

Cassels

Bill 148, *Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, 2017*, Passes Second Reading

October 18, 2017

On June 1, 2017, the Ontario Government introduced Bill 148, the *Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, 2017*. As we have previously reported, if passed, Bill 148 will significantly alter the employment and labour landscape in Ontario. Today, Bill 148 passed Second Reading after debate in the Ontario Legislature, moving one step closer toward becoming law. The Ontario Government published a news release regarding the Bill's status, which can be found [here](#).

Bill 148 includes proposed changes to Ontario's *Employment Standards Act, 2000* (ESA) and *Labour Relations Act, 1995* (LRA). After it passed First Reading, Bill 148 was referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs (the Committee), which held consultations with industry stakeholders on Bill 148. The Committee then adopted certain amendments to Bill 148, and the Bill was ordered for Second Reading. For an overview of the proposed changes to the ESA and the LRA found in the original version of Bill 148 as well as the amendments made by the Committee, see our previous posts on [changes to the ESA](#), [changes to the LRA](#), and [changes to Bill 148](#).

Some of the notable proposed changes include:

- Raising the general minimum wage rate to \$14 per hour on January 1, 2018, then to \$15 on January 1, 2019, followed by annual increases at the rate of inflation
- Expanding the personal emergency leave provisions to require all employers to provide 10 days of personal emergency leave, two of which must be paid
- Requiring equal pay for part-time, temporary, casual, and seasonal employees who perform the same job as full-time employees for the same employer
- Increasing the paid vacation entitlements from two weeks to three for employees with 5 or more years of service
- Requiring that employees be paid for three hours of work if their shift is cancelled within 48 hours of its scheduled start time
- Extending parental leave by 26 weeks: from 35 weeks to 61 weeks for employees who have taken a pregnancy leave, and from 37 weeks to 63 weeks for employees who have not

Now that it has passed Second Reading, Bill 148 has been referred back to the Committee where it may undergo further amendments. We will continue to track the proposed legislation and provide you with updates as they become available.

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This publication is a general summary of the law. It does not replace legal advice tailored to your specific circumstances.