

Today's News - Tuesday, February 20, 2018

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Ontario is standing up for workers and businesses with the introduction of legislation that, if passed, would allow the government to take measured actions in response to discriminatory American procurement policies. The proposed Fairness in Procurement Act would allow Ontario to take responsive action to address unfair government procurement practices that are being implemented in New York State and Texas, and considered in other states. These policies represent a worrying trend towards protectionism and prevent Ontario businesses from accessing cross-border procurement opportunities. The proposed legislation would give Ontario the flexibility to choose whether and how to respond to discriminatory actions, by creating regulations to address those actions. The responsive regulations, if made, would be pursued when a U.S. subnational jurisdiction enacts legislation or adopts an unfair, discriminatory policy. These regulations would be designed to be in proportion to restrictions made by public sector purchasers in the opposing U.S. jurisdiction.

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Also Today:

- Canada's Governor General, Her Excellency the Right Honourable Julie Payette, began her first official visit to Ontario this morning with a ceremonial welcome at the Legislative Assembly in Toronto. Premier Kathleen Wynne joined Her Honour the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, and the Honourable Dave Levac, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, to greet the Governor General. Upon arrival at Queen's Park, she received military honours, including a 100-person guard of honour, the Vice-Regal Salute and a 21-gun salute from 4th Canadian Division/Joint Task Force (Central), including the Governor General's Horse Guards. Her Excellency was then escorted into the Legislature for meetings with both the Lieutenant Governor and the Premier. The Governor General's official visit also includes a meeting with John Tory, Mayor of Toronto, as well as the presentation of honours to close to 60 remarkable Canadians in recognition of excellence, courage and exceptional dedication to service. Her visit will conclude this evening with an official reception hosted by Premier Wynne.

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- Ontario is transforming its adult correctional system to achieve better outcomes for individuals in custody, and those being released. The province has introduced legislation that is the foundation of the boldest transformation of our corrections system in a generation. The legislation would apply a consistent and evidence-based approach to rehabilitation, ensuring both public safety and the protection of the human rights and dignity of persons in custody. The proposed legislation has been informed by consultations with stakeholders, partners including corrections staff, and several comprehensive expert reviews. These measures will modernize corrections and support a system built around dignity, human rights, and accountability that will effectively rehabilitate and reintegrate individuals in custody. The implementation of this fundamental transformation of adult correctional services will be phased in as soon as possible based on system readiness and the appropriate supports being in place.

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Our government's plan to build a stronger, healthier Ontario includes **historic new investments in health care**, including free **medications for everyone 24 and under through OHIP+: Children and Youth Pharmacare**, providing free **tuition to over 210,000 students** and on-the-job learning opportunities to help land a great job, helping 100,000 kids access quality, licensed child care and making it more affordable for families, making everyday life more affordable by **reducing electricity costs by 25 per cent** on average through our Fair Hydro Plan, and taking action to **make housing more affordable** for homebuyers and renters through our Fair Housing Plan.