



July 28, 2006

OPEN LETTER

Ulli S. Watkiss  
City Clerk  
City Hall  
Toronto, ON  
M5H 2N2

Greg Essensa  
Director of Elections  
City Hall  
Toronto, ON  
M5H 2N2

Dear Ulli and Greg:

Your letter of July 19th, raises serious questions about the integrity, or lack thereof, of the List of Electors. To say that the city knows that there may be a discrepancy of between 10 and 30% in the accuracy of voters lists is both shocking and disturbing. For MPAC and your office to inform candidates and the electorate of this level of uncertainty with less than 4 months remaining to election day is not acceptable. As candidate for councillor in Ward 20, Trinity-Spadina, a ward which has attracted large numbers of newcomers to Canada and a significant mobile population, this is distressing news. The foundation of a democracy must be that everyone who is eligible has a vote.

Your letter puts the issue in terms of not knowing how much money a candidate can legally spend, since that is based in part on the number of electors. Clearly, from a candidate's perspective, this will complicate campaign planning, management, budgeting and spending – while also making it difficult to ensure we reach potential voters. But far, far worse, this chaos could result in as many as one in four legitimate voters being knocked off the rolls Sept. 8 because the bureaucracy is late establishing bona fides. This confusion could result in anywhere between 10 and 30 per cent of potential voters having difficulties on election day or even being disenfranchised. Historically, voter turnout in municipal elections is low, and if we continue to make it difficult for people to vote, then we can anticipate a greater democratic deficit.

As a matter of utmost urgency, I ask you to take action to remedy the situation. It would be preferable to revert to 2003 electoral lists until the matter has been investigated and resolved. As well, given the transient nature of many Toronto neighbourhoods, and given the appalling state of electoral lists, there seems to be a strong argument for a full enumeration. It would also be timely to adjust the rules to enfranchise landed immigrants, who participate in the community and contribute to the municipal tax base.

Let us use this crisis as an opportunity to address and reform flaws in the electoral process. The people of Toronto deserve nothing less.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Helen Kennedy".

Helen Kennedy  
City Council Candidate  
Ward 20 Trinity-Spadina