



## **FORD GOVERNMENT DELIVERS DELAYED 2020 BUDGET**

### **BILL 229, PROTECT, SUPPORT AND RECOVER FROM COVID-19 ACT (BUDGET MEASURES)**

PC Finance Minister Rod Phillips (Ajax) tabled his 2020 COVID-19 delayed budget bill featuring many promises of economic support for Ontarians. Unfortunately, the bill does not promise much for Ontario's education system. The budget projects that K-12 education spending will grow by \$100 million in 2021 and another \$200 million in 2022. K-12 education spending is as follows:

- 2020–2021—\$31.0 Billion
- 2021–2022—\$31.1 Billion
- 2022–2023—\$31.3 Billion

This year's budget is \$500 million less than the previous Liberal government had projected in its last budget in 2018.

The only other financial item K-12 education-related was a continuation of payments to parents to help support education of \$200 or \$250 for a child with special needs. Overall cost is projected at \$380 million.

The budget also introduced measures for teachers and ECEs regarding matters of discipline and dismissal. The bill indicates that teachers and ECEs convicted of sexual abuse and/or child pornography will face a lifetime ban. The government wants this provision to apply retroactively. As well, discipline measures will be introduced for racist comments and behaviours.

For Post-Secondary Education (PSE), funding is as follows:

- 2019–20—\$10.5 billion
- 2020–21—\$10.7 billion
- 2021–22—\$10.9 billion
- 2022–23—\$11.2 billion

In addition, some other highlights include:

- \$466 million over three years in capital grants for PSE
- \$100 million investment for 2020–21 in Employment Ontario for skills training programs for workers
- \$59.5 million in funding over 3 years for micro-credentials
- \$19.5 million in mental health funding for PSE students (but only \$3.25 million is new)

The PCs are expected to pass the budget prior to the legislature's scheduled winter break recess on December 10.

## NEW BILLS INTRODUCED

### **BILL 225, HARVEY AND GURVIR'S LAW (PROVISION OF INFORMATION RESPECTING DOWN SYNDROME)**

NDP MPP and co-deputy leader Sara Singh's (Brampton Centre) private member's bill seeks to amend the *Regulated Health Professions Act*, 1991 to require that the Minister ensure that up-to-date, evidence-based information relating to Down syndrome is made available to members and to the public. The Act is further amended to require that members share this information with expectant parent or parents when they communicate a prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome and that they refrain from recommending any further testing or treatment in relation to the diagnosis of Down syndrome for a 48-hour period unless explicitly requested or unless the member is of the opinion that the performance of the testing or treatment is necessary during the 48-hour period.

### **BILL 226, BROADBAND IS AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE ACT**

NDP MPP and co-deputy leader John Vanthof's (Timiskaming—Cochrane) private member's bill would require the Minister of Infrastructure to develop a Broadband Connectivity Strategy to deliver high-speed internet connectivity to 95 per cent of Ontarians by 2026 and to all Ontarians by 2030. The Minister is required to update the strategy at specified intervals and undertake certain consultations in developing or updating the strategy.

### **BILL 227, PUBLIC HEALTH ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (IN HONOUR OF DR. SHEELA BASRUR)**

In a swipe at the current process of selecting Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH), NDP MPP France G  linas (Nickel Belt) is seeking to make the CMOH an independent officer of the Ontario Legislature and establish a select committee to deal with future public health crises. The current CMOH's, Dr. David Williams, five-year term expires in February, 2021. At present, the CMOH is appointed by the government.

### **BILL 228, KEEPING POLYSTYRENE OUT OF ONTARIO'S LAKES AND RIVERS ACT**

PC MPP Norm Miller's (Parry Sound—Muskoka) private member's bill that would require persons who sell, offer to sell or construct floating docks, floating platforms or buoys to ensure that any expanded or extruded polystyrene in the dock, platform or buoy is fully encapsulated.

### **BILL 229, PROTECT, SUPPORT AND RECOVER FROM COVID-19 ACT (BUDGET MEASURES)**

Please see above lead story.

## BILLS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

### **BILL 164, PROTECTING VULNERABLE PERSONS IN SUPPORTIVE LIVING ACCOMMODATION ACT**

NDP MPP Jeff Burch's (Niagara Centre) bill passed 2nd Reading and was referred to the Standing Committee on General Government. Burch's bill seeks to establish a licensing system for operators of supportive living settings such as nursing homes and youth residences.

### **BILL 172, EDUCATION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT (FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER)**

Liberal MPP Kathleen Wynne's (Don Valley West) bill passed 2nd Reading and was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy. Wynne's bill would require boards of education to develop policies and guidelines with respect to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). As well, teachers' colleges and early childhood education programs would be required to provide training for FASD. custody laws in line with federal law.

## BILLS PASSED

### **BILL 202, SOLDIERS' AID COMMISSION ACT, 2020**

Todd Smith (Bay of Quinte), the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, saw his bill pass the final legislative 3rd Reading. Smith's bill would administer a financial assistance program for eligible veterans and eligible family members of veterans who are resident in Ontario. The bill would also set out rules respecting the appointment of members of the Commission's board of directors, the meetings of the board and annual reporting requirements. Smith's bill now awaits Royal Assent.

## IN OTHER NEWS

### **THE FORD GOVERNMENT'S INCLUSION OF UNIVERSITY DEGREE-GRANTING POWERS TO CANADA CHRISTIAN COLLEGE CONTINUES TO CAUSE CONTROVERSY IN THE LEGISLATURE**

The controversy surrounding the Ford government's inclusion of university degree-granting powers to Canada Christian College continues to occupy much of Question Period in Ontario's Legislature. The three opposition parties continued to hammer away at [Bill 213, Better For People, Smarter For Business Act](#) contending that Canada Christian College's President, Charles McVety, has a proven record of being a homophobe, Islamophobe and a racist. The NDP's Chris Glover's (Spadina—Fort York) raised concerns regarding the academic material taught at McVety's college [saying](#), "The minister this week made inappropriate comparisons between Ontario's proud colleges and universities, and Charles McVety's college. Instead of doing that, he should have done his research before he brought legislation forward to allow Charles McVety to grant science degrees. Here's why: In May 2018, Charles McVety said on video at his college, "People talk about the world being billions and billions of years old, but I've never seen anything more than 6,000 years old. You have a perfect historical record for about 6,000 years and then...stopped." Mr. Speaker, that's not science. Why would the minister let Charles McVety grant science degrees when he believes that humans walked the earth with dinosaurs 6,000 years ago?"

Later, NDP MPP Terence Kernaghan (London North Centre), in reference to reports that Deputy Premier Christine Elliott (Newmarket—Aurora) was troubled by McVety's history, challenged Elliott to speak up in the legislature on the bill. Kernaghan [charged](#), "Back to the Acting Premier: I suspect she's listening, but her silence is deafening. Conservatives talk about their gay friends when it's convenient; now is the time to speak up for your friends, but instead all we hear is silence. When government officials pander to radical, fringe social conservatives, they stoke the fires of hatred. This pre-emptive legislation stokes the fires of hatred. Through you, Speaker, to all government members: Stand up and speak out against McVety's hate. Your choice will define your political career. It will define you as a human being. Again to the Acting Premier: Where do you stand on McVety's platform of hate? Will you finally stand up as a leader?"

Despite the barrage of questions, the Ford government continues to press ahead with the bill. At this point, 2nd Reading debate continues.

**The legislature is recessed for Remembrance Week.  
It will resume the week of November 16, 2020.**