

January 2023

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## COMMITTEE CONVENES PRE-BUDGET HEARINGS ACROSS THE PROVINCE

The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs has been on the road holding public consultations with respect to the upcoming provincial budget. So far the Committee has heard from Ontarians in

- Kenora on Monday, January 9, 2023
- Red Lake on Tuesday, January 10, 2023
- Windsor on Monday, January 23, 2023.

Going forward, consultations will be held in

- Sudbury on Monday, January 30, 2023
- Sault Ste. Marie on Tuesday, January 31, 2023
- Timmins on Thursday, February 2, 2023
- Ottawa on Monday, February 6, 2023
- Kingston on Tuesday, February 7, 2023
- Barrie on Monday, February 13, 2023
- Toronto on Tuesday, February 14, 2023.

Anyone wishing to appear before the Committee or to make a written submission should click on the following link for details <https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/committees/finance-economic-affairs/parliament-43/notice-hearings/2023-feb-14-notice-hearings-standing-committee-finance-economic-affairs>

COCA will be making a written submission asking the government for:

1. reform of the Construction Act to address the technical and process bug, gaps and glitches that were not apparent when the statute was drafted but have become obvious over the past five years since it passed into law; and
2. meaningful consultation with informed stakeholders as it considers increasing loss of earnings benefits paid to workers who are injured or sick because of workplace causes from 85% of net pre-injury earnings to 90%

## CONFERENCE BOARD INSIGHTS INTO STATS CANADA CPI RELEASE

Here are the highlights and key insights of the Conference Board of Canada's latest Economic Quick Take on Statistics Canada's January 17 Consumer Price Index release:

- In December, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose by 6.3 per cent (y/y). This was lower than the consensus estimate of 6.4 per cent (y/y) and November's 6.8 per cent (y/y) increase.
- Gasoline prices fell by 13.1 per cent (m/m) but were 3.0 per cent higher than a year ago. Year-over-year, food prices increased in stores (+11.0 per cent) and restaurants (+7.7 per cent).
- Core CPI (excluding food and energy) was up by 5.3 per cent in December (y/y), lower than the 5.4 per cent increase (y/y) in November. Higher prices in several shelter and food subcategories were key contributors to overall CPI growth.
- On a seasonally adjusted monthly basis, the CPI fell by 0.1 per cent in December (compared to a 0.3 per cent gain in November).
- The average of the Bank of Canada's three core inflation measures fell to 5.6 per cent in December. CPI-median dropped to 5.0 per cent, CPI-common dipped to 6.6 per cent, and CPI-trim inched down to 5.3 per cent.

### Key Insights

The final inflation report of 2022 has landed—and year-over-year price growth remains aloft. Last year, consumer prices in Canada rose by 6.8 per cent—the highest rate of price growth in Canada since 1982. In December, high rent and rising mortgage interest costs kept shelter price growth elevated. Food prices, which continue to feed consumers' inflation expectations, also climbed. There were some positive signs in December's report, including lower month-over-month prices for energy and a modest drop in core inflation. But, on balance, the latest CPI figures remain too high for comfort.

The best laid plans of central banks often go awry. The Bank of Canada implied it could pause its monetary policy tightening cycle after its December interest rate hike. But stubbornly high core CPI and resilient labour market readings over the past month may force the Bank's hand to raise rates again on January 25. If the Bank has shifted to a "data-dependent" rate-raising approach, a quarter-point rate increase later this month seems likely. It takes time for the full inflation-fighting impact of higher rates to kick in, but Bank officials have stressed that they won't take any chances in getting inflation down sooner to avoid greater pain later.

Canadians can expect price growth to meaningfully subside this year. There are no quick and easy solutions for the inflation problem or for assuaging Canadians' concerns about higher prices. But as higher interest rates sap economic activity, year-over-year price growth will ease substantially. It will likely be back within the Bank of Canada's inflation target range by December 2023. Until then, unfortunately, higher prices will inflict further pain on household finances.

## OFFICE OF THE EMPLOYER ADVISER OFFERING FREE WEBINARS ON WSIB TOPICS

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The Office of the Employer Adviser (OEA) is an independent agency of the Government of Ontario, providing free, confidential and expert workers' compensation services to Ontario employers.

For more information please visit the OEA website at <https://www.employeradviser.ca>

The OEA is hosting a series of FREE webinars on various WSIB topics. Join in for these informative sessions by registering below. To register for an event visit: <https://www.employeradviser.ca/webinars/>

### OEA Services - WSIB update

Feb 7, 2023 | Time: 10:00 am ET

This webinar outlines the OEA services available to Ontario employers dealing with workplace safety insurance issues and when to engage those services. Also covered are the recent changes relating to COVID-19 and the WSIB's new rate framework.

### Introduction to Workplace Safety and Insurance

Feb 9, 2023 | Time: 2:00 pm ET

This webinar provides a basic overview of Workplace Safety and Insurance: who is covered, what are accidents, and reporting and other legal obligations. In addition, employer classification, return to work and appeals are addressed.

### Completing The Form 7 An Employer's Guide

Feb 14, 2023 | Time: 10:00 am ET

This webinar walks you through an employer's obligation to complete their 'report of accident' – the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board's (WSIB) Form 7. You will learn what information the WSIB is looking for and best practices for answering the form questions.

### Claims Management Tips

Feb 16, 2023 | Time: 2:00 pm ET

This webinar provides you with helpful practices to better manage your Workplace Safety & Insurance needs – starting from your hiring practices to dealing with an injured worker and their subsequent return to work.

### SIEF and Cost Reduction Tools

Feb 21, 2023 | Time: 10:00 am ET

This webinar explains the tools available to employers to reduce their accident costs and, in some cases, have them removed entirely.

### A Practical Guide to Return to Work for Employers (Non-Construction)

Feb 23, 2023 | Time: 10:00 am ET

This webinar explains the benefits of having a return to work program, your legal obligations under the WSIA, key steps for implementing a return to work program and plan, as well as resolution strategies for disputes in return to work.

### A Practical Guide to Return to Work for Employers (Construction)

Feb 28, 2023 | Time: 2:00 pm ET

This webinar explains the benefits of having a return to work program, your legal obligations under the WSIA, key steps for implementing a return to work program and plan, as well as resolution strategies for disputes in return to work.

### WSIB Appeals

Mar 2, 2023 | Time: 2:00 pm ET

This webinar outlines the appeal process, the different levels of appeal, and how to prepare for either your own, or your worker's appeal.

January 2023

### Section 50 Unlawful Reprisals

Mar 7, 2023 | Time: 10:00 am ET

This webinar explains the process and timelines for responding to a Section 50 unlawful reprisal allegation, and the OEA services available to help employers facing such an allegation.

### Rate Framework

Mar 8, 2023 | Time: 2:00 pm ET

This webinar outlines the new 'Rate Framework' and how your company will be assessed going forward. Learn how these changes will affect your company. This webinar is a general level presentation intended for all employers who have some experience dealing with the WSIB from a premium/assessment perspective.

### Mental Stress

Mar 9, 2023 | Time: 10:00 am ET

This webinar outlines the legislative modifications that have changed the handling of mental stress claims, and how mental stress entitlement, both traumatic and chronic, is determined by the WSIB.

If you have any questions, please contact us OEA at [askoea@ontario.ca](mailto:askoea@ontario.ca)

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## NDP TO MAKE STILES LEADERSHIP OFFICIAL

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Ontario New Democratic Party faithful will gather at a yet to be disclosed location in Toronto at 10:30 am on Saturday, February 4th for an event called "Ontario NDP Leadership Showcase and Announcement". From the title we can assume the event will be full of speeches from NDP leaders past and present and perhaps both federal and provincial and from across the country. The highlight of the event will be the confirmation of Marit Stiles as the Ontario NDP's new leader. The position became available when the former Party leader, Andrea Horwath, resigned to successfully run for Mayor of Hamilton. Stiles was unopposed in her bid.

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## NDP MPP ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

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NDP MPP for the electoral district of Kitchener Centre, Laura Mae Lindo, recently announced that she will be resigning her seat in the Ontario legislature to take a job in the University of Waterloo's philosophy department. Her resignation will take effect in July 2023.

The single mother of three, Lindo cited childcare and her healing journey from the deaths of her husband and other close family members as the primary factors for stepping away from Queen's Park.

Lindo was first elected in the Ontario general election in June 2018 that swept Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals out of office. She defeated one-term Liberal Daiene Vernile in a riding that had been in Liberal hands since 2003 and had never been NDP. She was re-elected handily in June 2022.

Lindo's academic credentials are impressive: BA Philosophy (U of T Scarborough 1998) ; BA African Studies and Philosophy (York 2005); MEd Education (York 2005); PhD Education (York 2011), Certificate in Human Rights (Osgoode hall Law School, York 2015). And she was a strong advocate for the disadvantaged.

## HAMILTON CENTRE BYELECTION STARTING TO TAKE SHAPE

After leading the Ontario NDP through four general elections (2011, 2014, 2018, 2022) Andrea Horwath stepped down as her Party's captain and announced her resignation as the MPP for Hamilton Centre in her concession speech on June 2nd after being re-elected in her home riding of Hamilton Centre for the seventh time. The 2022 general election was a disappointment for the NDP as they won seven fewer seats than they had four years earlier and their voter share dropped by almost 10%. Premier Ford has six months from the official date of Horwath's resignation to call a by election in Hamilton Centre.

Deirdre Pike will carry the Liberal banner into the yet-to-be -scheduled by election. Pike is a community activist who was long-time NDP backer before running for the Grits in 2018. Her LinkedIn page states that she is self-employed as the Principal Facilitator in her business called Queer Positive Power; a part-time Justice and Outreach Program Consultant with the Diocese of Niagara and a Columnist with the Hamilton Spectator.

We have previously written about the NDP candidate, Sara Jama, who co-founded the Disability Justice Network of Ontario, was a Senior Program Co-ordinator for the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion and also co-founded Hamilton Escarpment Support Network but has had run-ins with the law as a result of her protesting activities.

Lucia Iannantuono, will be the standard bearer for the Greens in the race. He moved to Hamilton from Muskoka to study engineering at McMaster (BEng 2029) and has remained in the area working more recently as an instrumentation engineer and an electronics specialist.

The Tories have yet to name their candidate.



**Prompt Payment and Adjudication rules took effect on Oct. 1, 2019 and apply to all construction projects, with few exceptions. COCA has developed resources to help you know your rights and responsibilities—and keep your business moving.**

Visit [getpaidontime.ca](https://www.getpaidontime.ca) for more information