

Bill 105 Proposes Amendments to OHS and WSIA

Bill 105, Protecting Ontario's Workers and Economic Resilience Act, 2026, was tabled in the Ontario legislature on April 20th. If passed it will amend the following statutes:

- Environmental Assessment Act
- Employment Standards Act
- Labour Relations Act
- Ministry of Health and Longterm Care Act
- Occupational Health and Safety Act
- Ombudsman Act
- Retirement Homes Act, 2010
- Workplace Safety and Insurance Act

It will also enact the Strengthening Talent Agency Regulation Act, 2026.

The following proposed changes might be of greatest interest to COCA members:

Environmental Assessment Act

- The proposed amendments clarify provincial ministries service standards and are designed to cut red tape, streamline and expedite permitting and approvals processes for mining projects, certain sewage systems, water taking and heritage

Employment Standards Act

- Prohibit employers from requiring employees to pay for uniforms
- Give the ministry authority to handle specific types of complaints with an inspection rather than an investigation and refuse complaints from people who are purposefully misusing the complaints process
- Ensure that when an employer owes an employee money and the ministry issues an Order to Pay, that during the collections process, money would go to employees first, before collection and administrative fees to the government.

Labour Relations Act

- shorten the "open period" in the construction industry from two-months to one-month for applications for both the displacement of a union and termination

Bill 105 (continued)

Occupational Health and Safety Act

- Permit the Chief Prevention Officer to collect personal information about workers' exposure to a physical, chemical or biological agent from unverified information voluntarily posted by workers on the worker occupational exposure registry
- Provide the minister of labour immigration training and skills development with authority to recognize inter-jurisdictional health and safety standards
- To recognize the CSA Group national standard for mobile elevated work platform training as the standard for Ontario
- (all jurisdictions have agreed to require training according to the CSA Group standard, effective January 1, 2027)
- Recognize CSA-approved respirators for use in Ontario
- Mandate the use of Type 2 hard hats on construction projects where workers may be exposed to side impact hazard (the ministry would introduce a reimbursement program to help offset initial costs for employers)

Workplace Safety and Insurance Act

- Allows the WSIB in certain circumstances to pay benefits beyond the age of 65
- Prospectively increases loss of earnings benefits from 85% of net pre-injury earnings to 90% which is estimated to increase the cost of new injuries (CNI) component of employers' premium rates by 6% to 8%
- Allows the WSIB to reduce injured workers loss of earnings benefits if the loss of earnings benefits together with other collateral earnings are greater than the worker's net pre-injury earnings
- Prospectively allows the WSIB to review 72-month lock-in claimants financial circumstances to ensure there is no overpayment
- Allows the Board to review payments at any time and also review payments if a material change in circumstances occurs
- Expands mandatory participation in the WSIB's insurance programs to include residential care facilities operated by a private employer and group homes

The full text of Bill 105 can be accessed by clicking on the following link:

<https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-44/session-1/bill-105>

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What Contractors Should Know to Comply With the Buy Ontario Act

Contractors and subcontractors bidding on public sector projects in Ontario must comply with the Buy Ontario Act (Public Sector Procurement), 2025, which fully comes into effect on April 13, 2026. The Act, along with its provincial and municipal directives, mandates that public entities prioritize Ontario-made goods and services, particularly in construction and infrastructure.

Key compliance requirements for contractors under the new framework include:

1. Mandatory Domestic Supply Chain Plans (DSCP)

For all "capital infrastructure procurements" (construction, renovation, repairs, and major materials), contractors must submit a Domestic Supply Chain Plan.

- **Identify Sources:** The plan must identify the source of major goods (structural materials like concrete, steel, lumber, aggregates, HVAC, elevators) and services.
- **Weighted Criteria:** Bids will be evaluated based on the proportion of Ontario-made goods/services, followed by Canadian.
- **10% Advantage:** Bidders with the highest proportion of Ontario-made content may receive a 10% evaluation advantage.
- **Commitment Approach:** Some projects may require a mandatory commitment to meet a specific percentage of Ontario/Canadian content.

2. Definition of "Ontario-Made" Goods and Services

To comply, contractors must ensure their materials and subcontractors meet these definitions:

- **Ontario-Made Good:** Wholly manufactured/originated in Ontario, or at least 51% of total direct production costs incurred in Ontario.
- **Ontario Service:** A service wholly provided by individuals located in Ontario.
- **Ontario Business:** Conducts business on a permanent basis in Ontario and has its headquarters/main office in Ontario OR has at least 250 full-time employees in Ontario.

3. Subcontractor and Supplier Due Diligence

Prime contractors are responsible for ensuring their subcontractors adhere to the same Buy Ontario requirements.

- **Pass-Down Obligations:** Compliance obligations should be built into subcontracts and purchase orders.
- **Substantiate Origins:** Contractors must be prepared to prove the origin of materials and services to the public entity.

Buy Ontario Act (Continued)

4. Restrictions on U.S. Businesses

The new directive incorporates a Procurement Restriction Policy that excludes U.S. businesses from most new public sector procurements.

- A "U.S. business" is one with headquarters in the U.S. and fewer than 250 full-time employees in Canada.
- Exceptions exist for essential, unique services, or if the U.S. bidder commits to 90% of staff being located in Canada.

5. Record Keeping and Audit Compliance

Contractors must maintain detailed records demonstrating compliance with the directives, which are subject to ministerial audits.

Key Dates for Compliance

- April 13, 2026: Most provincial and BPS requirements take effect.
- May 15, 2026: Capital infrastructure requirements for municipalities take effect.
- June 1, 2026: Requirements for local boards and municipal services corporations take effect.

Contractors are advised to review their supply chains, adjust bidding strategies to account for Ontario-sourced materials, and develop contingency plans for instances where local suppliers cannot meet demand.

COCA Releases Updated Prompt Payment & Adjudication Resources



The Council of Ontario Construction Associations (COCA) has announced significant updates to its Prompt Payment and Adjudication resources as major changes to Ontario's Construction Act come into force in early 2026. These updates reflect new provisions introduced through Bill 216, the Building Ontario for You Act (Budget Measures), 2024, and refined by Bill 60, both aimed at strengthening payment certainty and improving dispute resolution in the provincial construction sector.

[Click here to visit COCA's Prompt Payment Page to view the toolkit and download the fact sheets.](#)

Financial Accountability Office Looks Back on Ontario's Labour Market in 2025

Here is the Summary copied directly from the Financial Accountability Office's report "Ontario's Labour Market in 2025" that was published on April 29, 2026:

Summary

This report provides a review of Ontario's labour market performance in 2025. It presents a summary of the overall labour market in the province, and information for demographic groups, industries, occupations, major cities, other provinces and wage growth compared to inflation.

Ontario's labour market continued to moderate in 2025

- The pace of Ontario's job creation continued to slow in 2025, with employment rising by 80,900 (1.0 per cent), down from 140,000 jobs (1.7 per cent) added in 2024 and the slowest pace of job creation since 2015 excluding the pandemic.
- Job creation did not keep pace with the increase in the number of people looking for work, causing Ontario's unemployment rate to increase to 7.7 per cent in 2025, up from 7.0 per cent in 2024 and the highest since 2012 excluding the pandemic.

Most groups of workers saw job gains

- In 2025, core-aged workers (aged 25-54) and youth (aged 15-24) experienced job gains of 1.0 per cent and 2.5 per cent, respectively. Employment among older workers (aged 55 years and over) was little changed, with job losses^[1] for older workers concentrated among men.
- Employment grew across all major job categories except for public sector workers (-0.1 per cent). The slowdown in public sector employment in 2025 followed four consecutive years of strong gains and partly reflected the downsizing of the federal public-sector workforce and lower international student enrolment, which affected employment in the public administration and education sectors.
- Employment in full-time positions (0.6 per cent) grew at a slower pace than part-time positions (2.8 per cent), which is generally characteristic of periods of slow economic growth. Employment growth in temporary positions (7.0 per cent) outpaced that in permanent jobs (0.4 per cent).
- Of the 16 major industries in Ontario, eight saw an increase in employment, with most of the gains in industries that pay below-average wages. Job losses were recorded in industries highly affected by tariffs, including manufacturing (-8,400), agriculture (-6,400) and transportation and warehousing (-3,700).

Job vacancies continued to trend lower in 2025

- Job vacancies declined by 11.1 per cent in 2025, and the overall job vacancy rate^[2] fell from 2.9 per cent in 2024 to 2.6 per cent in 2025.
- Job vacancies declined in all industries in 2025. Of the 16 major industries in Ontario, health care and

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social assistance had the highest number of job vacancies (36,500) for the fourth year in a row and the highest job vacancy rate (4.0 per cent).

Unemployment rate increased in all but one Census Metropolitan Area and in most provinces

- The unemployment rate increased in all Ontario Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) except St. Catharines-Niagara, and employment increased in 12 out of the 15 CMAs in Ontario. Peterborough had the fastest pace of job creation (6.0 per cent) and Guelph experienced the sharpest decline in employment (-5.3 per cent).
- Nine out of 10 provinces experienced job gains in 2025, and the unemployment rate increased in eight provinces. Ontario's employment growth (1.0 per cent) was the third slowest among all provinces. Ontario recorded the third highest unemployment rate (7.7 per cent) and largest increase in the unemployment rate in the country for the second consecutive year.
- Wage growth in Ontario outpaced inflation in 2025 for most groups of workers
- The average hourly wage of Ontarians increased 3.5 per cent to \$37.72 in 2025, faster than the 1.9 per cent annual consumer price index (CPI) inflation rate. Average wage growth was above the annual inflation rate for all major groups of workers, in 12 out of 16 industry groups and for 28 out of 34 occupations.”
- Construction saw a loss of 1,400 or 0.2%

[For the complete report, click here.](#)

Premier Announces Monument for Construction Workers

The National Day of Mourning is observed in Canada on April 28th annually to remember workers killed, injured, or stricken by illness due to workplace tragedies. Ceremonies are held in cities and towns across the country.

About 200 health and safety and construction industry leaders gathered at Queen's Park on the Day of Mourning for a very special and solemn ceremony to honor the memory of those who have died or were injured while at work.

At the ceremony, Premier Ford and Minister Piccini announced that a memorial will be built to memorialize those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice while at work. The monument will be constructed on the east side of Queen's Park Circle near the south west corner of Queen's Park, adjacent to the University of Toronto's C David Naylor Building. The names of all construction workers who have lost their lives on the job will be inscribed on the monument and every year on the National Day of Mourning a new plaque with the names of workers who died due to workplace causes in the previous year will be added.

For the government of Ontario's news release about this very special memorial, its location and concept drawing, click on the following link:

<https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1007373/ontario-building-workers-memorial-at-queens-park>

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Pallas Data Survey Reflects on Premier Ford's Jet Purchase Fiasco

On Friday, April 17th Premier Ford's office confirmed the acquisition of a 2016 Bombardier Challenger 650 at a cost of \$28.9 million. The purpose of the plane was clarified, to transport Premier Ford on his many trips across the vast province of Ontario and into the US more efficiently than commercial flights and would also be used by other senior government officials. A reasonable case could have been made for the purchase and use of the plane but was not and in the face of swift and predictable backlash, two days later it was announced that the government would be selling the plane. The plane was subsequently sold back to Bombardier for the same amount that it had been purchased.

So, what has been the impact on Premier Ford and his government on the corporate jet fiasco? Pallas Data conducted a survey of 1,007 eligible Ontario using interactive voice response (IVR) voters between April 21st and 22nd, 2006 to find out. Here are some of the highlights of their findings:

- When first asked about the purchase of the jet, 65% of respondents strongly opposed the purchase of the aircraft and 14% somewhat opposed; only 18% strongly supported or somewhat supported the purchase; 54% of PC voters opposed it
- However, after Ford's explanation of its purchase was read to respondents, 74% were opposed; opposition among PC voters dropped from 54% to 45%
- Because of the jet purchase, 18% of respondents said they had supported the PCs in the past but will not again and an additional 14% who said they had voted PC in the past but are now less likely to do so
- Among current PC voters, 17% say they either won't vote for the PCs now (3.4%) or are less likely to vote for them now (13.4%)
- If an election was held at the time the poll was taken, among decided and leaning respondents, 37% would vote PC, 32% Liberal, 24% NDP, 6% Green and 2% another party

For the full story, click on the following link:

<https://pallas-data.ca/2026/04/23/pallas-ontario-poll-pc-37-olp-32-ndp-24-green-6-and-fords-jet-has-stung-his-base/>

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What's Going On with the Scarborough Southwest Provincial Byelection

Regular readers of this space may recall that the resignation of the federal Liberal MP for the riding of Scarborough Southwest, a former federal cabinet minister, Bill Blair, started a chain reaction that will continue for several months. On February 2, 2026, Blair resigned his seat in the federal parliament and was subsequently appointed Canadian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom.

Blair's resignation caused the then NDP MPP for Scarborough Southwest, Doly Begum, who at the time also served as deputy leader of the NDP, to rethink her future. Although one of the more progressive members of the provincial NDP caucus, Begum decided to resign her seat in the provincial legislature and throw-in with Canada's new centrist Liberal prime minister, Mark Carney, and carry the banner for the Grits in the federal byelection to succeed Blair. She was successful and now sits on the government benches in the federal parliament.

Begum's resignation created a vacancy in the provincial Scarborough Southwest riding. The writ for the byelection must be issued not later than August 3, 2026 and the byelection held on a Thursday not later than 36 days afterwards.

The riding was created in 1999 and was in Tory hands in the second round of the Mike Harris government. It went Liberal (Lorenzo Berardinetti) from 2003 to 2018 then swung to Doly Begum and the NDP when the Kathleen Wynne government was swept out of power in 2018. The Tories placed a distant second to Begum in 2018, 2022 and 2025.

Today the NDP selected Fatima Shaban to be their standard bearer in the yet-to-be-called provincial byelection in the riding. According to her LinkedIn page, Shaban was a fundraising consultant, founded

an association that focused on finding a legal path to citizenship for undocumented youth living in Canada, earned a BA in criminology, sociolegal studies, political science and history in 2021, and currently works for the Salvation Army.

Believed to be seeking the nomination for the Liberals are the following individuals:

- Nathaniel Erskine-Smith - Liberal MP for Beaches-East York(2015–present) and a contender for the leadership of the provincial party to succeed Bonnie Crombie
- Ahsanul Hafiz, owner of several Domino's Pizza franchises.
- Qadira Jackson, lawyer, Liberal candidate in the snap election in Ontario in 2025
- Mahmuda Nasrin, immigration consultant, a director of the Scarborough Southwest federal Liberal Party riding association
- Sharmina Nasrin, former constituency office worker for Whitby Progressive Conservative MPP Lorne Coe

Potential Tory Candidates include:

- Former TDSB trustee, Toronto City Councillor and PC candidate in the 2023 byelection in Scarborough-Guildwood, Gary Crawford
- Ayesha Sardar, a paralegal who is active in party and is vice president of the Pickering-Brooklin riding association
- PC candidate in Scarborough Southwest in the 2025 Ontario general election Addie Dramola