

# Queen's Park notes

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For the week of November 14–November 18, 2016

## **BILL 37, PROTECTING STUDENTS ACT, UNANIMOUSLY PASSES 3RD READING, AWAITS ROYAL ASSENT TO BECOME LAW**

Within six weeks of re-introducing Bill 37, *Protecting Students Act*, the Liberals successfully [passed](#) the legislation with all-party support by a unanimous vote of 90 – 0. Despite a number of objections raised by OSSTF/FEESO and others in their [presentations](#) to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs on issues including the publication of criminal proceedings on the Ontario College of Teachers website, the publication of non-relevant past criminal convictions and the fairly broad definition of a suspension, the Liberal government and MPPs from all political parties passed the legislation. The legislation now awaits Royal Assent before becoming law. No date has been released by the Lieutenant Governor's office on when Royal Assent shall be granted.

## **NEW BILLS INTRODUCED**

### **BILL 60, LEBANESE HERITAGE MONTH ACT**

Liberal MPP John Fraser (Ottawa South) introduced Bill 60, *Lebanese Heritage Month Act*. The bill would proclaim November as Lebanese Heritage Month.

### **BILL 61, RESPECT FOR MUNICIPALITIES ACT (CITY OF TORONTO)**

NDP MPP Cheri DiNovo's (Parkdale—High Park) Bill 61, *Respect for Municipalities Act (City of Toronto)* aims to eliminate the powers of the Ontario Municipal Board to overturn decisions of the City of Toronto in regards to land use planning. At the same time, the bill would allow the City of Toronto to create its own appeal processes.

### **BILL 62, CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND LOW-CARBON ECONOMY AMENDMENT ACT**

NDP MPP Peter Tabuns (Toronto—Danforth) introduced Bill 62, *Climate Change Mitigation*

*and Low-carbon Economy Amendment Act*. Tabuns' bill seeks to bring Ontario's climate targets into line with the agreements Ontario has signed. He says that his bill would provide a process, modelled on the United Kingdom's climate legislation that would require carbon budgets to be set for Ontario by the legislature so that measures taken are publicly debated and provide the transparency needed.

### **BILL 63, NURSE PRACTITIONER WEEK ACT**

NDP MPP France Gelinas' (Nickel Belt) bill would proclaim the second full week of November in each year as Nurse Practitioner Week.

### **BILL 65, SAFER SCHOOL ZONES ACT**

The Minister of Transportation, Steven Del Duca (Vaughan) introduced Bill 65, *Safer School Zones Act*. Del Duca's bill would amend the *Highway Traffic Act* to allow municipalities

## NEW BILLS INTRODUCED

to set speed limits within their borders and allow the use of automated speed enforcement systems and red light camera systems. The return of photo radar could potentially become a contentious political issue for municipalities that decide to use it.

### **BILL 66, FAMILY CAREGIVER DAY ACT**

NDP MPP France Gelinas (Nickle Belt) also introduced a bill that would proclaim the first Tuesday in April in each year as Family Caregiver Day.

### **BILL 67, AUDITOR GENERAL AMENDMENT ACT**

PC MPP Norm Miller's (Parry Sound—Muskoka) bill would permit the Auditor General to conduct special audits of public contractors.

### **BILL 68, MODERNIZING ONTARIO'S MUNICIPAL LEGISLATION ACT**

The Minister of Municipal Affairs, Bill Mauro (Thunder Bay—Atikokan) introduced legislation to make local governments more open, flexible and accountable to the people they serve. In a nod to caucus colleague Daiene Vernile's (Kitchener Centre) [Bill 46, Municipal Statute Law Amendment Act \(Councillor Pregnancy and Parental Leave\)](#), Mauro's legislation includes allowing women and parents elected to municipal governments time off for pregnancy or parental leave. As

well, Mauro proposes improving access to allow integrity commissioners to investigate complaints against municipal councillors. Mauro also wants to require municipalities to have a code of conduct for members of municipal councils and local boards. Finally, Mauro proposes that heads of most regional councils be elected to help ensure they are accountable to the voters they represent.

### **BILL 69, FINANCIAL LITERACY FOR STUDENTS ACT**

PC MPP Vic Fedeli (Nipissing), the Progressive Conservative critic for Finance, wants to amend the *Education Act* to require each school board to provide a comprehensive course on financial literacy, as determined by the board, at the Grade 10 level at schools under the board's jurisdiction. Pupils would be required to successfully complete the course as a condition for obtaining a secondary school graduation diploma.

### **BILL 70, BUILDING ONTARIO UP FOR EVERYONE ACT (BUDGET MEASURES)**

Subsequent to his Fall Financial Update, Finance Minister Charles Sousa (Mississauga South) introduced legislation to implement the Liberal government's economic agenda. Among the [features](#) in Sousa's bill is a provision to double the land transfer tax rebate to eligible first-time home buyers to \$4,000.

## BILLS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

### **BILL 39, AGGREGATE RESOURCES AND MINING MODERNIZATION ACT**

Natural Resources Minister Kathryn McGarry's (Cambridge) Bill 39, *Aggregate Resources and Mining Modernization Act* was referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy. McGarry's bill would strengthen the regulations governing aggregate companies and updates the fees and royalties they must pay for extraction.

### **BILL 45, ELECTION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT**

Liberal House Leader and Attorney-General, Yasir Naqvi's (Ottawa Centre), Bill 45, *Election Statute Law Amendment Act* was referred to the Standing Committee on General Government. The government bill would make certain amendments to Ontario's election law including moving the fixed general

election day from the first Thursday in October to the first Thursday in June. This change now confirms the 2018 election date as Thursday June 7, 2018. As well, the Liberals will establish a Far North Electoral Boundaries Commission with a mandate to review the electoral boundaries of two exceptionally large northern ridings—Kenora—Rainy River and Timmins-James Bay. The Commission will make recommendations about the creation of one or two more ridings in that geographic area. This could mean that the next general election could see an election of 124 ridings up from the current 107. Other changes proposed will allow 16 and 17 year-olds to pre-register for a future election, make canvassing in buildings easier, make school facilities more available as polling locations and allow candidates to use surnames that they ordinarily use rather than their legal surnames.

## BILLS PASSED

### **BILL 37, PROTECTING STUDENTS ACT**

(Please see top story above)

## IN OTHER NEWS

### **LIBERALS AND TORIES SPLIT BY-ELECTION CONTESTS**

In a by-election that many believed could have shaken the foundation of Premier Kathleen Wynne's leadership, the governing Liberals were able to hold onto the long-time safe seat of Ottawa—Vanier. Despite the candidacy of former Ontario Ombudsman, Andre Marin, as the Progressive Conservative standard-bearer, the PCs were unable to overcome the Liberal legacy in the riding. In an effort to buttress their chances in the predominantly francophone riding, the Liberals recruited their own star candidate, the Dean of Law at the University of Ottawa, Nathalie Des Rosiers. Breathing a collective sigh of relief, Liberals can now be certain that Premier Wynne will lead their party into the 2018 general election.

Despite the Liberal win in Ottawa-Vanier, Liberal fortunes were not replicated in the other by-election in Niagara West—Glanbrook. The Liberals saw their vote dip dramatically to 15 per cent and they finished in third-place. Meanwhile, the PCs were able to withstand a relentless political assault on their 19 year-old socially conservative candidate, Sam Oosterhoff.

Despite the draw on election night, both the Liberals and PCs face continued internal hurdles as the next general election nears. The Liberals need to show Ontarians that they are governing for them and not just to maintain power. And, with Wynne's mea culpa, at the Liberal Party Annual General Meeting the day after the by-elections, that she needed to pay more careful attention to hydro-electric prices, the Liberals know they need to do a lot more to recapture the trust of Ontarians. But, the halting of the partial sell-off of Hydro was not mentioned by Wynne.

As for the PCs, Party Leader Patrick Brown is still being distracted by his past courting of social conservatives and the candidacy of Oosterhoff did not help Brown's apparent plan to rid himself of their influence. And with Oosterhoff's ascendancy to the Legislature, Brown's path is becoming more complicated. How he deals with Oosterhoff, the new parliamentarian, will certainly impact on his party's electoral prospects.