

Peterborough This Week

Oct 3, 2013

Rally at MPP Jeff Leal's calls for defunding of elective abortion procedures

By [Sarah Frank](#)

PETERBOROUGH -- If the Province wasn't shelling out money to cover the cost of abortions, Christine Buchner guesses it might have more money for the physiotherapy treatments she's been waitlisted for.

The Peterborough woman was one of roughly 40 people who took to the sidewalk outside of Peterborough MPP Jeff Leal's office on Thursday (Oct. 3) to demand the Province defund elective abortions. The protest was part of a provincewide demonstration by Campaign Life Coalition, which is lobbying for the government to stop using taxpayers' dollars to cover the controversial procedures.

For Ms Buchner, it's not a "pro-life" or a "pro-choice" issue, though she admits she stands on the pro-life side of the grander debate. She says publicly funding abortions is an issue that should concern all Ontarians.

"There are many views and approaches about the procedures," she says. "This isn't about that. Today, I would hope that a lot of people who maybe even support choice and abortions would agree they shouldn't be publicly funded."

Still, with a few pro-choice supporters at the protest to voice their own opinions on the subject, the two sides clashed outside MPP Leal's office.

Sara Ostrowska, a Trent University student, was confronted by a number of people involved in the rally as she expressed her own belief that the procedure should remain publicly funded.

"This is over tax dollars," she says. "They shouldn't be attacking women's rights. It's not a cosmetic procedure...I feel like there should be more rallies over corporate tax cuts."

She says of the number of people who approached her, only one seemed reasonable in their arguments.

"A couple of people got in my face because they think I'm evil," she says.

Tom Mockler, advocating for the defunding of elective abortions, says being pregnant isn't a disease and shouldn't be treated like one.

"It's not an injury, it's a preference that some people have," he says. "And they expect us to pay for it. For 96 per cent of women who get abortions, it's out of convenience."

Paul Morgan, the past president of ProLife Peterborough, was more vocal in his views.



“In every abortion a baby dies,” he says. “Why should we pay for something we totally and absolutely disagree with...\$30 to \$50 million a year goes to funding this atrocious procedure.”

At 14, Rachel Quilty was one of the youngest participants at the rally. The pro-life supporter is firm in her beliefs and says she’s not one to change her values for her peers.

“People say they like the way I don’t change my attitude towards things based on what others think,” she says, adding she attends a pro-life walk in Ottawa every year. “My friends like me for that.”

Her mother, Tammy Quilty, says she couldn’t be more proud.

“She’s amazing,” she says of her daughter. “She doesn’t change, she’s not a chameleon.”

Ms Quilty says she used to possess similar traits when she was younger, but she lost the ability to stand firm in her beliefs when she left high school.

“I got fairly quiet and really started going with the crowd. It’s only in the last 10 years I’ve been able to slowly come out of that.”

Rachel was born without one of her hands. Ms Quilty says the birth defect is something some doctors will try to convince parents to abort their children over.

“Just because she’s different? She’s got so many talents and wonderful qualities...We couldn’t imagine life without Rachel,” she says.

Roughly another dozen youth from a local school were also in attendance. Mike Doyle, a humanities teacher with the Wayside Academy, a private school in Peterborough, says he asked his class whether they’d like to join the rally, and the students chose to come.

Many of the students signed a petition that circulated throughout the crowd.

“I think it very much affects them,” Mr. Doyle says. “They’re right on the cusp of being taxpayers themselves.”

Though he wore a sign around his neck supporting the defunding of elective abortions, Jonathon Quist worked to keep the peace throughout the rally, diffusing tense conversations between pro-life and pro-choice supporters.

“I think it’s important that we recognize everyone has their own conceptions and backgrounds,” he says. “I think we don’t know where people come from so we can never judge anyone. I think it’s great we can have these conversations.”

MPP Leal was at Queen’s Park during the protest.

“In every abortion a baby dies. Why should we pay for something we totally and absolutely disagree with...\$30 to \$50 million a year goes to funding this atrocious procedure.” - Paul Morgan, pro-life supporter

<http://www.mykawartha.com/news-story/4137993-pro-life-pro-choice-side-clash-at-protest-over-funding-video/>