

NEW BILLS INTRODUCED

BILL 194, FAIRNESS IN PROCUREMENT ACT

A bill to counter American trade protectionism by any state-level American government was introduced by Treasury Board President, MPP Eleanor McMahon (Burlington). McMahon's bill seeks to balance any "Buy American" legislation by granting the Ontario government power to implement responsive regulations against any particular American state.

BILL 195, CORRECTIONAL SERVICES TRANSFORMATION ACT

Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services Marie-France Lalonde's (Ottawa—Orléans) bill, [seeks to address](#) the concerns of many community activists including the concerns raised by Ontario Ombudsman Paul Dube. [In the initial report](#), the Ombudsman had urged reforms particularly around inmate segregation and confinement. In her legislation, Lalonde seeks improvements in segregation, inmate living conditions and standards, evidence-based programs and services, supports for indigenous individuals, over-represented groups and those with unique needs, improved health care, and an enhanced culture of professionalism and continuous learning. The bill will also create more oversight and transparency with the creation of a number of oversight mechanisms including a Chief of Investigations and an Inspector General. In response to the bill, [Dube expressed](#) satisfaction that the government was acting on his recommendations.

BILL 196, SUPPLY ACT

Treasury Board President Eleanor McMahon's (Burlington) bill authorizes the government's general expenditures for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2018.

BILL 197, AFFORDABLE ELECTRICITY ACT

Former PC and current Independent MPP Jack MacLaren (Carleton—Mississippi Mills) introduced his bill as a response to the Liberals' energy policies, particularly the Liberal government's energy policies as reflected recently in [Bill 132, Fair Hydro Act](#). MacLaren proposes to end policies that artificially lower electricity prices by borrowing money. He wants to end subsidies for conservation programs like wind projects.

BILL 198, STUDENT ABSENTEEISM AND PROTECTION ACT

Liberal MPP Ann Hoggarth's bill would make habitual absenteeism and lateness a child protection issue and would require a duty to report by any person to the Children's Aid Society. Hoggarth believes that absence and lateness to school is often an early indicator that a student is in trouble at home.

BILL 199, ACCESS TO CONSUMER CREDIT REPORTS AND ELEVATOR AVAILABILITY ACT

Government and Consumer Services Minister Tracy MacCharles' (Pickering—Scarborough East) bill would first allow consumers to access their credit score online twice per year, free

of charge. The second part of the bill seeks to establish mandatory elevator repair times, which would allow for further consultations. The plan is that these consultations will lead to regulations on mandatory elevator repair times.

BILLS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

BILL 193, ROWAN'S LAW (CONCUSSION SAFETY)

The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport Daiene Vernile's (Kitchener Centre) bill passed 2nd Reading and was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy. Vernile's bill seeks to raise awareness of concussions in amateur sports. The bill also details protocols that seek to ensure that players suffering from possible concussions do not re-enter the playing field prematurely. The bill adds a section to the *Education Act* that authorizes the Minister to establish and require boards to comply with policies and guidelines respecting concussions in pupils.

BILL 197, AFFORDABLE ELECTRICITY ACT

In a surprising development for a private member's bill, former PC and current Independent MPP Jack MacLaren's (Carleton—Mississippi Mills) bill was granted 2nd Reading, a day after it was introduced, and referred to the Committee of the Whole. MacLaren introduced his bill as a response to the Liberals' energy policies, particularly the Liberal government's energy policies as reflected recently in [Bill 132, *Fair Hydro Act*](#). MacLaren proposes to end policies that artificially lower electricity prices by borrowing money. He wants to end subsidies for conservation programs like wind projects.

IN OTHER NEWS

PC LEADERSHIP

In reviewing the last few weeks of Ontario politics, particularly the machinations surrounding the Progressive Conservative Party and its leadership, any writer treads with trepidation that what they write this moment may be useless by the next. In trying to explain what has happened since the [fateful evening of January 24](#) that saw MPP Patrick Brown's political leadership crumble, one has seen accusations of a potential political coup, vote buying, voter manipulation, bullying, misappropriated funds, rigged nominations, white supremacists and the list goes on. One can only speculate on what is coming next. Meanwhile, the business of politics and government will and must continue as Ontario heads to a general provincial election on June 7. Within the next 3 months, Ontarians will have to decide which party and leader will guide them for as many as the next four years.

While it may be easy to dismiss the current PC anarchy as a great gift to the opposition parties, particularly the governing Liberals and Premier Kathleen Wynne, public opinion polls do not bear that out. Since the sacking of Brown and his re-emergence as a leadership candidate, the PCs have [not lost public opinion support and, in some instances, have gained support](#). From those that commended the PCs for tossing Brown overboard for his alleged sexual misconduct to those that admire Brown for his fight against the allegations, PC support has remained consistent. The other opinion that seems consistent is that Kathleen Wynne has become an unpopular choice to continue leading Ontario again. In one poll, [80 per cent of Ontarians](#) want a new political party to take power at Queen's Park. Based on this, it would seem that the only political party that may have the most to gain from any continued implosion of the PCs is the NDP and its leader Andrea Horwath. If Horwath presents a clear, persuasive argument in her favour as well as strong policies, she may finally be able to gain the trust of Ontarians and assume the Premier's seat. Horwath may never have a better political opportunity than now.