



THE WATCHDOG

Newsletter

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"MUS"-SEE VIDEO: OMBUDSMAN TALKS NEW OVERSIGHT



On February 4, [Ontario Ombudsman André Marin](#) joined a panel discussion hosted by the Toronto Taxpayers Coalition in York Region. He touched on the importance of maintaining local accountability officers and his office's new expanded jurisdiction to include municipalities, universities, and school boards, telling participants, "We're happy to oversee municipalities, but resolve issues locally [first]. The Ombudsman should be a person of last resort, not a 9-1-1 phone call."

[Watch the video](#)

INVESTIGATIONS UPDATE

FEBRUARY 2015

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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OMBUDSMAN OUTREACH

Ombudsman staff handed out reports and answered questions from the public at a government and community services fair at Cloverdale Mall in Etobicoke on February 21. There were lots of

Hydro One:

It's been a year since the Ombudsman announced his investigation into billing and customer service at Ontario's provincial hydro utility, Hydro One. Since then, the office has received more than 9,900 complaints - by far, the most complaints we've ever received about a single organization. Complaints continue to come in, ranging from customers receiving no bills, delayed bills, multiple bills or estimated bills covering prolonged periods, to automatic withdrawal of unexpectedly large sums, to frustrating delays and poor customer service.

We've resolved thousands of individual complaints. Behind the scenes, Ontario Ombudsman staff have also been proactively raising issues for the attention of senior Hydro One brass.

Meanwhile, complaints about billing and other issues continue to come in, and the Special Ombudsman Response Team has almost wrapped up its investigation on the larger-scale, systemic problems at the utility, and the report will include concrete recommendations to improve service and fix billing problems. The Ombudsman expects to release more information about the progress of the investigation in the coming weeks, with the full report published sometime this spring.

Ontario direction to police on de-escalation:

The Ombudsman's preliminary findings and recommendations have been drafted and will be sent to the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services for a response in the coming weeks, after which his report will be finalized and published.

Adults with developmental disabilities in crisis:

We continue to resolve individual cases and take complaints - more than 1,200 to date. The large-scale systemic investigation continues, and the Ombudsman expects to release a report later in 2015.

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

BILL 8: Complaints about municipalities, universities, and school boards

Bill 8 is the *Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014*. It passed on December 9, 2014. The bill will allow the Ombudsman to take complaints about municipalities, universities and school boards for the first time.

Since the bill's passing, we have received more than 376 complaints about municipalities, 13 complaints about universities, and 104 about school boards. However, the bill has not been proclaimed into force and **we cannot yet accept complaints about these sectors**.

The team at the Ombudsman's Office is gearing up to take complaints about municipalities, universities, and school boards as soon as we're able to do so, and

questions about the Ombudsman's investigations into the G20, newborn screening, and the most recent report about the monitoring of unlicensed daycares. Look for us next at the Osgoode Hall [Public Interest Day](#) on March 6!



IN THE NEWS

- [Time to shine light on Taron](#) (*Toronto Sun*)
- [Ombudsman wants police board oversight](#) (*St. Catharines Standard*)
- [Waterloo pledges public involvement in budget on the heels of secrecy criticism](#) (*Waterloo Record*)

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we'll be sharing information about that timeline when it becomes available. In the meantime, [bookmark our page on Bill 8](#) for the latest news, or [follow us on Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#).

The Ombudsman has 3,409 [Facebook fans](#) and 29,395 [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
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