

MENTAL HEALTH INTERNATIONAL (MHI)
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on Addiction and Mental Health
Bill Wilkerson: Executive Chairman

STATEMENT CONCERNING MAYOR ROB FORD OF TORONTO, CANADA
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(MHI is a Canadian not for profit corporation that promotes mental health in the workplace, internationally, building on the pioneering work of the Global Roundtable.

Executive Chairman Bill Wilkerson – Co-Founder and CEO of the Roundtable, chairs the US/Canada Forum on Mental Health and Productivity and the Pan-European campaign of corporations targeting depression in the workplaces of the EEC.

Wilkerson is also familiar with Toronto City Hall, having served as Chief of Staff for Mayor Art Eggleton through the 1980s.)

NOW A LIFE AND DEATH MATTER

Rob Ford is disintegrating politically and emotionally. He is dying or dead politically. And will be physically if all this keeps up. Now is the time for compassion and a takeover of this man's judgment by the Ford Family not the Ford Nation.

The Ford Nation is his yesterday. The Ford Family in his future. Councilor Doug Ford must – unified with all those who love Rob Ford as family – intervene and demand that he follow them home. Not a leave of absence, but outright resignation.

Further, as an expression of brotherly love and common political sense, Doug Ford should resign his Council seat immediately and the two should leave the building not in retreat politically but in common cause to rescue their family from humiliation and to save Rob's life, quite specifically.

Rob Ford is a human being. And today, on television, his desperation –always concealed – maybe his despair – cropped up.

In his reaction to the 3rd video, he – plaintively – said to the crush of reporters – referring to his own “very, very inebriated state” in the video - “I hope none of you ever get like that.” A telling, heart-breaking insight.

Rob Ford is a human being. His political life is over. Probably forever. And, for him, obviously lacking personal insight until he finds it, resilience until he learns and fundamental judgment as to his public role, until he sees what that is, that is a good thing.

In the moment of which I speak, the Mayor was otherwise speechless. As if seeing a video of his own nightmare from the outside in. Having worked in the hot house that is City Hall, having been around politicians much of my adult life, I suggest it is time for the Ford Family not the Ford Nation to step in.

All members of the Mayor's blood family and those friends not associated with politics or crime must be unified in confronting this man with two realities:

One, to save his life – not his political life – but his life, he must resign outright, leave Toronto and Canada in 2014 for the sole purpose of physical and emotional renewal. He must then return thinner, calmer, happier and resolved to do good work outside elective office. This is possible, not yet plausible, but within the realm of what could happen.

Two, for this purpose, he must go to the United States for extended residential-based care at a highly discrete location and disappear from public view to escape the humiliation of the pictures of his own behavior and the caricatures now sweeping the internet and plaguing his family.

Urgently, Mayor Ford needs access to the expertise of clinicians who can diagnose, treat and manage the dual occurrence of drug and alcohol abuse, on the one hand, and mental distress and disorder on the other. This is a potentially lethal combination that must be disconnected, and resolved.

Common mental illness increases the risk of heart attack and stroke, perpetuates obesity and can cloud judgment. Mayor Ford must become a new man.

Today, Mayor Ford literally ran out of words. Unless he leaves City Hall now to get medical, psychological and physical care - a real overhaul -- he may well run out of time.

As for his critics, your point has been made – by him. Now he needs love – tough love if need be – and compassion from those closest to him. Without knowing the family, I know not if there is someone for this purpose. But his brother could show the kind of courage and strength Rob Ford needs by his wife – this, by walking, with him, out of city hall – now and maybe forever.

Refer: Bill Wilkerson, Executive Chairman

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