

NEW BILLS INTRODUCED

BILL 244, NO COVID-19 EVICTIONS ACT

NDP MPPs Suze Morrison (Toronto Centre) and Jessica Bell (University—Rosedale) jointly sponsored this private member's bill which sought limitations in issuing and enforcing eviction orders during the COVID-19 pandemic. The bill moved quickly past 1st Reading to 2nd Reading but was defeated by the Progressive Conservative government.

BILL 245, ACCELERATING ACCESS TO JUSTICE ACT

Attorney-General Doug Downey (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte) introduced this government bill that would allow him more control over the appointments of judges. Downey wants the shortlists of eligible candidates increased and he wants to be able to appoint judges to vacancies in a quicker process. Amongst other aspects of this bill, French-language references to "père" and "mère" would be replaced with "parent." The bill would also allow French-language documents to be filed in all of Ontario's courthouses; remove the \$10,000 cap on funds parents can inherit on behalf of their children; dissolve the Public Accountants Council and transfers its functions to the Chartered Professional Accountants of Ontario; authorize current and former Ontario attorney generals to be called to the Ontario Bar without having to meet Law Society licensing requirements; and allow the Office of the Children's Lawyer to release public reports.

BILL 246, SAFER SCHOOL BUSES ACT

PC MPP Mike Harris (Kitchener—Conestoga) introduced his private member's bill that would require school buses manufactured on or after January 1, 2005 to be equipped with four overhead amber signal-lights as well as the current four overhead red signal-lights.

BILL 247, PAID PERSONAL EMERGENCY LEAVE NOW ACT

Liberal MPP Michael Coteau (Don Valley East) introduced this private member's bill that provides personal emergency leave provision up to 10 paid days of leave per year for personal illnesses, injuries or medical emergencies and illnesses, injuries, medical emergencies and certain urgent matters experienced by specified family members. As well as supporting NDP MPP Peggy Sattler's [Bill 239, Stay Home If You Are Sick Act](#), the Liberals are promoting Coteau's bill as another option to support workers.

BILL 248, COVID-19 PUBLIC INQUIRY ACT

In an effort to promote transparency and hold the government to account, NDP Leader Andrea Horwath (Hamilton Centre) introduced this private member's bill that would establish a public inquiry into the Ontario government's response to the COVID-19 crisis and to make recommendations respecting the minimization of future harm, including loss of life, in similar circumstances. The bill provides that the commission shall hold hearings in public. It also sets out timelines for the commission to begin its work, to issue an interim report, to issue a final report and to make the reports public.

NEW BILLS INTRODUCED (CONTINUED)

BILL 249, WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER ACT (CUTTING MPP SALARIES TO CERB EQUIVALENT)

Independent MPP Roman Baber (York Center) introduced this bill to reduce the salary of all members of the Legislative Assembly to \$500 per week (the equivalent of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit) until all emergency orders related to the COVID-19 pandemic, except those orders relating to hospitals and long-term care homes, are revoked. Baber, who was expelled from the PC caucus in December for challenging the government's lockdown measures, saw his efforts to fast-track his bill denied. In fact, the government's house leader, Paul Calandra (Markham—Stouffville), introduced his own motion to lower Baber's pay alone to \$500 per week. The motion passed but was ruled out of order by the Speaker as it contravened the Legislature's policies.

BILL 250, RECOVERY MONTH ACT

PC MPP Vincent Ke (Don Valley North) introduced this bill to proclaim the month of September in each year as Recovery Month for people and families across the province often face challenges related to their addictions and mental health but can recover and be treated effectively.

BILLS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

BILL 243, TRESPASS TO PROPERTY AMENDMENT ACT (PROTECTING CONSUMERS FROM PACKAGE PIRACY)

PC MPP Stephen Crawford's (Oakville) private member's bill passed 2nd Reading and was referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills. Crawford's bill would provide minimum fines where a person trespasses for the purpose of taking, holding, concealing or destroying mail addressed to another person with the intent to deprive the other person of the mail or to defraud any person. The bill has also been referred to as the "porch piracy" bill.

MOTIONS

As the Legislature returned from its Winter Break, the NDP introduced a number of motions to fast-track three bills that are intended to help with the COVID-19 pandemic:

BILL 13, TIME TO CARE ACT (LONG-TERM CARE HOMES AMENDMENT, MINIMUM STANDARD OF DAILY CARE)

NDP MPP Teresa Armstrong's (London—Fanshawe) bill would mandate four hours of care per day for long-term care residents.

BILL 203, MORE THAN A VISITOR ACT (CAREGIVING IN CONGREGATE CARE SETTINGS)

NDP MPP Lisa Gretzky (Windsor West) bill would enshrine the right to access essential caregivers for people in congregate care settings.

BILL 239, STAY HOME IF YOU ARE SICK ACT

NDP MPP Peggy Sattler's (London West) bill would grant employees 10 days of sick leave, seven of which would be paid leave. In addition, Sattler's bill mandates another 14 days of paid leave in the case of declared emergencies or infectious disease emergencies.

Despite support from the Liberals and Greens, the NDP motions failed as the PC government continued to insist that they were taking adequate measures to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.

IN OTHER NEWS

PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATIONS

As part of pre-budget consultations, OSSTF/FEESO President Harvey Bischof [submitted a brief](#) to Finance Minister Peter Bethlenfalvy's (Pickering—Uxbridge) outlining OSSTF/FEESO's priorities for K-12 and post-secondary education. Bethlenfalvy's budget is expected before the end of March.

PREMIER FORD ACCUSED OF MISOGYNY

During a heated exchange in Question Period, NDP leader Andrea Horwath continued to press Premier Ford on his government's response to COVID-19. In response Ford [said](#), "Rather than sending inaccurate information out to the public and hurting the public, why don't you come and join us to support the people of Ontario for once, rather than just sit there and criticize and criticize? It's like listening to nails on a chalkboard, listening to you." Horwath [replied](#), "Speaker, this Premier always goes to the worst, worst places when he doesn't like the questions that the opposition is asking. But we're going to keep asking them on behalf of Ontarians, on behalf of the people of this province."

[Commentators](#) quickly pounced on Ford's words and accused him of misogyny and demanded that he apologize. At this point, the [Premier has yet to apologize](#).

EDUCATION MINISTER SCRUBBING SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Education Minister Stephen Lecce was accused of [scrubbing critical comments](#) from students on his social media account. Students complained that the Education Minister was not listening to their voices despite his constant references to defending and promoting student interests during the pandemic.

NDP QUESTIONS TFO APPOINTEE

NDP MPP Guy Bourgouin (Mushkegowuk—James Bay) called the [appointment of Barak Queija](#) as vice-chair of TFO as a "slap in the face" for Franco-Ontarians. In [committee vetting of his appointment](#), Queija declined to answer questions by NDP Education critic Marit Stiles (Davenport) regarding his planned policies for TFO. Instead Queija wanted to discuss his qualifications. Queija [said](#): "I'm here to talk about my qualifications, based on my board experience, my governance, my executive management and strategic planning and risk management, my financial planning. That's what I have to bring to the board—and my accounting experience, as well. That is why I'm here."

During questioning, Queija confirmed that he had contributed to the leadership campaign of PC MPP and Transportation Minister Caroline Mulroney.

TWO OSSTF/FEESO MEMBERS ACCLAIMED AS PROVINCIAL ELECTION CANDIDATES

Two OSSTF/FEESO members have been acclaimed as NDP candidates for the next provincial election in 2022. NDP MPP [Jill Andrew](#), first elected in 2018 in the riding of Toronto—St. Paul's, was nominated as the NDP candidate once again. Andrew was a Child and Youth worker with District 12 in Toronto.

[Allison Cillis](#), a teacher with District 21 in Hamilton, was nominated as the NDP candidate in Flamborough—Glanbrook. Cillis previously ran in the riding in 2019 as the NDP federal candidate.

Both are the first of a number of OSSTF/FEESO members who have expressed an interest in running in the next provincial election.