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May 2019

## COCA SCORES ANOTHER WIN; BILL 108 ADDRESSES EXECUTIVE OFFICERS IN CONSTRUCTION

Bill 108 is titled the "More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019". In total it amends 15 statutes. Buried in the Bill is Schedule 13, which if passed, will amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act.

It proposes to give the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board the authority to establish premium rates for partners and executive officers of construction companies who do not perform construction work and who are not exposed to the risks of construction work.

Under the current scenario, construction companies can identify one executive officer who doesn't perform construction work, who is exempt from the compensation system and may have other executive officers who don't perform construction work who are classified as non-exempt executive officers and classified into Rate Group 755 which has a premium rate of around \$0.20.

This was all going to be lost when the new Rate

Framework comes into effect on January 1, 2010.

Save for these proposed amendments, executive officers would have been assessed at the same premium rates as their construction trades workers. These Bill 108 amendments allow the WSIB to recognize executive officers in the new Rate Framework and assess a commensurate premium rate.

We are led to believe that the WSIB already has the policy solution developed, possibly the creation of another construction class in the new Rate Framework for executive officers, and that the premium rate will be commensurate with the risk profile of the class, possibly slightly higher than the current Rate Group 755.

This is another win for COCA which lobbied hard for a solution to Rate Group 755 in the new Rate Framework.

## WSIB REVIEW UNDERWAY

The long-awaited review of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB), announced in the Ontario government's Fall Economic Statement on November 15, 2018, is finally underway.

The names of the special advisors who will lead the review and the scope of the review were recently made public. The special advisors are Linda Regner Dykman who has 25 years of

experience in the commercial insurance industry and Sean Speer, a Senior Fellow at the Munk School of Public Policy. For more information on the Advisors click on

<https://news.ontario.ca/mol/en/2019/05/special-advisors-appointed-to-conduct-review-of-the-workplace-safety-and-insurance-board.html>

The scope of the review is described in the government's announcement is as follows:

- Financial Oversight: sustainability of the WSIB insurance fund and controls over it
- Administration: effectiveness of the current WSIB governance and executive management structure
- Efficiency: the cost-efficiency and effectiveness of operations, including comparisons to competing jurisdictions and

private sector insurers

It is presumed from the first bullet above that the review will recommend a funding level or a funding corridor for the sustainability of the system. This has been a matter of some debate among stakeholders, a corridor of 95-105% or a corridor of 100-110% being thought by most to be appropriate. The government may have a strong interest in a very high WSIB funding level, suppose like Alberta's system, in the neighbourhood of 140%, and to consolidate the books of the compensation system with those of the Province to improve Ontario's financial position.

This would be an easy way out for the government, achieved on the backs of hard working and risk taking employers who pay into the system without having to raise taxes.

## THE MAKE-UP OF LEGISLATURE ABOUT TO CHANGE

The composition of Ontario's 124 seat legislature currently stands as follows:

PC: 73; NDP: 40; Liberal: 7; Green: 1; Independent: 3 (all former PCs-Jim Wilson, Randy Hillier, Amanda Simard)

It will change in the near future as Liberal MPP Nathalie des Rosiers has decided to return to academic life (she is a former law Dean at the University of Ottawa) and has accepted a position as the next Principal of Massey College. The date of Des Rosiers' resignation as MPP for

Ottawa-Vanier is not known but the current Principal of Massey College, Hugh Segal, is set to retire on June 30th.

Marie France Lalonde will also be leaving the Liberal caucus if she is successful in securing the Liberal nomination in the federal riding of Orleans and wins the seat in the House of Commons in this fall's federal election.

This will leave the Liberals well short of official party status of 12 seats and all the benefits that come with it.

## PREMIER'S POLL NUMBERS COLLAPSING

A recent poll taken by Mainstreet Research shows the popularity of our new government collapsing, with the PCs in third place and with the Premier's favourability rating below that of Kathleen Wynne at the end of her last mandate. Here are some of the highlights of the Mainstreet poll:

- Premier Ford has a net favourability rating of -53.5%
- NDP leader Andrea Horwath's net favourability rating is +20.3%
- Interim Liberal leader John Fraser's net favourability rating is +7.4%
- Green Party leader Mike Schreiner has a net favourability rating of +11.4%
- 65% of decided Liberal voters polled (only 46% of Liberal voters polled were decided Liberal voters) said they would prefer to see John Tory as leader of the Ontario Liberal Party, 5.2% said Sandra Pupatello, 3.3% said Steven Del Duca, 5% said Michael Couteau and 11.1% said Mitzie Hunter
- 39.1% of all respondents said they would vote Liberal if John Tory was the Liberal leader, 29.6 for Pupatello, 27.8% for Del Duca, 28.1 for Couteau and 28% for Hunter

Another recent poll taken by Environics pointed in a similar direction:

- 70% of respondents strongly oppose the

government's proposed funding cuts with another 13% somewhat opposed

- More than half of those who voted PC on June 8, 2018 strongly oppose the government's funding cuts with an additional 18% somewhat opposed

What are the reasons for the PC's decline in popularity? Pundits point to the following reasons:

- The sex education fiasco
- Funding for autism treatment
- Lowering class sizes
- cuts to municipal funding
- Cuts to health unit funding
- Cuts to flood protection
- Cuts to research
- The disproportionate focus on beer pricing and distribution and not on important issues
- Lack of consultation, poor communications and bungled roll-outs

While the only poll that really matters is the poll taken on election day, polling results between elections make for interesting conversation around the water cooler