senate	For
C-273	An Act to amend the Competition Act and the Canadian Environmental Protection Act (right to repair)	Cmtee Report tabled in HoC	For
C-288	An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (tax credit for new graduates working in designated regions)	Cmtee Report tabled in HoC	For
C-290	An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (tax credit for loss of retirement income)	In HoC Finance Committee	For
C-301	An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Firearms Act (registration of firearms)	Dropped from Order Paper	Against
C-304	An Act to ensure secure, adequate, accessible and affordable housing for Canadians	Cmtee Report tabled in HoC	For
C-308	An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (improvement of the employment insurance system)	In HoC Human Resources Cmtee	For*
C-310	An Act to Provide Certain Rights to Air Passengers (Air Passengers' Bill of Rights)	Cmtee Report tabled in HoC	For
C-311	An Act to ensure Canada assumes its responsibilities in preventing dangerous climate change (Climate Change Accountability Act)	Cmtee Report tabled in HoC	For
C-391	An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Firearms Act (repeal of long-gun registry)	In HoC Public Safety Cmtee	Against
C-393	An Act to amend the Patent Act (drugs for international humanitarian purposes) and to make a consequential amendment to another Act	In HoC Industry Cmtee	For
C-395	An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (labour dispute)	In HoC Human Resources Cmtee	For
C-440	An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (war resisters)	1st reading in the HoC	For

*Denotes support for bill to committee stage. Further support subject to amendments.

SELECTED OTTAWA/PARLIAMENTARY MEETINGS & EVENTS

<p>February 23 – Laurentian University 50th Anniversary February 25 – Canadian Publishers Association March 1 – National Liberal Caucus March 2 – The Immigrant Success Gap Roundtable March 3 – National Liberal Caucus March 9 – Transport Committee March 9 – Easter Seals Ontario March 9 – Canadian Alliance of Student Associations March 9 – Canadian Urban Transit Association March 9 – Caucus Committee on Multiculturalism March 10 – Politics and the Pen Dinner (Writer’s Trust Canada) March 16 – Transport Committee* March 16 – Wes Sheridan, PEI Minister of Finance, Charlottetown March 16 – PEI Road Builders, Charlottetown March 16 – PEI Infrastructure Secretariat, Charlottetown March 16 – PEI Construction Association, Charlottetown March 16 – The Institute of Island Studies, Charlottetown March 18 - St. John’s City Council, St. John’s, Newfoundland March 18 – Memorial University – Canadian Politics March 18 – St. John’s Housing and Homelessness Committee March 18 – City of Mount Pearl Council Meeting March 22 – Human Resources and Skills Dev. Cmtee, C-304 March 22 – Caucus Committee on Multiculturalism March 23 – Caucus Legislative Committee</p>	<p>March 24 – National Liberal Caucus March 24 – Canadian Consumer Initiative March 25 – Transport Committee March 25 – Anti-Human Trafficking, Not for Sale Campaign* March 26 – CBC “The Current” March 26-28 – Canada 150 Conference, Montreal Canada 150 Sessions: - Workers of Today and Tomorrow, Learning as National Priority - Canadian Innovation, Safeguarding Retirement - The Future of Health and Healthcare - The Future of Canada’s Arctic - Clean Energy and Canada’s Potential - Culture in the Digital World - Africa in 2017, The Australian Experience - Canada –US relations & Canada’s Presence in World March 30 – Canadian Council on Learning Roundtable March 30 – Member Statement on Epilepsy Awareness March 30 – Caucus Legislative Committee March 31 – National Liberal Caucus March 31 – Canadian Council on Social Development April 1 –Low-carbon, high-octane economy – Stewart Elgie April 1 – Public Safety and National Security Committee</p> <p>*Attended by Official Representative</p>
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Over 600 hours of volunteer and internship work was contributed to the office between mid February and March. Contributors included students, seniors, and community-minded individuals, as well as two interns from an administrative program at COSTI, who worked for six weeks at the office. They helped Gerard with a wide range of tasks including advocacy, community outreach, local events and activities, research, casework, and office administration. During this time, the office had 241 walk-ins and received 997 phone calls and 1261 emails.

The office serves the role of representing constituents, whom often contact the office for advice, information, and updates in regards to dealings with federal matters. Office staff and volunteers often handle inquiries with federal departments including Foreign Affairs, Canada Border Services Agency, Canada Revenue, Health Canada, CPP, Citizenship and Immigration, EI, and Service Canada.

If you are experiencing issues with any of these departments and/or their related applications, please contact our community office.

Gerard at Canada 150 Conference



Gerard speaking to constituents via Skype during a break while in Montreal at the Canada 150 Conference

For help, advice or information on federal or community matters please contact your:

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Monday-Friday 10:00am-4:00pm

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832 Confederation Building
Parliament of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

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Email: Kennedy.G@parl.gc.ca

Office hours:

Monday-Friday 9:00am-5:00pm

On the weekend of March 26-28th, Gerard attended the non-partisan Canada 150 conference in Montreal hosted by the Liberal Party of Canada. Presentations were made by diverse experts and discussions took place with 30,000 Canadians online and through over 70 satellite events. The purpose was to determine how to meet the challenges facing Canada in the run-up to our 150th birthday as a country in 2017.

In Parkdale- High Park, a satellite group of 35 people watched the live webcast of the sessions covering “Environment and Clean Energy” and “Culture in the Digital World”. In between sessions, Gerard spoke with participants via video link Skype, including a tour around the conference room to show them what was happening in Montreal. Local attendees submitted questions to the panelists during the Environment session and were “tweeting” on Twitter throughout the day about the conference.

A national learning strategy, with special emphasis on Aboriginal learning, was one of the early commitments to emerge from the conference.

Get Involved in the Community Council

Help shape Canada from Parkdale-High Park by joining Gerard’s non-partisan “*Community Council on Federal Issues*”. The council is made up of interested community members and leaders of local organizations. Members are invited to attend regular public town hall meetings, receive MP reports as well as review information and provide advice on issues that they care about.

Please contact the Community Office for more information or to sign up