

## **Employer and Employee Bill 148 Discussion and Media Availability**

### **Purpose**

Premier, on Monday, October 30, you will be taking part in a discussion with workers about Bill 148, Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, 2017, at the IRV Gastro Pub. With the bill going to committee, it's a chance to hear from workers who will be directly impacted by the changes we are making.

You will also be speaking with Regan, the owner of the restaurant hosting the event. His message seems to be generally that minimum wage increase is the right thing to do (but isn't necessarily easy). He would like to discuss hydro and the province's plan and would like to discuss small business in the context of economic fairness.

### **Bill 148 – Changing Workplaces**

#### *Key messages*

- We want everyone to benefit fairly from Ontario's growing economy. But while business is expanding and creating wealth, not everyone is feeling it.
- We need to address the concerns of those who worry about falling behind, even as they work so hard to get ahead. I truly believe that that is our role- to be a force for good.
- Because we balanced our budget, we have the ability to do so. That means free tuition, expanded childcare, and free prescription drugs for anyone under 25. And a basic income pilot as well as Fair Hydro and Fair Housing Plans.
- Building on these initiatives, we're moving forward with our plan for Fair Workplaces and Better Jobs.
- This includes:
  - Hiking the minimum wage
  - Ensuring part-time workers are paid the same hourly wage as full-time workers for doing the same job,
  - Introducing Personal Emergency Leave days for all workers, two of which are paid.
  - And stepping up enforcement of employment laws.
- With these changes, every worker in Ontario will be treated fairly, paid a living wage and have the opportunities they deserve.
- Whether it's childcare or healthcare, rent control or workplace fairness, the motivation behind each of them are the same.
- They will help build an Ontario where greater opportunity is available for everyone and greater security is achievable for everyone.

#### *Minimum Wage*

- Millions of workers in Ontario are finding it almost impossible to support their families on a minimum wage that just doesn't go far enough. It's time this rate reflected the reality of people's lives.
- Raising the minimum wage to \$15/hr gives more than a quarter of Ontarians a pay increase, ensuring that more workers are benefitting from Ontario's economic growth.

- A \$15 minimum wage phased in over 18 months is good for workers but can be good for businesses too. When businesses pay fairly, living standards rise and reliance on benefits falls. Higher wages also lead to greater job satisfaction and productivity, less turnover and more spending power for lower income earners.
- Beyond the positive impact, the minimum wage increase speaks to our values. It's about equal opportunity- ensuring those who work hard and play by the rules are rewarded. It's our job as government to make sure our society reflects those values.
- Whether it's child care or health care, rent control or workplace fairness, the motivation behind them is the same. They all help build an Ontario where greater opportunity is available for everyone and greater security is achievable for everyone.

### *On Economic Fairness and Small Business*

- While some businesses are benefiting from Ontario's strong economy, we know that not everyone is feeling it.
- The reality is that in Ontario, 30% of workers are making below \$15 an hour.
- That means 30% of people in our Province are making below \$30,000 a year. Even less if they aren't working full time.
- We need to address the concerns of those who worry about falling behind, even as they work so hard to get ahead.
- That's why our government introduced the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act.
- The Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act will bring transformative changes to workplaces across Ontario, and will make sure that families have the support they need to succeed, while maintaining a competitive business climate where small- and medium-sized businesses can thrive.
- Many businesses across the province have come out in support of our plan saying:
  - It helps them attract employees
  - It reduces their labour turnover which saves them money
  - And it encourages employees to become more invested in the business
- That said, we recognize there are concerns from the small business community, and we are working with them to bring forward initiatives that will improve the competitiveness of Ontario's business climate.
- Our government is committed to bring forward initiatives to help small businesses in Ontario, and we will continue to work with the small business community to foster a competitive economic environment
- That's why we're streamlining compliance and reviewing ways that we can help alleviate administrative costs
- We've already taken steps to make it easier to do business in Ontario by reducing regulatory fees for independent grocery stores
- We've also cut more than 80,000 unnecessary regulations and saved business over \$150 million
- And just recently we introduced the Cutting Unnecessary Red Tape Act, 2017
  - Among other initiatives, if passed this bill will require all ministries to offset every dollar of new costs to business by removing \$1.25 of old and unnecessary costs
- Our government is taking measures to enhance the total share of government procurement awarded to small- and medium-sized businesses
- ... And we're making it easier for businesses to access all government services through a new centralized website and one-on-one counselling

## Hydro & Fair Hydro Plan

Some context on the system:

- We have built a system that is clean and reliable. We eliminated coal from our generating system, and made frequent brownouts and blackouts a thing of the past.
- Our government eliminated dirty coal generation, the equivalent of taking 7 million cars off the road. This was the largest climate change action taken in North America to date. It's also good for our health and environment, saving \$4.4 billion per year.
- We have built over 15,000km of new power lines – more than twice the distance from Montreal to Vancouver.
- Refurbishing Ontario's nuclear capacity will create almost 25,000 jobs, and generate annual economic activity of \$5 billion.
- In 2003, we had 10 wind turbines. We now have over 1,900 turbines – enough to power over one million homes. And we have more solar than any other province, with over 1,800 MW – enough for 210,000 homes.
- We introduced the Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP) for low- to modest-income households, and then expanded it in 2017 with the Fair Hydro Plan. Families are now eligible for as much as \$800 per year in support.
- We've invested more than one billion dollars in electricity conservation programs, the cleanest and most efficient alternative to new generation. Through these programs, we have avoided the equivalent of six natural gas plants of generation, while helping ratepayers lower their bills
- Now we have taken action to make electricity more affordable, through our Fair Hydro Plan by reducing bills by an average of 25% for every single household in Ontario, along with half a million small businesses and farms.
- Under the plan, bills will be held to the rate of inflation for the next four years.
- For those facing the highest delivery rates – especially those in rural parts of our province – the reduction is even larger, as much as 40-50%.
- But, all these investments came at a price that was being paid by today's generation alone. Therefore we decided to provide real relief by smoothing out these investments over a longer time. This will ensure that these investments are paid out over the full useful life of the assets.

What we're doing in the future:

- Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan reduced electricity bills by an average of 25 per cent for residential consumers and will hold any increases to the rate of inflation for four years. As many as half a million small businesses and farms are also benefiting from the reduction. Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan builds on previous actions that reduced electricity costs for families, farms and businesses.
- Ontario will share the costs of existing electricity investments more fairly with future generations by refinancing a portion of the Global Adjustment, spreading the cost of the investments over a longer period of time.
- Residential customers served by local distribution companies with some of the highest rates are getting enhanced distribution rate protection. This will save eligible customers as much as 40 to 50 per cent on their electricity bills.

- The First Nations Delivery Credit reduces the monthly electricity bills of on-reserve First Nation residential customers of licensed distributors.
- Residential electricity prices over the 2017 LTEP outlook period are forecast to remain below the level forecast in the 2013 LTEP. The outlook for electricity prices for large business reflects average increases in line with inflation over the forecast period.
- The government will enhance consumer protection by giving the Ontario Energy Board increased regulatory authority over unit sub-meter providers.
- The government will continue to support expanded access to natural gas, giving consumers greater choice and aiding in the economic development of their communities.

*Lindsay Aagaard - 647-400-3814*