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From Queen's Park by Sylvia Jones MPP ? Ombudsman opening investigation into the Ministry?s handling of licences

Ontario's Ombudsman Paul Dubé announced May 24 he was opening an investigation into how the Ministry of Transportation communicates licence suspensions and reinstatements to drivers.

The Ombudsman is an independent office of the Legislature who investigates complaints by the public about the government's services.

According to the Ombudsman, ?we have heard from drivers who went for years without knowing their licences were suspended. When they finally found out, it was through their insurance company or police, not the Ministry ? which then treated them as brand new drivers, requiring them to go through the graduated licencing program to have their licences re-instated.?

If you would like to share your concerns about the provincial driver's licence system, I encourage you to file a complaint with the Ombudsman at www.ombudsman.on.ca or by phone at 1-800-263-1830.

Problems with driver's licences are not new to me. My offices in Orangeville and Bolton assist people regularly with complications surrounding driver's licences. In fact, in the last two years, my office has opened nearly 500 cases to assist people with their driver's licence. If you are having difficulty, my office has had many successes in resolving problems surround official provincial documents such as birth, marriage and death certificates, health cards and driver's licences.

The Ombudsman is an important resource for taxpayers beyond concerns about driver's licences. The Ombudsman oversees more than 1,000 public sector bodies, such as municipalities, universities, school boards, provincial ministries, crown corporations, administrative tribunals, agencies, boards and commissions.

The Ombudsman has done important investigations into the use of solitary confinement in our correctional system and adults with developmental disabilities in crisis. The Ombudsman report Nowhere to Turn outlined the unacceptable state of developmental services in Ontario, particularly instances of ?abandonment.? These tragic cases occur when the needs of a child are overwhelming for a family and they are forced to abandon their child to get the services they need. These families often look for a long-term solution for their child by placing them in a group home. However, group home availability is limited and there are long wait lists. Parents come to realize that the only way they can keep themselves and their child safe and get the care their child needs is to relinquish care of their child or ?go into crisis;? giving up all parental rights for their child.

If you have questions or concerns about a provincial government service, I encourage you to contact my office in Orangeville (244 Broadway Orangeville, ON L9W 1K5) at 519-941-7751 or in Bolton (12596 Regional Rd. 50, Bolton, ON L7E 1T6) at 905-951-9382. You can also email at sylvia.jonesco@pc.ola.org or call toll free at 1-800-265-1603

