

EDUCATION NEWS

BILL 48, SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE CLASSROOMS ACT

Education Minister Lisa Thompson (Huron—Bruce) introduced this bill that would require all teacher candidates to pass a math test before being licensed. Thompson's bill would also revoke the certification of teachers and licensed early childhood educators disciplined by their respective professional regulatory body for committing sexual abuse against a student or child. As well, the bill would create guidelines for school boards to implement policies for the inclusion of service animals. Currently, 39 of the 72 school boards have policies in place. Thompson's bill also includes changes to the composition of the Ontario College of Teachers and its various committees.

THREE COLLEGE CAMPUSES CANCELLED

The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, Merrilee Fullerton (Kanata—Carleton) announced that the building of three college campuses in Brampton, Milton and Markham were to be defunded immediately. Fullerton [said](#), "Our government committed to restore accountability and trust in Ontario's finances. This includes making difficult decisions about projects across the province. Through our government's independent commission of inquiry, we now know that Ontario faces a \$15 billion deficit, about two and half times the estimate provided by the previous administration. As a result, the Ministry is no longer in the position to fund the following projects given the province's new fiscal restraints."

The next day in Question Period, NDP Leader Andrea Horwath (Hamilton Centre) [asked](#), "PC candidates spent the last campaign promising that these campuses would go ahead. During the campaign, the MPP for Milton said, "We will do everything we can to make this project a reality... whether it takes \$90 million or there's more we need to do." The MPP for Markham actually went to the groundbreaking ceremony of the new Markham campus. I guess this truly is a case of promises made, promises broken. Why did the government break their word to the parents and students in these communities who were promised a university? In response, Minister Fullerton repeated her comments that the government faced a \$15 billion deficit.

SCHOOL BUS DRIVER WEEK

In recognition of School Bus Driver Week, Education Minister Lisa Thompson (Huron—Bruce) acknowledged their work by [saying](#), "I would like to thank the great member from Northumberland—Peterborough South. He's doing a great job on behalf of that riding. I stand here today in front of you, Speaker, to share our sincere appreciation. On behalf of the Ontario PC government and Premier Doug Ford, I would like to thank school bus drivers across this province, because we all know the important job that they take on twice a day on behalf of all of us as they make sure that their students get to school and back in a very safe manner. It's interesting; every day, school bus drivers' focus is ensuring that nearly 800,000 students from across Ontario are getting to school every day, as I said, two times a day. Their role is particularly critical in rural and northern Ontario.

I'd like to share with you, Speaker, that we recognize how important their job is. In fact, I'm pleased to say that by the end of this month, eligible school bus drivers will be receiving funding from the School Bus Driver Retention Program. That's a thank you and it's recognition for the important role they have every day."

ONTARIO PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION ASSOCIATION FUNDING CUT

After 16 years of financial support by the Ministry of Education, the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (OPHEA) had its funding cut by Education Minister Lisa Thompson (Huron—Bruce). NDP Education Critic Marit Stiles (Davenport) asked the Minister about the funding cut, "The Ontario Physical and Health Education Association is a non-profit organization that provides training and resources to support health and wellness initiatives in Ontario schools. Since 1921, the association has supported healthier, safer school communities by providing important learning resources for parents and teachers. Sadly, as of last week, OPHEA will no longer receive funding from the provincial government—another addition to this government's growing list of education cuts. Will the minister please explain why her government is so intent on keeping up-to-date health and wellness information out of the hands of our students?"

Thompson (Huron—Bruce) replied, "I just want to refresh the memory of the MPPs that were maybe not here in the last session. The fact of the matter is, that particular organization fought Ryan's Law. I just thought I'd share that with everyone, just to put things in perspective. The fact of the matter is, we're making sure that we're making investments that are making a difference for the learning environment in the classroom. As we move forward, we're going to be looking at every line item to make sure that we are absolutely informing and supporting the best learning environment possible in this province. We look forward to having organizations like OPHEA participate in the consultation that we have going on, because I love to speak about this organization that we have created in terms of creating a forum for people to exercise their voice. All the collective voices coming together through our comprehensive consultation are going to make a difference for years to come."

IN OTHER NEWS

HEALTH MINISTRY TO MAINTAIN OVERDOSE PREVENTION SITES

Health Minister Christine Elliott (Newmarket—Aurora) said that the Ministry of Health will continue to fund overdose prevention and supervised consumption sites and will rename them as "consumption and treatment services." Elliott confirmed that there will be a hard cap of 21 sites province-wide. As well, Elliott said that overall funding will remain at \$31.3 million.

MUNICIPAL ELECTION—WHAT'S OLD IS NEW AGAIN

Last Monday's municipal election saw seven former Ontario MPPs win local political office. They include:

- Former Liberal MPP and Cabinet Minister Bill Mauro became mayor of Thunder Bay
- Former Liberal MPP and Cabinet Minister Kathryn McGarry became mayor of Cambridge
- Former Liberal MPP and Cabinet Minister Jim Bradley became a city councillor in St. Catharines
- Former Liberal MPP Dipika Damerla became a City Councillor in Mississauga
- Former Liberal MPP Granville Anderson became a Regional Councillor in Clarington
- Former Liberal MPP Mike Colle became a City Councillor in Toronto
- Former PC MPP Michael Harris became a Regional Councillor in Waterloo

HORWATH'S CHIEF OF STAFF ADDS FEDERAL DUTIES

Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath's (Hamilton Centre) Chief of Staff, Michael Balagus, has moved to Ottawa to become the interim Chief of Staff Federal NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh for the next six months.

NEW BILLS INTRODUCED

BILL 46, TERRORIST ACTIVITIES SANCTIONS ACT

PC MPP Dave Smith (Peterborough—Kawartha) introduced his private member's bill that would deny Ontarians convicted of terrorist acts abroad certain provincial rights, such as having a driver's licence, health coverage, social assistance and WSIB coverage. Smith's bill has the [support of Premier Doug Ford](#).

BILL 47, MAKING ONTARIO OPEN FOR BUSINESS ACT

Economic Development and Job Creation Minister Jim Wilson (Simcoe—Grey) finally announced the PC's long awaited bill to repeal former Liberal Premier Kathleen Wynne's signature [bill 148, fair workplaces and better jobs act](#).

Wilson's bill cancels the planned increase of the minimum wage to \$15 as of January 1, 2019. Instead, the PCs will tie the current minimum wage of \$14 to the rate of inflation effective October, 2020. This will mean that a \$15 minimum wage could now be delayed until 2025.

The bill will also cancel two days of paid leave for employees. The rules surrounding ample

notice for shift workers scheduling have also been eliminated as has a guarantee of equal pay for equal work for casual, part-time and temporary workers. The legislation also reinstates the old rules for union certification, adding an extra step for a secret ballot vote, which will make it harder for workers to form a union. On a positive note, the bill will retain provisions for leave for domestic assault victims.

In defending the bill, Wilson [said](#), "Our government has been clear since day one—we are making Ontario open for business. It is time to bring quality jobs back to Ontario and help families get ahead. This legislation is just one way our government is working towards that goal."

With all three opposition parties indicating their objection to this bill, a rare recorded vote happened at first reading. The PCs easily moved the bill at this first stage by a vote of 53–38.

BILL 48, SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE CLASSROOMS ACT

Please see above.

BILLS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

BILL 34, GREEN ENERGY REPEAL ACT

In their continuing quest to dismantle the previous Ontario Liberal government's environmental legislation, PC Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines, Greg Rickford's (Kenora—Rainy River) bill passed second reading and was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

BILL 39, ACCESSIBLE PARKING AND TOWING INDUSTRY REVIEW COMMITTEE ACT

PC MPP Gila Martow's (Thornhill) bill passed second reading and was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy. Martow's bill would establish a committee under the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services to review accessible parking for persons with a disability and the towing industry.

BILLS PASSED

No bills passed this week.

BILLS DEFEATED

BILL 37, LIABILITY FOR CLIMATE-RELATED HARMS ACT

NDP climate change critic MPP Peter Tabuns' (Toronto—Danforth) bill was defeated as second reading by the Progressive Conservatives. Tabuns' bill would have permitted individuals, businesses and governments to sue oil and gas corporations for "climate related damages from their products." Tabuns had [initially introduced this bill](#) more than two months prior to the June 2018 election.