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## Ontario employers won't be able to make workers wear high heels if proposed bill passes

'Putting Your Best Foot Forward Act' would prohibit companies from requiring inappropriate shoes.



Former British Columbia premier Christy Clark wears high heels while taking questions from reporters after addressing the Council of Forest Industries convention in Vancouver, B.C., on Friday April 7, 2017. That month the B.C. government banned mandatory high heels in the workplace in a move to address "discriminatory" dress codes. An MPP hopes to do the same in Ontario. (DARRYL DYCK / THE CANADIAN PRESS)

By **KRISTIN RUSHOWY** Queen's Park Bureau  
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A Liberal MPP is putting her foot down with a new private members bill banning employers from forcing workers to wear high heels on the job.

The proposed legislation follows a move earlier this year in British Columbia, where, for health and safety reasons, heels can't be a mandatory part of any uniform.

Toronto MPP Cristina Martins (Davenport) will formally announce her "Putting Your Best Foot Forward Act" on Tuesday, which will make changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act and "prohibit employers from requiring an employee to wear footwear that is not appropriate to the protection required for their work.

**Read more:** [B.C. moves to ban employers from requiring high heels be worn at work](#)

## Ontario human rights boss warns against cleavage, short skirts in dress code

### B.C.'s ban on mandatory high heels at work a step in the right direction: Editorial

“As the law currently stands, footwear protections ... deal with confined spaces, construction projects, health care, residential facilities, industrial establishments, mines and mining plants which ensure workers who may be susceptible to specific hazards or foot injury in these workplaces are protected by these regulations,” said a release from Martins’ office.

“There is also a general duty for employers ... to take every precaution reasonable for the protection of a worker. The Putting Your Best Foot Forward Act 2017 would further enhance these protections for workers” and “specifically include protection for all workers ... from being required to wear unsafe footwear as part of dress and uniform codes.”

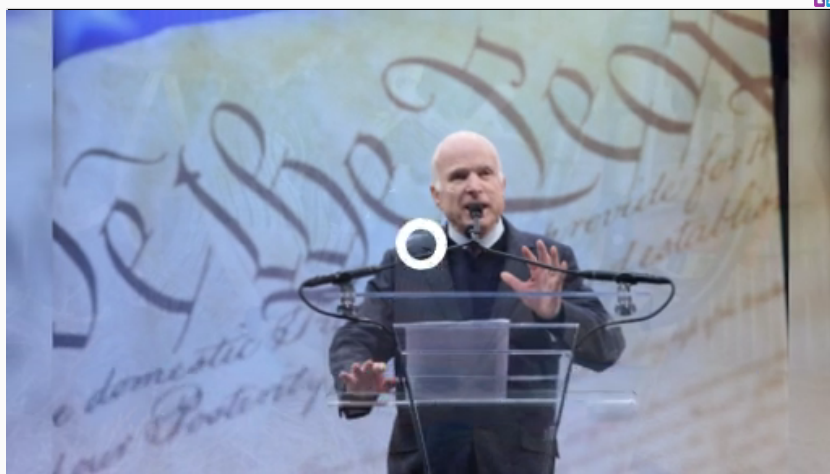
Martins’ bill already has the support of Ontario’s foot doctors, who say they see all kinds of injuries “caused by wearing footwear that is inappropriate or outright unsafe.

“Clinical evidence demonstrates that wearing high heeled shoes causes a much higher incidence of bunions, musculoskeletal pain and injury than those who do not wear high heels,” said James Hill, president of the Ontario Podiatric Medical Association.

“Podiatrists treat foot pain and deformities in women twice as often as foot disabilities in men, often due to having to wear high heels in their workplaces,” he said in a written release.

In the United Kingdom, a bill was introduced — though later rejected — after a woman was sent home without pay after showing up to work in flats.

And last year, the Ontario Human Rights Commission issued a report on gender-specific dress codes, saying women should not be forced to wear skimpy or tight uniforms and high heels, and noted the demand is typical for servers in bars and restaurants.



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