

**MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT TO INTRODUCE APOLOGY LEGISLATION**

October 7, 2008

Under current law, people and organizations can be reluctant to apologize for an accident or wrongdoing, out of fear that the apology will be used against them as evidence of liability in a civil court proceeding. This reluctance to apologize harms the relations between people and can lead to bitterness and increased litigation.

Being able to offer a sincere apology without legal consequences can help resolve disputes and reduce the number of lengthy, costly lawsuits. For a victim, a timely apology is often an important step in the healing process and a potential springboard to discussions to settle disputes.

**THE APOLOGY ACT**

This Apology Act would, if passed, apply to all Ontarians, as well as courts, tribunals, arbitrators and other judicial and quasi-judicial bodies. It would apply to legal proceedings, such as civil lawsuits, administrative proceedings and professional discipline matters.

This legislation would help the effectiveness of the justice system by removing barriers to settlement discussions. In the health care setting, the proposed legislation would, if passed, contribute to improving communication and relations between patients and health care professionals.

The proposed legislation would also promote humane and civil personal relationships, and contribute to stronger communities and a higher quality of life for all Ontarians.

The Apology Act, if passed, would not affect a victim's right to sue, or their right to compensation for harm done. It would not allow a wrongdoer to escape the consequences of the wrong, nor would it affect any criminal or provincial offences prosecution where the accused person has apologized.

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Sheamus Murphy, Ministry of the Attorney General,  
Minister's Office, 416-326-1785  
Brendan Crawley, Ministry of the Attorney General,  
Communications Branch, 416-326-2210  
Steve Erwin, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care,  
Minister's Office, 416-326-3986  
Mark Nesbitt, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care,  
Communications Branch, 416-314-6197

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