

Why I can't vote for Tim Hudak ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Read the full article online at National Post ^[2].

EXCERPTS

I have been a life-long small-c conservative. I supported the Common Sense Revolution of Mike Harris. I believe in balanced budgets, low taxes and value for money. I like the PCs' plans for ending corporate welfare and encouraging job creation.

I am also the parent of a four-year-old child with special needs in Ontario. And that's why I cannot vote for you, Tim Hudak.

My daughter has Asperger's syndrome, a type of high-functioning autism. For the past year her father and I have been paying through the nose for private therapy, because the wait for public services in Ontario is years too long, and because she would have likely been too verbal to qualify anyway.

For kindergarten, we were looking at private, and much more expensive, school options, in large part because the public classes in her district school have 30 kids. She can't handle a class that size. She won't be able to concentrate or get the assistance she needs to stay focused. And it's not just her; a lot of neurotypical children her age do better in smaller groups, with less distraction and more attention.

Thirty children. That is the normal JK and SK class size in the entire region where we live. Have you been in a class with 30 four or five year olds, Mr. Hudak? How about 32 of them? Some classes already have that.

You propose to increase class sizes by "two or three students." So you want there to be 33, 34, 35? With your proposed one-to-20 teacher ratio, that means what, 1 ½ teachers per class? How does that work? Do you really think little kids will learn anything in that environment? Do you think they are learning enough now?

The intelligent way to save money would be to scale back full day JK and or SK, which your own party opposed and which many parents don't want. But instead of that, you want to make a bad situation worse. You want to transform kindergarten into a kinderschool.

By sheer luck, my daughter was accepted into a public school near our home with a modified program (the kids have shorter summer holidays and longer breaks the rest of the year) with class sizes of about 20 students. Needless to say, this is the exception. It is also a godsend. But under your proposal, such a project might disappear, in favour of less funding, higher student-teacher ratios and bigger classes.

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Read the full article online at National Post ^[2].

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