

TEMPLATE MPP REMARKS

Bill 148

THE FAIR WORKPLACES, BETTER JOBS ACT, 2017

(Words: 865)

Over the past three years, our government has been listening to everyday Ontarians. We listened to their concerns, but also their hopes for a better life within today's workforce.

And while the economy is doing well – our unemployment rate is the lowest it's been in more than a decade, manufacturing is up and we're leading the G-7 in growth – not everyone is seeing the benefits.

What we heard, here in (INSERT RIDING) and right across Ontario, is that people are feeling anxious about their jobs; they're feeling nervous about their future and about their children's futures.

Many people are struggling to support their families on part-time, temporary or minimum-wage work.

People are raising families on minimum wage, and too many Ontarians are still living in poverty, despite working full time.

People are worried about falling behind, even as they are working so very hard to get ahead.

In this uncertain time, government has a responsibility to protect its people ...

We have a responsibility to be a force for change and workers in Ontario have the right to strong protections.

Fairness and decency must continue to be the defining values of our workplaces.

That's why we introduced Bill 148 – the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act.

I'm happy to announce today that the bill has received Royal Assent, and our government's plan to create opportunity, security and fairness for all workers is now law in the province of Ontario. (Will receive Royal Assent on November 27th)

(Pause)

Let me go over some of the progressive initiatives in Bill 148 that I'm most proud of.

We will raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2019, helping millions of people across our province.

We will make sure that part-time and temporary help agency workers receive equal pay for doing the same work as full-time employees.

We will make scheduling fairer and more flexible.

We are giving all employees across the province up to 10 personal emergency leave days a year, including two paid days, so they can take the time they need when they – or one of their children – become ill, or if a family member passes away.

Minimum vacation entitlement will be increased to three weeks of paid vacation a year after five years.

We're giving people affected by domestic and sexual violence 17 weeks of job-protected leave, including five paid days.

And our plan will increase enforcement so workers' rights are protected. This will also level the playing field so businesses who follow the rules are not at a competitive disadvantage to those who don't.

We have the ability to do this – to support families and build opportunity for people in (INSERT RIDING) – because we balanced our Budget this year.

And it's allowing us to do many other things as part of our broader plan to build a better, fairer Ontario.

Things like free tuition, expanded childcare and free prescription drugs for anyone under 25, as well as a Basic Income Pilot, our Fair Hydro Plan and our Fair Housing Plan.

Creating Fair Workplaces and Better Jobs is a critical part of our work to build an Ontario where greater opportunity and greater security is available for everyone.

Unfortunately, not all the parties are standing up for workers with us. The Progressive Conservatives voted against Bill 148.

The Leader of the Opposition would rather we not raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour; he doesn't believe that all workers should get paid sick days; and he doesn't believe in providing leave for victims of domestic and sexual violence.

Let me be clear that their approach would mean more people in (INSERT RIDING) living in poverty, and more of our neighbours struggling to put food on the table and shoes on the feet of their children. It would also stagnate the economy for years to come.

OUR plan is a path forward that will protect workers in a way that will also support business.

Greater equality is necessary for a strong economy. Basic economics proves that putting more money in the hands of hard-working Ontarians will help businesses grow and prosper.

By creating more customers, we're creating more opportunities. By creating more equitable workplaces, we're making Ontario an even more attractive place to live, work and do business.

The cost of doing nothing is simply too high – too high for workers and too high for the economy.

(PAUSE)

The values that form the foundation of Bill 148 are the values that define us as Ontarians.

We need to create the kinds of opportunities that will allow young people in (INSERT RIDING) to feel confident about their future, and for our older workers to feel respected and protected.

These changes are truly historic. Bill 148 is landmark legislation that will give unprecedented protections to millions of workers.

Bill 148 recognizes their contributions to our province and to our economy, and gives workers what they rightfully deserve.

Decent work and a good job should be the right of every Ontario worker.

In a changing world where work is not the same as it used to be, we need to create a fair and better balance.

The Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act will do that for workers, for employers, for Ontario, and for (INSERT RIDING).

Thank you.