

Today's News - Wednesday, October 18, 2017

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Date: Wed, 18 Oct 2017 13:07:23 -0400

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This morning in Toronto, Minister Duguid, Minister Moridi and Minister Matthews announced that Ontario is increasing support for students in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines, including artificial intelligence. The Ministers made the announcement ahead of a speech to the Canadian Club by Ed Clark, Premier Wynne's business advisor, where he laid out Ontario's approach to supporting bids for Amazon's new headquarters. The government will:

- Continue to build a highly skilled workforce and support job creation and economic growth
- Increase the number of postsecondary students graduating in the STEM disciplines by 25 per cent over the next five years, from 40,000 to 50,000 per year. This will position Ontario as the number one producer of postsecondary STEM graduates per capita in North America

Ontario will also partner with the Vector Institute to accelerate growth in the number of professional applied masters' graduates in artificial intelligence. The goal is to graduate 1,000 applied masters students in AI-related fields per year, within five years.

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Also Today:

- Bill 148, the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, 2017 passed second reading after debate in the Ontario Legislature. The bill will create more opportunity and security for workers by:
 - Raising Ontario's general minimum wage to \$14 per hour on January 1, 2018, and then to \$15 on January 1, 2019, followed by annual increases at the rate of inflation
 - Mandating equal pay for part-time, temporary, casual and seasonal employees doing the same job as full-time employees; and equal pay for temporary help agency employees doing the same job as permanent employees at the agencies' client companies
 - Expanding personal emergency leave to 10 days with an across-the-board minimum of at least two paid days per year for all workers
 - Providing up to 17 weeks off without the fear of losing their job when a worker or their child has experienced or is threatened with domestic or sexual violence
 - Bringing Ontario's vacation time in line with the national average by ensuring at least three weeks' vacation after five years with a company
 - Making employee scheduling fairer, including requiring employees to be paid for three hours of work if their shift is cancelled within 48 hours of its scheduled start time.

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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.