

Jones says minimum wage not keeping manufacturing jobs

By Bill Rea

Ontario's minimum wage is going up June 1, but Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones didn't think it really addresses employment problems.

The government announced last week the minimum wage will go from \$10.25 to \$11 per hour. This reflects the rise in the Consumer Price Index since the last minimum wage increase in 2010.

Increasing the minimum wage will help improve the standard of living for hardworking people across the province, while ensuring that businesses have the predictability necessary to plan for the future, Premier Kathleen Wynne commented.

Our government is focused on helping hardworking Ontarians by ensuring fairness for people living on minimum wage and predictability for business, remarked labour Minister Yasir Naqvi. By establishing a transparent, fair and responsible method of setting minimum wage in the future, we are taking the politics out of minimum wage. This will provide fairness for Ontario workers and their families and predictability and transparency for our businesses to remain competitive and succeed.

Jones observed raising the minimum wage doesn't require legislation, so she will not get the chance to vote on this.

I believe it's focusing on the wrong side, she said.

She added it would be more productive to have the government look more at how to keep manufacturing jobs in Ontario. She said she's not heard of anyone who's lost a manufacturing job who would be excited about minimum wage, and there are a lot of professionals who are struggling to find work in their fields because so many of these positions have gone elsewhere.

You really haven't accomplished the goal of getting more people working in Ontario, Jones said.

The province's Minimum Wage Advisory Panel held 10 public consultations across the province and received more than 400 submissions from organizations, businesses, and individual Ontarians. The panel also recommended that the Province perform a full review of its minimum wage rates and revision process every five years.