

NEW BILLS INTRODUCED

BILL 23, ISLAMIC HERITAGE MONTH ACT

NDP MPP Teresa Armstrong (London—Fanshawe) introduced Bill 23, *Islamic Heritage Month Act*. The bill would proclaim the month of October of each year to be Islamic Heritage Month.

BILL 24, MEN'S HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK ACT

Liberal MPP Arthur Potts (Beaches—East York) introduced Bill 24, *Men's Health Awareness Week Act*. The bill would proclaim the week immediately preceding the third Sunday in June in each year as Men's Health Awareness Week.

BILL 25, RESTORING PLANNING POWER TO MUNICIPALITIES ACT

PC MPP Jim Wilson (Simcoe—Grey) introduced Bill 25, *Restoring Planning Power to Municipalities Act*. The bill would give communities the power to reject wind power developments.

BILL 26, DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE WORKPLACE LEAVE, ACCOMMODATION AND TRAINING ACT

NDP MPP Peggy Sattler (London West) introduced Bill 26, *Domestic and Sexual Violence Workplace Leave, Accommodation and Training Act*. The bill would give employees who have experienced domestic or sexual violence up to ten days of paid leave of absence.

BILL 27, BURDEN REDUCTION ACT

Economic Development Minister Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre) introduced the

government's red tape reduction legislation, Bill 27, *Burden Reduction Act*.

BILL 28, ALL FAMILIES ARE EQUAL ACT (PARENTAGE AND RELATED REGISTRATIONS STATUTE AMENDMENT)

Attorney General Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre) introduced a government Bill 28, *All Families Are Equal Act* (Parentage and Related Registrations Statute Amendment). The bill would make amendments to the *Children's Law Reform Act* to establish new rules of parentage in Ontario that would ensure that same-sex couples did not have to adopt their own children.

BILL 29, HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (HELMET EXEMPTION FOR SIKH MOTORCYCLISTS)

NDP MPP Jagmeet Singh (Bramalea—Gore—Malton) introduced Bill 29, *Highway Traffic Amendment Act* (Helmet Exemption for Sikh Motorcyclists). The bill would exempt members of the Sikh religion who have unshorn hair and who habitually wear turbans from the requirement to wear a helmet.

BILL 30, HUMAN RIGHTS CODE AMENDMENT ACT (GENETIC CHARACTERISTICS)

PC MPP Sylvia Jones (Dufferin—Caledon) and Liberal MPP Mike Colle (Eglinton—Lawrence) have co-sponsored Bill 30, *Human Rights Code Amendment Act* (Genetic Characteristics). The bill would amend the Human Rights Code to include genetic characteristics as a prohibited ground of discrimination.

BILLS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

BILL 6, MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES AMENDMENT ACT (SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RESEARCH COMMISSION), 2016

MPP Paul Miller (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek) has proposed the establishment of a Social Assistance Research Commission. The Commission would recommend social assistance rates and other recommendations about social assistance policy. The bill has been referred to the Standing Committee for Social Policy.

BILL 9, END AGE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST STROKE RECOVERY PATIENTS ACT, 2016

MPP Lorne Coe's (Whitby—Oshawa) bill would ensure that any treatment recommended by a physician for a patient who is recovering from a stroke is provided to that patient promptly, regardless of the patient's age. The bill has been referred to the Standing Committee for Social Policy.

BILL 13, ONTARIO REBATE FOR ELECTRICITY CONSUMERS ACT, 2016

Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury) introduced the Liberals' signature Throne Speech legislation. The bill would rebate hydro users the provincial portion of the HST. The bill has been referred to the Standing Committee for Justice Policy.

BILL 22, TICKET SPECULATION AMENDMENT ACT (PURCHASE AND SALE REQUIREMENTS), 2016

Liberal MPP Sophie Kiwala (Kingston and the Islands) introduced a bill that would require ticket scalpers to list the original purchase price of a ticket when it is offered for sale in a print or electronic format. The bill has been referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

MOTIONS DEBATED

Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown (Simcoe North) continued his attack on the Liberals' energy policies by introducing an [opposition day motion](#) saying, "the Legislative Assembly calls on the Liberal government to stop signing contracts for energy that the province will sell at a loss and stop selling any further shares in Hydro One." Despite gaining the support of the NDP, Brown's motion was easily defeated by the Liberals by a vote of 49–28.

AROUND THE LEGISLATURE

LIBERALS CANCEL ENERGY CONTRACTS

In their attempt to control the rising cost of electricity rates in the province and buttress their political prospects, Liberal Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury) [announced](#) the cancellation of the second round of its Large Energy Procurement process, halting over 1,000 megawatts of proposed solar, wind, hydroelectric projects. Thibeault said this decision will save \$3.8 billion in electricity costs, which will save each household \$2.45 per month on electricity bills. Thibeault claims that Ontario has a "robust supply" of energy that will meet its projected demand over the coming decade.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION ANNOUNCEMENTS

WYNNE RELEASES NEW MANDATE LETTERS FOR MINISTERS

The current Chief Executive Officer of the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), Bruce Rodrigues, has been appointed the new Deputy Minister of Education effective October 17, 2016. Rodrigues has been the CEO since 2013. Before moving to EQAO, Rodrigues had been the Education Director of the Toronto Catholic District School Board. As well, he had also previously been the Associate Director of Education for the Waterloo Catholic District School Board. Rodrigues replaces Nancy Matthews, who was the Interim Deputy Minister of Education since June 2016. Matthews is moving to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services as Deputy Minister.

IN OTHER NEWS

LIBERALS SAY “NET-ZERO” AUSTERITY IS COMPLETED

In a post-Question Period press scrum, former Education Minister and current Treasury Board Secretary Liz Sandals (Guelph) [said](#) that the Liberal government’s requirement for net-zero pay increases for public sector workers will not be necessary for the next round of negotiations. Sandals said that the government will meet its balanced budget promise by 2017–18. At the same time, Sandals cautioned that this does not mean that “we are going to make it rain” with pay increases. It is likely as the momentum builds for the Ottawa—Vanier by-election, the media attention will make it appear as a referendum on Wynne’s leadership. Were Wynne to lose that by-election, her continued leadership would be seriously imperiled.

HORWATH CALLS FOR THE ELIMINATION OF INTEREST ON STUDENT DEBTS

With less than two years to the next election, NDP Leader Andrea Horwath has begun articulating some party policies including the [elimination of interest on student debts](#). At a meeting with students at Brock University, Horwath said, “The government should not be making a profit off of the fact that students in Ontario need to take out loans to afford postsecondary education.” Horwath added, “Insurmountable student debt delays important life milestones for young people such as buying a car, owning a home, starting a family or starting a business. This makes student debt not only a burden for the people who carry it, but on the provincial economy as a whole.”

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RATE INCREASE

The Liberals have announced that low-income earners will receive [increases](#) in both Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program this fall. Individuals receiving Ontario Works will get an increase of \$25 a month. As well, there will be a 1.5 per cent increase both for families on Ontario Works and individuals who receive Ontario Disability Support Program.

MINIMUM WAGE INCREASED

As of October 1, the [minimum wage](#) has been increased by fifteen cents from \$11.25 an hour to \$11.40 an hour. In 2014, the Liberals passed legislation requiring the minimum wage to increase annually by the rate of inflation.

CHANGING THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM FOR AFRICAN-CANADIANS REPORT RELEASED

The Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies released its report entitled "[One Vision One Voice: Changing the Child Welfare System for African-Canadians](#)." The report, funded by the Ministry of Children and Youth, includes a "Practice Framework" to improve outcomes for African-Canadian children and families who come into contact with the Children's Aid Society (CAS). The report cites data indicating that African-Canadians are disproportionately overrepresented in the CAS system. Among the report's recommendations is a call for the province to "acknowledge Canada's long history of anti-Black racism" and to "establish a system-wide training initiative to address anti-Black racism in education, community and social services, community safety and correctional services, and healthcare." It also calls for a review of complaint mechanisms for child welfare and for targeted funding to develop and enhance cultural responsive services for African-Canadian families.