

NEW BILLS INTRODUCED

None.

BILLS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

BILL 160, STRENGTHENING QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR PATIENTS ACT

Health and Long-Term Care Minister Dr. Eric Hoskins' (St. Paul's) Bill 160, *Strengthening Quality and Accountability for Patients Act* passed 2nd Reading with the support of the Progressive Conservatives. The NDP voted against the bill. Hoskins' bill would make it mandatory for the medical industry, including pharmaceutical and medical device manufacturers, to disclose payments made to health care professionals and organizations, as well as other recipients. Payments would include meals and hospitality, travel associated expenses, and financial grants, and the public would be able to search this information in an online database. The bill would also allow for the transport of emergency patients to a non-hospital setting, such as a mental health facility. Also, the bill would permit the regulation of recreational water facilities, like splash pads and wading pools, and personal service settings, including barber shops and nail salons. The bill will now be referred to the Standing Committee on General Committee for review.

BILL 164, HUMAN RIGHTS CODE AMENDMENT ACT

Liberal MPP Nathalie Des Rosiers' (Ottawa—Vanier) bill passed 2nd Reading by voice vote and was referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills. Des Rosiers' bill would amend the Human Rights Code to include immigration status, genetic characteristics, police records and social condition as prohibited grounds of discrimination. The Act currently includes race, place of origin, gender identity, family status and disability, among other things, as prohibited grounds of discrimination.

BILL 170, CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH ACT

Liberal MPP Lou Rinaldi's (Northumberland—Quinte West) bill would proclaim the month of October as Child Abuse Prevention Month. The bill passed 2nd Reading by voice vote and was referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

BILLS PASSED

BILL 152, REPRESENTATION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT

Liberal Cabinet Minister Yasir Naqvi's (Ottawa Centre) bill passed its final hurdle in the Legislature with unanimous support. The bill will add an additional two ridings to the already increased number of ridings to make a total of 124 constituencies in Ontario for the next election. The bill is a result of Premier Kathleen Wynne wanting to see greater representation for Northern Ontario and, specifically for Indigenous communities, in Ontario's Legislature. The bill would divide the current two northern electoral districts of Kenora—Rainy River and Timmins—James Bay into four and rename them Kenora—Rainy River, Kiiwetinoong, Mushkegowuk—James Bay and Timmins. The current Ontario Legislature has 107 MPPs and most boundaries are aligned with the federal counterparts.

In proposing this bill, the Liberals also made some additional changes to their earlier [Bill 2, Election Finances Statute Law Amendment Act](#) specifically adding nominated candidates to the list of individuals banned from attending fundraising events. To the Liberals' consternation and embarrassment, the PCs had noticed a loophole in the law that only barred sitting MPPs from fundraisers and not nominated candidates. As well, the Liberals clarified the law so that sitting MPPs and nominated candidates could attend party conventions such as annual general meetings.

BILL 163, PROTECTING A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO ACCESS ABORTION SERVICES ACT

Despite the Liberals' attempt to expose political divisions within the Progressive Conservative parliamentary caucus on the issue of abortion, Attorney-General Yasir Naqvi's (Ottawa Centre) bill passed with near unanimous support with only Trillium Party MPP Jack MacLaren (Carleton—Mississippi Mills) remaining steadfast in his opposition to the bill. Naqvi's bill sets out restrictions on activities around abortion clinics. In explaining his bill, Naqvi [said](#), "This includes the establishment of safe access zones, prohibiting set-out conduct, such as advising or persuading someone to not use abortion services or harassing behaviour. These zones around clinics would be 50 metres and can be increased up to 150 metres. It would also provide safe access zones of 150 metres or prescribed lesser distances around the residences of protected service providers." Many abortion providers and advocates had long argued that protesters around abortion clinics had been harassing and intimidating women.

MOTIONS

Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown (Simcoe North) put forth an Opposition Day motion calling on the Liberal government to apologize for wasting \$4 billion on the Fair Hydro Plan. Brown's motion is a result of Auditor-General Bonnie Lysyk's report saying that the Liberals were spending an additional \$4 billion to implement their Fair Hydro Plan. In moving his motion, Brown [said](#), "Finally, today, Mr. Speaker, the Ontario PC caucus is making a clear and simple request as part of our opposition day motion. We ask Liberal MPPs in the Legislature to take responsibility, do the right thing and apologize to the Auditor General and the people of Ontario for engaging in improper accounting practices; apologize for wasting four billion hard-earned taxpayer dollars and sticking the bill on current and future generations. If anything warrants an apology, it's that."

By agreeing, Liberal MPPs in the Legislature will show the people of Ontario that they are more than just part of a politically corrupt, morally bankrupt government. That is what I hope this vote this afternoon will show. Support this motion and issue an apology to the hard-working Ontario families. It's the right thing to do, and I hope every member of the Legislature can support this motion." Despite gaining the support of the NDP, Brown's motion was defeated by a vote of 51–27. And, in a related move, PC MPP Lisa MacLeod's (Nepean—Carleton) request to have the Standing Committee on Public Accounts review the Fair Hydro Plan accounting practices was defeated by the Liberal committee members.

EDUCATION NEWS

CHILD CARE WORKER AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR APPRECIATION DAY ACKNOWLEDGED IN LEGISLATURE

In recognition of Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day, MPPs rose in the Legislature to praise their work. First, the Minister Responsible for Early Years and Child Care [Indira Naidoo-Harris \(Halton\)](#) said, "Mr. Speaker, I strongly believe that all children in this province have the right to a brighter future. And all children deserve the best possible start in life. I know that everyone in this House feels the same, so I urge all of you today to rise in support of these dedicated professionals who are making sure every day that our children are on track, are able to thrive, are able to flourish and are able to reach their full potential in life. Rise today and say thank you for the important job that they do to support our children and to put them on a path to lifelong success."

NDP MPP [Catherine Fife \(Kitchener—Waterloo\)](#) added, "The child care system in our province is in crisis, and it's time for bold change. Tens of thousands of children are on waiting lists for care in a provincial system that has the highest child care fees in the country. Frankly, it's unacceptable that parents can pay more for their children's child care than they would for their university tuition. It's time to commit to strategically investing in the system. This means ensuring that equal pay for equal work for ECEs happens. This means investing in a system with an affordable fee scale. This means investing only in not-for-profit child care on a go-forward position."

Finally, PC MPP [Gila Martow \(Thornhill\)](#) said, "What we need is this government to offer some solutions, some concrete solutions, for the fact that early childhood educators and child care workers are professionals. They need to be compensated as professionals; they need to be respected as professionals and appreciated as professionals. They need to be able to support themselves. This isn't a part-time job to add to a main salary. This isn't volunteer work. This isn't an internship of some kind. This is a career, a professional career, and it needs to be treated as such. I think that, possibly—there has been a lot of talk about pay equity. The question comes down to: Is this because it's somehow women's work and undervalued for that reason."

PPM 161—STUDENTS WITH PREVALENT MEDICAL CONDITIONS

In response to concerns expressed by parents and medical groups, the Ministry of Education has [issued](#) a Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) that, by next school year, will require all school boards across Ontario have policies in place to improve the safety of students with anaphylaxis, asthma, diabetes and epilepsy. Boards will be required to provide students that have medical conditions with a plan of care, which outlines contacts and procedures tailored to the individual

needs of the student. The Ministry has indicated that it will continue to work with education unions on developing this PPM. PPM 161 will be finalized in winter 2018, for implementation by September 2018.

PILOT PROGRAM FOR AUTISTIC STUDENTS

Education Minister Mitzie Hunter [announced](#) a new \$5 million pilot program for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. It will begin in 18 school boards for the 2018–19 school year and will: provide dedicated spaces for external practitioners of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) to deliver on-site autism services; provide education assistants with access to voluntary 40-hour online targeted training and professional learning sessions; and provide funding to hire an ABA expertise professional with Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA) certification/qualification or equivalent qualification. The Educational unions have expressed concerns about the pilot program, primarily about bringing in external consultants to the school site and the related issues.

EXPANSION OF EARLY YEARS PROGRAMMING FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Education Minister Mitzie Hunter (Scarborough—Guildwood) and Minister Responsible for Early Years and Child Care Indira Naidoo-Harris (Halton) [jointly announced](#) that the province will build 100 new EarlyON Child and Family Centres. They will be open to all families across Ontario, and provide support, advice, personal connections and a network of resources as well as play- and inquiry-based programs for young children. The new facilities will cost \$140 million annually and will be completed over the next three years. Any existing programs, including Ontario Early Years Centres, will be consolidated under the new EarlyON brand.

SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN IN CARE

Education Minister Mitzie Hunter and the Minister of Children and Youth Michael Coteau (Don Valley East) [announced](#) funding to school boards for transportation services for children and youth in care. The Ministers say that this will provide more stability for students by allowing them to stay in their current school when they experience changes in their place of residence. Funding will also be provided to Ontario's children's aid societies, including Indigenous societies, to connect children and youth in care with an educational liaison. The liaisons will assist students in navigating the school system and developing educational plans and goals, and coordinate available supports within the school and the community to help students reach their full potential. At this point, the Ministers have not announced which member of the school educational team will perform the role of liaison for these students.

IN OTHER NEWS

SUDBURY BRIBERY SCANDAL ENDS IN ACQUITTALS FOR PROMINENT LIBERALS

The judge in the Sudbury by-election trial acquitted two prominent Liberals of bribery charges. Former Premier Kathleen Wynne Chief of Staff Patricia Sorbara and local Sudbury Liberal Gerry Loughheed were absolved of bribery charges in relation to their conversations with 2014 Liberal

candidate Andrew Olivier. The crown contended that Sorbara and Lougheed had attempted to bribe Olivier by offering him inducements so that he would not challenge former Federal NDP MP Glen Thibeault for the Provincial Liberal nomination. Despite the acquittals, the political damage to Wynne and her Liberal government may already be done in the court of public opinion.

2017 ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER'S REPORT RELEASED

Dianne Saxe, Ontario's Environmental Commissioner released her [2017 annual report](#), "Good Choices, Bad Choices: Environmental Rights and Environmental Protection in Ontario." In her report, Saxe outlined the impacts of industrial pollution and poor government cleanup efforts of Indigenous communities. She pointed to mercury poisoning in Grassy Narrows, polluted air in Chemical Valley and the 36 First Nations under drinking water advisories. She recommended the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change update its air standards regulations and improve how it transmits real time air monitoring information. She also urged the government to "incorporate environmental justice as part of its reconciliation with Indigenous people."