



## Petitioning the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Residents of the Province of Ontario have the right to petition their legislators at Queen's Park.

A petition is a request that the Parliament of Ontario take some specific action (or refrain from taking some action) to redress a public grievance. The action requested must be within the scope of jurisdiction of the Ontario Legislative Assembly, and the request must be clear, temperate, proper and respectful.

### Form and Content

A petition must be addressed to either the Parliament, Legislature or Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Petitions addressed to the Government of Ontario or to a particular minister cannot be accepted.

Petitions must be written, typewritten or printed, and it is recommended that the paper be standard letter or legal size.

If a petition consists of more than one sheet of signatures, the text of the petition must appear at the top of *every* sheet. Each person petitioning the Parliament of Ontario must print his or her name and address and sign his or her name under the text of the petition.

A petition must contain *original* signatures only, written directly on the face of the petition and not pasted or transferred to it. Petitions must be free of erasures or insertions. Petitioners must be residents of the Province of Ontario; it is acceptable for petitioners to be under the age of majority.

### Presentation

A petition may only be presented by a Member of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it must comply with the requirements above before the member may present it.

It is not the practice in the Ontario Legislature for the Speaker or a minister of the Crown to present a petition. Petitions received by a minister of the Crown are usually presented by the Chief Government Whip.

A petition may be presented in 2 ways: –

- at any time during a Session by an MPP filing it with the Clerk of the House (for such purposes; a letter should be sent to the Clerk by the MPP filing the petition requesting that the enclosed original petition, with the MPP's signature affixed to it, be filed); or

- by an MPP from his or her place in the House during Routine Proceedings under the proceeding "Petitions". The MPP may make a brief statement only, summarizing the contents of the petition and indicating the number of signatures attached to the petition. No debate is allowed on the presentation of the petition. The proceeding "Petitions" is limited to 15 minutes on any Sessional day.

The petition will be numbered and recorded as a sessional paper and the subject-matter of the petition, and the name of the MPP who presented it, will be printed in the *Votes and Proceedings*. If the House is not meeting on the day on which the petition is presented the petition will be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings* of the next day on which the House meets.

Within 24 Sessional days of the day on which the presentation of the petition is recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*, the government is required to file a response to the petition with the Clerk of the House and to provide a copy of the response to the MPP who presented the petition. The response of the government is also noted in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

The signature of an MPP who presents a petition must be on the front sheet of the petition. It is recommended that the MPP's signature appear in the top left corner of the front sheet of the petition.

It is the responsibility of the petitioner(s) to arrange for a Member of the Legislative Assembly to present a petition; an MPP cannot be compelled to present a petition, and presentation of a petition by an MPP does not imply that he or she endorses the contents of the petition.

For further information, contact:

Procedural Services Branch  
House Documents Section  
99 Wellesley St. West, Room 1405,  
Whitney Block, Queen's Park  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A2

Telephone: 416-325-3500  
(Collect calls will be accepted)

TTY: 416-325-3538

Facsimile: 416-325-3505



# Standing Order 39 of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

## Petitions

### Presentation by filing with Clerk

39. (a) A petition to the House may be presented at any time during the Session by a member filing it with the Clerk of the House or in the manner set out in clause (b).

### Presentation in House

#### Member to summarize contents

(b) A member may present a petition in the House during the Routine Proceeding "Petitions". The member may make a brief statement summarizing the contents of the petition and indicating the number of signatures attached thereto.

### Petitions to be certified as to form

(c) No member may seek to present a petition unless it has previously been given to the Clerk of the Assembly who has examined it and certified that it is correct as to form and content.

### Same

(d) In order to be certified by the Clerk, every petition shall:

#### Form of address

(i) be addressed to the Parliament, Legislature or Legislative Assembly of Ontario;

#### Request for action

(ii) contain a clear, proper and respectful request that the House take some action within its authority;

#### No erasures or insertions

(iii) be written, typewritten or printed, without erasures or insertions;

#### Contents

(iv) have its request appear at the top of every sheet, if it consists of more than one sheet of signatures; and

#### Petitioners

(v) contain the names, addresses and original signatures written directly on the face of the petition and not pasted thereon or otherwise transferred to it.

### Members responsible for contents

(e) Every member presenting a petition shall ensure that the petition conforms with the Standing Orders.

### Signature of member required

(f) The signature of every member presenting a petition shall be affixed to the petition.

### No debate on presentation

(g) No debate shall be allowed on the presentation of a petition.

### Duration

(h) The period for "Petitions" shall be limited to 15 minutes.

### Response by government

(i) Within 24 Sessional days of its presentation, the government shall file a response to a petition with the Clerk of the House and shall provide a copy of the response to the member who presented the petition.