

Manitoba PC Caucus Review

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PROGRESS FOR MANITOBA IN SPRING SITTING OF THE LEGISLATURE

June 1, 2018

The Manitoba government moved forward with several major initiatives to rebuild the Manitoba economy, fix the province's finances, and repair the services Manitobans count on, with the majority of the government's spring legislative agenda passing on Thursday, May 31.

Government House Leader Cliff Cullen noted major legislative achievements in this session, which include:

- passing The Sustainable Watershed Act, Manitoba's comprehensive strategy on watershed management marks a momentous first step in the Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan,
- expanding protections for whistleblowers in the provincial public sector and allowing municipalities to adopt the same standards for municipal workers,
- strengthening public safety measures following the federal legalization of cannabis, including measures to combat drugged driving and cannabis smoking in outdoor public places,
- restoring political accountability by ensuring employment contracts and severance payments for political staff are publicly disclosed, and,
- reducing red tape through consolidation of the heavy truck licensing system and allowing municipalities to set speed limits on municipal roads.

LAGASSÉ'S RAILWAY SAFETY WEEK BILL PASSES, WILL BECOME LAW

The Rail Safety Awareness Week Act, a private member's bill introduced earlier this spring by Dawson Trail MLA Bob Lagassé, was passed by the Manitoba Legislative Assembly on third reading. Bill 221 will establish an annual Rail Safety Awareness Week in the week of the last Friday in September.

"Rail Safety Awareness Week will improve public education on railway safety and help reduce railway-related injuries and tragedies in Manitoba," said Lagassé. "I want to thank everyone who supported this bill, and to encourage all Manitobans to help improve railway safety by taking part in Manitoba's first annual Rail Safety Awareness Week this coming September."

Bill 221 will make Manitoba the first province to put Rail Safety Awareness Week into legislation in an effort to reduce railway-related accidents.

There were 19 railway incidents resulting in three deaths and five serious injuries in Manitoba last year. Across the country in 2017, there were 222 railway incidents including 72 deaths and 44 serious injuries.

GUILLEMARD BRINGS IN CHANGES TO UMSU LEGISLATION

Sarah Guillemard, MLA for Fort Richmond, is pleased that her private member's bill, the University of Manitoba Students' Union (UMSU) Amendment Act, was passed by the Legislative Assembly on third reading this week and will become law this year.

"This bill includes amendments to bring greater transparency and autonomy to the University of Manitoba Students' Union, and gives its members a stronger voice in union decisions on matters such as UMSU fee increases," said Guillemard, whose constituency is home to the U of M's Fort Garry Campus. "The legislative changes also increase accountability in not only the students' membership fees, but in UMSU's services."

Bill 300, the UMSU Amendment Act, is poised to receive Royal Assent before the legislative session ends this fall.

UMSU's leadership asked our Progressive Conservative government to make these changes to the private legislation, in order to make the act's language more inclusive of all student members. The bill's passage has come despite the opposition NDP's initial efforts to stall the petitioned legislation against UMSU's wishes.

Our government is following our mandate to bring increased accountability and democracy to unions, and is listening to the concerns of post-secondary students.

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RED TAPE TASK FORCE, CO-CHAIR BY MARTIN, PRESENTS REPORT

The provincial government has now received and is implementing recommendations from the Manitoba Red Tape Reduction Task Force report, Finance Minister Cameron Friesen announced this week.

"Reducing red tape is about improving access to government services, ensuring effective public policy, rebuilding the provincial economy and getting better results," said Friesen.

The Red Tape Reduction Task Force consulted with Manitobans to identify the top five regulatory requirements that create red-tape barriers in sectors including agriculture and food-processing, non-profit organizations, land development and transportation. Regulatory requirements are the steps required of businesses, non-profits, local governments and private citizens to access government programs or services, conduct business or participate in regulated activities.

"Manitobans shared hundreds of situations where regulatory requirements not only create burdens for their organizations, but actually make the problems they were supposed to solve worse," said Shannon Martin, MLA for Morris, and task force co-chair.

The report recommends 20 priorities for reducing red tape and provides additional areas of concern for government review. In Manitoba, small- and medium-sized businesses alone spend an estimated \$1.2 billion annually to comply with federal, provincial and municipal regulations. It is estimated that 30 percent of this, or \$360 million, is spent on red tape.

For more information on red tape reduction in Manitoba, visit:

www.gov.mb.ca/reduceredtape/index.html.