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THE WATCHDOG

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ONTARIO OMBUDSMAN WELCOMES TABLING OF ACCOUNTABILITY BILL

Marin hopeful "serious concerns" about
MUSH sector oversight will be
addressed



Ontario Ombudsman André Marin discusses Bill 179 and the potential expansion of his mandate on [GlobalTV's Focus Ontario](#).

On March 24, Ontario Ombudsman André Marin welcomed the provincial government's official tabling of [Bill 179, the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014](#). The bill, announced earlier this month, proposes several measures aimed at more open government,

MARCH 2014

The Ombudsman investigates public complaints about Ontario government agencies. His office oversees more than 500 provincial ministries, agencies, tribunals, boards, commissions and Crown corporations.

[FILE A COMPLAINT ONLINE](#)

Ombudsman Ontario

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NINTH ANNIVERSARY AS ONTARIO'S OMBUDSMAN

Ombudsman André Marin will be speaking to administrative law students at Seneca College on April 1. It's also the ninth anniversary of his appointment as Ontario's Ombudsman! We'll post the video on our [YouTube channel](#) on April 2.

INVESTIGATIONS UPDATE

including extending the Ombudsman's mandate into the "[MUSH sector](#)" – municipalities, universities, school boards and hospitals, as well as long-term care homes, children's aid societies and police – for the first time.

If passed, the bill and accompanying amendments to the Ombudsman Act would give the Ombudsman authority to investigate public complaints about municipalities, universities and school boards. It will also create a new Patient Ombudsman for complaints about hospitals and long-term care homes, and gives the existing Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth the power to investigate children's aid societies.

"This bill marks important progress in finally opening MUSH sector organizations to independent scrutiny," said Mr. Marin, whose office oversees more than 500 provincial government ministries, agencies, boards, corporations, tribunals and commissions. "These organizations affect millions of Ontarians and account for billions of tax dollars; it's only right that citizens have recourse to their Ombudsman for complaints about them, just as they do for any other provincial government organization."

However, he noted that the bill is a work in progress. "While I welcome the bill and appreciate being consulted on parts of it before it was announced, I continue to have some serious concerns about some of its shortcomings. In deference to the parliamentary process, I will address those concerns at the appropriate time, before the appropriate legislative committee."

[View the full text of the bill](#)

[View the government's press release](#)

Have you contacted us about our Hydro One investigation?

[The Ombudsman's investigation](#) is looking at whether Hydro One's customer billing practices are transparent and whether Hydro One's process for responding to customer billing concerns is timely and effective.

As you may be aware from the media, we have received a large volume of complaints. The information you have provided is being reviewed and an Ombudsman staff member may be in touch with you to follow up on your concerns.

Please note we are also working with

- › [Hydro One billing practices](#): Investigators are in the fact-gathering stage and taking individual complaints - almost **7,000** have been received since the investigation was announced on Feb. 4.
- › [Ontario direction to police on de-escalation](#): The fact-gathering stage of this investigation is ongoing.
- › [Monitoring of unlicensed daycares](#): Investigators have finished gathering evidence. The evidence is being reviewed and a preliminary report is being drafted.
- › [Adults with developmental disabilities in crisis](#): The fact-gathering is nearing completion, and we have received **1,078** complaints. We continue to take complaints and resolve individual cases.
- › [Monitoring of drivers with uncontrolled hypoglycemia](#): The Ombudsman's preliminary report is finished and recommendations have been provided to the Ministry of Transportation for response.

Anyone who has information relevant to these investigations can contact our office at 1-800-263-1830, file an online complaint or email: info@ombudsman.on.ca.

IN THE NEWS

- › [Marin's new powers 'being driven by the public'](#) (Hamilton Spectator)
- › [Province plans to have ombudsman second-guess city councils](#) (Ottawa Citizen)
- › [Longer leash for watchdog welcome](#) (Northern Life)

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Hydro One to address and resolve systemic billing problems, which appear to be affecting larger numbers of customers. You may also wish to contact Hydro One directly at 1-888-664-9376 to address your concerns.

If you have any questions or if your situation changes, please do not hesitate to call us at anytime. We can be reached toll free at 1-800-263-1830, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The Ombudsman has more than 2,893 [Facebook fans](#) and 20,823 [Twitter followers](#)! Please continue to reach out to us on social media, or drop us a line at thewatchdog@ombudsman.on.ca.

Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario | Bureau de l'Ombudsman de l'Ontario

1-800-263-1830 - Complaints Line | Ligne des plaintes | 1-866-411-4211 - TTY | ATS

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