

STATEMENT BY THE ONTARIO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (OCC):

There has been much discussion in recent weeks about the unintended consequences of Bill 148, the legislation that introduced a higher minimum wage in Ontario and extended numerous labour and employment standards provisions.

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) and our members understand the intent of the legislation. But we also understand that evidence-based public policy must be fundamental in a properly functioning democracy.

For months, the OCC has forewarned that any objective analysis of these changes will lead to significant job loss, a 50% increase in inflation over and above what would otherwise be expected in the next few years, and an acceleration toward automation.

Now we are seeing these consequences come to fruition as businesses take extra-ordinary actions.

The implementation was too much too fast. It is clear that the Government of Ontario must take further action to mitigate the unintended consequences of Bill 148.

We will continue to call on government to provide offsets in the upcoming budget that will help employers manage this drastic increase in labour costs. We must ensure that we are doing all we can so that Ontario remains competitive.

Let's lower the rhetoric, on all sides, and ensure that we are collectively helping to shape an inclusive and shared prosperity here in Ontario.

