

BILL 10, CHILD CARE MODERNIZATION ACT BECOMES LAW

[Bill 10, Child Care Modernization Act](#), passed 3rd reading with the Liberals and NDP combining for a vote of 70 – 23. In a [news release](#), the Ministry of Education said it now had the authority to fine child care providers up to \$100,000 for infractions and increase the maximum penalty for illegal offences to \$250,000. The legislation was initially proposed as a result of a number of high-profile childcare deaths and injuries. The legislation also increases the number of children a licensed home-based child care provider can care for from five to six. As well, school boards are now required to offer before and after school programs for 6 to 12 year olds where there is demand. The Minister of Education said there are currently 317,868 child care spaces in the province, up 130,000 from 2003.

During [third reading debate](#), Education Minister Liz Sandals (Guelph) said, “Bill 10, if passed, will modernize our child care and early years system and replace the outdated legislation governing child care in this province. It will make our system more responsive to parents’ and children’s needs and better reflect the realities of our modern world. It will ensure Ontario families have access to safe and high-quality care to give children the precious head start they need for lifelong success and, if passed, it will also strengthen oversight in the child care sector.

In response, while supporting the legislation, NDP Education Critic Peter Tabuns (Toronto-Danforth) said the bill was insufficient to deal with the childcare needs of Ontarians. He remarked, “The most effective method of ensuring safe, high-quality, affordable child care is investment in non-profit and public child care. This bill is not being advanced as part of a larger program of investing in and reshaping the child care movement. That is a substantial omission.”

Meanwhile, the Progressive Conservatives were concerned that the bill did not listen to the concerns of independent childcare providers. PC Education critic, Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North) added, “In the end, there are going to be thousands and thousands—we calculated a minimum of 140,000 daycare spaces lost in the province by the independent child care providers. Those that are not going to be shutting their doors will have to go underground. That’s what’s going to happen.”

BILL 8, PUBLIC SECTOR AND MPP ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY ACT, 2014

The Standing Committee on General Government has returned Bill 8, *Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014* to the Legislature for 3rd Reading with [amendments](#).

The bill was put forward by the Liberals in response to a perceived lack of transparency and accountability in the broader public sector. Reports of exorbitant CEO salaries and severance packages were highlighted during Question Period. NDP Leader Andrea Horwath led the call to cap broader public sector salaries at \$400,000. While the Liberals have not capped these salaries, they

are taking steps to make salaries and expenses of public servants and politicians more transparent. For example, Ministers and MPPs will now post their eligible expenses online.

The Liberals have also given Ontario's Ombudsman greater powers over the broader public sector including municipalities, universities, colleges and school boards. But, they have not given the Ombudsman powers over hospitals although a Patient Ombudsman has been put in place. As well, a last-minute change has excluded the City of Toronto from the Ontario Ombudsman overview. Toronto's Ombudsman will remain as the overseer of the city administration.

The bill also looks to make the registration of lobbyists more transparent by requiring more frequent filing of lobbying activities.

Meanwhile, the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, Irwin Elman, complained that this bill did not give him the requisite powers to protect children and youth. He wanted the government to give him identical powers to the Ombudsman. The Liberals have denied his request.

The bill is expected to pass easily this coming week. The bill is expected to pass easily.

NDP MPP RESIGNATION COULD COST ONTARIO TREASURY \$558,000

With the sudden resignation of NDP MPP Joe Cimino (Sudbury) for personal reasons, attention turned to the financial implications of his departure. The Toronto Star [reported](#) that his resignation could cost the Ontario treasury up to \$558,000. The Star said that Cimino's five-month tenure entitled him to six months' severance pay, totaling \$58,000. As well, The Star claimed that the cost of the by-election could run between \$350,000 and \$500,000.

By the end of the week, Cimino, who is a public elementary teacher in the Sudbury area, said that he would not accept the severance package. With Cimino's assertion, any political repercussions for the NDP in the upcoming by-election were lessened. A by-election for the vacant seat must be called within six months from Cimino's resignation, which was effective November 20.

ONTARIO PRINCIPALS' COUNCIL ADVOCACY DAY AT QUEEN'S PARK

The Ontario Principals' Council met with about 30 MPPs from all three parties at their annual advocacy day. While the Principals' Council did not publicize the contents of their discussions, it was expected that they would concentrate on concerns regarding increasing workloads and the impact of Regulation 274.

ANTI-SLAPP (STRATEGIC LITIGATION AGAINST PUBLIC PARTICIPATION) LEGISLATION RE-INTRODUCED

After having failed on two previous occasions to pass anti-SLAPP (Strategic Litigation Against Public Participation) legislation, Attorney-General, Madeleine Meilleur (Ottawa-Vanier), introduced [Bill 52, the Protection of Public Participation Act](#).

Meilleur [said](#) that the intent of the legislation is to safeguard activists by giving Ontario courts a better process for dealing with strategic lawsuits. A strategic lawsuit is the process by which a person or company uses the threat of a lengthy and expensive lawsuit as a way to intimidate an opponent, discouraging them and others from speaking out. Meilleur added that the majority of strategic lawsuits are filed in court as claims of defamation, have little or no merit, and are often dropped before proceeding to trial. She said, "Using a strategic lawsuit to silence an opponent is not only an unfair way to win an argument, but an undemocratic restriction on freedom of expression." Both the Canadian Environmental Association and the Ontario Bar Association commended the government on the legislation.

PAN AM AND PARAPAN AM GAMES FUNDING FOR LGBTQ INCLUSION

The Minister for the Pan Am Games and Parapan Am Games, Michael Coteau (Don Valley East), [announced](#) funding to make the 2015 Pan Am Games a ground-breaking event for LGBTQ inclusion. The government will provide PrideHouseTO with \$700,000 in funding to support 1,5000 hours of community programming at the PrideHouseTO pavilion. As well, the province will commission art projects at the PrideHouse Celebrates Sports Zone in the Church-Wellesley Village. Games volunteers will also be provided with inclusion training. According to the Ministry, this is the largest investment in LGBTQ inclusion in multi-sport games history.

LIBERALS WANT MORE WOMEN ON CORPORATE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Finance Minister Charles Sousa (Mississauga South) [announced](#) that the government wants to see more women sit on corporate boards and senior management teams. Beginning December 31, 2014, companies will be required to disclose the number of women on their boards and in executive officer positions, as well as their policies regarding the representation of women on the board. As well, companies will have to reveal their boards' or nominating committees' consideration of the representation of women in the director identification and selection process. Also, director term limits and other mechanisms of renewal of their board will need to be considered. Through these securities law rule amendments, enforced by the Ontario Securities Commission (OSC), the Liberals want to promote a proactive approach through a "comply or explain model," rather than prescribing diversity quotas. The ministry said a recent OSC survey showed that of 448 firms, 57 per cent have no women directors and 53 per cent have women in less than 10 per cent of their executive officer positions.

WYNNE ANNOUNCES INITIATIVES AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

Premier Kathleen Wynne (Don Valley West) [announced](#) initiatives to raise awareness, enhance prevention and support victims of sexual violence and harassment. In her statement, the Premier outlined a number of steps including; 1) requiring all government MPPs to participate in sexual assault and harassment training, 2) providing all Premier's Office, Ministers' Office and government MPPs' staff with training specifically designed for the political workplace, and 3) reviewing government caucus harassment policies and procedures to ensure they conform with best practices. The Premier also said she will approach the Legislature's Speaker about making harassment

prevention training available to all MPPs. Wynne added that she has directed specific Ministers to bring forward options to enhance support for victims of sexual violence relating to the criminal justice system, policing, health care, education, post-secondary campuses and Ontario workplaces. Wynne said an action plan on enhancing support for victims of sexual violence will be released on March 8, 2015, International Women's Day.

MISSISSAUGA AND OAKVILLE GAS PLANT RELOCATIONS COMMITTEE BEGINS WRITING REPORT

The Standing Committee on Justice Policy looking into the gas plant relocations at the Mississauga and Oakville plants met to write its report. The relocations, estimated to be costing \$1 billion, have been a major political issue for the past three years. Former Energy Minister Chris Bentley resigned from politics in the wake of the scandal. The committee is expected to make recommendations on the tendering, planning, commissioning, cancellation and relocation of the Mississauga and Oakville gas plants. The new Liberal majority demanded that the committee write its report instead of continuing to call for more witnesses as the opposition had demanded.

LIBERALS ANNOUNCE \$7 MILLION FOR PRESCHOOL SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PROGRAM

Tracy MacCharles (Pickering-Scarborough East), the Minister of Children and Youth Ministry, [announced](#) \$7 million in support over two years to the Preschool Speech and Language Program to give 10,000 more children with speech and language difficulties access to more services. The funding will go to [31 agencies](#) throughout the province. MacCharles said the funding will reduce wait times for services, including communication skills assessments, parent workshops and group therapy, and transition planning for children eligible to start school.

PROVINCE TO CELEBRATE 400 YEARS OF FRANCO-ONTARIAN COMMUNITY

The Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs, Madeleine Meilleur (Ottawa-Vanier), [announced](#) \$1.4 million to help celebrate 400 years of francophone presence in Ontario. The Ontario [400th Celebrations Program](#) will help fund local cultural and tourism events. Events will also be taking place during the 2015 Pan Am and Parapan Am Games.