

MEDIA RELEASE

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Weak amendments to McGuinty omnibus budget bill facilitate sweeping privatization:

Citizens' groups call for privatization clause to be struck down

Toronto – The Council of Canadians and Ontario Health Coalition are outraged that despite promises made by Ontario's government, proposed amendments are too weak to stop the mass privatization of public services in Budget Bill 55, Schedule 28.

Proposed amendments do not remove wording from Schedule 28, subsection 10 that would allow for the privatization of broader public services. "Despite promises from Finance Minister Dwight Duncan the McGuinty government continues to grant itself extraordinary powers to privatize public services ranging from health care, education, water services, and municipal and provincial services," says Natalie Mehra of the Ontario Health Coalition. "To put it into context, the proposed amendments are so weak that they still facilitate potentially the largest privatization in Ontario's history. Amendments are not enough. Schedule 28 should be struck down in its entirety."

The amendments to Bill 55 were due Tuesday, June 12 at 6 p.m. Until then, the public was not able to see those amendments. "Without having time for proper legal analysis, Ontarians and their MPPs will simply not have the opportunity understand the consequences of an Act that is being pushed through the legislature. This is a violation of democracy. Ontarians have a right to have a say on government plans to privatize public services," says Maude Barlow, Chairperson of the Council of Canadians. "The McGuinty government misrepresented their intentions for this Schedule to Ontarians."

With amendments, Schedule 28 will still allow the sale of broader public services to for-profit companies. "Public services should never be delivered with profit as a primary motive," says Barlow. "Ontarians deserve the best water, schools and hospitals and they shouldn't have to pay more to get less."

The Council of Canadians and the Ontario Health Coalition are calling on the NDP and the PC opposition parties to put the interests of Ontarians first and strike down Schedule 28.

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