

## PARSA'S PERSPECTIVE: February Update

By Michael Parsa, MPP

Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill

In the past few months I, along with my caucus colleagues, have been criss-crossing the province to meet with small businesses and small business owners to discuss ways in which we can reduce red tape and open Ontario for business!

The message that we heard time and time again was that burdensome over regulation and red tape was hurting small businesses and making Ontario's economy unattractive for business.

Ontario currently has 380,000 pieces of burdensome red tape that have worked to stifle and hinder our economy. This is truly a mind-boggling number, especially when we compare it to the less than 167,000 regulations that British Columbia has.

It is for these reasons our government has committed itself and mandated to reduce red-tape in Ontario by twenty-five percent, over the next three years, so that Ontario can once again reclaim its place as the engine of Canada's economy!

Through our province-wide consultations we also heard that Ontario was facing many other systemic issues that have been hindering its economic growth and prosperity. One of the concerns we heard over and over again was that many parts of Ontario are facing a severe skills shortage. In other words, many small businesses in rural Ontario have an overwhelming demand for talented skilled tradespeople that are simply not available to them.

We heard this message over and over again, and it was evident that Ontario was facing a great shortage of skilled tradespeople, a problem that would only become worse as 85,000 skilled tradespeople are set to retire over the next 10 years.

Following these consultations, our government identified two restrictive factors that were hindering the supply of skilled tradespeople; firstly, the Ontario College of Trades, and secondly, the journeyman-to-apprentice ratio.

Through the passing of Bill 47, our government took the decisive steps of eliminating these staggering hindrances by scrapping the Ontario College of Trades and adjusting the journeyman-to-apprentice ratio to a one-to-one model. By removing these restrictive barriers Ontario businesses that are urgently in need of skilled tradespeople will have greater access to skilled and qualified tradespeople that they need.

As the Legislative Assembly resumes in the coming weeks, our government will continuously be looking to find ways to make life more affordable for Ontarians. We currently have an action packed legislative session ahead of us, and I for one cannot wait to get to work.

As always, I would like to end off by saying, I am here to serve the residents of Aurora - Oak Ridges ? Richmond Hill.

If you are a resident of this riding and require assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out, and I will do everything in my powers to help you in any way I can.