

**For Immediate Release
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Without new investment, amendments, Bill 148 creates less opportunity for vulnerable people, families in Ontario

Toronto, ON – Community Living Ontario fears further instability for many people who have an intellectual or developmental disability, families and member organizations with the passing of the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act yesterday in the legislature.

While the legislation provides for fairer employment and a living wage for Ontario's workforce, including people who have a disability and support workers, the Government of Ontario has chosen to ignore the facts and impact provided by the various stakeholders in the disability community who will be adversely affected.

"We need the Government of Ontario to work with Developmental Services Sector to provide the required funding, as well as the necessary amendments and exemptions to the legislation, so that people who have an intellectual disability, families and community agencies are not negatively impacted by the changes resulting from the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act," said Chris Beesley, Chief Executive Office of Community Living Ontario.

"The Ministry of Community and Social Services also needs to inform families immediately of their new legal obligations as employers under the Employment Standards Act."

Approximately 40,000 families receive Special Services at Home, Passport or other forms of individualized funding to hire support workers to provide them with respite and opportunities for their loved ones to participate in the community, develop worthwhile skills and valued social roles. Families that hire workers at the minimum wage will be required to pay them \$14 per hour come January 1st, 2018.

"There will be a jarring realization for many parents who are already in crisis and who rely on government funding. In a few weeks' time, they will see a 25 percent reduction in the number of hours of support for their sons and daughters due to the increases to minimum wage, public holiday and vacation pay, and other changes they may not be aware of," stated Beesley.

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“Further to that, the new legislation will restrict the flexible work arrangements that are often required to meet the needs of people who have an intellectual or developmental disability.”

Community Living Ontario, Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs and the Provincial Network on Developmental Services have made the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Premier’s Office aware of the legislation’s implications on community agencies. To date, there have been nine consecutive years with no increases to core budgets to support organizations, and collective bargaining and non-union wage settlements and pay equity settlements remain unfunded by the province.

Community Living Toronto estimates the new legislation will result in the loss of 80,000 service hours a year for people who have a developmental disability and their families, through the elimination of more than 40 full-time positions. Community Living Ontario’s other member organizations will face similar constraints.

“We proudly provide good jobs for 1,400 full and part-time staff, as well as facilitate employment, volunteer opportunities and community participation for over 1,300 people with developmental disabilities in Toronto,” said Brad Saunders, Chief Executive Officer of Community Living Toronto.

“However, without an offset from our funders, we will not be able to meet the requirements of Bill 148 without significant cuts to services for the people we support. We are asking for a commitment from the provincial government to cover the costs associated with Bill 148 for Community Living Toronto and the rest of the Developmental Services Sector.”

“Ministry representatives have told our members not to expect any base budget increases, so that means the people that stand to lose the most without additional funding and amendments to the legislation are people who have an intellectual or developmental disability, families, community agencies and their support workers,” added Beesley.

“Last week, Premier Kathleen Wynne took steps to end the college strike, and we’re asking

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that she take immediate steps to support our community agencies that provide critical services and supports to the province’s most vulnerable people.”

The following people are available for interviews:

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Community Living Ontario is a family-based association assisting people who have an intellectual disability and their families to lead the way in advancing inclusion in their own lives and in their communities. We are a progressive leader in the Developmental Services Sector representing more than 12,000 individuals, families, over 100 member organizations and community partners.

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