

COMPASSIONATE CARE LEAVE AMENDMENTS TO THE *EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ACT, 2000* RECEIVE FIRST READING

On April 13, 2004, the Ontario government introduced a bill to amend the *Employment Standards Act, 2000* ("ESA"). If the bill is passed by the legislature, employees would be entitled to up to eight weeks of unpaid job protected time off work to care for seriously ill family members. Employees would be entitled to the time off provided they make a request in writing and produce a certificate from a qualified health practitioner. The certificate must state that the family member has a serious medical condition with a significant risk of death occurring within a period of 26 weeks. Employees may also be entitled to a further leave of absence if the family member does not die within the 26 week period. Entitlement to the leave is also in addition to any entitlement to leave under the emergency leave provisions of the *ESA*.