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WOMEN WON'T NEED CONSENT FOR ADOPTIONS AFTER ASSAULT OR ONE-NIGHT STAND UNDER BILL 28, AG SAYS

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Women won't need consent for adoptions after assault or one-night stand under Bill 28, AG says

🕒 25.10.2016 👤 Sabrina Nanji 💬 0

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A committee studying Bill 28, the *All Families Are Equal Act*, was briefly delayed by one week as the government susses out the legality of certain amendments, Attorney General **Yasir Naqvi** confirmed Tuesday.

That includes tweaking provisions that some are concerned could potentially force a woman who becomes pregnant after a one-night stand or sexual assault to seek consent from the putative father should she wish to put that child up for adoption.

"Our intention was never to change the law in that regard. There's a fairly robust scheme that already exists within the legislation, and if in drafting that somehow inadvertently we undid that, we'll make sure that through amendments it doesn't happen," Naqvi said.

The Standing Committee on Social Policy was supposed to meet for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill Monday and Tuesday, but it was cancelled so the government could make "key technical amendments," although Naqvi kept mum on the details. Should it pass, Bill 28 would update parentage laws so that same-sex couples wouldn't be forced to adopt their own children and swaps out traditional terms "mother" and "father" for gender-neutral markers.

"We needed some time because we're working ... on some key technical amendments, so it's just making sure we get the job done right. I won't go into details, but we want to make sure that if there were any unintended consequences, that we deal with them in our amendments," Naqvi said.

The casual hook-up concern was raised at committee hearings last week by the Ontario Association of Private Adoption Professionals, comprised of adoption agencies, lawyers and social workers.

"The way this is worded now, we would require any putative father, any biological father, no matter what his relationship, however casual the relationship between the parents, whether he was known or ascertainable, whether his identity was even ascertainable, whether he was prepared to acknowledge that he was the father of the child – this could even be a sexual assault," to give consent for the purposes of adoption, as well as protection proceedings, spokeswoman **Cheryl Appell** told the committee.

"It says that all biological fathers are fathers," she added.

Social conservatives that spoke during committee hearings, including anti-sex-ed crusader **Queenie Yu** and Canada Christian College president **Charles McVety** have also raised concerns about a lack of public consultation. In particular, Yu is worried about the bill's impact on ethnic communities and accused the government of trying to speedily ram the legislation through the house. McVety's committee appearance prompted NDP MPP **Cheri DiNovo**, a longtime advocate of equal rights for LGBT parents, to [say a little prayer](#).

Both Yu and McVety have [lamented](#) that swapping out "mother" and "father" for gender-neutral markers undermines the traditional family.

However all three parties on the committee appear to be in support the legislation.

The committee will meet again next week for clause-by-clause consideration.

To contact the reporter on this story: snanji@qpbriefing.com



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