

QP BRIEFING

March 3, 2017

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ARTICLES

1). *SOCIALLY CONSERVATIVE PARENTS' GROUP SETS OUT ON 17-CITY TOUR AGAINST GENDER IDENTITY BILL*

By: Jessica Smith Cross

A socially conservative parents' group has embarked on a 17-city tour of Ontario, rallying support against the two bills that deal with gender identity rights for children.

Parents As First Educators (PAFE) will hold an information-action meeting in Scarborough Friday night, and has already held meetings in Ottawa, Etobicoke and Mississauga, said president Tanya Granic Allen, (pictured above, at a rally outside of Queen's Park).

PAFE played a role in the Progressive Conservative sex-ed letter drama that unfolded during the Scarborough-Rouge River byelection last year. PC Leader Patrick Brown's former chief of staff had negotiated with the group for its support, including giving Allen a copy of the anti-sex-ed letter that Brown later recanted.

Sex-ed is on the agenda Friday night, specifically: "How to continue exposing Kathleen Wynne and her S/x-Ed Agenda, and Patrick Brown's support for it."

But the group is also focusing on two new pieces of legislation — Ontario Bill 89, which overhauls the province's child protection legislation, and the federal Bill C-16, the bill that adds gender identity and expression as to the federal human rights and hate crime laws.

Granic Allen said she has general concerns with Bill 89 about the government interfering too much in families' lives, specifically around the addition of language concerning children's rights being taken into account in the best interest of the child. The bill uses the Human Rights Code language, about the "child's race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, family diversity, disability, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression."

"What Bill 89 does do is push gender ideology into the family home, and most families in Ontario are not okay with the government doing that," she said. "I think families, where they may have a five-year-old child present or identify, or say they may feel like a girl or a boy today, or vice-versa, and if a family would not be supportive of that child transitioning, would that now be considered a crime?"

The answer to that is no — nothing in the bill establishes any new crime. Children and Youth Services Minister Michael Coteau has previously reassured conservative Christian groups that raised similar concerns that the grounds for the apprehension or removal of a child from a home isn't changed by the bill and remain abuse and neglect.

However, he said, by way of example, that he would consider it abuse for LGBT teens to be told their identity is wrong and they should change. "I would consider that a form of abuse, when a child identifies one way and a caregiver is saying, no, you need to do this differently," he said.

Overall, Granic Allen she is concerned about how the law shifts in focus from parental rights, more toward the child's human rights. That is a specific intention behind the bill, referred to as Katelynn's principle, to place the child's rights and wishes at the centre of every decision about their care. It's named after Katelynn Sampson, who was abused and died at age 7. Where the child protection used to consider the religion of the family in placement decisions, the new legislation would consider the child's "creed."

"It's a diminishing of the parental role," she said.

Foster parents who love what they do — but don't support the idea that a child's gender identity could be different from biological sex — are worried they won't be able to foster any more, she said.

Granic Allen has similar concerns about C-16, and cited the views of controversial philosophy professor Jordan Peterson on the issue.

It should be noted that C-16 doesn't criminalize any form of parenting either, short of "advocating genocide" and "the public incitement hatred" concerning gender identity or expression.

PAFE has teamed up with the Stop the New Sex-Ed Agenda Party in running candidates in recent byelections. The party intends to run a candidate in the Sault Ste. Marie byelection, but doesn't have one yet, Granic Allen said.

Bill 89 is scheduled for the continuation of second-reading debate Monday. So far, all three political parties have said they broadly support the bill and its goals, including Katelynn's principle.

However, PC Children and Youth Critic Gila Martow said in debate Wednesday that communities who have these concerns should have them addressed by the government.

"The bill also attempts to focus on the importance of a child's or youth's identity—for example, culture, race, sexual orientation, gender expression, etc.—in how and what services are provided. Many community organizations are raising concerns about what this entails exactly," Martow said. "I am concerned myself that this Liberal government hasn't done enough to address those communities' concerns. I would like to see a lot of consultation."

2). GOVERNMENT RECRUITS TECH-SAVVY ONTARIANS TO HELP BUILD DIGITAL TOOLS AT WEEKEND HACKATHON

By: Sabrina Nanji

The provincial government is seeking help from some of the most tech-savvy Ontarians to hack through digital infrastructure challenges at a so-called hackathon in Toronto on National Open Data Day on Saturday.

Ontario is one of the sponsors for CodeAcross, a coding and design event presented by Civic Tech Toronto, and is asking top digital minds to work on solutions to “civic tech challenges” posed by the government.

For instance, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care posed a challenge to “create an app/tool that allows Ontarians to access their immunization and drug records.”

That information would be useful for a family that’s just moved to a city and need to provide their new doctor with a child’s immunization history, or if someone winds up in an emergency room and is asked what medication they’re on.

“For many patients, these questions are difficult to answer accurately and comprehensively,” the ministry’s challenge notes.

Bonus points go to coders who come up with ways to allow users to print a hard copy of those records, and to investigate how the information may be linked to the iPhone health app’s medical identification feature.

Liberal MPP Yvan Baker, the parliamentary assistant to Deb Matthews, the Minister Responsible for Digital Government, is co-hosting the event on the government’s behalf.

He said Friday there is an added value for the province to open up design challenges to the “brightest young minds” in the civic tech community, as opposed to putting out a complicated, traditional request for proposal to a company for specific apps or online tools.

“It’s not just about coming up with a solution to a specific technological challenge, it’s not just about putting out an [request for proposal] to ask a company to design a solution for us,” Baker added.

He said he might even prefer government use the design challenge approach to glean certain information.

“Sometimes we need these folks to come together to help us figure out what the solution might look like before it gets built, so that’s what’s exciting about these design challenges – it doesn’t just build on the technological knowledge of the people who are there, but it builds on their creativity in helping us to come up with a solution in the first place.”

Baker said hackathon events present a recruiting and networking opportunity for the Digital Government office to scoop up top tech minds.

“There are a lot of people out there who have a tremendous amount of talent and ability and want to contribute, and they’re actually not looking to be paid, they just want to help,” he said.

Meanwhile, the government's search for a Chief Digital Officer continues.

Luke Simcoe, spokesman for Urban+Digital, an organization that bills itself as one that "promotes and enables civic technology and design, civic education, and collaboration between the public, private and not-for-profit sectors," that is also a sponsor of CodeAcross, said the province may get answers to questions it didn't know to ask.

“The challenge system is a way for them to access outside expertise from different places, and perhaps find solutions that they weren't even necessarily aware of,” Simcoe said.

The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development has also posed a challenge for Saturday's event, and has asked coders to design an online tool that would “assist students in deciding career pathways” by improving on the link between government datasets on employment and education.

The ministry said its existing infrastructure is “often difficult to navigate and interpret.”

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services is looking for ways to create a data dashboard linking youth unemployment and crime rates.

Baker is asking for help on another education challenge that would create a hub for students and potential students to access details of post-secondary programs. including tuition, admission requirements, the amount of government financial aid available and student satisfaction.

Baker has a private members' bill, introduced in 2015, that's now at committee which would allow that information to be published in a centralized location online.

3). WHO'S LOBBYING FOR WHOM

By: Jessica Smith Cross

New, renewed and amended registrations

Lanny Cardow of Navigator Limited on behalf of Windstream Energy LLC
Kyle Larkin of Impact Public Affairs on behalf of Direct Sellers Association of Canada
Jackie Choquette of Hill+Knowlton Strategies on behalf of Bombardier Inc.
Omar Khan of Hill+Knowlton Strategies on behalf of Bombardier Inc.
Andrew Steele of StrategyCorp Inc. on behalf of Union Gas - An Enbridge Company
Noah Niznick of Public Affairs Advisors on behalf of Xplornet Communications Inc.
Noah Niznick of Public Affairs Advisors on behalf of RI Canada
Noah Niznick of Public Affairs Advisors on behalf of Goldcorp Inc
Vanessa Wallace of Impact Public Affairs on behalf of Prompt Payment Ontario
Rob Nicol of StrategyCorp Inc. on behalf of Muslim Association of Canada
Brian Teefy of StrategyCorp Inc. on behalf of Union Gas - An Enbridge Company
Abid Malik of Santis Health Inc. on behalf of Information Technology Association of Canada
Jasmine Igniski of Drysdale Forstner Hamilton Public Affairs Ltd. on behalf of Glencore - Sudbury Integrated Nickel Operations
Jill Wilson of Global Public Affairs Inc. on behalf of Design Exchange (DX)
Paul Di Ianni of Edelman Canada on behalf of Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs (OASIS)
Kevin Gaudet of Tactix Government Relations and Public Affairs Inc. on behalf of Power Workers' Union
Scott Munnoch of Temple Scott Associates Inc. on behalf of Salesforce.com
Ryan Singh of Temple Scott Associates Inc. on behalf of Mastercard Canada
Ryan Singh of Temple Scott Associates Inc. on behalf of Salesforce.com
Rudy Barell of Barell Government Consulting on behalf of DANI Developing and Nurturing Independence
Rudy Barell of Barell Government Consulting on behalf of Wittmann Canada Inc.
Ramiro Mora of CWell Consulting on behalf of Bruce Power Inc.
Mark Rodger of Borden Ladner Gervais LLP on behalf of Corporations of the Municipalities of Kincardine, Arran-Elderslie and Township of Huron-Kinloss
Mike Semansky of StrategyCorp Inc. on behalf of Canadian Consumer Finance Association
Kelly Baker of StrategyCorp Inc. on behalf of McKesson Canada
Devan Sommerville of Counsel Public Affairs Inc. on behalf of Labourers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) Local 183
Devan Sommerville of Counsel Public Affairs Inc. on behalf of Orfus Realty
Devan Sommerville of Counsel Public Affairs Inc. on behalf of Parkbridge Lifestyle Communities Inc.
Dafna Strauss of One Degree Government Relations on behalf of Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve
Grant Gonzales of Counsel Public Affairs Inc. on behalf of Labourers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) Local 183
Colin MacDonald of Navigator Ltd. on behalf of Fidelity Investments Canada
Christina Marciano of Sussex Strategy Group on behalf of Brooks Road Environmental
Christina Marciano of Sussex Strategy Group on behalf of Electronic Product Stewardship of Canada
Christina Marciano of Sussex Strategy Group on behalf of StormFisher Environmental Ltd.
John Perenack of StrategyCorp Inc. on behalf of Ontario Convenience Stores Association

Greg Wilkinson of Earnscliffe Ontario Inc. on behalf of NOVA Chemicals Corporation
 Greg Wilkinson of Earnscliffe Ontario Inc. on behalf of Chemical Industry Association of Canada
 John Armstrong of Armstrong Communications Inc. on behalf of Helderleigh Holdings
 Robyn Gray of Sussex Strategy Group on behalf of BlueSource Canada
 Sarah Simmons of Sussex Strategy Group on behalf of Brookfield Asset Management Inc.
 Sarah Simmons of Sussex Strategy Group on behalf of German Solar Corporation
 Sarah Simmons of Sussex Strategy Group on behalf of Oracle America, Inc. (Formally Opower)
 Sarah Simmons of Sussex Strategy Group on behalf of Alectra Inc. (Formally PowerStream Inc.)
 Sarah Simmons of Sussex Strategy Group on behalf of Canadian Solar (USA) Inc.
 Sarah Simmons of Sussex Strategy Group on behalf of CLEAResult
 Sarah Simmons of Sussex Strategy Group on behalf of S2E Technologies Inc.
 Sarah Simmons of Sussex Strategy Group on behalf of Spark Power Corporation
 Troy Ross of TRM Public Affairs on behalf of Canadian Online Gaming Advocacy
 Troy Ross of TRM Public Affairs on behalf of Innova Gaming Group
 Marc Kealey of Kealey & Associates Inc. on behalf of Scientific Games International Inc.
 Laura Greer of Hill+Knowlton Strategies on behalf of Gilead Sciences
 Bob Lopinski of Counsel Public Affairs Inc. on behalf of Ontario Charitable Gaming Association
 Bob Lopinski of Counsel Public Affairs Inc. on behalf of Labourers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) Local 183
 Bob Lopinski of Counsel Public Affairs Inc. on behalf of Markinch Consulting Inc.
 Nicole Foster of Global Public Affairs Inc. on behalf of Design Exchange (DX)
 Francesca Grosso of Grosso McCarthy Inc. on behalf of Populus Global Solutions
 Jeffrey Bangs of Pathway Group Inc. on behalf of Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors Council/COHV
 Peter Curtis of Pathway Group Inc. on behalf of Loraxian
 Philip Dewan of Counsel Public Affairs Inc. on behalf of Labourers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) Local 183
 Philip Dewan of Counsel Public Affairs Inc. on behalf of Parkbridge Lifestyle Communities Inc.
 Chris Benedetti of Sussex Strategy Group on behalf of Oracle Opower
 Chris Benedetti of Sussex Strategy Group on behalf of Electronic Product Stewardship of Canada
 Chris Benedetti of Sussex Strategy Group on behalf of Alectra Utilities Corporation
 Chris Benedetti of Sussex Strategy Group on behalf of Brooks Road Environmental
 Chris Benedetti of Sussex Strategy Group on behalf of Electricity Distributors Association
 Peter Landry of Enterprise Canada on behalf of Canadian Steel Producers Association
 Peter Landry of Enterprise Canada on behalf of Christian Medical and Dental Society of Canada
 Peter Landry of Enterprise Canada on behalf of The Archdiocese of Toronto
 Barry Campbell of Campbell Strategies on behalf of EnerCare Inc. (formerly registered on behalf of Stratacon Inc.)
 Howard Brown of Brown & Cohen Communications & Public Affairs Inc. on behalf of Youth Employment Services - YES
 John Matheson of StrategyCorp Inc. on behalf of Muslim Association of Canada
 John Duffy of StrategyCorp Inc. on behalf of Canadian Consumer Finance Association
 Leslie Noble of StrategyCorp Inc. on behalf of Union Gas - An Enbridge Company
 Andrea Belanger of ABA Inc. on behalf of Vision Council of Canada
 Douglas Jure of Douglas Jure & Associates Inc. on behalf of FCA Canada Inc. (formerly Chrysler Canada Inc.)
 Patrick Auriol on behalf of Ontario Association of Certified Home Inspectors
 Leonard Inkster on behalf of Ontario Association of Certified Home Inspectors
 Justine Taylor on behalf of Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers

Richard Seguin on behalf of Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers
George Gilvesy on behalf of Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers
Jennifer Saunders-Finlay on behalf of FirstOntario Credit Union
Kelly McGiffin on behalf of FirstOntario Credit Union
Kelly Harris on behalf of FirstOntario Credit Union
Paul Taylor on behalf of Mortgage Professionals Canada
Amanda Meek on behalf of Eye Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
Dr. Kylene McReelis, MD, FRCSC on behalf of Eye Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
Dr. Nav Nijhawan, MD, FRCSC on behalf of Eye Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
Dr. Robert Adam, MD, FRCSC on behalf of Eye Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
Dr. Jordan Cheskes, MD, FRCSC on behalf of Eye Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
Dr. Tim Hillson, MD, FRCSC on behalf of Eye Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
Anne Bell on behalf of Ontario Nature
Julee Boan on behalf of Ontario Nature
Caroline Schultz on behalf of Ontario Nature
Joshua Wise on behalf of Ontario Nature
John Cappelletti on behalf of CAAT Pension Plan
Evan Howard on behalf of CAAT Pension Plan
Nancy Harvey on behalf of Ontario Athletic Therapist Association
Drew Laskoski on behalf of Ontario Athletic Therapist Association
James Taggart on behalf of Electro-Federation Canada
Mary McIninch on behalf of Association of Canadian Search, Employment and Staffing Services
Dara Laxer on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Dr. Gregory Athaide on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Dr. Lesley Barron on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Dr. Tatiana Jevremovic on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Laurel Brazill on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Dr. Christopher Jyu on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Dr. Atul Kapur on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Dr. Jeff Kolbasnik on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Dr. Rachel Forman on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Kari Cuss on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Katherine Patterson on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Barbara LeBlanc on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Dr. Adam Steacie on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Dr. Jim Stewart on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Jennifer Gold on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Jessica Katul on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Matt McNama on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Voytek Roszuk on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Dr. Stephen Chris on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Dr. Virginia Walley on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Catherine Dowdall on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Derek Vanstone on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Dr. Michael Toth on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Dr. Robert Swenson on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Dr. Stephen Kosar on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Dr. Gail Beck on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Susan Bjerno on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
James H. Simpson on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Peter Brown on behalf of Ontario Medical Association

Angela Jonsson on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Dr. Albert Ng on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Dr. David Esser on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Leianne Musselman on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Tim Lenartowych on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Adam Farber on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Dr. Christopher Cressey on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Dr. Laurence Colman on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Dr. Richard Tytus on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Maggie Keresteci on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Robert L. Lee on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Ada Maxwell-Alleyne on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Dr. Hirotaka Yamashiro on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Dr. Lee Donohue on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Tom Magyarody on behalf of Ontario Medical Association
Michael Perley on behalf of Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco
Wally Easton on behalf of Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association
Dan Duszczyszyn on behalf of Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association
Nick Milanetti on behalf of Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association
Sharon Duffy on behalf of Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association
Connie Araujo-De Melo on behalf of Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association
Brian O'Sullivan on behalf of Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association
Mike McPhee on behalf of Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association
Stephen Andrews on behalf of Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association
Malcolm Chivers on behalf of Canadian Bankers Association
Marina Mandal on behalf of Canadian Bankers Association
Sandy Stephens on behalf of Canadian Bankers Association
Darren Hannah on behalf of Canadian Bankers Association
Naina Ralhan on behalf of Canadian Bankers Association
Valerie Atkinson on behalf of Canadian Bankers Association
Terry Campbell

4). PREMIER MAKES COURTESY CALL, ELECTRICITY CUSTOMER SLAMS WYNNE'S 'REALLY BAD ADVISERS'

By: Geoff Zochodne

With the eyes of cameramen and reporters upon her, Premier Kathleen Wynne got an earful from an electricity customer Friday morning.

Wynne had been calling up people who had written her to voice their issues with increasing hydro costs, giving the Premier a chance to explain the 17 per cent in new electricity savings that her government announced the day before. Reporters were invited to listen to three conversations between Wynne and her constituents.

"I just wanted you to know that we were responding," Wynne told one person.

The person on the other end of that call, Anita of Sturgeon Falls, forced the Premier to field questions about the Hydro One CEO's salary (\$4 billion is "the outer limit of what he would make," the Premier reassured her) and the wisdom of spreading out hydro costs for so long ("The analogy to a mortgage is exactly right," Wynne said, adding that "it's a more fair way of paying off those costs").

The Liberals' new plan involves transferring some electricity assistance programs from hydro bills to tax bills, while also reducing the amount of global adjustment charge customers pay. Having taxpayers pick up the tab for the assistance programs will cost approximately \$2.5 billion over three years, and reducing the global adjustment charge will force customers to pay an estimated \$25 billion in interest payments over the next 30 years, the government predicts.

Anita also asked questions about Ontario's time-of-use pricing, calling the peak price period a "farce," and saying the province should have just one rate. Anita said it should be a fixed fee, which is actually what the NDP have proposed. Wynne said Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault would be looking at time-of-use in the future.

Anita continued, asking Wynne about Ontario's selling of electricity to the United States. "Well, they pay us too," Wynne said.

But Anita also noted that Wynne wasn't the only one contributing to the province's plan. "Some of those are really bad advisers," she said.

QP Briefing took a Persicope video of the encounter:

The two other conversations reporters sat in on went much more smoothly, with one Hamilton reverend praising the province's embrace of small-scale solar power.

PC Leader Patrick Brown, meanwhile, also had an awkward conversation of his own Friday morning, on Newstalk 1010. One pundit said it "sounded like you got him out of the shower."

5). *THE FUNDING PORTAL - WEEK OF FEBRUARY 20*

By: Sabrina Nanji

Who got funding from the government this week?

Funding for the week of Feb. 20, 2017 under Canadian federal and provincial grants and business incentive programs reached \$366.2 million, up from \$191.2 million during the previous week.

Top Sector. Mining & Natural Resources is the top sector this week, attracting \$150 million, 41 per cent of total incentives.

Top Region. B.C. is the top province this week, securing \$261.1 million, accounting for 71 per cent of total national disbursements this week.

Top Recipients in Ontario.

- The Canadian Canoe Museum receives \$1.41 million from Canadian Heritage to fund architectural and engineering plans required for the construction of a new museum facility in Peterborough.
- The Pic Mobert First Nation receives \$283.5k from the Aboriginal Economic Development Fund to do major renovations on a day care.
- The 2017 Ontario 55+ Winter Games receives \$235k from the Games Ontario Program.

6). *SEEN: ONTARIO'S NEW 'GREEN BANK' ESTABLISHED*

By: Geoff Zochodne

More details about the Ontario government's environmentally friendly financial institution have come to light, outlining how the "green bank" will be run.

A Feb. 15 regulation establishes the bank as a Crown agency with between three and 12 people sitting on its board of directors, to be appointed by the government. A Feb. 15 order-in-council shows the chair of the board will be paid a \$500 per diem, the vice-chair \$250 and the other directors \$200.

No directors have been named yet. The board will also appoint a chief executive officer to run the bank and its employees.

According to the regulation, the bank, christened the Ontario Climate Change Solutions Deployment Corp., will "stimulate the development of industry, trades and business undertakings in Ontario that further the deployment in Ontario of commercially available technology that reduces greenhouse gas emissions" from homes and manufacturing plants.

The regulation says it will do so by creating programs that provide information, services, "incentives," and financing. Those programs could be used to encourage the construction of low-carbon buildings or retrofitting old ones to be more energy efficient, or leverage private-sector investment in GHG-reducing technology.

The bank is not allowed to research or develop new technologies itself, and can't offer incentives or financing to do that research and development. The environment minister is also able to issue orders to the financial institution that the corporation must follow.

The bank will be funded by Ontario's cap-and-trade system, which started in January and is being counted on to provide about \$1.9 billion in proceeds annually. It is based off of similar institutions in Vermont and New York states, which are also funded with cap-and-trade proceeds.

The regulation says the revenues and investments of the bank won't show up in the province's bottom line. Ontario's auditor general will be permitted to audit the green bank's dealings.

*7). SEEN: LIBERALS' OMNIBUS BILL – MINUS WINTER HYDRO DISCONNECTIONS –
PASSES THIRD READING*

By: Geoff Zochodne

The Liberal government's omnibus red-tape bill passed third reading Thursday, albeit minus a section that would have allowed for the Ontario Energy Board to stop utilities from cutting off their customers in the winter.

Bill 27 passed on a 76-14 vote Thursday, with the Liberals and PCs voting for and the NDP against.

After some partisan skirmishing, the government and the opposition parties passed a standalone piece of legislation last week aimed at ending winter disconnections. Prior to that, though, the Liberals had time-allocated Bill 27, the Burden Reduction Act, which had a passage that would have had the same effect.

Even after passing the standalone bill to end winter disconnections, the Liberals kept Bill 27 on the fast track. During committee meetings, the disconnection section was deleted.

Bill 27 still amends a number of pieces of legislation for the purpose of cutting red tape. The NDP had been particularly leery section of Bill 27 that allows for the selling of land at Ontario Place.