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## Friday June 5 COVID-19 Update

Dear neighbour,

Toronto demonstrated its incredible solidarity this weekend as thousands marched with the family of Regis Korchinski-Paquet to demand answers and accountability for her death. Thank you to everyone who has also reached out to me and my office. I hear your grief, your anger and your demands for action. I fully endorse [the letter](#) sent by my colleagues, MPP Bhutila Karpoche and MPP Laura Mae Lindo to the Solicitor General, demanding a full, independent and urgent investigation into Regis' death.

I was dismayed this week when Premier Ford tried to claim that Canada doesn't have 'deep roots' of systemic racism. Thank you to my colleague MPP Jill Andrews for [responding powerfully](#) in the legislature to Ford's harmful comment. Our work must include making systemic change to end anti-Black racism in our institutions, including in policing. I pledge to be a part of this work.

Please contact my office if you have questions or concerns, if you have petitions you want me to read out at Queen's Park, or if you want to organize with us so we can use this pandemic to build a new normal.

Yours,

Jessica Bell (MPP for University-Rosedale)

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## Speaking out against Bill 184, and for tenants' rights

I was shocked last week when the Ford Government advanced Bill 184, a bill that will make it easier for landlords to illegally raise the rent and evict renters. As the [Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario](#) points out, the only tenant protection in Bill 184 is in the title.

Thank you to everyone who has already joined me in taking action against this bill. Dozens have called and spoken with staff at Housing Minister Steve Clark and Premier Ford's offices to advocate for renters' rights, and over 575 emails were sent to Clark and Ford's offices through [this online form](#) alone.

We need your help to keep up the pressure and make sure this bill does not become law.

Bill 184 is now going to the [Standing Committee on Social Policy](#) so the public can speak to it and amendments to the bill can be introduced. **Three days of hearings have been scheduled for this bill on June 24-26.** If you would like to present to committee on this bill, you can email the committee Clerk at: [comm-socialpolicy@ola.org](mailto:comm-socialpolicy@ola.org) by Thursday, June 18 at 10am. Please cc-me when you email the Clerk so we know you want to appear on the committee.

Please [send a message](#) to Ford and Clark asking them to stop Bill 184.

Join us at the rally at Queen's Park on Tuesday June 9 at 2pm - "[No COVID Evictions. Not now, Not ever](#)" hosted by [Parkdale Organize](#).

**ACT NOW!**

**Stop Ford's  
Eviction Bill**

Let's keep up the pressure  
to make sure Bill 184  
doesn't become law!

[www.jessicabellmpp.ca/Bill184](http://www.jessicabellmpp.ca/Bill184)

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## Anti-Black racism is a public health crisis

I endorse the call from Black health leaders across Ontario for the Ontario government to [recognize anti-Black racism as a public health crisis](#) and address it substantially and immediately. It is long past time for the Ontario Government to listen, step up and actually do the work of rooting out anti-Black racism in all of our institutions.

I also join Andrea Horwath in calling on Premier Ford to issue an emergency order to begin the immediate [collection of race-based data](#) when it comes to health care delivery in Ontario.

Expanded access to testing

It is now easier for anyone who wants to be tested for COVID-19 to get tested.

If you're worried you have COVID-19 or have been exposed to it, you should get tested – even if you don't have any symptoms.

**You should visit an assessment centre if you:**

- have COVID-19 symptoms
- do not have symptoms but are concerned you might have been exposed
- do not have symptoms but think you are at risk (for example, if you are an essential or health care worker)

You do not need an OHIP card to be tested. It is a free service. Anyone can get a test if they want one.

Some assessment centres may require you to book an appointment first or have certain restrictions (for example, some are unable to test young children).

[Find out about an assessment centre near you.](#)

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## Municipalities continue to face funding crisis

The City of Toronto alone says it has a \$1.5 billion shortfall as a result of COVID-19, which it warns will result in immediate negative impacts to the quality of service we receive, including transit cuts, firefighting cuts, child care cuts, long-term care cuts and more.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has estimated the hole in operating budgets across all cities at between \$10 billion and \$15 billion over the next six months.

The Federal Government did the right thing to transfer infrastructure money faster, however, it's not as much as is needed, and the Ontario Government must do its fair share. Yesterday NDP MPPs Jeff Burch, critic for Municipal Affairs, and NDP House Leader Gilles Bisson urged Ford to [commit to providing emergency operating funding to municipalities right away](#), so they can continue to run day cares, transit, public health units, water treatment facilities and so much more. We will continue to advocate for cities to receive financial support.

You can use Progress Toronto's website to send a message to Premier Ford calling for him to help municipalities [right here](#).

# Ontario government to release information on second stage of reopening the economy

Premier Ford shared this week that Ontario health officials are in [discussions about the second stage of the province's economic reopening plan](#), including opening restaurant patios, and says he hopes to bring it forward over the next week likely using a regional approach.

I have been pushing for Ford to follow the guidance of regional public health officials and ensure that every region opens on the schedule that's best for health and then the economy.

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## Ford's new bill sets the stage for privatization of long-term care

I have heard from hundreds of people in University-Rosedale about the need for a full and transparent public inquiry into Ontario's long-term care system. Fundamental changes need to be made to ensure that [the current crisis in senior homes](#), especially in for-profit homes, never happens again.

Instead of heeding this call, the government is [ramming through Bill 175](#), the Connecting People to Home and Community Care Act 2020. This legislation further enables the privatization of home care and removes some existing provisions of public control and accountability. The bill has no provisions to improve access to care, staffing shortages, equity, or home care assessments. The bill also introduces measures that expand privatization not only of homecare, but also potentially of hospitals and long-term care. The Ontario Health Coalition is [asking the Ford government](#) to "halt Bill 175 and consult with Ontarians to develop a public non-profit home care system that would integrate care and ensure it is provided in the public interest." I support their call to build a public system that will provide quality care for our seniors and loved ones. You can read OHC's analysis on this bill [here](#).

Hearings on Bill 175, Home and Community Care Act have been scheduled for June 15 to 17. The deadline to register to make an oral presentation is 6pm this

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## Ombudsman investigates long-term care

Ontario's Patient Ombudsman [launched an investigation into long-term care](#), a day after the provincial ombudsman launched a similar investigation.

The investigation launched by Paul Dubé, Ontario's Ombudsman, will focus on the work done by the Ministry of Long Term Care and Ministry of Health and will examine complaint handling, inspections, emergency planning, data collection, support measures, and inter-agency communication.

The Patient Ombudsman will hold a separate investigation into resident and caregiver experiences after receiving 150 complaints about long term care homes across the province.

It is promising to see these two Ombudsman investigations into the government's neglect of long term care facilities across Ontario, but we still need a fully transparent, independent, and public inquiry. A publicly accountable process, focused on the long history of neglect towards long-term care, is the only way to ensure justice for our seniors and loved ones, and the only path forward to building a long-term care system that works for all. [Join me in demanding this here](#).

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## Transit delays and Bill 171, the Building Transit Faster Act

A [report released in the Toronto Star this week](#) showed that Premier Ford's privatized Ontario Line project will likely to miss its target 2027 completion date.

The Ford Government ripped up a shovel ready relief line plan to go back to the drawing board, [setting transit construction back years](#). Ford is learning the hard way that it's easy to draw lines on a map, but it's much harder to actually build transit.

At the same time, the Ontario Government is moving forward with Bill 171, the Building Transit Faster Act. Bill 171's purpose is to speed up the delivery of four

Unfortunately, it seeks to do this by giving the province the power to take over municipal assets, like a road or a subway line; speeding up expropriations and reducing residents ability to contest expropriations; and allowing the province to jump to the front of the queue and move utilities when it suits them instead of coordinating carefully with utilities and the city. In practice, this means a road might be dug for a transit project and then dug again a year later to replace sewage lines because the province didn't want to wait. Additionally, in a separate regulatory move, the Ford Government is further weakening the environmental assessment process for transit projects, giving residents less say than they already have.

Our region absolutely needs good transit service today and we need to build transit right to meet future needs. This Bill is Premier Ford's attempt to make up lost time by making it faster and easier for private companies to rush transit construction at the expense of neighbourhoods, businesses and common sense.

More information on this bill and what I am calling for [here](#).

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## New electricity rates

The Ontario Government announced [new initiatives on electricity rates](#) for consumers and businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic, including: \$9 million for the COVID-19 Energy Assistance Program (CEAP); \$8 million for the COVID-19 Energy Assistance Program for Small Business (CEAP-SB); and an extension of the Ontario Energy Board's winter disconnection ban until July 31, 2020. In addition, the government recently announced that it will continue the suspension of time-of-use (TOU) electricity rates and, starting on June 1, 2020, customers will be billed based on a new fixed COVID-19 Recovery Rate of 12.8 cents per kilowatt hour.

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## Toronto Public Library to begin curbside drop-off and pick-up service

This past week the Toronto Public Library [reopened 53 additional library branch drop boxes](#) to accept the return of library materials, the next step in its rollout of

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8th.

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## State of Emergency extended until June 30

On Tuesday June 2nd, Ontario [extended the provincial Declaration of Emergency to June 30](#).

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## Park washrooms to reopen

The City of Toronto will begin to open some of its approximately 200 park washrooms this week across the city following the Province of Ontario's amendments to an order under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act. The reopening will occur in two phases. The first phase will have roughly 50 washroom sites opening by June 6, followed by the remaining locations by mid-June. A list of locations and health guidelines for washrooms are available on the [City Services webpage](#).

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## New requirements at Toronto

### Pearson Airport

All passengers and airport workers are now required to wear face coverings at all times in public areas of the airport. The policy includes parking facilities, sidewalks and curbs outside the terminal as well as security screening areas.

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## Backcountry camping reopens at Ontario Parks



an expansion of day-use activities to allow picnicking and off-leash dog runs. Advanced reservations or registrations will be required at most of the 20 operating provincial parks that offer backcountry camping. The closure of all other overnight camping and day-use features has been extended to June 14.

## Today's COVID kindness feature



Today I want to spotlight [Friends of Kensington Market](#)'s tireless organizing to support neighbours and respond to racism in their neighborhood. From [pushing back against increased surveillance](#), to responding to a [racist attack on a shopkeeper](#), to [setting up a local wealth redistribution program](#) they have shown enormous creativity and dedication in standing up for all residents.

**Note that this email and all previous COVID-19 updates are available at: [www.jessicabellmpp.ca/coronavirus](http://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](mailto:jbelle-co@ndp.on.ca)



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