

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



Assemblée  
législative  
de l'Ontario

1ST SESSION, 44TH LEGISLATURE, ONTARIO  
4 CHARLES III, 2025

# Bill 78

## **An Act establishing a Commissioner for Democratic Rights**

**Mr. C. Glover**

**Private Member's Bill**

1st Reading      November 25, 2025

2nd Reading

3rd Reading

Royal Assent



#### EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Bill enacts the *Commissioner for Democratic Rights Act, 2025*. The Act provides that there shall be a Commissioner for Democratic Rights who is an officer of the Assembly. The Assembly shall, by order, appoint the Commissioner. An order appointing the Commissioner shall be made only after, unless decided otherwise by unanimous consent of the Assembly, the person to be appointed has been selected by unanimous agreement of a panel composed of one member of the Assembly from each recognized party, chaired by the Speaker who is a non-voting member. The Commissioner shall hold office for a five-year term and may be reappointed for one further term. The Commissioner may appoint a Deputy Commissioner.

The Commissioner for Democratic Rights shall monitor barriers to voting; review legislation, regulations and government actions with respect to their effects on democratic rights and processes; review and report on provincial interventions into local government structures, councils and elections and promote civic education, encourage democratic participation and support special reports to the Assembly regarding the state of democracy in Ontario. The Commissioner may make recommendations for legislative or policy reforms to strengthen democratic processes and to ensure fair and equal access to voting for all Ontarians.

In relation to these functions, the Commissioner for Democratic Rights may examine any person on oath, may conduct an inquiry within the meaning of section 33 of the *Public Inquiries Act, 2009* and may conduct investigations.

## **An Act establishing a Commissioner for Democratic Rights**

His Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, enacts as follows:

### **Commissioner for Democratic Rights**

**1** (1) There shall be a Commissioner for Democratic Rights who is an officer of the Assembly.

#### **Appointment**

(2) The Assembly shall, by order, appoint the Commissioner for Democratic Rights.

#### **Same, conditions**

(3) An order appointing the Commissioner for Democratic Rights shall be made only after, unless decided otherwise by unanimous consent of the Assembly, the person to be appointed has been selected by unanimous agreement of a panel composed of one member of the Assembly from each recognized party, chaired by the Speaker who is a non-voting member.

#### **Office of the Commissioner for Democratic Rights**

**2** (1) The Office of the Commissioner for Democratic Rights consists of the Commissioner for Democratic Rights, the Deputy Commissioner for Democratic Rights and such other employees as the Commissioner may require for the proper conduct of the business of the Office.

#### **Remuneration and expenses**

(2) The Legislature may determine the remuneration and expenses of any person referred to in subsection (1).

#### **Appropriation required**

(3) Subsection (2) does not apply unless money has been appropriated by the Legislature for the purpose of that subsection.

#### **Term of office**

**3** (1) The Commissioner for Democratic Rights shall hold office for a term of five years and may be reappointed for one further five-year term in accordance with subsections 1 (2) and (3).

#### **Continuation in office**

(2) By order of the Assembly, the Commissioner for Democratic Rights may continue to hold office after the expiry of their term of office until a successor is appointed.

#### **Restrictions re other work, etc.**

**4** (1) The Commissioner for Democratic Rights shall not be a member of the Assembly and shall not, without prior approval by the Assembly, hold any other office or employment.

#### **Exception**

(2) Despite subsection (1), the Commissioner for Democratic Rights may hold more than one office to which he or she has been appointed by the Assembly.

#### **Deputy Commissioner**

**5** (1) The Commissioner for Democratic Rights may appoint a person to act as Deputy Commissioner for Democratic Rights.

#### **Same**

(2) The Deputy Commissioner for Democratic Rights, under the direction of the Commissioner for Democratic Rights, shall assist in the exercise of the powers and the performance of the duties of the Commissioner and, in the absence or inability to act of the Commissioner, shall act in the place of the Commissioner.

#### **Functions**

**6** (1) The Commissioner for Democratic Rights shall perform the following functions:

1. Monitor barriers to voting.
2. Review legislation, regulations and government actions with respect to their effects on democratic rights and processes.

3. Review and report on provincial interventions into local government structures, councils and elections.
4. Promote civic education, encourage democratic participation and support special reports to the Assembly regarding the state of democracy in Ontario.

**Same**

(2) The Commissioner for Democratic Rights may make recommendations for legislative or policy reforms to strengthen democratic processes and to ensure fair and equal access to voting for all Ontarians.

**Powers**

**7** (1) The Commissioner for Democratic Rights has the following powers in relation to the functions set out in section 6:

1. The Commissioner may examine any person on oath.
2. The Commissioner may conduct an inquiry within the meaning of section 33 of the *Public Inquiries Act, 2009*.
3. The Commissioner may conduct investigations.

**Investigations**

(2) Section 18 of the *Ombudsman Act* applies to an investigation under paragraph 3 of subsection (1), with necessary modifications.

**Commencement**

**8** This Act comes into force on the day that is 12 months after the day this Act receives Royal Assent.

**Short title**

**9** The short title of this Act is the *Commissioner for Democratic Rights Act, 2025*.