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## MPP goes from being a pariah to hero of the party

**Updated 3 days ago**

Three months ago, Newmarket-Aurora MPP Frank Klees was the pariah of the Tory caucus.

He broke solidarity with his party, announcing he'd run for Speaker.

Had he been successful, he'd have effectively handed Premier Dalton McGuinty a majority government.

Now, though, the party renegade has turned party hero, with his dogged pursuit of the scandal surrounding the ORNGE air ambulance service.

From Klees, we've learned a litany of jaw-dropping stupidities that have beset ORNGE.

Quite apart from the lavish pay and perks of former ORNGE CEO Chris Mazza and the convoluted and questionable practices of the company, ORNGE's woes have frequently affected patient safety.

The interior configuration of the choppers prevents paramedics from performing CPR.

If a paramedic called in sick, ORNGE wasn't able to call in support from other agencies, meaning flights were often cancelled. That's now fixed, and paramedics can be called in from other agencies.

On Tuesday, we learned shocking news from Klees' colleague, Elizabeth Witmer. Certain ORNGE helicopters do not have clearance to use U.S. air space or to land there.

Worse, Health Minister Deb Matthews appears to have been blindsided by this information -- yet Witmer received it from a health ministry employee in a briefing note which Matthews should have received.

Since January, 10 new ORNGE choppers have been awaiting approval from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

"The Ministry and Ornge are working with authorities such as Transport Canada, the FAA and others to expedite this approval and resolve the situation as quickly as possible," a Matthews' aide said in an e-mail to reporters.

So, in a province that has a long border with the U.S., where often a U.S. hospital is the nearest health facility, these choppers can't land. What happens if there's bad weather at their destination and the closest safe place to land is in the U.S.?

Why are we hampering the ability of paramedics and pilots to do their jobs properly?

The Tories are calling for Matthews to resign.

That's not fair. She didn't create this mess.

She took over from David Caplan, who had to fall on his sword for the sins of George Smitherman in the eHealth boondoggle.

Who does the ORNGE boondoggle trace back to? You guessed it -- Smitherman.

Why should yet another competent minister get the axe for Smitherman's sins?

Makes you wonder what other unexploded landmines Smitherman left behind.

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Matthews is smart and capable. She's just Smitherman's cleaning lady.

A bigger question is, what are all those overpaid bureaucrats in the health ministry doing to earn their bloated salaries?

Within five short years, they've been asleep at the switch as billions of dollars of taxpayers' dollars have gone down the drain.

First, we had the eHealth scandal, that saw lavish contracts awarded Liberal insiders and expensive consultants. Now there's ORNGE.

In the private sector, after two massive messes, those responsible would have had their heads served up on a platter.

It's time to sweep out those people who have no respect for the tax dollars of hard-working folk.

They've shamelessly slopped away millions of our dollars with no accountability.

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