

MUNICIPAL ELECTION ACT AMENDMENTS **SUMMARY INFORMATION BULLETIN**

The summary detail provided on this bulletin is only as a reference. For full review of the changes, the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, in its entirety should be consulted.

BILL 218 (Supporting Ontario's Recovery and Municipal Elections Act, 2020) AND Bill 254 (Protecting Ontario's Elections Act)

The Province amended the MEA through Bill 218 making mandatory changes regarding voting methods, vote counting equipment, and election timetables. In particular, Bill 218 removes the option to hold ranked ballot elections in Ontario by repealing sub-sections 41.1 and 41.2 of the MEA.

Bill 218 also moves nomination day in a regular election from the fourth Friday in July to the third Friday in August, moves the date for establishing procedures and forms for the use of voting and vote-counting equipment or alternative voting method to June 1st and amends Section 42 of the MEA to allow bylaws authorizing the use of vote-counting equipment and alternative voting methods to be passed on or before May 1st in the year of an election. Bill 218 also implements new legislative protections by establishing limited liability protection for good faith efforts of individuals and organizations working to preserve the health and safety during the pandemic.

Bill 254 makes changes regarding nomination submissions and rules regarding registered third party advertisers. Specifically, Bill 254 allows Clerks to put conditions in place that would allow candidates and third party advertisers to submit their nomination and registration forms electronically (endorsements must still be collected or original signatures), allows a registered third party advertiser to withdraw their registration before voting day and places provisions that automatically withdraws the advertising campaigns of registered third party advertisers if they file a nomination to run for office.

CORRUPT PRACTICE OFFENCE

The MEA expanded its provisions on corrupt practices. It is an offence to offer, give, lend, or promise or agree to give or lend any valuable consideration, in connection with the exercise or non-exercise of an elector's vote. Bill 181 revised the MEA to include a similar provision with respect to influencing a person's decision to run for office, not to run for office or withdraw from running for office. Penalties for conviction include removal from office and ineligibility to run for office in the next two election cycles, among prescribed in other Acts.