

# Today's News - Tuesday, May 23, 2017

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## Today's News

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Minister of Labour Kevin Flynn issued the following statement in response to the final report released today:

"The Government of Ontario released the Changing Workplaces Review final report this morning. This is Ontario's first independent review in more than a generation to seek recommendations for legislative changes to the province's Employment Standards Act and Labour Relations Act. I want to thank the special advisors C. Michael Mitchell and the Honourable John C. Murray for the hard work they put into this report, and for the care and thoughtfulness they demonstrated through their recommendations.

I would also like to thank all of the women and men, and all of the advocates and representatives from organized labour and our business community who took an active role in the consultation process. The response by so many people across Ontario shows the seriousness of this issue, and confirms why our government has made this a priority.

Ontario's economy is strong and growing. Our unemployment rate is the lowest it's been in 16 years, and our GDP growth continues to lead all G7 countries. But with the rapid modernization of the workplace and new technology, people across Ontario are feeling less secure. We have heard from many people that they are no longer able to count on full-time, secure work to provide for themselves and their families. Many people work multiple jobs, on contract or in unstable positions with unreliable hours or pay.

What is clear to me, and to our government, after reading the report is that responsible change can ensure that every hard-working person in our province has the chance to reach their full potential. Fairness and decency must continue to be the defining values of our workplaces. No person in Ontario should ever feel like they can't get ahead.

Our government has reviewed the recommendations, and will be announcing our formal response

within the next week. Action is needed in order to ensure the benefits of our strong economy are shared by every Ontario family. Our government is committed to making the important changes necessary to make a meaningful difference in people's lives.

The people of Ontario have worked hard to build a province where workers and their families have the opportunity to prosper alongside business, and our actions will help to ensure a fairer future for everyone in our province."

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#### **Also today:**

Premier Kathleen Wynne was at the NEOKids Wing at Health Sciences North in Sudbury today to discuss how Ontario's new OHIP+: Children and Youth Pharmacare Program will help children and youth and make life more affordable for families in Northern Ontario. As part of the 2017 Budget, Ontario is making prescription medications free for everyone with OHIP coverage 24 years of age and younger, regardless of family income. Coverage will be automatic, with no upfront costs. Beginning in January 1, 2018, the program will provide free prescription medications for more than four million children and young people, helping families who may not have access to comprehensive drug benefit plans. Beyond the most common prescriptions, OHIP+ will give children and young people access to more than 4,400 drugs reimbursed under the Ontario Drug Benefit Program, including medications funded through the Exceptional Access Program, at no cost. Medications that will be covered include asthma inhalers, antibiotics, drugs to treat depression, anxiety and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and oral contraceptives. Making prescription medications more affordable for young people and families is part of our plan to create jobs, grow our economy and help people in their everyday lives.

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Ontario is celebrating the 50th anniversary of GO Transit and looking to the future as it transforms the network into a true regional rapid transit system. Steven Del Duca, Minister of Transportation, was at the Toronto Railway Museum today to mark the anniversary by opening the museum's newest exhibit—a fully restored original GO train coach—and highlighting the new investments that are underway. GO Transit began operating on May 23, 1967, as a 14-stop commuter rail line from Hamilton to Pickering. Today, GO Transit accommodates about 70 million trips per year on seven rail lines, connecting to 15 GO bus terminals and 17 municipal transit systems across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area. Moving forward, Ontario is undertaking the largest commuter rail project in Canada to bring even more GO rail service across the region. Through GO Regional Express Rail, more two-way, all-day service will come to

large parts of the GO rail network, with much of the network electrified and service extended to Niagara Falls and Bowmanville. This will provide significantly more travel choice by increasing the number of weekly trips across the network from about 1,500 to nearly 6,000 by 2025. Building public transit to manage congestion, connect communities, and give people more travel options is part of our plan to create jobs, grow the economy and help people in their everyday lives.

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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, **making everyday life more affordable by reducing electricity costs** by 25 per cent on average through our proposed Fair Hydro Plan, and **taking action to make housing more affordable** for homebuyers and renters through our Fair Housing Plan.