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Dear Members of the Chamber:

With the COVID-19 Coronavirus outbreak, the health and safety of people in our community and across Ontario is the most important priority. We are grateful for the hard work of our health care workers during this unprecedented emergency. Today, the Ontario Government took further action to protect the jobs of workers and ensure that essentials such as groceries, medicine and other basics can arrive on store shelves.

On March 17, the Ontario Government enacted a Declaration of Emergency to protect the public and today Ontario Legislature met and passed two pieces of legislation to help deal with the crisis. The first is the *Employment Standards Amendment Act (Infectious Disease Emergencies), 2020*, which will provide job-protected leave to:

1. Employees in isolation or quarantine due to COVID-19, or
2. those employees who need to be away from work to care for children because of school or day care closures or
3. to care for other family members and relatives.

The second is the *The Municipal Emergency Act, 2020* (more information about this at the end of this letter.)

Job-protected leave

The Act provides job protection for employees unable to work for the following reasons:

- The employee is under medical investigation, supervision or treatment for COVID-19.
- The employee is acting in accordance with an order under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*.
- The employee is in isolation or quarantine in accordance with public health information or direction.
- The employer directs the employee not to work due to a concern that COVID-19 could be spread in the workplace.
- The employee needs to provide care to a person for a reason related to COVID-19 such as a school or day-care closure.
- The employee is prevented from returning to Ontario because of travel restrictions.

An employee will be able to take infectious disease emergency leave to care for the following individuals:

- The employee's spouse.
- A parent, step-parent or foster parent of the employee or the employee's spouse.
- A child, step-child or foster child of the employee or the employee's spouse.
- A child who is under legal guardianship of the employee or the employee's spouse.
- A brother, step-brother, sister or step-sister of the employee.
- A grandparent, step-grandparent, grandchild or step-grandchild of the employee or the employee's spouse.
- A brother-in-law, step-brother-in-law, sister-in-law or step-sister-in-law of the employee.
- A son-in-law or daughter-in-law of the employee or the employee's spouse.
- An uncle or aunt of the employee or the employee's spouse.
- A nephew or niece of the employee or the employee's spouse.
- The spouse of the employee's grandchild, uncle, aunt, nephew or niece.
- A person who considers the employee to be like a family member, provided the prescribed conditions, if any, are met.
- Any individual prescribed as a family member for the purposes of this section.

The Act also makes it clear that an employee will not be required to provide a medical note if they need to take the leave. However, the employer may require the employee to provide other evidence that is reasonable in the circumstances, at a time that is reasonable in the circumstances. This could include such requests as a note from the daycare or for evidence that the airline cancelled a flight, but not a medical note. These measures are retroactive to January 25, 2020, the date that the first presumptive COVID-19 case was confirmed in Ontario. They will remain in place for the foreseeable future.

Who does this apply to?

Most employees and employers in Ontario are covered by the provisions in this legislation, whether they work full-time, part-time, are students, temporary help agency assignment employees, or casual workers. It does not apply to people in sectors that fall under federal jurisdiction, including employees working for banks, airports, inter-provincial and international rail, and federal crown corporations.

Helping ensure the health and safety of Ontario workers and workplaces

Employers and workers in the health sector should be following the Ministry of Health [COVID-19 Guidance for the Health Sector](#). Workers in other settings should be following the Ministry of Health's recommendations on how to protect yourself. For the most up-to-date information on how individuals can protect themselves and what to do if they suspect they may be at risk, please visit Ontario.ca/coronavirus.

Employer Obligations

Employers are required to report all occupational illnesses, including COVID-19, to the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development in writing within four days. Employers are also required to notify their joint health and safety committee or a health and safety representative and a trade union, if they exist.

The Municipal Emergency Act, 2020

This legislation will ensure that for the near future, the delivery of goods to Ontario's businesses and consumers isn't impacted by municipal noise by-laws that may unintentionally be impeding such deliveries when they are most urgently needed. The legislation also gives municipalities the ability to fully conduct Council, local board and committee meetings electronically when faced with local and province-wide emergencies, empowering the government's municipal partners to respond quickly when in-person meetings cannot be held.

We expect more information on government supports for employees, employers and the economy to become available when the Minister of Finance makes an economic and fiscal update next week. I will continue to keep you informed.

While my office remains closed to in-person meetings, my staff and I are working remotely. Should you have any specific questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Effie". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Effie Triantafilopoulos, MPP
Oakville North-Burlington