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Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Wednesday 19 October 2005

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mercredi 19 octobre 2005

**Standing committee on
government agencies**

Intended appointments

**Comité permanent des
organismes gouvernementaux**

Nominations prévues

Chair: Tim Hudak
Clerk: Susan Sourial

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT AGENCIESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES
ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUX

Wednesday 19 October 2005

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The committee met at 1005 in room 151.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Chair (Mr. Tim Hudak): Good morning, folks. I call the standing committee on government agencies to order. We have a number of subcommittee reports to get through; I think members have copies in their packages.

Our first order of business is the report of the subcommittee on committee business dated Thursday, September 29, 2005. Is there anybody to move its adoption?

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): I move its adoption.

The Chair: Any discussion? All in favour? Any opposed? Carried.

The second order of business is the report of the subcommittee on committee business dated Thursday, October 6, 2005.

Mr. Berardinetti: I move its adoption.

The Chair: Any discussion? Seeing none, all in favour? None opposed? It is carried.

Our third order of business is the report of the subcommittee on committee business dated Thursday, October 13, 2005.

Mr. Berardinetti: I move its adoption.

The Chair: Any discussion? All those in favour? Any opposed? That also is carried.

Also, we have an extension of deadlines pursuant to standing order 106(e)(11). Members will know we need unanimous consent to extend the 30-day deadline for consideration for the following intended appointee: Andi Shi. Andi Shi is an intended appointee to the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal.

I'm seeking unanimous consent to have this deadline extended to November 22, 2005. Any objections? Great. Thank you very much, folks.

I should also let you know that in your packages there is a notice of a withdrawal of a nominee as well. If there's any discussion, why don't we take that up under other business. But it looks like a relatively routine withdrawal of an intended appointee.

Let me also say, as we begin, thank you very much to my very capable Vice-Chair, Ms. Horwath, for filling in in my absence at the last meeting. I understand the meeting went very smoothly.

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): Any time.

The Chair: I'd suggest too, folks, that we save other business for the end of the session and move forward with our intended appointees.

Is there any other business?

Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing): Then we'll save it to the end; sure.

The Chair: Is that all right with everybody? Ms. Scott, that's good? OK.

So we'll move other business to the end of the agenda, and move on with our intended appointments.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

JEFFREY HAMBLIN

Review of intended appointment, selected by third party: Jeffrey Hamblin, intended appointee as member, Hamilton Community Care Access Centre.

The Chair: Our first interviewee is Jeffrey John Hamblin.

Mr. Hamblin, welcome to the committee. You're welcome to make any introductory comments: why you're interested in the position and your background. I think you know that we then have 10 minutes allocated for questions for all three parties, beginning with the third party. Any time you do take up comes from the government side. Please make your opening comments.

Mr. Jeffrey Hamblin: Thank you very much, Chair.

In order to demonstrate my experience to qualify as a public appointee, I think it's perhaps relevant for me to outline briefly to you the latter stages of my career.

After spending three and a half very happy years here in Toronto as manager, Canada, for the British Tourist Authority, I was transferred to Frankfurt, Germany, in September 1988, where initially I took responsibility for the authority's offices in Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Belgium. Two years later, still based in Frankfurt, I took on responsibility for all of the offices in Europe. In 1993, I was appointed executive vice president, the Americas, and moved back across the Atlantic to a base in New York with responsibility for offices in the USA, Canada and Latin America.

At the end of 1998, I was appointed chief executive of the organization and returned to head office in London. There, I had responsibility for the London operations as well as 23 offices around the world. With a budget from government of close to \$80 million and a turnover of close to double that, thanks to investment from the

private sector, I had responsibility for a staff complement of 550. I held that post until my retirement in 2002.

As accounting officer, I had full responsibility for the budget and reported to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport—the sponsoring government department.

So how does that experience translate into some potential for me to become a member of the board of directors at the Hamilton CCAC? I think that it would enable me to bring a sound operational background to the board, an intimate knowledge of significant budgets and their deployment, and an in-depth knowledge of risk management, crisis management—thanks to having to deal with foot-and-mouth disease and the aftermath of 9/11 on travel partners throughout the world—as well as public relations and government liaison at a senior level. I think it also enables me to offer strong human resources skills and a well developed customer focus.

Since retiring, I've chaired a series of strategy groups for both the public and private sectors of the tourism industry in Northern Ireland, and have chaired many meetings of a forum to integrate the public and private sector interests of the tourism industry in my home region, the northeast of England. Those roles demanded lots of diplomacy. They also enabled me to bring focus, as well as strategic thinking and strategic planning skills, to the table.

Finally, I consider myself to be a good listener, someone who is compassionate, and I feel that I'm a good team player.

Thank you for the opportunity to make those opening comments.

The Chair: Mr. Hamblin, thank you very much for your opening comments. We'll begin any questions with the third party.

1010

Ms. Horwath: Good morning, Mr. Hamblin. It's very nice to meet you. I want to start off by asking some basic questions about your political affiliation, if any, here in Canada. Do you have any political party that you're affiliated with?

Mr. Hamblin: Yes. I am a member of the Hamilton Mountain Liberal Association.

Ms. Horwath: Do you provide political monetary donations to the party?

Mr. Hamblin: Yes, modest ones.

Ms. Horwath: What raised your interest in this particular position? How did you learn about it?

Mr. Hamblin: I learned about it from a telephone conversation from a friend of mine who works in the constituency office of MPP Dr. Bountrogianni. She advised me that the Ministry of Health was looking for an increase in the number of board members of the Hamilton CCAC and suggested that if I was interested, I should perhaps look on the Web site. This I did, and that gave me an excellent background brief on the CCAC. I was also guided toward the electronic application form, which I completed and sent off.

Ms. Horwath: So you were solicited by someone from Marie Bountrogianni's office for this particular position?

Mr. Hamblin: No. I was advised that the Ministry of Health had made it clear that they were looking for additional board members.

Ms. Horwath: I read through your CV, your information, and listened to your description of your experience. It seems to me that your experience very much leans toward the corporate side of the various initiatives you've been involved with. What about your experience with the community side, particularly in the city of Hamilton, where you'll be on the CCAC if this appointment goes through? What connections have you made in that particular area, on the community side of things?

Mr. Hamblin: We moved to Hamilton at the end of November 2003. I've got to say that the first 12 months of that time were spent in getting ourselves established in what was a new house and all of the landscape work that needed to go with it. Since then, I've begun to think about contributing to public life. I've had a reasonably successful career and now I think it's time for me to add something back to society.

Hamilton is the city in which my wife and myself have chosen to spend what we hope are the rest of our days. Hamilton has been very open, warm and welcoming to us, so it's particularly with respect to Hamilton that I'd like to give something back.

There's a third factor at play here as well. Sadly, about 12 months ago now a close friend of ours, living not in Hamilton but in Caledonia, was dying of breast cancer, and I was able to see a CCAC at work in Haldimand county, bringing to what was a desperate situation a little bit of comfort in terms of home care and making a desperate situation a little bit better for Michelle, the girl who subsequently died, her husband and her children.

Ms. Horwath: What's your opinion or your view of community health care? Following up on your comments around the CCAC that you saw in action, give me your vision or your understanding of what good community health care is and why it's important.

Mr. Hamblin: The important thing is that the customer, the client, the patient, should as far as possible have the choice. It's this element of the work of the CCAC that I find most attractive. It enables people to carry on living at home where otherwise they may need to be hospitalized. I think that can make for a much more comfortable end-of-life strategy.

I think also it is a means by which information can be disseminated effectively, and with respect to young people, the assistance that can be provided to those in need so that they can continue education in schools. I think all of those are fundamental and all of them should be applauded.

Ms. Horwath: Do you have any understanding of the history of the CCACs, how they came into being and any of the controversy that existed around that?

Mr. Hamblin: Not of the controversy. I have done some research through the Web site, so I am aware that it

was formally the Hamilton-Wentworth home care program, that they were incorporated in 1997 and then made a statutory corporation in 2001. But with respect to controversy, no, I'm not aware of it.

Ms. Horwath: Can I ask you for your basic opinion on the competitive bidding model that's in place now?

Mr. Hamblin: I don't have any detailed information about it, but I have worked in an environment where competitive bidding has been a normal part of my business life.

Ms. Horwath: I mean particularly in terms of the health care field.

Mr. Hamblin: No. I am unable to comment specifically on that, other than to say that I'm in favour of there being a level playing field so that whatever is procured by any organization should be the best for the job.

Ms. Horwath: So it should be the best for the job, the best for the patient, the best for the community?

Mr. Hamblin: My focus is always with the customer. I said in my opening comments that I am customer-focused, therefore I think the starting point is customer care.

Ms. Horwath: Have you read the Elinor Caplan report, which was a review of the competitive bidding system in home care?

Mr. Hamblin: No, I have not.

Ms. Horwath: I'm in the position of having a family member currently getting services from CCAC. One of the frustrations that I hear not only from that person but also from many others in my riding is a sense of lack of attention to the actual patient or client, if you will, so that decisions are driven by the organization on the corporate side as opposed to the needs of the patient. Unfortunately, that's one of the pitfalls of the situation that we're in now. Nonetheless, out of the 70 recommendations or so that came from the Caplan report, that, to me, indicates that there are some really serious changes that need to be made in the whole sector. But if you're not aware of those, then I really can't follow up on those any further.

How much time do I have left, Mr. Chairman?

The Chair: You have three more minutes.

Ms. Horwath: Are you aware that the people who provide home care services are required to absorb the cost of travel on their own, so that in fact as things like gas prices go up, the home care providers are the ones who are absorbing those costs? Did you know that that's the case?

Mr. Hamblin: No. I was not aware that that was the case.

Ms. Horwath: Can you comment on that situation?

Mr. Hamblin: I'm not commenting specifically on the situation but on the principle that, if costs go up, then recompense should follow at some point.

Ms. Horwath: You're saying right now that your position is that the competitive bidding system is generally a positive one, that you think that's the right way to go in terms of the systems you're aware of and perhaps the health care system or the home care system.

Mr. Hamblin: No. I don't think I'm quite saying that. What I am saying is that the disbursement of public monies must be always above scrutiny. It must stand the test of time of being scrutinized any which way.

With specific respect to the request-for-proposal process that exists in this instance, I'm afraid I don't have the detailed knowledge to be able to answer you specifically.

Ms. Horwath: That's fair, and I appreciate that. I just have one last question, if I can, and that's around something totally outside of this specific area. I was hoping, considering your own personal history and your own place, where you come from, you could comment the UK's experience of privatization of hospitals and what your personal understanding is of how that has worked.

Mr. Hamblin: I was a member of a private health plan in the United Kingdom, as was my wife. My wife benefited from it, sadly—well, no; gratefully. I didn't need to call upon that health care for myself.

One thing I would comment on, which is a big problem, is that in the private health care system that operates in the United Kingdom, if you are seeking insurance, the likelihood is that insurance coverage will not be provided for existing problems. For example, I had a disc taken out of my back some 20 years ago, therefore with my private medical insurance that was taken out of any health care I could get from the private sector and paid for by the insurance company. So that was a great problem as far as I was concerned because that would likely be the medical care I would have needed.

1020

Ms. Horwath: What about the P3 hospitals?

The Chair: I'm sorry, Ms. Horwath. We're out of time. I'll move to the government side.

Mr. Berardinetti: I just wanted to thank Mr. Hamblin, on behalf of all members here from the Liberal Party, for coming forward to sit on the Hamilton Community Care Access Centre. Thank you.

The Chair: Short and sweet. To the opposition.

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton-Victoria-Brock): Thank you, Mr. Hamblin, for coming in and wanting to contribute back to your community and bringing a very impressive background in various aspects to the committee.

I was wondering if you knew a bit about the local health integrated networks that are almost up and running, and if you did, how you feel about the CCACs that are going to fit in there, because there has been some discussion that the number of CCACs may be reduced from 42 to 20. I know you've done some background work; if you could comment on what you're aware of locally in your community.

Mr. Hamblin: I can't add very much, really, other than to say that if over the coming months the focus is on the end-user—the customer, the client, the patient—the focus is on the person seeking support, then whatever is created in terms of superstructure is geared toward delivering an optimum level of service. The relationship between the local health integration network, which I

believe is based in Grimsby, and the various CCACs that relate to it is, to me, less important than the quality of care that's provided to the customer.

Ms. Scott: I guess we're having some concerns that if they're made too large, the community's voice isn't heard, and the needs specifically, which can happen often. Ms. Horwath did a great job of asking you detailed questions about the community and the services there.

Do you know many CCAC board members right now whom you've maybe had a conversation with, or don't you know any?

Mr. Hamblin: I don't know any of them, so I've had no conversations; nor have I had any conversations with or met with any of the senior executives. What I did do at the back end of last week was find out where the office was and just parked and had a look from the car park at the building.

Ms. Scott: Do you know the chair or the CEO of the local health integration network that's in your area?

Mr. Hamblin: No.

Ms. Scott: OK. You spoke of an experience with a friend there. Do you know a lot about the system that exists there? Is the VON, for example, in existence there or is there a paramedic; what are the care providers in the community? Do you know any—

Mr. Hamblin: Not in any detail. I couldn't enumerate them to you. What I have done in preparation for the meeting with your good selves today is some research on the Internet as to the vision, the mission, the values held by the Hamilton CCAC. I've got to say that to a large extent I'm impressed by much of what I've read. I thought there were perhaps four pluses that I could associate: the focus on people, including staff and customer satisfaction surveys; the partnerships that they're looking to create; the communications, which I think are vitally important in anything; and also what appears to be the sensible use of financial resources. That's as far as my knowledge goes. I'm sorry if that appears to be rather weak.

Ms. Scott: No. That's fine, and that's fair enough. I wonder, for example, in long-term centres, do you know if there are waiting lists, because they're channelled through the CCACs?

Mr. Hamblin: No, I don't know.

Ms. Scott: You don't know of the supply-demand for long-term-care centres that exists there. OK. I often communicate with the local CCAC in my riding of Haliburton–Victoria–Brock as to how the system works, and I know that autism is often brought up in services, that they can assist with families with children with autism. Do you know if there's anything on the autism services available?

Mr. Hamblin: No, I don't. The only thing I'm aware of with respect to uniqueness in terms of Hamilton and its health is through what I read in the Hamilton Spectator over the greater-than-normal preponderance of asthma and of allergies because of air quality. The newspaper reminds us of that fairly frequently.

I was drawn to the work that has been carried out recently by McMaster University, their centre for health economics and policy analysis, to benchmark health issues in 16 neighbourhoods in Hamilton. I've not seen the results of that research, but I would have thought that it could be enormously helpful in specifically locating where health problems may exist within Hamilton itself.

Ms. Scott: When you were getting this appointment, and I agree with what you said about working with the communities and seeing especially that CCACs may have this role, were you given any time period that this appointment may last for, especially in light of the fact that they may be downsizing the number of CCACs?

Mr. Hamblin: None whatsoever.

Ms. Scott: So is it one year, three years—

Mr. Hamblin: It is only in the last week that I was made aware that CCACs may be downsized as a result of the initiative taken with the creation of the local health integration networks.

Ms. Scott: OK. So did you apply for one year or three years? Did you know—

Mr. Hamblin: I didn't apply for any specific term. I simply applied to be a member of the board of directors.

Ms. Scott: OK. And, I'm sorry, you applied originally when?

Mr. Hamblin: It must be going back now to the middle of summer, perhaps early summer.

Ms. Scott: OK. Thank you very much for appearing here today.

The Chair: Mr. Hamblin, thank you very much for your presentation and your responses to the members' questions.

We move to our concurrence votes after the interviews are complete. So you're welcome to stick around. That will probably be around 11:30 or 12.

BRYAN DE SOUSA

Review of intended appointment, selected by third party: Bryan De Sousa, intended appointee as member, Council of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario.

The Chair: Our next intended appointee is Bryan De Sousa. Mr. De Sousa has travelled here from Gulliver Road in Toronto.

Welcome to the committee. Mr. De Sousa is an intended appointee as a member of the council of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario. You've been in the audience here, so you've seen how we proceed. You're welcome to make some opening comments about yourself and your interest in this particular position. We'll have questions from the three parties, beginning with the government members. Mr. De Sousa, the floor is yours.

Mr. Bryan De Sousa: Thank you. I'd just like to start by making a brief statement. Thank you, members of the panel. I appreciate being given this opportunity to speak before you. As you all know, my name is Bryan De

Sousa. I'm a resident of the riding of York-South Weston.

My interest in the council of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario stems from my work as a special education teacher. I work with severely disabled students in the life skills program in a high school in Brampton. I do see the benefits and detractors of the audiologists' and speech pathologists' work daily.

I also have a personal connection to it. When I was in high school, the school that I was at did actually have one of the very few deaf and hard-of-hearing departments, so I've been around hearing-impaired persons for about 11 years. I've seen what they have to go through to be integrated into society, so it is a bit of a personal connection.

Currently, I work as a special education teacher in Brampton. During my three years at the faculty of education at York University, I had a very keen interest in special education in that field and did research highly into that area, including audiology and speech pathology. So I'm somewhat versed in the college, hoping to bring an outsider's perspective into it, a public perspective, to see how it actually works. I know, at least with my experience at the faculty, how some people stay in a position for a long period of time and get disconnected, and I'm hoping to bring a little bit of a connection back to the council and the college itself.

The Chair: Thank you for your presentation. Questions or comments from the government members?

Mr. Berardinetti: I again, on behalf of all members of the Liberal caucus here, just want to thank Mr. De Sousa for coming out today and putting his name forward for an appointment.

The Chair: Anything else? Thank you, folks. To the official opposition.

Ms. Scott: Thank you for appearing here today before us, Mr. De Sousa. You mentioned that you're a special ed. teacher. I was looking through your resumé, and St. Thomas Aquinas secondary school—

Mr. De Sousa: It's in Brampton, at Torbram Road and Queen Street.

Ms. Scott: OK. I have one in my riding too, so I was just checking to see—

The Chair: It's a good name.

1030

Ms. Scott: There you go. It's a good name. They use it often. Anyway, thank you for that.

Also on your resumé, "Community Involvement": We have here "assisted in the organization of Dinner for Diabetes, November 2004; assisted in the organization of GTA Youth for Tsunami Relief, February 2004," and then we have "assisted in the organization" and then it's blank. I don't know if it got missed or not completed.

Mr. De Sousa: I think it got cut off. It wasn't for the application; it was another thing I was working on. Currently I'm assisting in the organization for a charitable relief reception for the Pakistani earthquake, so I'm highly involved in that aspect of attempting to do what I

can in the community to assist. So that probably was one that I didn't put there.

Ms. Scott: OK; it just didn't get filled in there at the end. We just didn't know if it was taken out or—now, how did you hear about this appointment for today?

Mr. De Sousa: Prior to becoming a teacher, I worked in a constituency office, and you hear about appointments all the time. Primarily, I handled immigration cases, so I had reappointments and everything like that. While I was in the constituency, I didn't want to apply for any appointments, for obvious reasons. I wanted to take a year away from politics in general and just see from there when I'm ready. I went to settle into teaching. About now, I'm a year into it, and I feel that I'm adequately stable and could go back.

When I was looking through the Web site, I saw this one, and I said, "It's perfect." I have some experience in it, so I think that I'd be perfect to assist in that, to bring the connection back.

Ms. Scott: So you did your own searching on the Web site to see where there were vacancies in the public appointments service. When you said you worked in a constituency office, was that for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Mr. Volpe?

Mr. De Sousa: Prior to him becoming a minister—I think I was only in the office when he was Minister of Human Resources for six months, but yes, there.

Ms. Scott: Do you think that your connections with the Liberal Party have influenced your appointment for today?

Mr. De Sousa: No, actually I try and do everything standard by myself, as solo as I can. I'm not one to take handouts. I want to earn things on my own. That's how I view myself.

Ms. Scott: OK. It was on the resumé that you'd worked there. Did you use any elected Liberal members as references?

Mr. De Sousa: I used three people as my references. Two of them were friends of mine whom I worked with in the constituency, and the other was a teacher I worked with last year at St. Thomas Aquinas. That's about it.

Ms. Scott: This is a part-time position. Were you given how many hours that you may be working or how much pay per diem it is?

Mr. De Sousa: For the part-time position?

Ms. Scott: Yes.

Mr. De Sousa: With the constituency or—

Ms. Scott: No, for your part-time position for your appointment.

Mr. De Sousa: There was something on the Web site about a per diem, but like I said, I do it more to help out rather than to get any financial compensation for it.

Ms. Scott: So you don't know the term or the—

Mr. De Sousa: Well, I believe it was a three-year term. I think that's what the Web site said. I think it was \$100 or some per diem, but it's not something that I looked at as making my decision to join this college or not. It's more for assisting that I looked at.

Ms. Scott: Just more verifying the research and the position that you knew about.

It is a board that you need to sit on a disciplinary committee for. I just wondered, do you feel that you have enough background for the function as an adjudicator on this committee?

Mr. De Sousa: Well, given that I have to discipline almost daily at my school and try to be unbiased in every single thing, case by case, in that situation—I'd be given two different perspectives, two different sides, and I'd have to weigh it accordingly in an unbiased manner. That's the way I'd approach everything, in a unbiased manner. I don't believe that it would be a major issue at all, as long as I see both sides of the story and be unbiased as to judgment there.

Ms. Scott: It is going to be a little different than working in the classroom, being on the committee.

Mr. De Sousa: I understand that.

Ms. Scott: Do you know anyone else who is sitting on the committee right now?

Mr. De Sousa: No, I do not.

Ms. Scott: All right. Thank you.

Ms. Horwath: Good morning, Mr. De Sousa. I just want to follow up on the last question. I guess what I want to know is, do you have any formal experience with adjudicative types of roles in regulatory bodies?

Mr. De Sousa: No, I do not.

Ms. Horwath: You have no formal experience, just your experience as a teacher with the children that you work with?

Mr. De Sousa: Yes.

Ms. Horwath: OK. You talked a little bit about the work that you do with special needs children and how that caused you to be interested in this particular position as you were surfing the Web site for something to do. Do you have any other direct experience in the health care field?

Mr. De Sousa: No, no other experience directly.

Ms. Horwath: Do you have any knowledge of the structure of the college and how that all works?

Mr. De Sousa: I looked at it briefly on the Web site afterwards when I applied for the appointment. I did a little bit of background work. I saw somewhat of the structure there. So that's limited knowledge there, but that's my knowledge.

Ms. Horwath: Do you have an understanding of the regulatory framework, the objectives that are set out in the Regulated Health Professions Act and the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Act?

Mr. De Sousa: I read over them briefly during the past week.

Ms. Horwath: So you feel you have some understanding of them?

Mr. De Sousa: Minimal understanding of that.

Ms. Horwath: Do you expect to get some training before you're called upon to actually serve?

Mr. De Sousa: Absolutely; I'd be expecting to.

Ms. Horwath: All right. I wanted to ask a little bit about your work with special needs children particularly.

Have you done any work specifically in the area of audiology and speech-language pathology?

Mr. De Sousa: I have to work closely with an audiologist and a speech pathologist for certain students I have in my classroom, whether it's basic speech-language recognition using the voice, working with an FM system. I'd have to work directly with them, and then I'd also have to integrate that into their IEPs, augmented at IEPRCs, see what the parents wish to do about that, and then also work in combination. So that's pretty much where my connection comes in.

Ms. Horwath: So you have significant exposure?

Mr. De Sousa: On a day-to-day basis; not whether to recommend or do anything.

Ms. Horwath: I understand. OK.

The Chair: Sorry to interrupt. Mr. De Sousa, if you could maybe move closer to your mike and speak up a little bit.

Mr. De Sousa: I'm sorry. No problem.

Ms. Horwath: Do you have any experience working with children who are autistic?

Mr. De Sousa: Yes, I do.

Ms. Horwath: Do you know the situation around the IBI treatment being cut off at age six?

Mr. De Sousa: I've heard about that.

Ms. Horwath: Do you have any experience in how children progress with IBI treatment?

Mr. De Sousa: No. Usually when I've encountered students who are autistic is at age 14—that's if they're severe and they're classified to be in my classroom—I see them when they come in, depending on their severity. Then we take it from there. That's when my planning kicks in, to see how I can best integrate them back into the community itself, going through community living programs, etc., from that point. In relation to what happens from six to 14, I'm unaware of what happens there, except for transition from grade 8 to grade 9.

Ms. Horwath: So you're not given any understanding of the extent or the amount or the age to which some of these children might be receiving IBI treatments or not?

Mr. De Sousa: No, I do not know that.

Ms. Horwath: Would it be your understanding, though, that IBI treatment specifically is something that assists children in their ability to obtain success in the school environment?

Mr. De Sousa: That, I'm not too sure. I'd have to get more information on the treatment prior to making a comment on that. I see them when they enter my classroom at age 14. Then they're usually there till 21, and we see what we could do to best integrate them back into the programs. So I'm not too aware of the treatment itself.

Ms. Horwath: Can I ask how long you've been working with students with special needs?

Mr. De Sousa: I've spent the past year and a half working with students with exceptionalities, and again, as I stated in my opening statement, my three years at the faculty were a really keen interest for myself in research, hoping that they include more special education

requirements in there so that we could better assist and better identify students before.

Ms. Horwath: So in your experience, the time that you spent with children with exceptionalities, do you have a sense that parents and children with special needs are getting the supports that they need?

Mr. De Sousa: I think that in my area, in my school, we're in a very good area, with Brampton Caledon Community Living, which has done a really outstanding job trying to integrate the students coming in. There's also a program that we work with to see if we could get students who are employable once they've reached the age of 21 or they've stated that they wish to graduate, that we work with this other program to get them prepared for life skills. So I do believe supports are there, in answer to your question.

1040

Ms. Horwath: I was trying to get more at the broader understanding of whether children with special needs and their parents are getting adequate supports within the current systems that we have in the province of Ontario.

Mr. De Sousa: From my conversations with parents, I have not heard anything other.

Ms. Horwath: Are you aware of the recent Ombudsman's report on the situation of special-needs children and their parents?

Mr. De Sousa: We've received a copy of it recently, and currently I'm working my way through it. I've not gained a great knowledge of it yet, but I'm currently working through it.

Ms. Horwath: Do you have any knowledge of the recommendations that the Ombudsman—

Mr. De Sousa: Not yet. They save those for the end, so I'm currently working through the front of the Ombudsman's report.

The Chair: Mr. De Sousa, we're having trouble picking up your—

Mr. De Sousa: No problem. I'll move forward. Sorry about that. I get comfortable. It's too comfy a chair, so I keep moving back a little bit.

The Chair: We do need the volume so we can record.

Ms. Horwath: You'll be interested to know that in fact the Ombudsman gave a scathing report card to the previous minister and the ministry around special-needs children and around the supports that are not provided to their parents. A lot of that centred around the fact that—and again, these would be children that would be much younger than the ones that you're dealing with. The report was scathing with regard to the lack of action of the ministry in solving some of these ongoing crises that families are in or end up in as a result of them not being able to get not only services for their children but services for themselves as families to try and help them to cope with the very significant challenges that face those families.

I urge you to actually spend some time on that report, because it's not a very long report. It's actually fairly short, and it's easy reading in terms of the kinds of descriptions that the Ombudsman puts forward in terms

of the crises that face these families. If you are going to be sitting on this particular college, I think it might do you well to spend some time with that report. The recommendations are—there are only four of them—quite significant. There needs to be some serious action by the government in that regard.

I just wanted to confirm, as my final question, your current status as a member of the Liberal Party and your status in terms of donating to the party.

Mr. De Sousa: I'm currently a member of the Eglinton–Lawrence FLA. In regard to donations, I do not donate consistently; I just purchase a ticket here or there to very select events. Again, it all depends what it is for. I have to look at the person and what it is.

Ms. Horwath: Have you ever been a political candidate?

Mr. De Sousa: No, I have not.

Ms. Horwath: Have you ever run for office?

Mr. De Sousa: No, no, no. I have no intention of doing so in the near future. I'm quite happy where I am.

Ms. Horwath: You don't have to put that on the line now.

Mr. De Sousa: That's why I said "in the near future."

Ms. Horwath: Just curious. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. De Sousa, for your response to members' questions. As you probably heard, we move to the concurrence votes at the end of the presentations, probably around 11:30 or so.

JAMES McMASTER

Review of intended appointment, selected by third party: James McMaster, intended appointee as member, Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal.

The Chair: Our next intended appointee is James Grant McMaster. Mr. McMaster hails from Ajax, Ontario. He is a former deputy mayor and councillor for the town of Ajax. Mr. McMaster is an intended appointee to the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal.

Mr. McMaster, welcome to the committee. You're invited to make some opening comments about your background and interest in the position, and then we'll do a rotation, beginning with the official opposition, for any questions for you. The floor is yours.

Mr. James McMaster: Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I'm pleased to be here today to present to you why I believe I'd be a good addition to the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal.

As I'm sure you've seen by my resumé, I was a municipal councillor in the town of Ajax for 12 years, having left politics in the fall of 2003. When I left politics, a number of my colleagues had suggested that I should consider looking for something like an appointment to a tribunal or similar, to be able to continue to use the ability that I had learned over the years of listening to two different opinions and making an informed, defensible position. I have to admit, I always enjoyed that part of my political career, and I applied for a few different committees in the spring of 2004. One of the committees

I applied to was this one. I felt that with my background as a politician, being able to control a meeting, make decisions, combined with my backgrounds in business and real estate, this was a very appropriate committee for me to apply to.

As you will all understand, being a good politician means being able to listen, do your research, talk to staff for input, and make a defensible position that can be understood by both parties. Obviously, both parties are never going to fully agree with you, but even if one does agree and the other one can at least admit that they understand your point of view, then I think you've done a good job.

I'll just take a few moments to highlight my background for you. I attended Ryerson Polytechnic Institute in electrical power systems and left that school as a certified senior engineering technician. I worked for 12 years with Ontario Hydro, where some of my work involved research based on what you're seeing today with regard to time-of-use rates. That was back in the late 1980s.

Early in the 1990s, I got the political bug and also opened a sporting goods store in Ajax, which stayed open for five years. After I closed the store, I got my licence for selling real estate and did that, as well as being a local councillor in Ajax.

In 1995, I moved up to the region of Durham as a regional councillor. In Durham, that means you sit on both the local and regional councils. During that period of time, I've been deputy mayor; chair of the planning committee; sat on the library board; vice-chair of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority; chair of Veridian Connections, our local hydro company; chair of Ajax transit and founding co-chair of APTA, which is a combination of Ajax and Pickering transit; I was regional finance chairman and budget chief at the region of Durham, and held the same kinds of positions at the town; I was also a board member of the Durham Region Non-Profit Housing Corp.; as well, many volunteer positions, including the Ajax-Pickering hospital board.

I'm currently in the transportation consulting business, having owned my own company for over 10 years. I deal mostly with highway coach operations and public transit systems, neither of which has any conflict with my potential role with the tribunal.

I'm sure you'll agree that I've had a fairly wide and varied background, and, fortunately, a large number of things I've done tie in very nicely with being a tribunal member. I have an open mind, I listen well, I'm not afraid to make decisions, I treat people well in meeting situations and can control the meeting's progress. I have previous knowledge of real estate from all three sides, having been a tenant many years ago, a landlord with the Durham Region Non-Profit Housing Corp. and also a sales representative. I understand business principles, have a reasonable knowledge of law for a layman and, probably most importantly, I learn quickly and am ready for a new challenge.

I look forward to any questions you may have, and hopefully I can count on your support.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. McMaster, for your presentation and background. I'll begin the questions with the official opposition.

Ms. Scott: Thank you, Mr. McMaster, for appearing before us today. You're a very busy guy, for one thing. You've got a lot of background. You said you expressed an interest in sitting on this board as well as on other boards. I just wondered, what were the other boards, and did you just get the call for this board?

Mr. McMaster: No. Actually, I was interviewed for the municipal assessment board as well, if I remember. As the other gentleman did, I went on to the Web site and had a look through and tried to see things that would be of interest to me and that I felt would tie in to my background. I think I probably applied for three or four different positions.

Ms. Scott: Was this the one that was offered to you, or was the other offered to you?

Mr. McMaster: No, the other one was never offered to me. I was interviewed, and it never went any further.

Ms. Scott: I can see that your background ties more, in a sense, into the municipal assessment board, especially in Durham, the fastest-growing area. My colleague John O'Toole and I did a gridlock task force there on Tuesday night. There were certainly a lot of issues around gridlock and the 407 and also housing and building issues. So I wondered if you just chose the first one that was offered, or did you really want to wait for the municipal assessment board?

Mr. McMaster: Actually, when this one came up, I did some extra research on it and actually went out and sat through a couple of tribunals, just to see if it was something that interested me, and it really did. It looked very interesting.

Ms. Scott: You have Roger Anderson as one of your references.

Mr. McMaster: I've known Roger for 20 years and worked with him for 12, I guess.

Ms. Scott: Very good. He's got a lot of background as chair of AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

Mr. McMaster: He's also a very busy person right now.

Ms. Scott: You said you were a landlord and a tenant previously, and that you were with the Durham Region Non-Profit Housing Corp. I just wondered if you could explain a little bit more on the housing situation in Durham.

Mr. McMaster: As a landlord, it was minimal, I have to be honest. The things that would come forward to us would not be the more day-to-day issues, like actually dealing with specific tenants. It wasn't very often that we would get directly into that. It was more policy-directed. We got a little bit involved with the Tenant Protection Act, but not a great deal. I've had a flavour of being a landlord, but not a very large flavour.

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Ms. Scott: OK. You brought up the tenant act. Do you think there's a fair treatment that exists right now with

the present government and the landlords and tenants as they exist? Are you actively in real estate still?

Mr. McMaster: No, I haven't had my real estate licence for eight years now.

Ms. Scott: OK. So from your background and your experience, is there a balance between tenants and landlords now? Do you feel that you'd like to see some changes occur there?

Mr. McMaster: I honestly don't have a strong enough knowledge of it as it stands today to really be able to say. The only thing I noticed was on a piece of background information that was sent to me that talked about the percentage of cases that were coming forward. It seemed to me that a very large percentage, over 90% if I remember right, were landlord-based and less than 10% were tenant-based. I would always expect that there would be more landlord- than tenant-based complaints, but that might be a little bit more than it should be. I believe the government is doing a review of the TPA right now, but I honestly don't have a really strong opinion as to where it stands.

Ms. Scott: OK. How do you feel about the rent control issue in general?

Mr. McMaster: Again, rent control is a really interesting thing. It's something that, unfortunately, I guess, there's a need for, and I can understand it from both sides of the case. There need to be protections for the tenant; there also has to be enough interest for landlords to be able to make capital investments in properties. I leave the decisions on where that goes up to you folks. I'll deal with what comes forward. It's something that's been—boy, I can remember people talking about rent controls for an awful long time. Certainly it's a very tricky balance.

Ms. Scott: It is. How are vacancies right now in the Durham region? I know in Toronto there's a high vacancy rate right now.

Mr. McMaster: I honestly don't know.

Ms. Scott: OK. You don't know the housing needs in Durham?

Mr. McMaster: No, I honestly don't know.

Ms. Scott: You mentioned adjudicative experience. A lot of the people who appear before you haven't had the benefit of counsel. I don't know if you know the composition of the board right now. Could you tell us some way that you could ensure they have a fair hearing?

Mr. McMaster: First off, there's always the language issue. I think it's also very important that people understand what is available to them. In fact, at one of the tribunals I was at, I thought the adjudicator did a great job. Right at the very beginning he laid out exactly what was available for everybody and was quite willing to stop the proceedings if something could be helped with regard to mediation—something like that. I thought that was a very good way of doing things—just making sure that people have as much access to everything they're capable of having access to.

Going back to my council background, people often didn't have experience in appearing in front of councils.

For somebody who has never done it before, it can be a bit of a nerve-racking event. I think you tend to try to help people through as much as you can, while staying in the role you have to be in—certainly just making sure they are well aware of all the different things that are available to them.

Ms. Scott: This is a part-time appointment. I know you're a busy man, but have you ever considered going full-time, because you're very enthusiastic and knowledgeable?

Mr. McMaster: I would be a little leery of going full-time because when I went back into this, having been the regional finance chairman in Durham—I didn't have an awful lot of extra time. I've got my transportation business going again. The part-time aspect of this intrigued me because it would give me a chance to have a look at it. Would I be interested in doing it full-time down the road? Quite possibly.

Ms. Scott: And do you think the 407 should be expanded to 35/115, since you live up there?

Mr. McMaster: Yes, yesterday morning.

Ms. Scott: I agree totally. Thank you for appearing before us today.

The Chair: Ms. Horwath.

Ms. Horwath: Good morning, Mr. McMaster. You indicated you got the information about this particular appointment from the Web site, similar to the previous interviewee, and you said you applied in the spring of 2004.

Mr. McMaster: Just before, yes.

Ms. Horwath: I guess you were pretty surprised when all of a sudden you got the call.

Mr. McMaster: It's been a long, slow process.

Ms. Horwath: It has. Can I just ask how long you were in elected office?

Mr. McMaster: Twelve years.

Ms. Horwath: You stopped being in elected office in 2003?

Mr. McMaster: Right.

Ms. Horwath: That would have been the municipal elections.

Mr. McMaster: Yes.

Ms. Horwath: Did you choose not to run in those elections?

Mr. McMaster: No, I—

Ms. Horwath: You were defeated?

Mr. McMaster: The residents chose for me not to run.

Ms. Horwath: Did you run under any party affiliation?

Mr. McMaster: No. I've never believed that parties should be affiliated at the municipal level.

Ms. Horwath: But are you affiliated with a political party? Are you a donor to any particular party? Have you made any political donations?

Mr. McMaster: No. I've been a—

Ms. Horwath: Just to your own campaigns.

Mr. McMaster: Just to my own campaigns, which is bad enough. In the past, I was a \$10 member of the Lib-

eral Party and a \$10 member of the Progressive Conservative Party as well. But they were both to assist people I knew who were running, so I took out memberships to help them get elected, none of which is current right now.

Ms. Horwath: Good. You talked a little bit about your experience in the housing portfolio. What would you say are some of the major issues that exist with the landlord-tenant relationship?

Mr. McMaster: That is a tough question because, to be very honest with you, the level of my knowledge right now of the TPA is not great. I now have it on my computer at home and I have had the opportunity to read through it a couple of times, but from a day-to-day working point of view, I really couldn't give you a strong answer to that right now.

Ms. Horwath: OK. So you're applying for this position, then, not out of a particular passion for this area but because—

Mr. McMaster: Actually, I always have had a passion for real estate and for the business of real estate. I think just that, combined with my adjudicative skills through being able to run meetings and—how to best put it? I find it's a good way to be able to serve, and there definitely needs to be a referee. I know enough about the landlord and tenant situation to know there has to be a referee between them, because we don't always agree on things.

Ms. Horwath: So in the spring of 2004, after the fall of 2003, you applied for a number of different things just to more or less see what might be available for you to get busy, if you want. As a busy person, you had time, so you went looking for opportunities, perhaps, to serve, and this was one of the four or five or so that you applied to. But being involved in real estate is quite different from the Landlord and Tenant Act—the Tenant Protection Act, rather.

Mr. McMaster: Oh, without a doubt, but you do have a background. Mind you, at that time it would have been the Landlord and Tenant Act, but that's part of your training, so you have a basic knowledge of it.

Ms. Horwath: All right. You don't have very many insights into the landlord and tenant relationship, let's say, but what would you say would be the greatest need that tenants in Ontario would have?

Mr. McMaster: Again, this would come from my Durham non-profit housing part: access to housing.

Ms. Horwath: Access to affordable housing or just access to housing?

Mr. McMaster: Yes, access to affordable housing. I know that's a need that's been there for a long time, but from what I could see, that was always the case.

Ms. Horwath: What about the greatest need of landlords in Ontario?

Mr. McMaster: Landlords have to understand what the rules of the game are so they can make business decisions as to whether there's a business case for them to be able to move forward and make investments. We need them to continue to make investments to make the rest of the system work.

Ms. Horwath: Do you think there has been a great deal of investment in the development of rental housing over the last while?

Mr. McMaster: I can only speak from Durham's point of view. There has been some investment. Has there been enough? Probably not, but there has definitely been some.

Ms. Horwath: It seems to me that most of the development, particularly in the community that I come from, and many others, has been in the condo market as opposed to the rental housing market.

We already went down the road of rent control, and you're right: It's a fairly complex, controversial and long-standing issue.

What about the issue of costs no longer borne? Are you aware of that phrase, "costs no longer borne?"

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Mr. McMaster: I've seen you ask that question before in Hansard.

Ms. Horwath: You did your homework.

Mr. McMaster: The only real reference that I can find to it is—I'm assuming that it's supposed to have something to do with if you have a very large increase in your utility costs, for instance, so the landlord makes application to be able to increase the rent because of that, and then those costs go down. I'm assuming that's what is meant as a cost no longer borne.

Ms. Horwath: So therefore, the rent should go down.

Mr. McMaster: Therefore, the rent should go down.

Ms. Horwath: Any opinion of that kind of—

Mr. McMaster: I don't know what the logistics are. I think it all depends on if it's strictly utilities.

Ms. Horwath: I believe it's capital as well.

Mr. McMaster: That would certainly make sense if it's capital, because if it's utilities—I'm not sure about the rest of you, but my utilities don't go down; they just keep going up. If it's capital—

Ms. Horwath: So it's kind of moot when it comes to utilities.

Mr. McMaster: Yes, but if it's capital, then I can understand it. But I don't think you can quite plain and simply say that once the capital cost has been paid, it should automatically come off, because then there may be other costs that may come forward out of that. If it's a new piece of equipment, that new piece of equipment then has to be maintained and there has to be some kind of a reserve fund or something to be able to recapitalize it at some point in time in the future. If it was just that, and it was never, ever, going to have anything to do with it again, then it would make sense that it would come off. Is it replaced by something else? I think that's something that you have to look at on a case-by-case basis.

Ms. Horwath: OK. Do you have any knowledge or insight into the quality of housing stock in your area or in other areas of the province?

Mr. McMaster: Not really.

Ms. Horwath: Have you written any rental housing tribunal briefs, helped any tenants make submissions or

acted as an advocate at any time, or as a landlord advocate, for that matter?

Mr. McMaster: No.

Ms. Horwath: You said you have, though, attended as an observer to see—

Mr. McMaster: I went to one tribunal meeting back when this interview process started, just to see if I would like it. Since then, I've been to two others, just to get a bit of a flavour for what's going on.

Ms. Horwath: Do you have any adjudicative experience yourself? Have you ever been in a situation, other than as a councillor and deputy mayor, as an adjudicator? More in a quasi-judicial—

Mr. McMaster: Informal? No. My experience as an adjudicator could be limited to a council experience.

Ms. Horwath: All right. I guess the last question is, you indicated at the beginning of your remarks, or perhaps it was as a response to questions, that it was your understanding that the Tenant Protection Act was under review by the government. Do you know how long the act has been under review by the government and how many times they've broken their promise to bring forward changes to the Tenant Protection Act?

Mr. McMaster: No, I honestly don't. I know that it's being reviewed.

Ms. Horwath: Pardon me?

Mr. McMaster: I'm aware of the fact that it's being reviewed.

Ms. Horwath: OK. That's all, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. McMaster, for coming.

The Chair: The government members?

Ms. Smith: Thank you for being here. Could you just briefly take us through the process that you went through in the application to get to today?

Mr. McMaster: As I say, I made the application in—I can't even remember exactly when, but sometime in the spring, or maybe even early summer of 2004. I received a phone call for an interview for this committee, which would have probably been back in March of this year. The timing was bad for me, unfortunately. The tribunal was somewhat limited in the times that they had their group together to do the interview, and when they were available, I was in Florida, so we had to put it on the back burner.

It sat on the back burner until about the end of June, at which time I attended an interview, which was a verbal interview with the chair and two of the vice-chairs, I believe. That continued on to a written test with three or four cases that you had to come up with your opinion on. The process just continued from that, and then I heard that things were moving along well. The next thing was this committee.

The Chair: No more questions? Thank you very much, Mr. McMaster, for your presentation and your responses to our members' questions. You're welcome to stay. We have one more intended appointee and then we'll move to the concurrence votes. Thank you for joining us.

MEYSA MALEKI

Review of intended appointment, selected by third party: Meysa Maleki, intended appointee as member, council of the College of Nurses of Ontario.

The Chair: Our next intended appointee is Meysa Maleki. Ms. Maleki is an intended appointee as a member of the council of the College of Nurses of Ontario, part-time. Welcome to the committee. You've been in attendance, so you know how we work. We welcome an opening statement about your background and interest in the college, and then we'll begin a rotation of questions with the third party. The floor is yours.

Ms. Meysa Maleki: Thank you. I'll start with a brief statement. Good morning. I would like to thank the standing committee for giving me the opportunity to appear before you as an intended appointee to the College of Nurses of Ontario.

I'm here because I'm interested to serve in the public interest and I believe there is no other agency that plays a more crucial role than the College of Nurses, in that they regulate the front line of our health care system and, therefore, determine the lives of millions of Canadians.

You have my resumé before you. I would like to briefly elaborate on the skills that I think I will bring forth to this agency as a lawyer and, more importantly, to elaborate on the contributions I believe I can make to this agency as a public citizen.

I obtained a bachelor of science, specializing in psychology, at the University of Toronto before pursuing my law degree. I worked at the counselling and learning services at the University of Toronto, where I wrote and published numerous pamphlets on psychological disorders facing a college-age population, which to this day continue to be published and used by U of T students.

During my undergraduate years, I also volunteered at a centre in North York as a communication facilitator, assisting patients suffering from aphasia. This, I must add, was a most rewarding and challenging experience for me. I also volunteered at Women's College Hospital in downtown Toronto during my undergraduate years at the day surgery floor, where I acted as a liaison between patients and nurses and physicians, and I had to report back to patients on the status of their family and loved ones.

I have always held a keen interest in the interplay of law, medicine and ethics. In law school, I took law and medicine and learned of the myriad of legal/ethical dilemmas our health care providers face on a day-to-day basis and the impact of their decisions on the safety and well-being of our citizens. I also became familiar with the operation of the various colleges and the legislation under which they operate, in particular the Regulated Health Professions Act.

I was called to the bar of the province of Ontario in 2003. I am currently a family law practitioner in London, Ontario. Upon my call to the bar, I practised civil litigation and, in particular, personal injury litigation, in Toronto, where I represented injured clients, many of whom had very debilitating brain and spinal cord in-

juries. I became familiar with the insurance legislation, as well as the Health Care Consent Act, and learned of the importance of record-keeping by physicians, residents and nurses through assisting senior counsel with medical malpractice cases.

My husband is a physician. My move to London, Ontario, was a result of his acceptance as a first-year resident in the orthopaedic surgery program at the University of Western Ontario. While I thoroughly enjoy my career as a family law practitioner, I continue to have a keen interest in health care and I frequently discuss with nurses and other physicians with whom my husband works the ways in which health care in our province can improve and problems and obstacles they face on a day-to-day basis. It is through these everyday anecdotes that I continue to assess and revise my own views in which health care in our province can be improved.

I'm aware of this college's mandate to protect the public's right to quality nursing services in self-regulation, and I believe I can make numerous contributions should my appointment be confirmed by you today. As a lawyer, I offer to the college my understanding of the governing acts and regulations, my ability to analyze all sides of an argument and to then make an independent and free conclusion. As a public citizen, I offer to the college my keen interest to continuously build on my knowledge in the area, to bring forth the public perspective to council discussions and to passionately contribute to the development of excellence in nursing practice in the public interest.

The Chair: Ms. Maleki, thank you very much for your opening statement. We begin with the third party.

Ms. Horwath: Thank you, and good morning. So, why exactly did you apply for the position?

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Ms. Maleki: To the College of Nurses in particular? I believe, as I stated in my opening statement, that nurses are the front line of the public health system. Because of my interest in health care, particularly in the College of Nurses, and my ability as a lawyer to bring forth my legal skills and my views as a public citizen, I believe that I could be an asset to the College of Nurses. That's the reason I applied.

Ms. Horwath: You talked a little bit about your experience in some of the work that you did in your undergraduate studies as well as some of the work you did, I think you said, at Women's College Hospital.

Ms. Maleki: Correct.

Ms. Horwath: But have you ever been a nurse or worked directly in the health care field?

Ms. Maleki: No, I have not.

Ms. Horwath: Can you expand a little bit about the work you were doing that was bringing you to the front lines? You talked about working with family members to give them the information about the status of their family member who was in hospital. Can you expand on that a little bit?

Ms. Maleki: Sure. My role was basically to go and speak to the physicians and nurses—these were patients

who were in day surgery—and continuously go back and forth and reassure the family members that the day surgery had gone OK and that they would be out soon, or give them an idea of the timing of when they would be released and when they could come back and be there for them.

Ms. Horwath: What other kinds of community work have you got experience in?

Ms. Maleki: I'm currently a board member of the Bam Disaster Children Relief Committee—that's in my resumé. I'm an Iranian Canadian. I sat on the committee, which raised about \$80,000 to support the Bam earthquake. I'm also a part of the Iranian-Canadian Movement Against Poverty. We've just recently set that up in order to assist the underprivileged members of the Iranian-Canadian community. I'm also a board member of the Iranian Canadian Lawyers Association, and through that, again, our mandate is to increase the knowledge of our public, the Iranian-Canadian community, about legal issues. We've submitted a report to the paralegal task force. So that sort of thing.

Ms. Horwath: Great. But have you ever worked specifically with nurses or advocated for nurses or any of that kind of thing?

Ms. Maleki: The closest I've come to working with nurses was, first of all, when I was a personal injury lawyer. We had a staff nurse. I frequently went through the more complicated cases where there were debilitating spinal cord and brain injuries and used her assistance; and again, through my position at Women's College Hospital, but other than that, no.

Ms. Horwath: Would you be aware of any of the key issues that nurses would say are facing them and their profession right now?

Ms. Maleki: I think I am. I would think that one of the first crises right now is whether the promise to hire 8,000 more nurses in light of the 15,000 nurses that may be retiring by 2008—I think that's a real gap in the system that needs to be addressed. Through my position at the college, why nurses are retiring at the ages of 57 and 58, before the mandatory age of retirement, I think, needs to be addressed. We need to address the job satisfaction of nurses and to really keep them, because they are an asset. Especially with that level of experience, they are an asset, and we don't want to lose them. So I think that's a dilemma.

Ms. Horwath: All right. You have actually raised the issue of the 8,000 nurses that need to be hired or that were promised to be hired, but it seems to be taking a bit of time. I'm glad that you raised it; I think it speaks well of your passion on the issue. Can I assume, then, that if issues come up that pertain to nurses, in your capacity as someone who is going to be on this particular body and you have concerns with what's happening in the realm of government, would you be prepared to speak up on those issues?

Ms. Maleki: Absolutely. I think that's what I am there for. I have my own views on what is right and what isn't, and that's what I hope to be able to contribute to the council.

Ms. Horwath: Excellent. At the beginning of my questions, I didn't get how you heard about the position.

Ms. Maleki: A colleague of mine is currently a council member. She was appointed last year. I found out about the position through her, but then I checked the Web site and applied through the Web site.

Ms. Horwath: What is your general understanding of the role of the college?

Ms. Maleki: I know that they became a self-regulatory body in 1963. I know that the council position I'm applying for is to really bring forth the public interest, and that the council is a regulatory body that frequently addresses the issues we're talking about right here.

Ms. Horwath: Usually I start off—you probably noticed, if you were here earlier—with questions around political affiliation and political donations. I know you were quite open about that in your CV, and I just want to have that on the record.

Ms. Maleki: Sure.

Ms. Horwath: Are you a member of any political party?

Ms. Maleki: I am not a member. I was a member of the Liberal Party of Ontario in 1997 or 1998. I have not been a member since that time.

Ms. Horwath: Do you provide donations to any particular political party?

Ms. Maleki: I provided a one-time modest donation to the Liberal Party of Ontario during the 2003 campaign.

Ms. Horwath: Thank you very much, Meysa, for coming in.

The Chair: We'll go to the government side.

Ms. Deborah Matthews (London North Centre): It's nice to see you. I'd like to acknowledge you as a new constituent of mine. Welcome to London North Centre.

Ms. Maleki: Thank you.

Ms. Matthews: I just want to commend you for offering yourself for this very important position. I think you'll be an outstanding member. Again, welcome to London.

Ms. Maleki: Thank you. I appreciate that.

The Chair: A fine city. I spent a couple of years there at Western myself—four, as a matter of fact; four of my favourite years. I was probably a London North resident as well.

Ms. Matthews: Yes, indeed, I bet you were.

The Chair: Comments or questions, government members? The official opposition?

Ms. Scott: Welcome to the committee today. I'll follow up on some political questions, if you don't mind, and then I'll go more into the nursing questions.

I think we noted that you were a campaign volunteer for both George Smitherman and Greg Sorbara in 2003; is that correct?

Ms. Maleki: That's right.

Ms. Scott: You were an Iranian-Canadian Liberal Party of Ontario board member from 1998 to 1999?

Ms. Maleki: That's correct.

Ms. Scott: Ms. Horwath asked you questions about donations, so I won't go into that. Just to be clear, you are not a member of the Liberal Party at this present time.

Ms. Maleki: I have not been since 1999.

Ms. Scott: OK. Do you feel your involvement with the ministers I have just mentioned had anything to do with your appointment for today's process?

Ms. Maleki: Not at all.

Ms. Scott: That's not reflective of your background; you have a very impressive background, and I appreciate that.

Ms. Maleki: Thank you.

Ms. Scott: When you did the process of applying, did you speak to any staff members of any Liberal MPPs or Liberal cabinet ministers?

Ms. Maleki: No, other than the one person who contacted me about my application. I don't know if that's—

Ms. Scott: Was there a name—

Ms. Maleki: Mr. Sukpal.

Ms. Scott: And you don't know what office or what title?

Ms. Maleki: I don't know what position he holds. He asked me questions about my resumé and application.

Ms. Scott: OK. I'm going to ask some questions. Before I became an MPP, I was employed as a nurse for over 20 years, varying between full-time and part-time, outside the country and in the country, mainly in acute care settings. I've spoken to a lot of nurses' associations since I have become an MPP and have seen the political side of nursing. A lot has been mentioned about nurses and RPNs—registered practical nurses—who are also on the board you are sitting on—you have RNs and RPNs, as well as the public.

You brought up a great point in saying, "Why is there dissatisfaction and why are nurses not staying in the profession?" They tell me that the numbers of RNs and RPNs who aren't working in Ontario are quite large. That's certainly a lot of talent that we're not harvesting into our health care setting. I just wondered if, in your past experience, especially in your undergraduate studies, you had any recommendations or any thoughts about how we could possibly attract both RNs and RPNs back into the workforce in Ontario.

Ms. Maleki: I think job satisfaction needs to be assessed. I note through speaking to my husband—for example, he told me the other day that a lot of nurses complain about boredom at times. For example, if they're doing ER for a while, they'd like to change floors and go to something else. He said that's part of the reason. And the other reason is numbers. If you reduce the stress on nurses, I think that would definitely increase job satisfaction, so that's another thing. The government has promised to hire 8,000 new nurses. Whether that will come to fruition or not, we'll have to wait and see, but I think those are the sorts of things we need to be looking at.

1120

Ms. Scott: I agree. Out of the discussions with the professor at York University in the nursing programs—

no one has really ever asked the nurses what they'd like. I'll pick one of the topics that they probably haven't been asked about, and a lot of it is flexibility in scheduling. I know when I worked in the state of Florida—I would work three or four months at a time as a travel contract—we had many more choices. We could do self-scheduling; we could do days; we could do nights. I know there are some barriers in the province that maybe need to be brought down in order to enable some more flexibility in the hours, because predominantly they're women in the nursing profession and they have young children and they're trying to balance home and work lives.

I just wondered if it would be possible that you could instigate or bring up the possibility of having nurses actually surveyed, and see if there was ever a study done of nurses and maybe how we could make it a more suitable lifestyle for them in your role on the board.

Ms. Maleki: Absolutely. I do believe, from my review of their Web site, that they do frequent surveys and there are focus groups. I would definitely like to see more of that and ways to improve it—because all those things cost money—in the most efficient manner.

I know, as per the quality assurance program, they do consultations with hospital staff on a yearly basis on things that seem to be working and not. Maybe as part of that you could take it a step further in really getting the views of nurses on ways they think it can be improved and their job satisfaction improved and their level of stress can be reduced. Because, with increased job satisfaction, I think we will fulfill our mandate, which is to provide quality nursing to the public.

Ms. Scott: I have a rural riding that I represent, Haliburton–Victoria–Brock. I worked in the Lindsay hospital, Ross Memorial Hospital. There isn't the acute nursing shortage in rural Ontario as there is in the cities. They still would like more full-time work but not all of them want full-time work, so it's trying to find the balance.

You also mentioned that your husband is a physician and brought up the high workloads. There is no question that studies have been done repeatedly: the fewer nurses at the bedside, the higher the mortality rate. There is no question. We did speak with the RPNs, I believe just last week, and certainly studies have shown that the model of care of an RN working with an RPN does deliver a higher level of care to the patients.

I'll just give you some background information, that some needs in rural Ontario are different than urban Ontario; also, the role of nurse specialists and nurse practitioners. I just wanted to know if you had any comments about if we could increase the roles for nurse practitioners and nurse specialists not only in the hospitals but in the communities. I don't know if you have much background with that.

Ms. Maleki: I do have some background. I believe that nurse practitioners are a tremendous asset. I don't believe that in all areas they could substitute for a family physician. There have been studies done—I think there was a study done in Brampton some years ago, if I'm not

mistaken about the city—and when they compared patient satisfaction and patient care, people were just as happy with the nurse practitioners as physicians.

I think in rural areas, as you mentioned, where there is definitely a lack of family physicians, they provide primary health care and are there for these patients. My views on nurse practitioners are that they're a tremendous asset, not a definite substitute for family physicians, but the controlled acts that they are authorized to do are clearly set out in the legislation. I believe they can exercise judgment, when they feel that they're not up to the job or that it's beyond their level of competence, to refer it to a family physician or a specialist or to get outside help. So I'm in favour of nurse practitioners.

Ms. Scott: There's no question that nurse practitioners have a role. In the city of Kawartha Lakes, which is one of the areas I represent, we're short 15 family physicians. Nurse practitioners certainly have a role, and I'm hoping there are more family health teams that are going to be announced by the present government and, for the ones originally announced, that the money will flow.

I didn't know if you knew that there is some problem attracting nurse practitioners, but there is also low enrolment in the new RN program, the diploma that has gone to the baccalaureate. There's decreased enrolment in the RN program, and also nurse practitioners are harder to attract to rural areas. It's more if you knew of different incentives or suggestions that could make for different changes in legislation to get more nurse practitioners out in the communities and the hospitals.

Ms. Maleki: It's really a personal lifestyle decision, to attract them to rural areas. I think for the same reasons that family physicians often prefer to stay in urban areas, so do nurse practitioners. I think if remuneration were to go up for nurse practitioners in rural areas, that would definitely be an incentive.

I think for registered nurses, frankly, if more positions became available, they would attract people to become registered nurses. Reading in the newspaper that there are not enough jobs out here, I frankly wouldn't want to pursue four years, have OSAP right behind my back, come out with that loan money and not be able to get a job. So I think those are the incentives that we need to focus on.

Ms. Scott: Thank you very much for your comments there. Certainly, our new grads leaving the country has been a big problem in the past, so any type of retention measures, which are really full-time jobs, would be appreciated by them.

The Chair: Ms. Maleki, thank you very much for your presentation and your response to members' questions. You may step down.

We're now going to move to the concurrence votes on our intended appointments today. We'll proceed in the order that they appeared before the committee.

We will now consider the intended appointment of Jeffrey John Hamblin, intended appointee as member of the Hamilton Community Care Access Centre.

Mr. Berardinetti: I move concurrence.

The Chair: Mr. Berardinetti moves concurrence. Is there any discussion on Mr. Hamblin's intended appointment? Seeing none, all those in favour? Any opposed? It is carried.

Congratulations, in his absence, to Mr. Hamblin on his appointment to the Hamilton Community Care Access Centre.

We will now consider the intended appointment of Bryan De Sousa, intended appointee as a member of the council of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario.

Mr. Berardinetti: I move concurrence.

The Chair: Mr. Berardinetti moves concurrence. Is there any discussion of Mr. De Sousa's intended appointment? Seeing none, all in favour? Any opposed? It is carried.

Congratulations to Mr. De Sousa on his appointment to the council of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists.

We will now consider the intended appointment of James Grant McMaster, who is with us, as intended appointee as member of the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal.

Mr. Berardinetti: I move concurrence.

The Chair: Mr. Berardinetti moves concurrence. Any comments or discussion?

Ms. Horwath: I think it's important to note that although Mr. McMaster has an extensive background in many different areas, he didn't seem to have a lot of background or knowledge of the Tenant Protection Act and the issues facing landlords and tenants in the province of Ontario. That raised a little bit of concern with me, so although he seems a very capable person and someone who—I think it was he who said he is a quick learner. I still get concerned that some of these tribunals, particularly the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal, have seen a number of appointments of people who really don't have the background or experience necessary to get up and running very quickly. So I'm going to reserve my vote on that one.

The Chair: Thank you. Any further discussion? Seeing none, all in favour? Any opposed? It is carried.

Congratulations, Mr. McMaster. All the best on the housing tribunal.

We will now consider the intended appointment of Meysa Maleki. Ms. Maleki is the intended appointee as member of the council of the College of Nurses of Ontario.

Mr. Berardinetti: I move concurrence.

The Chair: Mr. Berardinetti moves concurrence. Any questions, comments? Seeing none, all those in favour? Any opposed?

Congratulations, Ms. Maleki, and all the best on the College of Nurses.

1130

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Chair: Now that we have moved through our intended appointments and the concurrence votes, I said I

would come back to other business. Let me just say, Ms. Scott had mentioned she had other business. We will be reconvening on a regular schedule from now on. So Wednesday, October 26, we'll be back in session. We have a full slate of intended appointees to be reviewed.

Other business? Ms. Scott.

Ms. Scott: I want to bring forward a motion. The clerk is passing out the motion. It's referring to standing order 106(e). This is the committee that was set up to provide the overview of the appointments related to the Greenbelt Foundation in yesterday's questioning in the Legislature. We wanted to bring this forward to the committee so that the government's not trying to introduce partisanship into the appointments process. We have the ability, as the opposition parties, to highlight that. So it's an important part of ensuring government transparency.

I know the previous NDP government had the integrity to establish this committee when they were in government. The original recommendation was to set up this oversight body, which was made when the Liberals were in government, but they chose to ignore those recommendations. As things stand now, we have a limited mandate and can only review some of the appointments.

This board is one that has an important function and is responsible for spending money on behalf of the government. Appointments to this board should be reviewed by this committee, especially because of the nature of the work that they will be doing. The people of Ontario deserve to know whether the appointments the government makes to this board are the best-qualified individuals or they're simply political hacks. The appointments should not be made under this cloak of secrecy; they should be subject to review.

We're concerned that the present McGuinty Liberal government has once again abused the public trust by acting in contravention of their own legislation. The Government Advertising Act was put in place to prevent the government from engaging in self-serving promotional advertising, and it has come to light that the McGuinty Liberals are circumventing this legislation by channelling advertising dollars through a foundation set up under the Corporations Act.

The Greenbelt Foundation was created by the McGuinty Liberals in June 2005 and given a grant of \$25 million in taxpayers' dollars, with no checks and balances to ensure that these funds were allocated appropriately. Furthermore, the current board of the foundation, which was appointed quickly through the back door, includes the deputy minister appointed by the Premier. They have now launched a \$1.5-million political advertising campaign to persuade Ontarians that the Liberal "greenbotch" is a good thing. This abuse of public trust and public funds by funnelling government advertising dollars through the back door cannot be tolerated by Ontario taxpayers, and we in the opposition are demanding more accountability.

Therefore, I would like to move that the current board members be asked to appear before this committee in

order to review their fitness as appointments to the purportedly independent Greenbelt Foundation. The motion has been passed out. I'd like to ask for a recorded vote on this motion but, as I've said before, I want to enforce that this motion is brought before the committee to ensure that safeguards are in place and we don't end up with a provincial Liberal Adscam. I'm sure that the members of the government do not want to see that happen.

Referring to standing order 106(e), I'll read the motion as follows:

Whereas, on June 16, 2005, the government announced the creation of the Greenbelt Foundation and provided a \$25-million grant to fund the operations of the foundation; and

Whereas the McGuinty Liberals appointed a five-member interim board, including the current Deputy Minister of Natural Resources, to oversee the operations of the foundation; and

Whereas the Greenbelt Foundation has launched a 12-week, \$1.5-million political advertising campaign to promote the newly legislated greenbelt; and

Whereas the McGuinty Liberals have passed legislation banning such partisan political advertising;

The standing committee on government agencies requests that all current appointments to the Greenbelt Foundation be reviewed by the committee and that all future appointments, including the inaugural permanent nine-member board to be appointed in March 2006, be reviewed by this committee.

The review of these appointments should consider the inherent political nature of the greenbelt process to ensure that prospective appointees have no direct affiliation with the McGuinty Liberal government and are in fact independent and free from political influence. The review should also consider that the foundation has been charged with the responsibility of allocating \$25 million in taxpayer money, \$1.5 million of which has already been squandered on partisan political advertising, in contravention of the McGuinty Liberals' own law.

I ask for a recorded vote, Madam Clerk.

The Chair: Before we move to a vote, we're open to debate. Questions and comments?

Ms. Horwath: It's interesting that this motion is coming forward. Some of the issues outlined here have been a concern to New Democrats as we've watched what's been happening. Can I just ask if anyone has an update—perhaps you, Mr. Chairman, or perhaps research—on what the status of the bill is with the political partisan advertising that the Liberals introduced Lord knows when? When was that bill introduced, and what is the status of it now?

The Chair: You've caught me a bit off guard. I don't know the status of the legislation. I believe it was passed, but as Chair, I don't have any—

Ms. Horwath: No, I don't think it has actually gone through the final process. I don't think it has received royal assent.

The Chair: We were just provided with this, I think, a couple of minutes before the members were, so we don't

have any particular research on the status of the legislation.

Ms. Carrie Hull: I can get back to you when I find out.

Ms. Horwath: Can I just ask the mover: Is the intention to have this done right today as opposed to put it on for next week's meeting?

Ms. Scott: We'd like to review the intended five-member interim board as soon as possible. I leave it to the clerk for procedures. I would like it voted on now because I'd like to interview the board members as soon as possible for the interim board.

Ms. Horwath: I was just asking for some clarification. If you prefer to have this motion voted on today, I have no problem with that, but it would have been helpful if we'd had this before.

I think it's really interesting that that bill got tabled—I don't even recall when; I wish I had it in front of me—because I think it illustrates that, notwithstanding the purported commitment to making sure that all of these things are more transparent, in fact what we have is every opportunity being used by the government to take advantage of the fact that the bill hasn't been proclaimed yet. This particular advertising indicates that there is really a lack of commitment by the McGuinty Liberals to get that bill passed and to make sure that the scrutiny that's required on political partisan advertising is being undertaken.

I also agree that the need is apparent—maybe for different reasons—for having these foundation members reviewed by this committee. The greenbelt has been a controversial issue, but is certainly one that will continue to be controversial in the future. I believe the requirement of having these members of this foundation go through the appointments process would be an appropriate thing to do.

Although I'm a bit taken aback by not knowing that this motion was coming, and not having all of the information that I would like to have in regard to the situation as it currently stands in the legislative process of the advertising bill, I do believe that this is certainly in the right direction and can support it in spirit, and with my vote as well.

The Chair: Any other comments or questions?

Mr. Berardinetti: Briefly, Mr. Chair. The appointments process is regulated through our standing orders. With the greatest of respect, if Ms. Scott or any other member has a problem with that process, then I think it should be taken up with the respective House leaders at a House leaders' meeting. So I will not be supporting this motion today.

The Chair: Any other comments or questions?

Ms. Scott: I'd just like to make the comment that, because the advertising is going on presently, if the procedure is to go through the House leaders, then they should discuss it as soon as possible so that if we have an opportunity—which I would like, obviously, by this motion—to interview the five-member interim board, we would appreciate that. They've been allotted \$25 million.

We have to know how that money's being spent and we only know partially that \$1.5 million is being spent on partisan advertising, which the present government has brought in legislation to ban.

Ms. Smith: I can't stand it any more.

The Chair: Ms. Smith?

Ms. Smith: Ms. Scott has alleged that political advertising is occurring, and we have no such information or evidence. The Greenbelt Foundation was structured in order to promote the greenbelt. There are various organizations across the province that promote good environmental concerns. This particular motion that she's put forward is incredibly political, and for that reason, of course we will be voting against it.

Ms. Scott: The motion has been brought forward so we can see where the money is being spent and for transparency and accountability. You have brought legislation in with respect to that. So I don't see why it's not appropriate that we possibly interview the five interim board members to ask them what guidelines they've been given and if they've been given direction as to where the \$25 million is to be spent.

The Chair: Further debate or comments?

Before we call a vote on this, I need to make sure the motion is in order. I think members know—Mr. Berardinetti referenced the standing orders—that the committee has the ability to compel intended appointees to agencies that are orders in council. Because staff have just been presented with the motion, we're not sure at this

point in time if the Greenbelt Foundation is an OIC agency or not. I think members know that if it's not an OIC agency, we don't have, under the standing orders today, the ability to call them before the committee.

I'll tell you what. Since we just presented them with this and they're doing some research, I'm going to take a five-minute recess and confer with the clerk and research. We'll come back in five minutes, at 11:50.

The committee recessed from 1142 to 1153.

The Chair: The standing committee on government agencies is now back in session.

Folks, we have a motion on the floor. We've been doing some research, and I thank staff from the bench here, the clerk and the research officer.

We're getting close to noon, and we're still not clear on exactly what the appointment process is surrounding the Greenbelt Foundation. I think members know that within the standing orders there is an OIC appointment process; that's how members are appointed, and then members can call them to come before the committee. There are other members who are appointed by ministerial letter. Now, the process is they cannot be called before the standing committee.

What I'd like to do is reserve my decision until the next meeting of this committee so that we have full information on the Greenbelt Foundation and how they're appointed.

Given that, this meeting is adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1154.

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