

In our May newsletter: Ombudsman calls for overhaul of “moribund” Landlord and Tenant Board, Interim French Language Services Commissioner speaks to Senate Committee on Official Languages, and much more

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**New investigation report: Ombudsman calls for overhaul of “moribund” Landlord and Tenant Board**

**Interim French Language Services Commissioner speaks to Senate Committee on Official Languages**

**Ombudsman welcomes stronger school board oversight in bill, calls for further amendments**

**Register today for webinar “Get Treated Fairly: The Role of the Ombudsman in Toronto and Ontario”**

**New podcast: Quebec Ombudsman’s investigation into COVID-19 in long-term care homes**

Here, there and everywhere

How we helped

Careers

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## New investigation report: Ombudsman calls for overhaul of “moribund” Landlord and Tenant Board



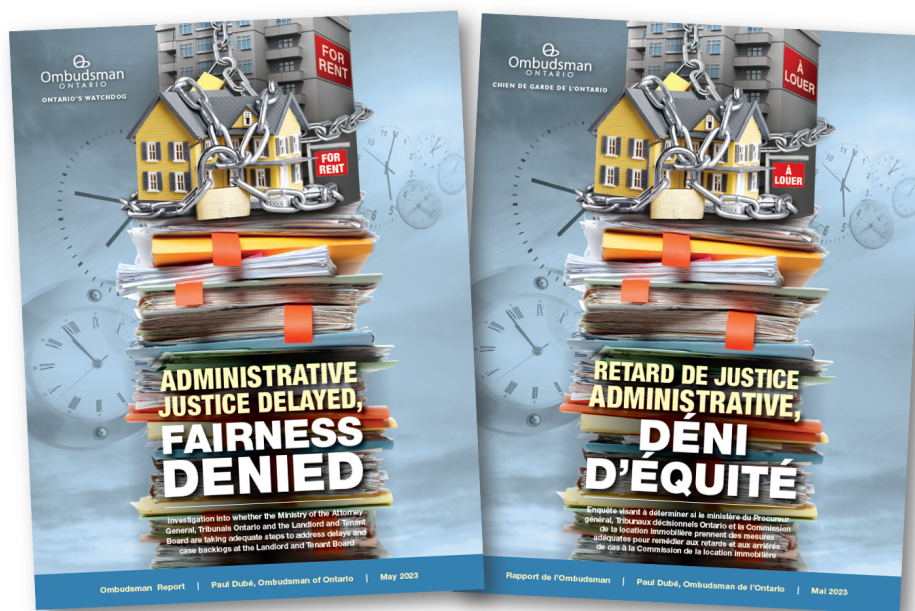
Tens of thousands of Ontarians have been denied fast, fair access to justice and suffered hardship because of “excruciatingly long” delays at the Landlord and Tenant Board, Ombudsman Paul Dubé reveals in his latest investigation report, released on May 4.

Severe backlogs, staff shortages and antiquated technology that had plagued the Board for years exploded in the “perfect storm” of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ombudsman says in his report, entitled [\*Administrative Justice Delayed, Fairness Denied\*](#). The added pressures of lockdowns, remote work, virtual hearings and a pause on eviction orders caused extreme disruption to its operations, he found.

“As an administrative tribunal, the Board is fundamentally failing in its role of providing swift justice to those seeking resolution of residential landlord and tenant issues. In doing so, it is denying justice to a significant segment of Ontarians,” he says in the report.

The Ombudsman’s 61 recommendations were accepted by the Ministry of the Attorney General and Tribunals Ontario. They have pledged to report back on their progress in implementing them.

[The full report and press release are available here.](#)



#### In the News:

- [‘Excruciating delays’ at Ontario’s Landlord and Tenant Board: Ombudsman report](#) – Global News
- [Ontario’s Landlord and Tenant Board ‘fundamentally failing,’ ombudsman finds](#) – CBC News
- [Ontario’s Landlord and Tenant Board hit with ‘excruciating delays’ of up to 2 years](#) – CTV News

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## [Interim French Language Services](#) [Commissioner speaks to Senate Committee](#) [on Official Languages](#)



Interim French Language Services Commissioner Carl Bouchard was invited to speak to the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages on May 8 as part of its study on minority-language health services.

Our French Language Services Unit has handled numerous complaints from Franco-Ontarians unable to access health services in French, he told the committee. He underscored the importance of a better strategy to take their needs into account, including adequate planning to deliver services in French. Senators appreciated this information, and asked about how different levels of government can work together to ensure adequate French services. [Click here to watch a video of the session.](#)

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## **Ombudsman welcomes stronger school board oversight in bill, calls for further amendments**



Noting that the government's new education bill incorporates his longstanding call for integrity commissioners at the school board level, Ombudsman Paul Dubé proposed further improvements to it this month.

In a submission regarding Bill 98, the *Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act*, Ombudsman Paul Dubé suggested amendments to allow integrity commissioners to take complaints from members of the public about trustees' conduct, as well as complaints about conflicts of interest. He also suggested the legislation specifically state that our Office can review complaints about school board integrity commissioners, as we do with their municipal counterparts.

Our Office has handled close to 6,000 complaints and inquiries about Ontario school boards since 2015, including 280 cases regarding boards of trustees.

[Read the Ombudsman's full submission here.](#)

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**Register today for webinar “Get Treated Fairly: The Role of the Ombudsman in Toronto and Ontario”**



Were you treated unfairly by a provincial or municipal government service? The Toronto Ombudsman and the Ontario Ombudsman are free, impartial, and confidential services. They will work with you to resolve your problems, or help you figure out where to go next.

Join Ontario Ombudsman Paul Dubé and Toronto Ombudsman Kwame Addo on June 20 for a free webinar to learn more about how an Ombudsman can help ensure you are treated fairly. [Register today!](#)

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## [New podcast: Quebec Ombudsman's investigation into COVID-19 in long-term care homes](#)

This month's episode of the Canadian Council of Parliamentary Ombudsman's podcast details how Quebec's Protecteur du Citoyen investigated complaints about COVID-19 in long-term care facilities during the first wave of the pandemic – and the repercussions that continue to be felt today. (This episode is in French, with an [English transcript here.](#)) [You can listen to this, and all other episodes, here.](#)



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[Here, there and everywhere](#)



## Welcome connections at Toronto Newcomer Day

On May 25, our staff greeted hundreds of people at the ninth annual Toronto Newcomer Day at Nathan Phillips Square in downtown Toronto. We answered a wide range of questions about our Office and how we help people navigate Ontario public services. We appreciated the opportunity to share our resources and the many ways we can help resolve issues with driver's licences, health cards, ServiceOntario, school boards, municipalities, universities and colleges – and so much more.

[Learn more about our Office and how we work.](#)



### **Raising the flag for solidarity against hate**

On May 17, the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, Ombudsman Paul Dubé and Deputy Ombudsman Barbara Finlay attended the raising of the Progress Pride flag, hosted by Toronto Pflag at City Hall. Volunteers from Pflag, an organization that promotes the health and well-being of 2SLGBTQ+ people and their families, also gave a presentation to Ombudsman staff to share lived experiences and guidance for how our Office can best serve these communities. "Pflag Toronto plays a crucial role in supporting Toronto's 2SLGBTQ+ families and kids." said Ombudsman Dubé. "We are so grateful for the work they do and for the time they spent with us to share their valuable insights."



# FOSTER PARENTS SOCIETY OF ONTARIO

*The dedicated voice of foster families in Ontario*



## **Ombudsman staff meet with foster parents**

Staff from the Ombudsman's Children and Youth Unit participated in a panel discussion at the Foster Parents Society of Ontario (FPSO) conference in Oshawa on May 26, alongside representatives from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, and the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies. Attendees were eager to learn about how the Ombudsman can take complaints from caregivers, as well as how young people are supported throughout the complaint process.

*If you're interested in learning more about the Ombudsman's Children and Youth Unit, please contact us to schedule a presentation.*



## From Niagara to the Nickel City

Interim French Language Services Commissioner Carl Bouchard was in Sudbury May 23-25 to meet with key Francophone organizations in the region. He discussed issues facing the post-secondary and health sectors with representatives from Laurentian University, Sudbury University, Collège Boréal, the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario du grand Sudbury and Horizon Santé Nord.

*Interviews with Interim French Language Services Commissioner (in French only):*

[Jonction 11-17](#)

[Le Voyageur](#)

On May 16, Commissioner Bouchard toured the Centres d'Accueil Héritage in Toronto, and met with residents. That same day, he spoke in St. Catharines about how we handle complaints about health services, at a meeting organized by Entité 2, which provides French-language health planning for the regions of Waterloo Wellington and Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant.



### **Municipal events – Strengthening local governance**

On May 11, Ombudsman Senior Counsel Robin Bates spoke to the Simcoe County Annual Conference in Orillia about how our Office handles complaints about closed meetings, by-law enforcement, housing, infrastructure and other services. She also explained how we work with municipalities to encourage transparency and accountability. [Click here to learn about some of the municipal issues we address.](#)

Ombudsman staff also met with municipal officials at our booth at the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities conference in Parry Sound, May 8-10.

Look for us next at the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario conference in Niagara Falls, June 11-13. We'll be offering a session on how municipalities can set up their integrity commissioners for success!

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## HOW WE HELPED



### Positive result

A man complained to us about the lack of French language services at a COVID-19 vaccination clinic. The clinic was organized and operated by a hospital partially designated under the *French Language Services Act*. We contacted the facility and they acknowledged that the recruitment and deployment of staff on site did not take service in French into account.

The hospital committed to testing the language proficiency level of onsite staff, providing a list of bilingual staff to clinic management in advance, and sharing instructions on the active offer of services in French and the distribution of bilingual staff throughout the vaccination site.

**Learn more about the French Language Services Unit which answers questions and takes complaints about services in French**



### [Bringing a smile](#)

The Office of the Children's Lawyer contacted us on behalf of a 17-year-old who was trying to get the cost of braces for her teeth covered by her children's aid society (CAS). The youth had a Voluntary Youth Services Agreement (VYSA) – a program that extends child protection services to 17- and 18-year-olds – but her CAS said it had an internal policy that it did not fund orthodontic treatment for youths with VYSAs.

With the youth's consent, staff from our Children and Youth Unit pointed out the specific terms of the youth's VYSA to the service director at the CAS – which obliged the CAS to cover the cost of braces. The service director agreed with our assessment, and within two hours, we obtained written confirmation that the youth's braces would be paid for. She was delighted with the result and thanked us for our help.

**[Click here to learn more about how we helped with issues or problems concerning children and youth](#)**

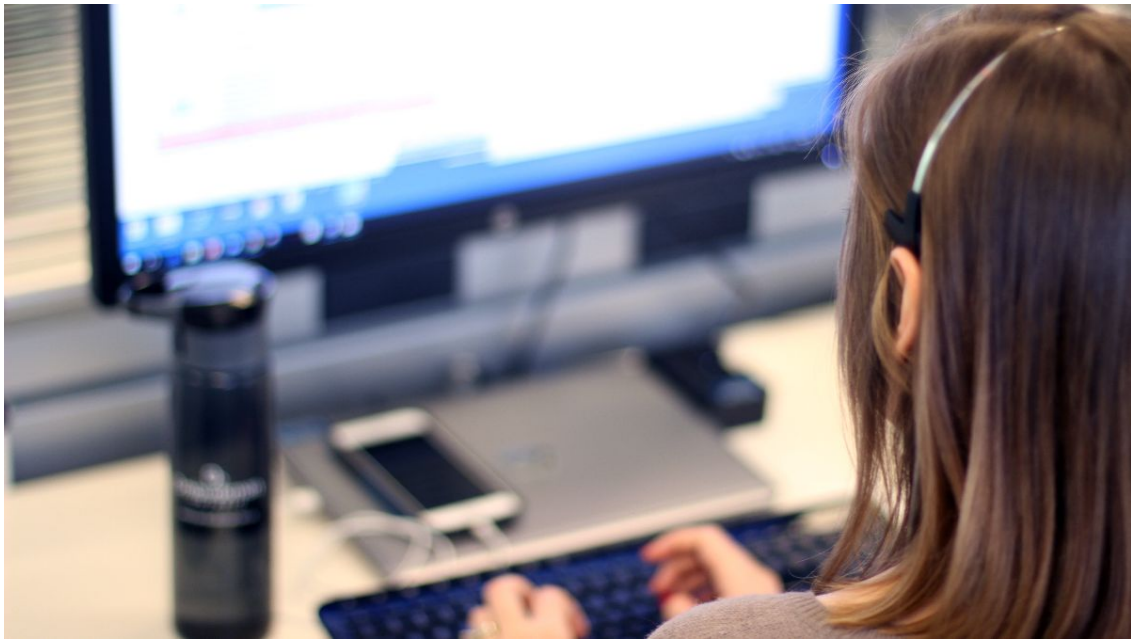


### [Failed to send](#)

An Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) recipient complained to us that her benefits had been cut off twice without warning. We made inquiries with ODSP officials, who determined that the woman should have received written notice that they were withholding benefits because they needed information about her living arrangements. But the woman's caseworker, a new employee, had electronically generated letters of notice to her without sending them. They also noted that ODSP was operating with reduced staff due to the pandemic, and workers were dealing with unusually high caseloads.

[\*\*Click here to learn more about how we helped Ontarians with their problems\*\*](#)

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## CAREERS

We continue to hire new staff. [Check out all of our open positions in the Careers section of our website.](#)

### **WE OFFER:**

- Collaborative, exciting work with exceptional colleagues passionate about public service
- Comprehensive health, dental and vision benefits
- Generous paid maternity and parental leave
- Hybrid working environment with an office centrally located on the subway line
- A commitment to work-life balance
- Defined-benefit pension plan through the Ontario Pension Board
- Ongoing training and professional development opportunities

**APPLY TODAY!**

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**File a complaint or contact us here**

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The Ombudsman is an independent officer of the Ontario legislature who conducts oversight of provincial government agencies and municipalities, universities and school boards, as well as child protection services and French language services. The Ombudsman's investigations have benefited millions of Ontarians and prompted widespread reforms, including improved newborn screening, a more secure lottery system, and better tracking of inmates in segregation.

The Ontario Ombudsman's work takes place on traditional Indigenous territories across the province we now call Ontario, and we are thankful to be able to work and live on this land.

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