

NDP KEY COMMITMENT: REMOVE BARRIERS TO POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION & TRAINING

location: Oakville

date: September 17, 2007 - 1:00pm

body:

Ontario NDP Leader Howard Hampton says no one should be denied the chance to go to college, university or take an apprenticeship because they can't afford it. Speaking at the Ontario Sheet Workers Training Centre in Oakville, Hampton outlined his fifth key commitment working families can count on: rolling back and freezing tuition fees and scrapping apprenticeship fees.

"Before the last election Dalton McGuinty promised to scrap classroom fees for apprentice. Yet another broken promise," said Hampton. "Fairness means making sure working families can help send their children to a post-secondary institution without both parents and students facing crippling debt."

Dalton McGuinty broke his promise to eliminate in-class fees for apprenticeship students. The fees average \$400 a session, and in many cases, apprentices take five in-class sessions, which means paying more than \$2,000. Howard Hampton and the NDP will eliminate those fees and put more money back into the pockets of the 90,000 enrolled in apprentice programs.

Ontario tuition fees are now well above the national average and going to get a lot higher. Some working parents just can't afford to send their kids to college or university. Ontario students are graduating with the highest average post-secondary education debt in the country – a staggering \$22,700. The NDP Fair Deal for Students would freeze tuition fees at pre-McGuinty levels. For the average Ontario undergraduate university student, this will mean a reduction in annual tuition of about \$460.

"Dalton McGuinty is out of touch with hard-working families struggling to give their kids a better future. New Democrats will make sure that students aren't deprived of the college, university or apprenticeship studies they want because they can't afford it," Hampton said. "That's a commitment you can count on."