

**What Clergy and Church Wardens need to know about Bill 148,
The *Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, 2017***

Bill 148, called the *Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act*, was introduced on June 1, 2017 by the provincial government. There are several key changes to Ontario's labour laws including an increased minimum wage, two mandatory paid sick days, an extension of various personal emergency leaves and several other aspects that affect parish employers and employees.

The Act has presently gone through two readings. There are significant changes to the Ontario Employments Act, 2000 for parishes with employees. The most significant changes for parish leadership include;

1. Increase to minimum wage to \$14 per hour beginning January 1, 2018, and then to \$15 on January 1, 2019, followed by annual increases at the rate of inflation.
2. Equal pay for part-time employees beginning April 1, 2018. Mandating equal pay for part-time, temporary, casual and seasonal employees doing the same job as full-time employees; and equal pay for temporary help agency employees doing the same job as permanent employees at the agencies' client company.
3. Increase to paid vacation beginning January 1, 2018. After five years of service with the same employer, vacation must be increased to three weeks per year. This will bring Ontario in line with the national average.
4. Expanding personal emergency leave to ten personal emergency leave days would apply in all workplaces, and two of those days would be paid per year for all employees.
5. Public Holidays, a new calculator will be introduced to calculate holiday pay.
6. Making employee scheduling fairer, including requiring employees to be paid for three hours of work if their shift is cancelled within 48 hours of its scheduled start time.
7. New leave of absence for domestic or sexual violence. The amendments introduce a new unpaid leave of absence where an employee or the employee's child has experienced domestic or sexual violence. It will provide up to 17 weeks off without the fear of losing their job.
8. Extensions to Pregnancy and Parental Leave. Pregnancy leave will be extended from 6 weeks to 12 weeks for employees after a miscarriage or stillbirth. Additionally, the length of parental leave will be extended by 26 weeks – from 35 weeks to 61 weeks for employees who have taken a pregnancy leave, and from 37 weeks to 63 weeks for employees who have not.

If you are currently paying an employee the current minimum wage of \$11.60 per hour there will be a \$2.40 per hour increase to their wages as of January 1, 2018. You will need to take this into consideration when you prepare your annual budget for 2018. More information can be found at <https://news.ontario.ca/mol/en/2017/05/proposed-changes-to-ontarios-employment-and-labour-laws.html>