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## THE QUEEN'S PARK MONITOR



## This Month in Provincial Politics

### Provincial Byelection

PC leader Patrick Brown is hoping to secure a seat in the Ontario legislature as early as next month as the next MPP for the riding of Simcoe North, with voting set to take place on September 3, 2015. The Ontario Liberals had initially indicated that they would wait until after the federal elections to call a byelection. However, a writ was issued on August 5 to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of PC MPP Garfield Dunlop for the Simcoe North riding.

### Premier Wynne

The Ontario legislature may have adjourned until mid-September, but that hasn't kept Premier Kathleen Wynne from staying exceptionally busy the past few weeks. Wynne and the Ontario Liberals recently unveiled details of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP), including the phasing-in of contributions beginning with larger workplaces in 2017. The ORPP would ultimately see qualifying employees and employers make matching 1.9 per cent contributions on annual earnings of up to \$90,000. "There exists an enormous and widening gap between what people are actually able to save and what they will need to maintain a comparable standard of living in retirement," said Wynne.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Stephen Harper seems to be relishing in his government's hands-off approach, having vowed not to lend any assistance to the made-in-Ontario pension plan, blasting it as a "harmful tax hike." Such tension isn't uncommon between Premier Wynne and Prime Minister Harper, who have spoken publicly about their differences leading up to the federal election. Premier Wynne has taken things one step further by aggressively campaigning in support of Liberal leader Justin Trudeau. Wynne's approach may seem understandable, given Harper's perceived lack of support for her agenda when it comes to federal transfers, infrastructure, pensions and energy and environmental policy. Nonetheless, critics have suggested that the Premier's approach could have its consequences, as recent polls show a tight three-way race between the Conservatives, NDP and Liberals, with much of the Conservative strength centered

around Toronto.

## **Labour Negotiations**

After a tumultuous few months of labour negotiations between several provincial teachers' unions and provincial negotiators, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) have reached a tentative deal with the Ontario government and the Ontario Public School Boards' Association. The OSSTF announced their tentative deal on Thursday morning, which must still be ratified by the union's 60,000 members. Ontario Education Minister Liz Sandals issued a statement Thursday morning, calling the process "challenging" but said "it speaks to the dedication and commitment of everyone involved that collaboration prevailed and a tentative agreement was reached."

Meanwhile, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA) and Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) are still bargaining — and their members are poised to commence strike action as the school year begins. Unions representing 115,000 teachers across Ontario remain at the bargaining table with school boards, but one union official says they haven't even started talking about the government's demand for "net zero" wage increases. When asked about OSSTF's tentative deal, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario President Sam Hammond said that it "may be" a sign that the provincial government is "finally willing to recognize the importance of resolving issues prior to the start of the school year." Hammond, however, said that his union remains "prepared for anything and everything on September 1" when negotiations with the province resume. They are prepared to go ahead with the second phase of a work-to-rule campaign on the first day of the school year.

## **Hydro One Valuation**

Stephen LeClair, the province's first financial accountability officer, says that he's optimistic the report on the government's valuation of Hydro One will be ready sometime around September or October, when the House returns. The Ontario legislature is scheduled to return on September 14, 2015. The report will analyze the government's valuation of Hydro One, as high as \$15 billion, and how selling 60 per cent of the utility's shares will affect the province's fiscal position. The Ontario government plans to put about \$5 billion of the proceeds into hydro debt and \$4 billion into transportation infrastructure. LeClair had initially suggested that the report may not be released at all, if his office was unable to pull together the necessary resources before the government's initial public offering of the first 15 per cent stake in the utility, which is expected to take place sometime this fall. LeClair said he has been able to get more information on the Hydro One valuation through meetings with ministry officials.

## **Government News**

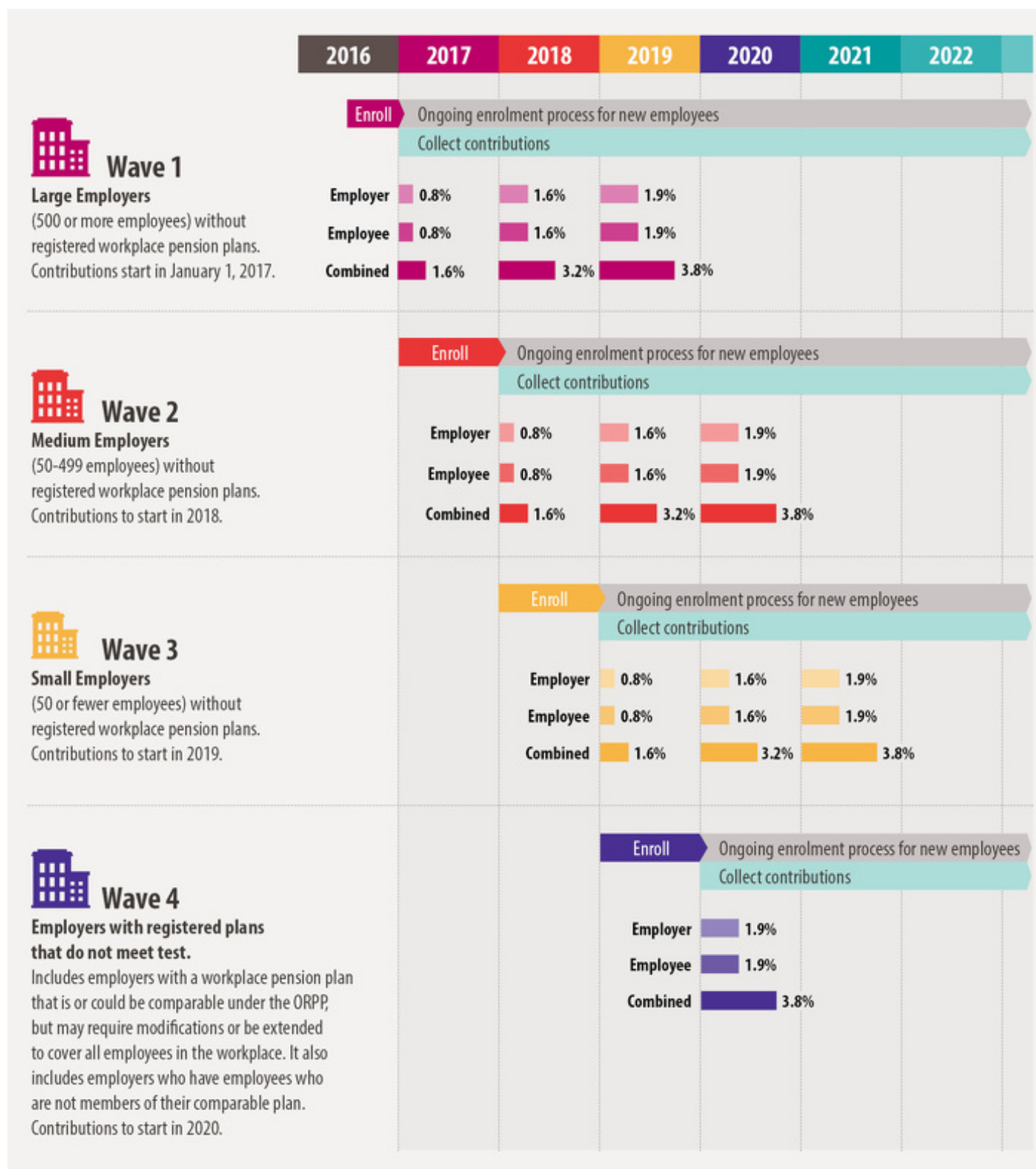
### **Ontario Premier Released Details of Ontario Retirement Pension Plan**

Premier Kathleen Wynne recently announced key details in the design of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP). The ORPP would help close the retirement savings gap for the two out of three Ontarians who do not have a secure workplace pension plan. With the design details unveiled last week and subject to

approval by the legislature, the ORPP would expand pension coverage to about 3.5 million workers, providing a predictable, reliable and inflation-indexed stream of income in retirement.

After extensive consultations on the design of the ORPP, which included over 1,000 responses to the consultation paper, several key elements have now been finalized:

- The ORPP would not apply to those currently in a comparable workplace pension plan. A comparable plan is one that provides a predictable stream of replacement income and an adequate standard of living in retirement similar to the benefit that would be provided by the ORPP. Qualifying plans -- including defined contribution plans -- would need to meet a minimum contribution threshold, be locked in and be regulated by existing provincial pension standards.
- Enrolment would be phased in to ensure the ORPP is focused on employees without access to a plan and to give employers time to adapt.
- Like the CPP, the ORPP would be funded by equal co-contributions from both employers and employees.
- Contributions would also be phased in, reaching 1.9 per cent each from employers and employees by 2021.
- Benefits would be paid starting in 2022. They would be earned as contributions are made, ensuring that the system is fair and younger generations are not burdened with additional costs related to benefits for older workers.
- Every employee in Ontario would be part of the ORPP or a comparable workplace pension plan by 2020.



## Ontario Investments

- \$7 million in small hospitals, including many rural hospitals, to improve patient care close to home. This funding will help more than 50 hospitals across Ontario improve care for patients through measures such as: reducing wait times, providing staff with additional clinical education and expanding programs in partnership with community organizations.
- \$1.5 million in live theatre in communities across the province to build interest in arts and culture and

create jobs while strengthening local economies. Souleppper Theatre Company will receive \$1.5 million over four years to create a permanent touring repertory theatre.

- \$2 million through the Proceeds of Crime Front-Line Policing Grant in 25 community safety and well-being programs across the province to support local police and community groups in their efforts to build safer, stronger communities.
- \$125 million in 2015-16 to hospitals repairs and upgrades across the province to renew critical infrastructure, helping to ensure patients continue to receive high-quality care in a safe and healthy environment. 128 hospitals will receive funding through the Health Infrastructure Renewal Fund (HIRF).
- \$7.2 million to promote active lifestyles through the Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund. As part of this investment, the province is providing more than \$224,000 to Special Olympics Ontario for the Partners in Play program. The Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund will support 123 provincial, regional and local projects in 2015-16.
- Partnering with Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada Inc. to invest in innovative new technology and secure the long-term future of the company's Cambridge and Woodstock assembly plants. Ontario will provide a conditional grant of up to \$42.1 million, directly leveraging a \$421 million investment from Toyota. The funding will help to create 25 new, highly skilled jobs and secure approximately 8,000 jobs in Toyota's Ontario manufacturing operations.

### **Provincial & Territorial Ministers Working Together on Electricity**

- At the 2015 Energy and Mines Ministers' Conference, Ontario Minister of Energy Bob Chiarelli and Newfoundland and Labrador Minister of Natural Resources Derrick Dalley committed to exploring opportunities for importing clean and reliable electricity from Newfoundland and Labrador into Ontario. Ontario and Newfoundland and Labrador are working together in that spirit to examine options around clean electricity trading that would create mutual benefits for the two provinces. A new high-level working group will undertake a thorough study of the potential for firm electricity trade between the two provinces, with discussions being guided by shared goals of reducing costs, fighting climate change, improving system reliability, and supporting a dynamic economy.
- The governments of Manitoba, Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, The Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Ontario are establishing a Pan-Canadian Task Force to reduce the use of diesel fuel to generate electricity in remote communities. This agreement comes directly following the Council of the Federation's announcement of the Canadian Energy Strategy. Reducing or eliminating diesel use in these communities would reduce harmful emissions, strengthen local economies, and create well-paying jobs. The Pan-Canadian Task Force will be chaired by Manitoba, and consist of officials from each of the provincial and territorial ministries and agencies that have policy responsibility for electricity supply in remote off-grid communities and remote off-grid aboriginal communities.

### **Pan Am & Parapan Am Games in Ontario**

- Team Canada won a 217 medals at the TORONTO 2015 Pan Am Games and 168 medals at the TORONTO 2015 Parapan Am Games
- More than 1.4 million people attended Parapan Am and Pan Am celebrations at seven sites, including PANAMANIA Live at Nathan Phillips Square and Ontario's Celebration Zone.
- Over 23,000 volunteers welcomed visitors from around the world to the Pan Am and Parapan Am

Games.

- The Games are expected to create 26,000 jobs and boost Ontario's real GDP by \$3.7 billion from 2009 to 2017.

### **Ontario Expanding Cardiac Care in North Simcoe and Muskoka**

Ontario has given its support to a proposal to bring advanced cardiac care services to patients in North Simcoe and Muskoka. Premier Kathleen Wynne made the announcement last month at Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre (RVH) in Barrie. Under the proposal, RVH will partner with Southlake Regional Health Centre in Newmarket to offer advanced cardiac care services at both hospitals. This will give patients in the northern part of Simcoe County and the District of Muskoka faster access to services that can save the lives of people with heart disease. The proposal will also enhance care by allowing cardiologists to work at both hospitals, which improves flexibility in coverage and provides more opportunities for skills development.

### **Province Showcasing Cutting-Edge Accessibility Technology**

Ontario hosted the first ever Accessibility Innovation Showcase, an official event of the TORONTO 2015 Parapan Am Games, from Saturday, August 8 to Monday, August 10, 2015 at the MaRS Discovery District. Over 50 companies demonstrated innovations in technologies and assistive devices that can benefit people with disabilities, their families and employers across Ontario. The showcase was open to the public and admission was free. Ontario has a plan to reach its goal of being accessible by 2025, building on the foundation of the province's landmark Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. The plan will engage employers to give people with disabilities an opportunity to participate in the workforce, addressing a growing skills shortage in a number of important sectors.

### **Provinces, Territories Establish Expert Advisory Group on Physician-Assisted Dying**

Ontario, in collaboration with participating provinces and territories, is establishing an expert advisory group on physician-assisted dying, with a focus on the needs of patients and their families. In February 2015, the Supreme Court of Canada struck down the federal law prohibiting physician-assisted dying. The federal government has since established an external panel to inform its legislative response to the Supreme Court's decision. To complement the work of the federal panel, 11 provinces and territories are establishing an expert advisory group on physician-assisted dying which will be led by Ontario. The advisory group will provide advice on the development of policies, practices and safeguards for provinces and territories to consider when physician-assisted dying is legal within their respective jurisdictions. The advisory group will be co-chaired by Dr. Jennifer Gibson, Director of the University of Toronto Joint Centre for Bioethics, and Maureen Taylor, medical journalist and physician assistant in infectious disease. The Ontario government is also inviting Ontarians to share their views on physician-assisted dying and end-of-life care through in-person consultations and an online survey. Federal, provincial and territorial governments have until February 2016 to implement responses in advance of the Supreme Court decision on physician-assisted dying taking effect.

### **Province Continues to Invest in Small, Rural and Northern Municipal Infrastructure**

Ontario is inviting small, rural and Northern municipalities to apply for infrastructure funding to build and repair critical infrastructure, like roads and bridges, under the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund. To be eligible for the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund, municipalities must have a population of less than 100,000 as of the 2011 census or be located in northern or rural Ontario. Eligible municipalities will have access to \$100 million per year to revitalize core infrastructure and support asset management planning. The province approved 78 projects under the first intake of the fund, and expressions of interest for the second intake will be accepted from July 28, 2015 to September 11, 2015.

### **Ontario Launches Public Consultations on Police Street Checks**

Ontario has launched public consultations on street checks to ensure that police interactions with the public are without bias, consistent, and carried out in a manner that promotes public confidence. When used properly, street checks are one tool for police to use in their efforts to help communities remain safe and secure. Ontario does not support any practice where police are stopping individuals without reason, cause or for clear policing purposes. Public consultations began this month, with community organizations, policing partners, academics, civil liberty organizations and members of the public. Ontario will ask for public input on: the circumstances when police may ask an individual for information; the rights of those being asked for their information; how to enhance accountability mechanisms and training requirements; and data collection and retention. The province also launched an online document that any member of the public can complete. Ontario encourages individuals who have experience with street checks to provide feedback.

### **Ontario Community Hubs Action Plan Released**

Premier Kathleen Wynne's Community Hub Framework Advisory Group has released a report, titled Community Hubs in Ontario: A Strategic Framework and Action Plan, to guide the creation of community hubs. Community hubs are part of the Premier's vision for making the province the best place to work, live and raise a family. The Advisory Group's action plan lays out eight overarching recommendations, which the province has accepted and will begin to implement, including: creating a provincial lead for community hubs; fostering integrated service delivery; developing a provincial strategy for public properties; removing barriers and creating incentives; supporting integrated and long-term local planning; ensuring financial sustainability; increasing local capacity; and evaluating and monitoring outcomes. A community hub can be a school, neighbourhood centre or other public space that offers co-ordinated services such as education, health care and social services. Communities and stakeholders across Ontario are encouraged to continue to provide input on the implementation of the recommendations.

### **Province Developing a New Strategy for a Safer Ontario**

Ontario is developing a new strategy to build safer, stronger communities across the province. The nature of policing and the role of police officers have changed since the Police Services Act was written in 1990. As a result of advancements in technology, including the widespread use of the internet, the increasing frequency of police interactions with vulnerable individuals, such as those suffering with mental health or addiction issues, and Ontarians' enhanced expectations about oversight and accountability of law enforcement, policing has evolved. To ensure that communities across the province are well-equipped to handle these

changes, Ontario will consult on key areas of a new Strategy for a Safer Ontario, which will include updating the Police Services Act. The consultation will seek input on how to:

- Enhance accountability and strengthen civilian governance of police services boards as well as how to ensure police oversight bodies are effective and have clear mandates
- Improve interactions between police and vulnerable Ontarians, including enhancing frontline responses to those in crisis
- Clarify police duties, modernize training programs and deliver services using a range of public safety personnel
- Develop a provincial framework for First Nations policing to ensure equitable and culturally responsive policing for the province's First Nations communities.

Further information about consultation dates and how the public can provide their feedback on the new strategy will be available in the coming weeks.

### **Ontario Nominates Renu Mandhane as New Human Rights Commissioner**

Ontario has nominated international human rights law expert Renu Mandhane for appointment as the next chief commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, subject to review by the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Ms. Mandhane is executive director of the International Human Rights Program at the University of Toronto, Faculty of Law, including its award-winning legal clinic. Prior to joining the University of Toronto in 2008, Ms. Mandhane was a practicing criminal lawyer, representing survivors of domestic and sexual violence and federally-sentenced prisoners. A long-time advocate for the advancement of women's human rights, Ms. Mandhane is a member of the Canada Committee of Human Rights Watch, and is an active advisor to PEN International. Pending review by the Standing Committee on Government Agencies, Ms. Mandhane will take over the role of chief commissioner from interim chief Ruth Goba in fall 2015. Previously, the position was held by Barbara Hall, who retired from the post in February 2015 after nearly 10 years of service.

### **Province Taking Action to Better Protect Health Care Workers**

Ontario is establishing a Workplace Violence Prevention in Health Care Leadership Table to better protect health care professionals on the job. Due to the nature of their work, health care workers face a number of workplace hazards including exposure to infectious diseases, ergonomic hazards, slips, trips and falls, as well as violence. The members of the Leadership Table will bring together key stakeholders and experts, including patient advocates, to provide advice on how to reduce and prevent workplace violence for health care professionals. Based on the advice of the Leadership Table, Ontario will develop an implementation plan to: make hospitals safer; reduce incidents of workplace violence in hospitals and the broader health care sector; and change attitudes toward workplace violence and improve workplace safety culture regarding violence.

### **Ontario Announces New Disaster Recovery Assistance Programs**

Ontario is making it easier and faster for municipalities and individuals to get financial assistance following



natural disasters. Requests for provincial disaster assistance have doubled in the last five years and are expected to continue to rise due to climate change. As a result, the province is replacing the Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program with two new programs that will be more responsive to the needs of individuals and communities following a natural disaster.

- New Municipal Disaster Recovery Assistance program will help municipalities address extraordinary emergency response costs and damage to essential property or infrastructure like bridges, roads and public buildings, as a result of a natural disaster. Going forward, municipalities will be given four months rather than 14 days to assess costs and request provincial assistance, so that they have time to focus on emergency response after a disaster occurs.
- New Disaster Recovery Assistance for Ontarians program will provide faster assistance to individuals, small businesses, farmers and not-for-profit organizations that have experienced damage to, or loss of, essential property as a result of a natural disaster. The program will also do away with the current requirement for municipal volunteers to fundraise for matching provincial assistance.

The province will launch the new programs in early 2016. Municipalities may continue to access the Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program until the new programs come into effect.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

*The following events may be of interest to you:*

August 25	10th Annual Patio Party with Special Guest <b>Hon. Kathleen Wynne</b>
August 26	Brews, Blues & BBQ Fundraiser with <b>John Fraser, MPP</b>
September 10	Ontario Liberal Women's Caucus Golf Tournament with host <b>Hon. Deb Matthews</b>
September 10	3rd Annual Cocktails in the Capital with host <b>Hon. Madeleine Meilleur</b>
September 18	Liberal Fund Ottawa Golf Tournament with hosts <b>John Fraser, MPP &amp; Marie-France Lalonde, MPP</b>

*If you would like to purchase tickets for any of these events, kindly contact us as soon as possible. For further information on donation limits please contact our office.*

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