



## **SENIORS FOR SOCIAL ACTION (ONTARIO)**

### **INFORMATION BULLETIN - ADVOCACY**

# **THE MINISTRY OF LONG-TERM CARE STALLS A FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY COMMISSION ORDER**

**April 27, 2026**

On March 11, 2024, the Chair of Seniors for Social Action Ontario (SSAO) filed a Freedom of Information request asking for a copy of the current license for Southbridge Care Homes Port Perry Place, and any current documents related to the agreement for redevelopment of existing beds and expansion of existing beds in Port Perry.

She also asked for a copy of the current license for Southbridge Care Homes Hope Street Terrace, and any current documents related to the agreement for redevelopment of existing beds and expansion of existing beds in Port Hope.

This came as Southbridge was attempting to build in a heritage district in Port Hope over the strong objections of the local citizens. Port Hope Council voted, in June of 2023, to deny the permit required for demolition. Southbridge took the town to the Land Tribunal where it lost, and later withdrew its appeal of that decision (Municipality of Port Hope, 2026).

### **Freedom of Information Commission Issues an Order to Produce the Requested Record**

Fast forward to 2026 - after time extensions by the Commission for the Ministry of Long-Term Care to produce the requested documents, and successful appeals by SSAO - to January 29, 2026 when a Commission Adjudicator finally issued an order to “disclose the record at issue to the appellant by February 27, 2026.” The Adjudicator took the additional step of “verifying compliance” by “reserving the right to require the ministry to provide her with a copy of the record disclosed to the appellant upon request” (Order # PO-4781).

### **The Ministry Fails to Meet the Adjudicator's Deadline**

On March 24th the Chair of SSAO received a response from the Lead, Access and Privacy, Strategic HR & Corporate Management Branch in the Corporate Services Division of the Ministry of Long-Term Care stating that the "Ministry recognizes that IPC order PO-4781 required the ministry to provide you with the record at issue by February 27, 2026, and that this deadline was not met." The Ministry apologized for

taking so long and said it was sorry for the inconvenience. It also said it was "working towards getting a revised decision along with a release of the record in question....by April 17, 2026."

### **SSAO's Chair responds**

SSAO's Chair responded that she was concerned that this "extension" would prevent her from receiving the 84 pages of documents that she requested months before, and which the Adjudicator ordered released a month before, since the Premier now intended to prevent any information held by Ministers or his office from being released. She asked whether or not the information requested would be affected by the Bill proposed by the government if she had to wait an additional two months. If that was the case she asked that release of the record be expedited.

### **The Ministry of Long-Term Care Access and Privacy Official Responds**

The FOI official at the Ministry replied that not having seen the new legislation wording she could not comment on it. "That said, I cannot see where this would be included under any new section 12 provisions, should they pass." She stated that in her experience "this sort of record would not qualify if it needed to be deemed "held by a Minister" since "the Minister and the Ministry are two separate entities". She further expressed that it was not her office's intention to delay so that the records requested would be covered by that, claiming that hers was a one person office and she was "swamped".

In spite of an Order by an Adjudicator of the Commission, the only reassurance offered was "I will work to get it to you as quickly as I can."

### **The Ministry of Long-Term Care Access and Privacy Official Misses Another Deadline**

That April 17th deadline was also missed. When SSAO's Chair followed up yet again, this was the response by the Adjudication Review Officer at the Commission's Head Office on April 22, 2026: "I have been in contact with the ministry, and they have confirmed that they intend to comply with the order. The IPC does not have the express authority to file our orders with the court to enforce them. We suggest you continue to communicate with the ministry about obtaining the records ordered disclosed."

### **Analysis**

So after waiting almost two years for the requested record, the Commission suggests that the requester "continue to communicate with the ministry"?

All of this begs the question – why should citizens and organizations even attempt to obtain any information about the activities of their provincial government if the Ministries can flagrantly violate orders made by the Freedom of Information and

Protection of Privacy Commission's adjudicators? The Commission apparently has no means to enforce compliance by court order.

Why would any Ministry comply with a Commission Order knowing the Commission will not enforce that Order in court?

Why should citizens continue to pay, through their taxes, for a Commission that is essentially powerless?

What this means is that the Ministry of Long-Term Care is free to operate in the dark, spending millions in taxpayer funding on behind-closed-door deals with long-term care corporations with little to no scrutiny by the taxpayers footing the bill.

SSAO has now filed an Ombudsman complaint against the Ministry of Long-Term Care for its defiance of an Order by the Information and Privacy Commission. Let's see if the Ombudsman is willing to act, or if the Ministry will get away with failing to comply with an Order of the Commission.

### **Ford Government Guts Freedom of Information Law**

On April 23, 2026 the Ford government passed its Bill to "retroactively gut freedom-of-information laws" with the Opposition criticizing the government for rushing passage through without public hearings.

The Bill exempts the Premier, Cabinet Ministers, and their offices from Freedom of Information requests dating back to 1988 (Ferguson, 2026).

This means that another FOI request by SSAO for records held by the Ministers of Long-Term Care and Municipal Affairs and Housing concerning the granting of a Minister's Zoning Order (MZO) overriding the unanimous objections of Pickering Council (Callan and Snowdon, 2023), and license and bed expansions granted to Southbridge Orchard Villa in Pickering, where more than 80 residents died, the army had to be called in, and the local Medical Officer of Health ordered the hospital in to try to save lives, is now in jeopardy after over two years of stalling by those Ministries.

It is reasonable, at this point, to ask what is this government trying to hide?

**If this concerns you, you can write to the Premier voicing your objections at:**

[premier@ontario.ca](mailto:premier@ontario.ca) copy to his Chief of Staff [travis.kann2@ontario.ca](mailto:travis.kann2@ontario.ca) and Deputy Chief of Staff Issues Management [ryan.doyle2@ontario.ca](mailto:ryan.doyle2@ontario.ca) You can also call his office at **(416) 325-1941**

**Please be sure to copy the Leaders of the Opposition and your MPP:**

NDP - [mstiles-qp@ndp.on.ca](mailto:mstiles-qp@ndp.on.ca) Her Chief of Staff [cpettifor@ndp.on.ca](mailto:cpettifor@ndp.on.ca) and her Deputy Chief of Staff [cmancini@ndp.on.ca](mailto:cmancini@ndp.on.ca)

Liberals - [jfraser.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org](mailto:jfraser.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org) His Executive Assistant [ckropp@liberal.ola.org](mailto:ckropp@liberal.ola.org)

Green Party - [MSchreiner-CO@ola.org](mailto:MSchreiner-CO@ola.org) Chief of Staff [sbird@ola.org](mailto:sbird@ola.org)

**If you wish to also register your objections to the stalling by the Ministry of Long-Term Care of SSAO's Freedom of Information request (Order # PO-4781) you may do so by e-mailing:**

The Minister - [lcmminister@ontario.ca](mailto:lcmminister@ontario.ca) Natalia Kusendova-Bashta and her Chief of Staff [fadi.dawood2@ontario.ca](mailto:fadi.dawood2@ontario.ca) and E.A. to the Minister and Senior Operations Manager [Beberg.Khan@ontario.ca](mailto:Beberg.Khan@ontario.ca)

## REFERENCES

Callan, I., Snowden, F. (May 3, 2023). Ford government blasts Pickering council for rejecting long-term care home MZO request.  
<https://globalnews.ca/news/9669068/orchard-villa-long-term-care-home-mzo/>

Ferguson, R. (April 23, 2026). Ford government passes Bill gutting Ontario freedom-of-information access. Toronto Star. [https://www.thestar.com/politics/provincial/ford-government-passes-bill-gutting-ontario-freedom-of-information-access/article\\_bd943fc7-4689-4c7e-b6b5-7eddee83ed49.html](https://www.thestar.com/politics/provincial/ford-government-passes-bill-gutting-ontario-freedom-of-information-access/article_bd943fc7-4689-4c7e-b6b5-7eddee83ed49.html)

Municipality of Port Hope. (2026). Update on 65 Ward Street - Appeal Withdrawn.  
<https://www.porthope.ca/en/news/update-on-65-ward-street-appeal-withdrawn.aspx>