

Support Ontario Youth

Apprenticeship 1:1 works!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

McGuinty Hands Pink Slips to Youth Across Ontario

Students forced out of pre-apprenticeship jobs at graduation by unfair provincial rules

TORONTO, June 26, 2008 – Potentially thousands of young Ontario pre-apprenticeship program graduates could be forced out of work as summer begins because of unfair and misguided provincial rules. The apprenticeship jobs are being lost even though contractors have numerous unfilled vacancies amid a fast-growing shortage of skilled construction trade workers in Ontario.

A campaign launched today, Support Ontario Youth, seeks to draw public attention to the unnecessary job losses, and to advance a simple and cost-free provincial government remedy: reduce the ratio of certified electrical trades persons required for each apprentice from 3:1 to 1:1. The facts are presented on a new website, www.supportontarioyouth.ca, that went live today.

The situation is most pressing in the electrical trades, where numerous jobs across the province go unfilled. Other skilled construction trades face similar challenges. In a requirement almost unique to Ontario, contractors must have three certified electricians for every apprentice. By comparison, almost every other province and territory requires just one certified journey person per apprentice.

Ontario's ratio imposes tight limits on the number of apprentices electrical contractors can hire in the province, which means fewer opportunities for those wanting to work.

The impact hits hardest right now, at the end of the high school year, when numerous Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) graduates face the loss of pre-apprenticeship jobs. Prior to graduation, they are allowed to work in apprenticeship roles because OYAP job positions are not subject to rules governing apprenticeship ratios.

"It's disheartening to see the door closed on young people when there are so many job openings available to them," said Richard Cullis, President, Dial One Wolfedale Electric of Mississauga, Ont., and a Director of the Ontario Electrical League (OEL), a non-profit electrical industry association that is spearheading the Support Ontario Youth campaign. "Instead of pink slips, Premier McGuinty should offer apprenticeship candidates new rules that will let them work."

The Ontario government actively encourages young people to enter skilled trades and has significantly increased funding for training programs, even as it obstructs employment opportunities through unfair apprenticeship ratios. The same policy also harms thousands of small businesses that provide electrical contracting services because they are barred from hiring the skilled employees they need to replace retiring workers or meet growing workloads.



**Level the
Playing Field**



“Electrical contractors could hire hundreds if not thousands of apprentices right now if given the chance,” said OEL President Mary Ingram-Haigh. “The Ontario government can solve this problem instantly with a simple solution that is cost-free to taxpayers.”

About Support Ontario Youth

Support Ontario Youth seeks to remove roadblocks to employment for young people seeking a career in the skilled trades, through the establishment of fair apprenticeship ratios in Ontario. A program of the Ontario Electrical League, it also seeks to address the fast-growing skilled labour shortage that leaves many electrical contractors unable to fill job vacancies. For more information, visit the Support Ontario Youth website at www.supportontarioyouth.ca.

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