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ONTARIANS NOW HAVE THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE WHEN TO RETIRE

People Will No Longer Be Forced To Leave Their Jobs At 65

TORONTO — Ontario workers can now decide when to retire as the end of mandatory retirement takes effect tomorrow, December 12, Labour Minister Steve Peters said today.

“Ontarians deserve the right to choose when they want to retire,” Peters said. “Workers can now decide when to retire based on lifestyle, circumstances and priorities. This is simply the right thing to do.”

Ontario Human Rights Chief Commissioner Barbara Hall, along with Jim Bradley, the Minister Responsible for Seniors, joined Peters in marking the end of mandatory retirement.

“Our government recognizes that older workers have valuable experience to share,” said Bradley. “They deserve to be evaluated on the basis of actual performance rather than age-based assumptions.”

“Requiring people to retire at age 65 benefits neither the individual nor society,” said Hall. “It’s simply wrong – it’s discriminatory.”

The Ending Mandatory Retirement Statute Law Amendment Act, 2005 was passed in December 2005. It provided for a one-year transition period to ensure everyone is ready for the new law to take effect. It amends the Ontario Human Rights Code to protect people aged 65 and over from age discrimination for most employment purposes. The legislation also amends a variety of other statutes that have provisions connected to mandatory retirement.

Ontario currently has 1.5 million seniors. By 2031, estimates put that number at 3.7 million. Approximately 100,000 people reach 65 every year, some have estimated as many as 4,000 would continue to work if given the choice.

Ontarians can go to www.ontario.ca/mandatoryretirement for more information on the provisions of the act and how they apply. A toll-free telephone line is also available for public inquiries at 1-800-531-5551.

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