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## ALL CURLERS WERE WINNERS AT ANNUAL CURLING ASSOCIATIONS BONSPIEL



Even though the team from the London District Construction Association skipped by Brian Hayman took home the coveted and hotly contested trophy, all participants in the 8th Annual (except for the two pandemic years) Ontario Construction Associations Curling Bonspiel were winners. There were about 30 participants on the teams from the Windsor Construction Association, the London District Construction Association, the Grand Valley Construction Association, the Toronto Construction Association, the Council of Ontario Construction Association (the COCAnuts) and the Hamilton-Halton Construction Association entered in the competition held on March 24th and 25th.

This year's event was superbly hosted by Sue Ramsay and her team at the Hamilton-Halton Construction Association including Alana

Modi, Jamie Brow and volunteer board member and curling enthusiast Paul Christie. The actual competition was staged at the Dundas Granite Curling Club and there was a dinner at La Piazza Allegra in downtown Hamilton and a lunch at Shawn & Ed's Brewery in Dundas. Curlers overnighted at the brand new, very modern and comfortable extended stay property called The Laundry Rooms. Sue and her team really outdid themselves with their warm and generous hospitality and we can't thank them enough for a wonderful time in Hamilton and Dundas.

This event, a highlight in every construction association's annual calendar is a tradition started about ten years ago by the Windsor Construction Association. The inaugural bonspiel was hosted by the WCA, who also hosted last year. It has also been hosted by the LDCA, by the Construction Association of Thunder Bay, by NOCA, by the Barrie Construction Association, by the GVCA and now by the HHCA. Let's make sure this important tradition of skill (???) and friendship continues.

## THIRD “WORKING FOR WORKERS” BRANDED BILL INTRODUCED

The Working for Workers Act 2023 was introduced in the legislature on March 20th. It is the third Bill introduced by the Ford government carrying the “Working for Workers” brand and is currently in the Second Reading Debate stage of the law making process. It amends the following statutes:

1. Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act, 2009
2. Employment Standards Act, 2000
3. Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act, 2006
4. Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities Act
5. Occupational Health and Safety Act
6. Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997
7. Ontario Works Act, 1997

According to the government’s news release, if passed, the Working for Workers Act, 2023, would:

- Make Ontario’s job-protected [leave for military reservists](#) the most flexible and comprehensive in all of Canada. This will allow reservists to have their job protected when they are deployed to emergency operations inside Canada even if it’s their first day at a new job, reduce the length of employment required for all other reasons from three months to two months, and expand the reasons for taking reservist leave to include where the employee may need additional time off to recover from physical or mental injuries.
- Increase the maximum fine that may be imposed on a corporation convicted of an offence under the [Occupational Health and Safety Act \(OHSA\)](#) from \$1.5 million to \$2 million. This would give Ontario the [highest maximum corporate fines](#) under workplace health and

safety legislation in Canada, build on changes announced in the [Working for Workers Act, 2022](#), and reinforce the importance of putting worker safety first and further penalize employers that treat injuries as the cost of doing business.

- Give greater certainty to employees starting a new job by proposing regulatory changes to require employers [provide employees with information about their job](#), such as pay, work location and hours of work, and the date by which that information needs to be provided (e.g., before their first shift).
- Include employees who work solely from home in the count for [mass termination provisions](#) to ensure that remote employees receive the same eight-week minimum notice of termination or pay-in-lieu as their in-office colleagues.
- Strengthen protections for temporary foreign workers by establishing the [highest maximum fines in Canada](#) for employers and people who are convicted of taking possession of or retaining a foreign national’s passport or work permit.
- Continue to advance international credential recognition, by introducing further measures to help remove barriers facing internationally trained professionals when seeking registration in regulated professions in Ontario, which includes clarifying that a regulated profession can only accept Canadian experience in satisfaction of a qualification for registration if it also accepts alternatives that meet certain criteria.

For the complete story, click on the following links:

<https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-43/session-1/bill-79>

<https://news.ontario.ca/en/backgrounder/1002846/working-for-workers-act-2023>

## CONGRATS DUE TO MINISTER MCNAUGHTON FOR DOUBLING OINP ALLOCATION

According to the provincial government, in December 2022 there were nearly 300,000 jobs in Ontario going unfilled. The shortage of skilled workers in the construction industry, confirmed by BuildForce Canada, is undisputed and immigration is the only immediate fix.

The Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP) allows the province to nominate individuals for permanent residence who have the skills and experience to contribute to Ontario's economy. In 2022 Ontario reached its allocation of 9,750 immigrants through the OINP, including 3,900 skilled trades workers, 2,200 software and IT workers, and nearly 100 nurses and personal support workers.

The OINP's allocation from the federal government for 2023 is 16,500 immigrants and it has been more than doubled from 9,000 in 2021 to 18,361 for 2025.

Congratulations to Minister McNaughton for negotiating this much improved arrangement with the federal government.

## FULLARTON'S SURPRISE RESIGNATION

On Friday, March 24th, Merrilee Fullarton announced that she had met with Premier Ford to tender her resignation from cabinet as Minister of Children, Community and Social Services and that she had resigned as the MPP for Kanata-Carleton.

Here's what we know:

- Before entering politics Fullarton was a family physician who practiced medicine in the Ottawa area for more than 25 years and was active in medical and community affairs
- She was first elected in June 2018 succeeding the former MPP, Jack Maclaren, who had been expelled from the PC Party
- Following her election in June 2018 she was appointed Minister of Colleges and Universities
- She had the misfortune of being appointed Minister of Long-Term Care in June 2019, inheriting a system that was unprepared for what was to come and muddling her way

through the crisis in long-term care homes during the pandemic

- Fullarton was re-elected again by a wide margin in June 2022 and was appointed Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
- In announcing her departure from politics, Fullarton said all the right things, thanking Ford, her cabinet and caucus colleagues and her constituents and Ford praised her back
- It's rumoured that Fullarton is leaving politics for unknown personal reasons

Michael Parsa, who previously served as Associate Minister of Housing, has been appointed Minister of Children, Community and Social Services to fill the vacancy created by Fullarton's departure and Nina Tangri, who was a minister in the previous parliament but not in the current one until now, rejoins cabinet as Associate Minister of Housing

## PREMIER FORD'S POPULARITY IN DECLINE – LATEST ANGUS REID POLL

An online survey of 4,899 Canadians including 861 Ontarians conducted by the Angus Reid Institute between March 6 – 13, 2023 and published on March 15, 2023 revealed the following results about Ontario's government and Premier Ford:

Premier Ford's approval rating has been like a roller coaster ride at Canada's Wonderland. It was 42% in December 2018 then suffered a gradual decline to 31% in March 2020, then spiking up to 69% in the early stages of the pandemic in June 2020 before trending downward again to 30% in December 2021, then cresting at 45% in June 2022 before bottoming at 33% in March 2023

Of the 861 Ontarians surveyed, 6% strongly approve of Ford, 26% moderately approve, 21% moderately disapprove, 42% strongly disapprove and 5% are not sure

Ford has faced criticism from the opposition and others after an investigation revealed that developers paid \$150 a ticket to attend his daughter's "stag and

doe" engagement party.

On the positive side of the ledger, Ontario reached agreement with the federal government on health care funding in February, which Ford described as "a good down payment", suggesting there would be more to come

Reports of underspending, staff shortages and concerns about the implications of an increase in privatization in healthcare continue to be discussed in the province.

The province scored a win when Volkswagen announced it would build a 185,000-square-metre electric vehicle battery plant in St. Thomas

Only two premiers are disliked more by their residents than Premier Ford

For the full story, click on the following link:

<https://angusreid.org/premiers-approval-march-2023/>

## NEW ROUND OF SDF FUNDING FOR BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT

To further address the shortage of skilled workers in Ontario and perhaps improve the province's lagging productivity, the government recently announced a new \$224 million stream of funding under the Skills Development Fund (SDF) called the capital stream for the purposes of building, upgrading and modernizing training centres.

Applications for the new SDF capital stream are expected to open in late spring and will provide eligible applicants, including unions, Indigenous centres, businesses and industry associations, with funding to build new training centres or to upgrade or convert their existing facilities into training centres with state-of-the-art design and technology. This includes facility renovations, retrofits, expansions, repairs and building construction.

The capital stream is the third round of SDF funding. The first two rounds invested close to \$700 million to support 388 innovative training projects.