

Wynne appoints Halton MPP Minister of Women's Issues

By **Graeme Frisque**
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Premier Kathleen Wynne named Halton MPP Indira Naidoo-Harris as Minister of Women's Issues in her latest cabinet shuffle announced Thursday (Jan. 12).

Naidoo-Harris, who is serving in her first term at Queen's Park, will also head the Ministry Responsible for Early Years and Child Care, building on her previous role as Associate Minister of Education. She also served as Associate Minister of Finance between June and August last year before the position was eliminated.

Indira Naidoo-Harris takes on the new portfolio of Minister of Women's Issues. She will lead the implementation of the province's gender wage gap strategy and coordinate ongoing efforts to build gender equality across Ontario, said the government in a release.

Born in South Africa and raised in Alberta, Naidoo-Harris lives in Milton with her husband and their

two children. A journalist before beginning her political career, she graduated from the University of Lethbridge and started her career with NBC and PBS before moving to Ontario in the 1990s.

She worked for the CBC until assuming office after defeating long-time Halton MPP Ted Chudleigh in the 2014 election. Chudleigh, who served under the Progressive Conservative banner, was an MPP for Halton since 1990.

Also moving is MPP for Sault Ste. Marie Marie-France Lalonde, will move from Minister of Government and Consumer Services to replace the now retired David Oraziotti as Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Lalonde will also continue to serve as Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs.

Ontario Labour Minister and Oakville MPP, Kevin Flynn, had assumed the duties of Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services in the interim before Lalonde's appointment

Thursday.

Peterborough MPP Jeff Leal will take over as Minister Responsible for Small Business and will retain his current role as Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Mississauga East Cookville MPP Dipika Damerla, who previously served as Minister Responsible for Seniors, will now assume the office of Minister of Seniors Affairs, a new standalone ministry.

Tracy MacCharles, representative for Pickering Scarborough East, will replace Lalonde as at the head of the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services and will retain her role as Minister Responsible for Accessibility.

The shuffle, revealed during a swearing-in ceremony at Queen's Park Thursday morning, reduces the size of the province's cabinet to 29 ministers from 30.

The Premier's last cabinet shake-up last June saw the addition of seven new positions and increased the number of cabinet ministers from 23 to 30.



This month, Halton MPP Indira Naidoo-Harris was appointed the Minister of Women's Issues by Premier Kathleen Wynne.

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