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# Ontario Government Cancels Planned Minimum Wage Increase

***The Ontario government says it will not proceed with a planned increase to the minimum wage that was to kick in next year.***

The minimum wage will remain at \$14 an hour rather than rising to \$15 as planned. The increase, which would have taken effect on January 1, 2019, was announced back in May of 2017 as part of then-Premier Kathleen Wynne's Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, known as Bill 148.

Current Premier Doug Ford is working to repeal Bill 148. The bill mandates equal pay for part-time and temporary workers doing the same job as full-time employees and increases vacation entitlements to three weeks after a worker has been with their company for five years. It also requires employees to be paid for three hours if their shift is cancelled within 48 hours of its start, and expands personal emergency leave to 10 days per year, two of them paid.

As part of Bill 148, Ontario's minimum wage increased from \$11.60 to \$14 an hour on January 1st, 2018, drawing complaints from businesses and prompting some to raise prices, cut staff hours and reduce employee benefits to offset the cost.

"The increase of 20 per cent this year was a lot for businesses to absorb so we're putting a pause on the minimum wage," Labour Minister Laurie Scott said. The minister would not say whether the minimum wage would eventually go up, saying only that the government was conducting consultations on the issue.

She also said the government was reviewing the labour reform legislation brought in by the Liberals, which included the wage increase. Some business groups opposed changes in the law and have asked the government to repeal parts of it.

While the minimum wage increase has been paused for 2019, Scott said that there will be some tax breaks available for Ontarians earning less than \$30,000 per year. During his campaign, Premier Doug Ford vowed to eliminate provincial income tax for anyone earning minimum wage, however, the government is still working out which tax breaks will be available or when they'll come into effect.

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