

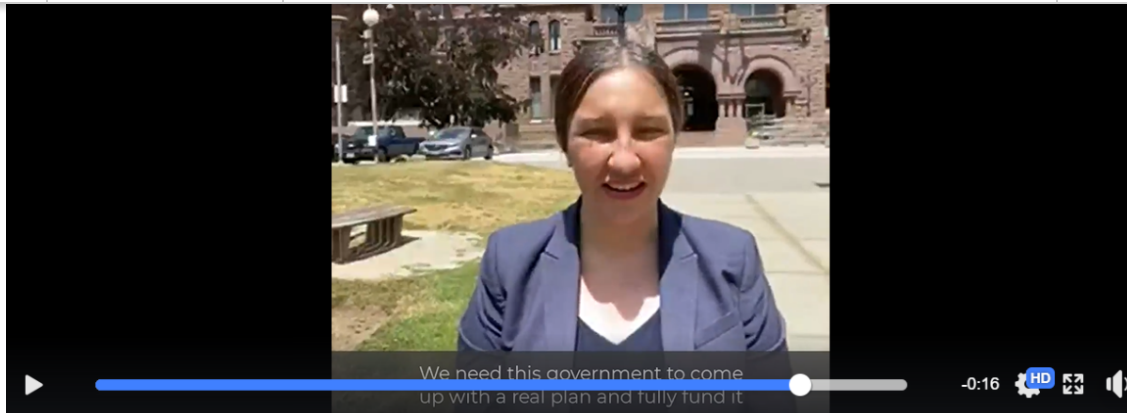
[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)[Click here to view this email in your browser.](#)

Friday July 17 COVID-19 Update

Dear neighbour,

I know the question of if and how schools will reopen in September is top of mind for so many of you. I recently hosted [a virtual townhall on education](#) to hear from parents, educators, and public health experts about their concerns. On Friday I followed up with [a letter to the Minister of Education](#) sharing our riding's feedback about the lack of affordable child care, the lack of a real and properly funded back to school plan, inequity in online learning, the need to repair schools, concerns about teacher and student safety, and the consequences of no school on children's mental health.

This week I was proud to join my colleagues in proposing an [emergency action plan](#) that would help get kids safely back to class five days a week. That plan, captured in a motion tabled this week by NDP education critic Marit Stiles, includes steps like hiring more educators to allow for smaller class sizes, funding for extra supports for students who are struggling or have special needs, and funding for school upgrades that will help with infection control. We also need to ensure parents have protections like paid sick leave and affordable child care options.

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate](#) ▼

I am pushing for a safe return to school for our kids. [Watch my two minute breakdown](#) of the Ontario Government's plan and where it falls short if kids and parents are going to safely return to school and work.

On Wednesday the [TDSB released](#) a [preliminary report](#) that provides more details on possible scenarios for returning to school in September for both elementary and secondary students. [Full report here](#). It highlights what we already know - that we need meaningful government investment to make school in September work. For the Ontario Government to download the responsibility of opening schools to school boards without providing the funding they need to do so is irresponsible and puts lives at risk. **I will continue to push for a September plan that is safe and equitable for all students, families, and educators.**

Please continue to write to my office and share your concerns. I deeply appreciate your input, and am especially grateful to those who share the specific impacts of government policies or proposals on your lives. Your stories help me to advocate for the changes that will truly benefit residents across University-Rosedale in this difficult and confusing time.

Yours,

Jessica Bell

Jessica Bell (MPP for University-Rosedale)

In this newsletter:

- [Bill 195, keeping emergency powers after the state of emergency is over](#)
- [Bill 197, a "COVID-19 recovery" omnibus bill](#)
- [Bill 184, the "Eviction Bill"](#)
- [Federal government pledges funding to cities, paid sick leave](#)
- [Moving towards a Stage 3 reopening plan](#)
- [Important changes to long-term care, including visitation, funding and air conditioning](#)
- [Child care cap increases to cohorts of 15](#)

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

- [All city-led and permitted events in Toronto cancelled through Sept. 30](#)

Bill 195, keeping emergency powers after the state of emergency is over

[Bill 195](#) is legislation the Ontario Government is pushing through to lift the state of emergency order but continue the government's emergency powers until at least next year. This would give the government wide-ranging powers without the built-in accountability mechanisms found in the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, like the requirement that they had to report to the full legislature. Groups like the [Canadian Civil Liberties Association](#) have raised serious concerns that with this bill, the government is making a grab for permanent emergency powers.

Bill 195 will also override key aspects of frontline workers' contracts indefinitely, even though the Bill says the emergency is over. This particularly affects nurses and personal support workers whose layoff and reassignment rights, vacation rights, and contracting out are most at risk.

Bill 197, a “COVID-19 recovery” omnibus bill

[Bill 197](#) is a new omnibus legislation, introduced by the Ford Government under the guise of recovery from COVID-19. [Bill 197 does nothing at all](#) to help families, devastated long-term care homes, small businesses, schools, day cares, parents, First Nations, or provide funding for municipalities.

Bill 197 weakens the Environmental Assessment Act by no longer requiring environmental assessments, except in the case of certain designated projects. It also limits the public's ability to request a more robust environmental assessment on contentious projects. This has been condemned by a number of environmental groups including Environmental Defence and the Canadian Environmental Law Association.

Bill 197 also includes a new bill called the “Transit-oriented Communities Act” which gives Ontario the power to quickly seize and develop land near the Government's four priority transit projects. Premier Ford is also proposing changes to give the Minister power to impose zoning requirements on this “transit” land, augmenting the power Ontario already has to exempt land from municipal zoning laws. [Read more on Ford's COVID-19 recovery bill and what it means for public transit here.](#)

Bill 184, the “Eviction Bill”

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

landlords to evict tenants and makes illegal rent increases legal. You can learn more about how to take action [here](#) and read an open letter expressing concerns with the bill signed by various groups [here](#).

Given that the Ford Government has decided the eviction ban will be lifted on the month that the state of emergency is lifted, this means that if Bill 195 passes this month, mass evictions will be allowed as of August 1. This would be devastating to renters and a gift to corporate landlords.

[Click here to send the Ford Government a message about Bill 184.](#)

Federal government pledges funding to cities, paid sick leave

The federal government has [pledged \\$19 billion to the provinces and territories](#) to target areas including COVID-19 testing and contact tracing, purchasing PPE, funding for municipalities and a national sick leave plan. The NDP has been [fighting for the Ford government to provide emergency funding to municipalities](#) to avoid service cuts and raised taxes. We are working hard to identify what this funding announcement will mean for important services like childcare and the TTC.

Moving towards a Stage 3 reopening plan

This week the government [announced](#) that portions of Ontario will be moving to [Stage 3](#) of the province's reopening plan effective today. **Toronto will remain in Stage 2 for the time being**, as will Peel, Hamilton, Niagara and a number of other regions. Stage 3 reopening includes the opening of businesses including bars, restaurants, movie theatres and gyms. The indoor gathering limit rises to 50 people, with the outdoor gathering limit rising to 100 people, while physical distancing remains in effect.

Note that social circles at this point will also be kept to a maximum of 10 people province-wide, regardless of stage.

I will provide an in-depth look at the measures involved in this move to Stage 3 once Toronto reaches that step.

Important changes to long-term care, including visitation, funding and air conditioning

The Ministry of Long-Term Care published [updated visitation guidelines](#) for long-term care homes, including the removal of the requirement for visitors to attest they've taken a COVID-19 test within the previous two weeks. Thank you

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

The Ford Government also announced this week that it [will alter the funding formula for long-term care construction](#), a move that unfortunately may put more [public dollars into the corporations that have already failed seniors](#). The government also announced that it will require all new and newly renovated long-term care homes to [have air conditioning](#), and establish a fund to help retrofit older homes.

I will continue to push for an overhaul of the broken long-term care system, including a commitment to hiring more staff, raising PSW wages and giving them full-time jobs, and getting the profits out of long-term care.

Child care cap increases to cohorts of 15

Beginning on July 27, child care centres will be permitted to operate in cohorts of up to 15, which is an increase from the current cohort cap of 10. [The Ford Government is saying](#) these changes will allow the sector to reach approximately 90 per cent of the capacity that existed pre-COVID. However, in the absence of provincial funding, [many child care centres face enormous barriers](#) to welcoming kids back under the new rules for re-opening.

Declaration of Emergency extension sought until July 24

The government has [announced](#) that they will seek a final one-week extension to the Declaration of Emergency, which, if approved, will terminate on July 24, 2020. Currently, Emergency Orders made by the government have been extended to July 22, 2020.

Latest in Toronto recreation reopenings

- City of Toronto's community centres, recreation centres and indoor pools [will be reopening on Monday, July 20](#).
- Riverdale Farm, High Park Zoo and the City's conservatories [opened up this Tuesday](#), July 14.
- Toronto mayor John Tory says the [city is preparing to reopen playgrounds](#) around Toronto when the municipality is given the green light to enter the next stage of the province's reopening plan.

All city-led and permitted events in Toronto cancelled through Sept. 30

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)

online-only affair for this year. The city had previously cancelled all permitted events with attendance of more than 250 people through the end of July and all events with attendance of more than 25,000 people through the end of August. Mayor John Tory, however, confirmed on Monday that a decision has now been made to cancel all city-led and permitted events through Sept. 30.

Note that this email and all previous COVID-19 updates are available at: www.jessicabellmpp.ca/coronavirus

As always, if you require urgent assistance from my office, please contact my team at 416-535-7206 or email us at jbelle-co@ndp.on.ca



Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.

