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Premier's instructions to the Minister on priorities for the year 2014



September 25, 2014

The Honourable Kevin Flynn
Minister of Labour
Ministry of Labour
14th Floor
400 University Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1T7

Dear Minister Flynn:

I am honoured to welcome you back to your role as Minister of Labour. We have a strong Cabinet in place, and I am confident that together we will build Ontario up, create new opportunities and champion a secure future for people across our province. The people of Ontario have entrusted their government to be a force for good, and we will reward that trust by working every day in the best interests of every person in this province.

As we implement a balanced and comprehensive plan for Ontario, we will lead from the activist centre. We will place emphasis on partnerships with businesses, communities and people to help foster continued economic growth and make a positive impact on the lives of every Ontarian. This collaborative approach will shape all the work we do. It will ensure we engage people on the issues that matter the most to them, and that we implement meaningful solutions to our shared challenges.

Our government's most recent Speech from the Throne outlined a number of key priorities that will guide your work as minister. Growing the economy and helping to create good jobs are fundamental to building more opportunity and security, now and in the future. That critical priority is supported by strategic investments in the talent and skills of our people, from childhood to retirement. It is supported through the building of modern infrastructure, transit and a seamless transportation network. It is supported by a dynamic business climate that thrives on innovation, creativity and partnerships to foster greater prosperity. And it is reflected across all of our government, in every area, and will extensively inform our programs and policies.

As we move forward with our plan to grow the economy and create jobs, we will do so through the lens of fiscal prudence. Our 2014 Budget reinforces our commitment to balancing the budget by 2017-18; it is essential that every area adheres to the program-spending objectives established in it. We will choose to invest wisely in initiatives that strengthen Ontario's competitive advantage, create jobs and provide vital public services to our families. The President of the Treasury Board, collaborating with the Minister of Finance, will work closely with you and your fellow Cabinet members to ensure that our government meets its fiscal targets. The President of the Treasury Board will also lead the government's efforts on accountability, openness and modernization as we implement new accountability measures across government.

As Minister of Labour, you will advance safe, fair and respectful workplace practices that are essential to the social and economic well-being of the people of Ontario.

Your ministry's specific priorities include:

Reflecting the Changing Workplace

- Engaging openly with Ontarians to consider actions that will support labour and employment law reforms. Your goal is to continue to protect workers while supporting business in today's evolving economy.
- Leading a review of Ontario's system of employment and labour standards. You will work with other ministers to consider reforms that reflect the realities of the modern economy, such as the rise of non-standard employment and the reduction in the prevalence of employer benefits and training.

Developing a Wage Gap Strategy

- Leading the development of a wage gap strategy. Women make up an integral part of our economy and society, but on average still do not earn as much as men. You will work with the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues and other ministers to develop a wage gap strategy that will close the gap between men and women in the context of the 21st century economy.

Protecting Vulnerable Workers

- Working with the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade to better protect migrant workers in Ontario. Your goal is to continue to strengthen protection for the most vulnerable workers in our province, while creating a level playing field for companies that follow the rules.

Promoting Occupational Health and Safety

- Protecting workers' health and safety and leading workplace accident prevention efforts. I ask that you work with the Chief Prevention Officer to enhance the ministry's prevention capacity by augmenting our prevention efforts. As a first step, I ask that you work with the construction sector, through the Chief Prevention Officer, to develop an action plan to strengthen workplace accident prevention in the construction sector.

- Accelerating the transformation of Ontario's occupational health and safety system, as recommended by the Expert Advisory Panel.

Working with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board

- Continuing to ensure the long-term sustainability of our workers' compensation system while balancing the interests of injured workers and employers. I ask that you consider such issues as removing the 72-month lock-in provision, enhancing survivor benefits, implementing a long-term strategy to deal with indexation for partially disabled workers — and developing further reforms.

Supporting Mental Health in the Workplace

- Engaging with companies that have introduced strong workplace mental health programs for their employees to draw upon their experience. Your goal is to work with employers to expand employer-provided services available to Ontario workers.

Collaborating on Collective Bargaining

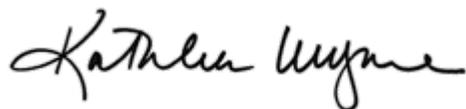
- Continuing to work with ministers — and the President of the Treasury Board, employers and unions — to uphold and respect the collective bargaining process. Your goal is to maintain a respectful labour relations climate for both employers and unions.
- Continuing to assess options to reform the interest arbitration process. I ask that, going forward, you continue to work to balance the interests of both employers and unions.

We have an ambitious agenda for the next four years. I know that, by working together in partnership, we can be successful. The above list of priority initiatives is not meant to be exhaustive, as there are many other responsibilities that you and your ministry will need to carry out. To that end, this mandate letter is to be used by your ministry to develop more detailed plans for implementation of the initiatives above, in addition to other initiatives not highlighted in this letter.

I ask that you continue to build on the strong relationships we have with the Ontario Public Service, the broader public sector, other levels of government, and the private, non-profit and voluntary sectors. We want to be the most open and transparent government in the country. We want to be a government that works for the people of this province — and with them. It is of the utmost importance that we lead responsibly, act with integrity, manage spending wisely and are accountable for every action we take.

I look forward to working together with you in building opportunity today, and securing the future for all Ontarians.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Wynne
Premier

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