

NEW BILLS INTRODUCED

BILL 234, PAYDAY LOANS ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

NDP MPP Sandy Shaw's (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas) private member's bill seeks to increase protections for borrowers from Payday Loans companies including creating a Payday Loans Task Force to advise the government.

BILL 235, CANNABIS LICENCE AMENDMENT ACT

NDP MPP Marit Stiles' (Davenport) private member's bill would give municipalities and communities a greater voice in deciding where cannabis businesses can locate. In opening debate on her bill, Stiles [said](#), "This bill seeks to align the licensing process for new cannabis retail licences with that used for new liquor licences, and gives more weight to municipal voices in considering where and how many licences should be awarded in a given area, in line with their own planning and community priorities."

BILL 236, SUPPORTING LOCAL RESTAURANTS ACT

In response to repeated calls from opposition parties to help small restaurant businesses, PC MPP Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria (Brampton South), Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction, introduced this government bill that aims to cut restaurant delivery fees. In introducing the legislation, Sakharia [said](#), "This legislation will, if passed, provide measured, focused caps to the fees charged by food delivery apps. It would cap the rates charged by food delivery service companies and apps to 20 per cent for each transaction, with no more than 15 per cent for commission and 5 per cent for other fees, in areas where indoor dining is prohibited."

BILLS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

BILL 210, FAIRNESS FOR RESIDENTIAL SUPERINTENDENTS, JANITORS AND CARETAKERS ACT

NDP MPP Gilles Bisson's (Timmins) private member's bill passed 2nd Reading and was referred to the Standing Committee on Estimates. Bisson's bill would amend the *Employment Standards Act* so that workers, such as superintendents, janitors and caretakers, who reside in their buildings are entitled to the minimum wage. The minimum wage was raised to \$14.25 an hour effective October 1, 2020, as per legislation previously passed by the Kathleen Wynne government instituting annual inflation rate increases. Although the Ford government reversed the proposed minimum wage increase to \$15, it did retain the inflation rate increases.

BILLS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE (CONTINUED)

BILL 213, BETTER FOR PEOPLE, SMARTER FOR BUSINESS ACT

Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria's (Brampton South) government bill passed 2nd Reading and has been referred to the Standing Committee on General Government. Sarkaria's bill has caused a firestorm in the legislature as it also seeks to grant Charles McVety's Canada Christian School the right to confer university-level degrees. Many groups, including [OSSTF/FEESO](#), have condemned the bill citing McVety's long documented history of homophobia, Islamophobia and racism. As well, a [NDP motion](#) passed in the legislature denouncing the bill. Despite the passage of the motion, the PCs, particularly Premier Doug Ford, seemed determined to pass this bill into law. Other proposals in the bill include:

- Require certain persons who wish to apply for a permit to take ground water for the purpose of producing bottled water to first seek the support of the council of the local municipality where the water will be taken;
- Allows the Financial Services Regulatory Authority to waive or change certain rules around pension plans, including the requirement for an administrator to give notice of a transfer of assets between pension plans, as well as the conversion of a plan from single-employer to jointly sponsored;
- Exempt from development charges the development of land intended for use by a university that receives operating funds from the government.

BILL 226, BROADBAND IS AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE ACT

NDP MPP and co-deputy leader John Vanthof's (Timiskaming—Cochrane) private member's bill passed 2nd Reading and has been referred to the Standing Committee on General Government. Vanthof's bill would require the Minister of Infrastructure to develop a Broadband Connectivity Strategy to deliver high-speed internet connectivity to 95 per cent of Ontarians by 2026 and to all Ontarians by 2030. The Minister is required to update the strategy at specified intervals and undertake certain consultations in developing or updating the strategy.

BILL 229, PROTECT, SUPPORT AND RECOVER FROM COVID-19 ACT (BUDGET MEASURES)

PC Finance Minister Rod Phillips' (Ajax) 2020 COVID-19 budget bill passed 2nd Reading and has now been referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. In setting its agenda, the committee has accepted OSSTF/FEESO's request to present a brief. With the pending winter break recess scheduled for December 10, The PCs want to pass the budget bill prior to the break.

As for the bill, it features many promises of economic support for Ontarians. Unfortunately, the bill does not promise much for Ontario's education system. The budget projects that K–12 education spending will grow by \$100 million in 2021 and another \$200 million in 2022. K–12 education spending is as follows:

- 2020–2021—\$31.0 billion
- 2021–2022—\$31.1 billion
- 2022–2023—\$31.3 billion

This year's budget is \$500 million less than the previous Liberal government had projected in its last budget in 2018.

The only other financial item K–12 education-related was a continuation of payments to parents to help support education of \$200 or \$250 for a child with special needs. Overall cost is projected at \$380 million.

BILLS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE (CONTINUED)

The budget also introduced measures for teachers and ECEs regarding matters of discipline and dismissal. The bill indicates that teachers and ECEs convicted of sexual abuse and/or child pornography will face a lifetime ban. The government wants this provision to apply retroactively. As well, discipline measures will be introduced for racist comments and behaviours.

For Post-Secondary Education (PSE), funding is as follows:

- 2019–20—\$10.5 billion
- 2020–21—\$10.7 billion
- 2021–22—\$10.9 billion
- 2022–23—\$11.2 billion

In addition, some other highlights include:

- \$466 million over three years in capital grants for PSE
- \$100 million investment for 2020–21 in Employment Ontario for skills training programs for workers
- \$59.5 million in funding over three years for micro-credentials
- \$19.5 million in mental health funding for PSE students (but only \$3.25 million is new)

BILLS PASSED

BILL 201, MAGNA CARTA DAY ACT (IN MEMORY OF JULIA MUNRO, MPP)

PC MPP Jane McKenna's (Burlington) private member's bill passed 3rd Reading and awaits Royal Assent. McKenna's bill would proclaim June 15 in each year as Magna Carta Day. The bill was introduced in honour of the late Julia Munro, the longest serving female MPP in Ontario's history. Munro, a former high school teacher with the York Region District School Board, was a MPP from 1995 to 2017. Munro had introduced this bill prior to her resignation as MPP.

BILL 214, TIME AMENDMENT ACT

PC MPP Jeremy Roberts' (Ottawa West—Nepean) bill passed 3rd Reading and awaits Royal Assent. Roberts' bill would make daylight saving time permanent year round. Despite the bill's passage, its goal would not be realized unless New York State and Quebec implemented a similar law.

BILL 215, MAIN STREET RECOVERY ACT

Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria's (Brampton South) government bill passed 3rd Reading and awaits Royal Assent. Sarkaria's bill seeks to slash red tape for businesses. One of the proposed changes would remove a municipalities' power to make noise-related bylaws. This would permanently allow round-the-clock deliveries.

IN OTHER NEWS

FORD GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO POST-SECONDARY FUNDING

The Ford government has announced significant changes to the funding model for Ontario's post-secondary institutions starting in 2020 until 2025. Ross Romano (Sault Ste. Marie), the Minister of Colleges and Universities, [said that changes](#) were needed because the previous system was not working for students and needed to be driven by results. Romano claims that under the previous funding agreement, students were graduating with world-class degrees but were finding it difficult to secure stable employment in their field of study.

According to Romano, this [new funding model](#):

- ensures students and graduates are set up to succeed in rewarding careers
- encourages institutions to be more efficient, specialized and focused on what they do best
- promotes greater accountability and transparency by ensuring that the funding post-secondary institutions receive results in positive economic outcomes

In response to the Minister's announcement, the Canadian Federation of Students (Ontario) [said](#), "The Ontario Government refused to consult students and faculty about this plan. Students are concerned that it will lead to a further decrease in the quality of their education."

The CFS (Ontario) added, "Tying the majority of post-secondary funding to arbitrary metrics set out by the performance-based funding plan will have a negative impact on academic autonomy, diversity of research and interdisciplinary studies. This plan will pressure colleges and universities to prioritize fields of study that produce higher wage earning workers. The mission of post-secondary institutions is to provide higher education. Performance-based funding will compromise academic freedom and disrupt collegial governance as institutions will be more likely to be influenced by corporate or private interest in exchange for increased funding."

The Ontario University and Colleges Coalition ([OUCC](#)) is continuing its discussions on next steps in challenging this decision by the Ford government.

FORD SLAMS AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT ON PANDEMIC RESPONSE

Despite past praise of Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk for unveiling government malfeasance during the Kathleen Wynne Liberal government, Premier Doug Ford took a very different stand regarding the [Auditor General's report](#) on the Ford government's response to the pandemic. In her report, [Lysyk called](#) the Ford government's pandemic response "disorganized and inconsistent." She added that compared to other provinces, Ontario's response was lacking. She noted that Ford's approach sidelined key health officials and "diminished" the role of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. David Williams.

Lysyk also exposed the Ford's government use of private consultants, including the American firm McKinsey & Company for a sole-sourced \$1.6-million contract to develop a crisis response structure. The consulting firm was also paid an additional \$3.2 million to work on a reopening of schools strategy.

In responding to Lysyk's report, a furious Ford [said](#), "Don't start pretending you're a doctor or health professional, because I can tell you, you aren't. Stick with the numbers, stick with the number crunching." Despite Ford's outburst, [Lysyk stood by her report](#).

INDEPENDENT MPP CHARGED FOR VIOLATING PANDEMIC RESTRICTIONS

Former PC and current Independent MPP Randy Hillier (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston) has been **charged** for organizing an anti-lockdown protest at Queen's Park attended by hundreds of people. Hillier could face a fine ranging from \$10,000 to \$100,000. Hillier will appear in court in January 2021. After his dismissal from the PC caucus, Hillier has become a vocal critic of Ford's government and has challenged the constitutionality of pandemic restrictions.

NDP BLOCKS FAST-TRACKING OF CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH'S PROPOSED EXTENSION

The PC government's plan to extend the appointment of Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. David Williams, beyond his five-year term, scheduled to end in February 2021, to September 2021 was procedurally delayed by the NDP. The NDP, citing concerns by some medical professionals, wants Dr. Williams proposed extension to be scrutinized by an all-party committee. The PCs have so far refused to consider any further this proposal and are determined to push through the extension of Dr. Williams. Dr. Williams was appointed in 2016 by Kathleen Wynne's Liberal government.