

## Municipal Code of Conduct Legislation (Bill 241)

*13 December 2024*

OMAA welcomes the introduction of legislation aimed at strengthening local governance in Ontario. This initiative is a crucial step toward enhancing accountability and transparency within municipal governments.

“Addressing harassment within municipal government is crucial to fostering a healthy work environment. This proposed legislation aligns with our call for comprehensive reforms that hold elected officials accountable for their conduct, particularly in relation to harassment and discrimination. By ensuring that all members of municipal councils are subject to effective disciplinary measures, this legislation aims to mitigate the power imbalances that currently exist between elected officials and municipal staff.

— OMAA Vice President Michael Di Lullo

OMAA continues to advocate for specific provisions that mandate training in anti-harassment and discrimination, as well as the establishment of clear mechanisms for reporting and addressing misconduct. Bill 241 seeks to do this plus enable standardization of municipal codes of conduct and integrity commissioner investigation processes as well as create an oversight role for the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario. The details on the code, training, and reporting have yet to be determined—but are welcome steps as the current environment is fragmented and disjointed.

Bill 241 also establishes a mechanism to remove and disqualify from office members of council for the most serious violations. OMAA is pleased to see a range of penalties that escalates and reflects the severity of the situation. However, we maintain that ICs and/or municipalities should be able to apply to a judge to remove a sitting member in the most egregious cases and not have this subject to a vote at Council as this risks politicizing the issue and re-traumatizing the victim(s).

OMAA looks forward to collaborating with the government to ensure that it effectively addresses the critical issues of harassment and accountability in the municipal sector. Together, we can create a safer, more respectful environment for all municipal employees and enhance public trust in local governance.