

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – SEPTEMBER 18, 2006

ENDORSEMENT OF BILL 124, FAIR ACCESS TO REGULATED PROFESSIONS ACT

Recommendation

Councillor Tony Carella and Regional Councillor Mario Ferri recommend that Council endorse Bill 124, the *Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act*, to permit internationally trained Ontario residents to practice their respective professions in a timely fashion.

Economic Impact

Nil

Purpose

To express support for those residents of the City of Vaughan who are currently unable to practice those professions for which they were trained outside Canada, and whose situation will be rectified through the passage of the *Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act*.

Background - Analysis and Options

The inability of foreign trained professionals to practice in Ontario has been called one of the last vestiges of anti-immigrant prejudice left in the province, disguised as concern over a supposed "fall in standards" if such professionals are allowed to practice in Ontario. The fact is that professional standards are as high in foreign jurisdictions as they are in Ontario, language barriers can be surmounted through profession-specialized English as a Second Language courses, and Canadian experience equivalency programs. Bill 124 provides for a variety of means of facilitating the transition of immigrant professionals into Ontario's professions, and is long-overdue. As one of the GTA municipalities with a growing number of immigrant professionals who will be helped by this legislation, it is appropriate that Council express its support to the Government of Ontario for this measure.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

Conclusion

Bill 124 is a long-overdue attempt to facilitate entrance into Ontario professions by the foreign trained, many of whom live in the City of Vaughan, and otherwise will be delayed in contributing their professional expertise for the benefit of other Canadians.

Attachments

Breaking Down Barriers for Skilled Newcomers: What You Need to Know About Bill 124, the Proposed Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006

Report prepared by:

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor Tony Carella and Regional Councillor Mario Ferri

Helping Newcomers Succeed in Ontario

In addition to the proposed *Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006*, the Ontario government has a comprehensive plan for newcomer success.

To date:

- More than \$34 million has been invested in over 60 **bridge training projects** to help thousands of newcomers work in over 100 trades and professions.
- The first provincial **internship program** for the internationally trained will be created in the fall of 2006. Newcomers with a minimum of three years international work experience will be placed for six-month assignments within the Ontario Public Service and Crown Agencies.
- Internationally trained professionals are getting help to work in their fields sooner through an investment in a program that will provide **loans** of up to \$5,000 per person to cover assessment, training and exam costs.
- www.OntarioImmigration.ca was launched to provide information on the job market, how to find work in specific fields, settlement information for different communities and even how to get a driver's licence.

Breaking Down Barriers for Skilled Newcomers

What you need to know about Bill 124

Proposed Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006

For more information

about the proposed

Fair Access to Regulated

Professions Act, 2006 and other

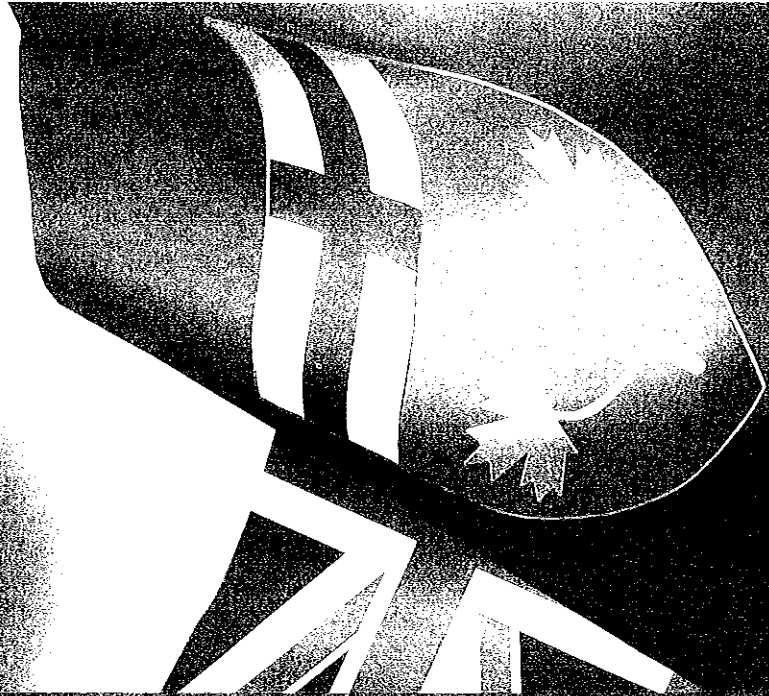
ways the Ontario government is

helping newcomers succeed,

please visit:

www.citizenship.gov.on.ca

www.OntarioImmigration.ca



Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration



The Ontario government is moving to **break down barriers** and help internationally trained individuals put their skills and experience to work in Ontario.

On June 8, 2006, the Ontario government introduced legislation, the proposed **Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006**, which, if passed, would help newcomers work in their field.

First legislation of its kind in Canada

If passed, Bill 124 would help ensure professional regulatory bodies adopt **fair and transparent admission and licensure** practices and would require them to:

- Review current requirements for registration, including academic credentials and work experience
- Provide information about documents and credentials required for application, and alternatives if applicants can't obtain documentation for reasons beyond their control
- Provide complete information on how the registration process works including the amount of time it might take to get a decision, fees, and criteria for acceptance
- Decide within a reasonable time whether an application is successful
- Provide written reasons for the decision
- Provide an internal review or appeal process for registration decisions
- Ensure staff who make decisions on registration, internal review or appeals are trained and knowledgeable about the processes.

Access Centre for Internationally Trained Individuals

If passed, Bill 124 would create a new one-stop centre providing a range of services to assist internationally trained individuals seeking to enter regulated professions. Services would be provided person, and via email, online and phone.

The Access Centre, the first of its kind in Ontario, would:

- Provide information about how to obtain a licer or admission to a regulated profession
- Become a centre of excellence for information & assistance on internships and mentorships for newcomers.

Fairness Commissioner

If passed, Bill 124 would also create a Fairness Commissioner who would be responsible for assessing the registration practices of regulatory bodies based on their obligations under the legislation. This would be done through annual reports and audits of registration practices of the regulatory bodies.