

# NEWS RELEASE / COMMUNIQUÉ

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## Repealing Bill 148 'a race to the bottom': Thomas

TORONTO – OPSEU President Warren (Smokey) Thomas is condemning the Ontario government's introduction of the *Making Ontario Open for Business Act*, which will repeal many of the worker protections in Bill 148. Thomas described the move as part of a remorseless "race to the bottom."

"Doug Ford is taking his reign of error to brutal new lows as he attacks every worker in Ontario," said Thomas. "No successful business person would ever argue the fact that workers themselves are the bedrock of any successful business or enterprise. To this government, workers are now nothing more than 'red tape' and a 'regulatory burden.'"

In November 2017, the previous government had enacted labour reforms through Bill 148. Among other protections, the bill mandated equal pay for equal work, ensured two paid days of sick leave, and raised the minimum wage, which would have reached \$15 an hour on January 1, 2019.

Premier Ford has been critical of Bill 148, describing it as a "job killer." Nevertheless, since the minimum wage was raised on January 1, Ontario has seen a surge in job creation and the lowest unemployment rate since the turn of the century.

"This is a slap in the face to every precarious worker, especially our college workers, both in Academic and Support. It has emboldened the College Employer Council to boast that this announcement allows them to take millions of dollars out of the pockets of the workers in our province's colleges.

"Ford talks about bringing quality jobs back to Ontario to help families get ahead, but the actions he takes to attack the workers of Ontario, and eliminate quality jobs, speak louder than words.

"If this province is prospering, it's despite the best efforts of Doug Ford to drive it into the ground," Thomas said. "Everything he touches turns to disaster. Look at his failed and farcical buck-a-beer and his bungling of the cannabis file. Ontario is open for business all right – just ask organized crime."

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