

**MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT PROMOTES
FAIRNESS AND CHOICE FOR EMPLOYEES 65 AND OVER**
Consultations To Be Held in September On Ending Mandatory Retirement

TORONTO – The McGuinty Government will be holding public consultations on how to end mandatory retirement to give Ontario workers the right to choose when to retire, Labour Minister Chris Bentley announced today.

“Ontarians are healthier and living longer so it is unfair to insist that they stop working simply because they reach age 65,” said Bentley. “Ending mandatory retirement would protect workers by allowing them to decide when to retire based on their own lifestyles, circumstances and priorities. However, we want to achieve this goal without undermining existing retirement rights -- including entitlements to benefit and pension plans -- and also address any issues raised by business, labour or others.”

The Ministry of Labour has released a consultation paper designed to promote discussion and gather public input on the issue of mandatory retirement. Among other things, the paper asks Ontarians to consider:

- Would ending mandatory retirement reduce skills shortages in areas such as nursing, teaching or skilled trades?
- Would ending mandatory retirement affect pensions and other benefits?
- What impact would ending mandatory retirement have on recent entrants to the workforce, or those who take time away from it?

The Ontario Human Rights Code does not protect people aged 65 and over for the purposes of employment. As a result, employees can be forced to retire at age 65.

“Following our public consultations, the government intends to introduce legislation to end mandatory retirement,” said Bentley.

Public consultations led by Kevin Flynn, the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Labour, will be held across the province as follows: Toronto, September 8; Hamilton, September 10; Kingston, September 15; Thunder Bay, September 21; Sudbury, September 22; Ottawa, September 23; London, September 28; Windsor, September 29; and a second session in Toronto, September 30.

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