

Bill 18 Receives Royal Assent

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In past editions we have noted the progress of Bill 18 - *Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act, 2014* (formerly Bill 146). Bill 18 passed third reading in the legislature on November 6, 2014, with all party support and received Royal Assent on November 20, 2014.

Key features of the Bill include:

- Tying future minimum wage increases to the Consumer Price Index for Ontario which will be announced by April of each year, and come into effect on October 1;
- Ensuring *Occupational Health and Safety Act* ("OHSA") coverage for unpaid co-op students and other unpaid learners, which will give them protection under the OHSA such as the right to know about workplace hazards and the right to refuse unsafe work;
- Eliminating the \$10,000 cap on the recovery of unpaid wages through Ministry of Labour orders to pay and increasing the period of recovery to two years;
- Expanding employment protections to cover all foreign employees who come to Ontario under an immigration or foreign temporary employee program; and
- Holding temporary help agencies and their employer clients accountable for certain employment standards violations, such as failure to pay regular wages, overtime pay, and public holiday entitlements.