

NEW BILLS INTRODUCED

BILL 255, SICKLE CELL DISEASE AWARENESS DAY AND THALASSEMIA AWARENESS DAY ACT

PC MPPs Rudy Cuzzetto (Mississauga—Lakeshore) and Andrea Khanjin (Barrie—Innisfil) co-sponsored this private member's bill that would proclaim June 19 in each year as Sickle Cell Disease Awareness Day and May 8 in each year as Thalassemia Awareness Day. The bill quickly passed 1st and 2nd Reading and was referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

BILL 256, AWENEN NIIN ACT (WHO AM I) RESPECTING IDENTITY DOCUMENTS

NDP MPP Judith Monteith-Farrell (Thunder Bay—Atikokan) introduced this private member's bill that would eliminate fees for registering a birth, adding to or changing a birth registration, having a search made for the registration of a birth or obtaining a birth certificate. The bill would also strike an advisory committee to make recommendations to end systemic procedural and systemic barriers to obtaining personal identification documents in Ontario.

BILL 257, SUPPORTING BROADBAND AND INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION ACT

The Minister of Infrastructure, Laurie Scott (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock), introduced this government bill that seeks to make it easier for broadband providers to connect their technology to municipal power lines. As well, the bill makes a [very controversial change](#) to the *Planning Act*, retroactively authorizing the government to allow a casino warehouse to be built on a provincially significant wetland near Duffins Creek in Durham Region.

BILLS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

BILL 245, ACCELERATING ACCESS TO JUSTICE ACT

Attorney-General Doug Downey's (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte) government bill passed 2nd Reading and has been referred to the Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly. The bill would allow the Attorney General more control over the appointments of judges. Downey wants the shortlists of eligible candidates increased and he wants to be able to appoint judges to vacancies in a quicker process. Amongst other aspects of this bill, French-language references to "père" and "mère" would be replaced with "parent." The bill would also allow French-language documents to be filed in all of Ontario's courthouses; remove the \$10,000 cap on funds parents can inherit on behalf of their children; dissolve the Public Accountants Council and transfers its functions to the Chartered Professional Accountants of Ontario; authorize current and former Ontario attorney generals to be called to the Ontario Bar without having to meet Law Society licensing requirements; and allow the Office of the Children's Lawyer to release public reports.

BILLS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE (CONTINUED)

BILL 246, SAFER SCHOOL BUSES ACT

PC MPP Mike Harris' (Kitchener—Conestoga) private member's bill passed 2nd Reading and was referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy. Harris' bill would require school buses manufactured on or after January 1, 2005 to be equipped with four overhead amber signal-lights as well as the current four overhead red signal-lights.

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BILLS PASSED

None.

BILLS DEFEATED

BILL 239, STAY HOME IF YOU ARE SICK ACT

Despite a concerted effort by all the opposition parties, NDP MPP Peggy Sattler's (London West) bill was defeated by the PC government. Sattler's bill would have granted employees 10 days of sick leave, seven of which would be paid leave. In addition, Sattler's bill mandated another 14 days of paid leave in the case of declared emergencies or infectious disease emergencies. The PC government continued to insist that federal measures, such as the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), and other provincial government measures were adequate to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic and that Sattler's bill was unnecessary.

IN OTHER NEWS

SUPPORTS FOR BLACK STUDENTS

The Minister of Community and Social Services Minister Todd Smith (Bay of Quinte) [announced \\$6 million](#) over three years to employ education advocates for Black students in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) and Ottawa. The supports of the program include:

- Working with students and families to develop a plan for achieving their goals
- Attending meetings with teachers, guidance counsellors, and school administrators to discuss student progress
- Developing trust-based relationships with participants and helping them build positive relationships with educators, student peers, and community members
- Connecting students and families to resources and supports like community programming, learning opportunities, tutoring and mentorships, job placements and scholarship or leadership opportunities.

PHASE TWO OF VACCINE PLAN RELEASED

The Ontario government announced the [details of the Phase Two](#) of its vaccine rollout. The plan would see [teachers and education workers](#) included in the vaccination plan scheduled to be completed by the end of July, 2021. No further details were announced.

NDP RELEASE MEMO SHOWING COMING CUTS TO EDUCATION FUNDING FOR 2021-22

NDP Education Critic, Marit Stiles (Davenport) released a [Ministry of Education document](#) showing that the government is warning Boards of Education that this current school year's education funding may not be available for the next school year. As well, [Stiles warns](#) that the previously planned education cuts, pre-pandemic, are still on the table.