Human Resources Legislative Update

Ontario 2012 Budget Bill Introduced

Date: March 30, 2012

On March 27, 2012, the Ontario government introduced Bill 55, *Strong Action for Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2012* ("Bill 55"), omnibus legislation designed to implement a number of the proposals contained in its 2012 Budget, "Strong Action For Ontario."

In part, Bill 55 proposes amendments to reform the interest arbitration process in Ontario that would affect a variety of employment-related statutes, including the *Ambulance Services Collective Bargaining Act, 2001*, the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997*, the *Hospital Labour Disputes Arbitration Act* and the *Police Services Act*, among others. The amendments would:

- require submissions from the parties to the arbitration;
- require written reasons from the arbitrator upon the request of either party;
- create a 12-month time limit on the issuance of an arbitration award (subject to limited extension in exceptional circumstances); and
- permit the Ontario Labour Relations Board to issue an award if the arbitration award is not rendered in accordance with the prescribed time limits.