

## EDUCATION NEWS

### EDUCATION MINISTER TOUTS MCDONALD'S JOBS FOR YOUTH

During Question Period, NDP MPP Faisal Hassan (York South—Weston) [asked](#) the Minister of Education how she was preparing youth for employment by asking, “Again, my question is to the Minister of Education. Under this government’s watch, Ontario’s youth unemployment rate is 12.3%, higher than the rate for the rest of Canada. This Conservative government claims to be all about jobs but they do not seem to care about jobs for the youth in communities like York South—Weston. Leaving programs like FoodShare Toronto in the dark about whether or not they will be able to continue to employ, educate and support students shows where the government’s real priorities lie, and it is not with our youth. When will this government stop balancing its budget on the backs of our young people?”

Minister Thompson replied, “Again, I want to stand in front of everyone in this House today and say it’s our PC government of Ontario that’s actually going to be able to tout the success that we have in making sure our students have the job skills and life skills they need for the jobs of today and tomorrow. Some of those skills actually involve embracing technology for good. I want to share an example of something that we’ve just learned about today. McDonald’s Canada, for the first time, is today accepting applications from students via Snapchat. I’m telling you, Speaker, we need to make sure that we’re doing everything we can to invest in proper studies, in a proper curriculum, so that our students are equipped to work with the means amongst them. Technology for good is absolutely a means to an end whereby we want to make sure they have the skills to go out and pursue jobs that they’re going to have satisfaction in.”

### NDP EDUCATION CRITIC EXPRESSES CONCERNS REGARDING ONLINE LEARNING

Also in Question Period, NDP Education Critic, MPP Marit Stiles (Davenport) [asked](#) the Minister of Education, Lisa Thompson (Huron—Bruce) about the requirement for the completion of four online courses by high school students for graduation. Stiles said, “Online opportunities, Mr. Speaker? Online opportunities? This is not about 21st-century learning. This is not about technology. This is about making students take courses online that are now mandatory. This is about removing 10,000 teachers from our classrooms. Students are right to be worried about their future. They are right to be worried. They’re wondering how they will concentrate in classes as large as 40. They’re afraid they and their siblings will fall behind when they’re forced to take a class online with no support. And they’re worried about how they’ll navigate the transition to college or university or be ready to contribute to the economy when their guidance counsellors are cut. Mr. Speaker, will the minister have the courage to stand up for students, or will she simply carry on with the Premier’s endless quest for cuts?”

Thompson responded: “I stand up for students every single day, as opposed to the no-digital party. Honest to goodness, Speaker, I can’t even believe how disconnected that member opposite and her entire party are. My goodness, we should be celebrating how we’re already leading the way.”

TVO, TFO—people and jurisdictions around the world are coming to them for the online advances that they’re making with online courses. The fact of the matter is, if the party opposite was actually truly connected with our school boards across this province, they would know online courses are already happening. Again, what is wrong with making sure that our students, at minimum, once a year, embrace technology for good? Having so many opportunities that the Internet provides, we are going to continue to push the bar and make sure Ontario education is—.”

The next day, Stiles continued her line of questioning by [asking](#), “Mr. Speaker, that minister knows perfectly well this is not about preparing students to use technology or building resiliency. It is about less face-to-face learning, less one-on-one attention, because this government is cutting 10,000 teaching jobs and forcing students into mandatory online courses. The government didn’t just unilaterally change graduate requirements with a stroke of a pen here; it also signaled that the delivery of e-learning programs would be shifted away from school boards and centralized. Parents don’t know who will be delivering these courses, where or how students will take them, or what will happen if students fail to complete the courses. Minister, who will be delivering online courses to Ontario students?”

Minister Thompson replied, “You know what, Mr. Speaker? Honest to goodness, to the people watching I say, please don’t get caught up in the rhetoric of this opposition party, because it’s absolutely nothing but nonsense that they’re spewing across Ontario. The fact of the matter is that in my home riding of Huron—Bruce, Avon Maitland is doing a phenomenal job bringing math into the classroom and supplementing it with online facts and learning. Honest to Pete, there are great examples that we can use. It’s best practices. Seriously, Speaker, this party is doing nothing but fearmongering. To that end, I want to quote the CBC fact-check from yesterday. We’ve heard this party opposite go on and on and cause fear in parents and teachers alike. But the CBC fact-check just yesterday said, “Boosting the average secondary class size to 28 would still see Ontario rank on the lower end of the spectrum” across Canada. So—.”

### **FORMER PREMIER WYNNE RAISES CLASS SIZE ISSUE**

Former Premier and one-time Education Minister Kathleen Wynne (Don Valley West) [asked](#) an education question in the Question Period regarding the proposed increase in the average class size in high school from 22 to 28 students. Wynne said, “What I’m asking the minister is how she can justify taking thousands of adults out of schools. She knows full well—or she should, Mr. Speaker—that 22 kids in a secondary class is an average number. What it means if she takes thousands of adults out of the schools is that boards and schools across the province will be scrambling to make sure that the core curriculum has reasonable class sizes. How can she guarantee that courses like drama and music and visual arts and industrial design and co-op programs will have any sections at all, that kids will be able to take those courses, when thousands of adults have come out of the schools?”

Thompson replied, “Well, what I choose to do in this House is to set that member opposite straight, because our focus on education is going to see zero changes from kindergarten to grade 3. From grades 4 to 8, we’re looking at no more than maybe one student per class. And when it comes to high school, I’m telling you, we’re going to get it right. We’re looking at an increase of perhaps six students, but what we’re also focusing on is the success and the actual effectiveness of the teacher in the classroom, and we’re excited by that. We’re investing in our teachers like never before. We’re looking at outcomes that will ensure that we are following through and being measured on our goals, our vision, which is student success. Let’s talk about that education reform. We’re looking at a new math curriculum, not only for the students, but we’re going to be supporting our teachers as well. We’re looking at a refocused effort and theme in STEM. We’re taking a look at modernizing.”

## NEW BILLS INTRODUCED

### **BILL 92, LABOUR RELATIONS AMENDMENT ACT (REPLACEMENT WORKERS)**

NDP MPP France Gélinas (Nickel Belt) introduced her private member's bill that prevents an employer from replacing striking or locked-out employees with replacement workers except in specified emergency situations. With the governing Progressive Conservatives already enacting many anti-labour initiatives, this bill will likely not proceed past the first reading stage.

### **BILL 91, PETER KORMOS MEMORIAL ACT (TRILLIUM GIFT OF LIFE NETWORK AMENDMENT)**

NDP MPP France Gélinas (Nickel Belt) introduced this private member's bill that would remove the requirement for consent before tissue can be removed from a deceased person's body. But, Gélinas' bill would allow a person to object to the removal of the tissue prior to his or her death or a substitute may object on his or her behalf after the death has occurred.

### **BILL 90, LOWER AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE RATES ACT**

NDP MPP Tom Rakocevic (Humber River—Black Creek) introduced this private member's bill that would require approval by

a government regulator before automobile insurance rates could be increased. This is the third bill introduced this session on automobile insurance rates. PC government backbencher MPP Parm Gill (Milton), earlier introduced [Bill 42, \*Ending Discrimination in Automobile Insurance Act\*](#) and NDP MPP Gurratan Singh (Brampton East), introduced [Bill 44, \*Ending Automobile Insurance Discrimination in the Greater Toronto Area Act\*](#). Gill's bill has passed second reading and is with the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. Singh's bill was defeated at second reading.

### **BILL 89, TEACH THE REACH ACT**

NDP MPP Marit Stiles (Davenport) introduced her bill that would require the Ministry to ensure that the Dutch reach method is explained in driver education handbooks or other written material prepared or endorsed by the Ministry and is taught in driver education courses that are approved or licensed by the Ministry. The Dutch reach method is when a person uses his or her hand that is the farthest from the door and reaches across his or her body to place the hand on the door handle. Stiles hopes her bill will cut down on the number of cyclists that are injured by car doors being opened abruptly.

## BILLS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

### **BILL 78, SUPPORTING ONTARIO'S COMMUNITY, RURAL AND AGRICULTURAL NEWSPAPERS ACT**

PC MPP Goldie Ghamari's (Carleton) private member's bill intends to support rural and agricultural newspapers. The bill passed second reading and has been referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

### **BILL 77, HELLENIC HERITAGE MONTH ACT**

PC MPP Effie Triantafilopoulos' (Oakville North—Burlington) bill would proclaim the month of March in each year as Hellenic (Greek) Heritage Month. The bill passed second reading and has been referred to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

## **BILLS PASSED**

### **BILL 81, SUPPLY ACT, 2019**

MPP Peter Bethlenfalvy (Pickering—Uxbridge), President of the Treasury Board, had his bill authorizing the continuation of government expenditures pass third and final reading.

### **BILL 68, COMPREHENSIVE ONTARIO POLICE SERVICES ACT**

Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, Sylvia Jones' (Dufferin—Caledon) government bill passed third and final reading. Jones' bill would limit the scope of the Special Investigations Unit (SIU). The SIU would only investigate in cases where police are involved in serious injury or death, and face allegations of sexual assault. As well, the SIU is to complete its investigations within 120 days. If it does not, the SIU must provide reasons for the delay. The bill will also create a new agency, the Law Enforcement Complaints Agency, to deal with complaints against police. The agency will have the power to direct complaints to a police force or to an independent investigator. This is a change from the current complaints process, which is handled by the Office of the Independent Police Review Director.