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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 30 April 2007

Lundi 30 avril 2007

Speaker
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Monday 30 April 2007

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Lundi 30 avril 2007

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

COURT STAFF

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): On April 26, I raised the issue of the more than 1,400 staff employed by the Attorney General in courtrooms across the province who have been working under impossible conditions since the implementation of the terms of the flexible part-time agreement. The Attorney General and the Premier have been ignoring the pleas of these employees for months, and their union was not able to advance a solution.

Responses saying that employees agreed to the terms are an abdication of responsibility and don't do anything to resolve what for many staff are financial hardship and personal stress, not because of lack of employment but because the Attorney General isn't paying these people for the work they are doing and for which payment is being withheld. At the Newmarket court, that translates into an average of \$4,000 per employee since January 1. Province-wide, the government is withholding more than \$1 million from these employees.

This morning I was joined at the Newmarket courthouse by many of these victims of this unfair agreement. The unintended consequences of that agreement are causing serious harm to hard-working employees. I made public this embarrassing situation, released the letter I delivered to the Attorney General and the Premier last week in which I called on them to act immediately to resolve this matter, and committed to once again raise this issue in the House today. So, on behalf of the 1,400 staff province-wide, I call on the Attorney General once again to resolve this issue without delay.

MINOR HOCKEY

Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland): It's with great pride that I rise in the House today to share some exciting news from my riding of Northumberland-Quinte West. We've captured seven Ontario championship titles. What an amazing feat.

The Cobourg novice A team, the Campbellford novice CC team and the Port Hope midget AE team are each proudly displaying their 2006-07 OMHA championship trophies. Also, the city of Quinte West is understandably proud of their minor bantam team, as well as their bantam team, which now hold 2006-07 OMHA champion-

ship titles. As well, the village of Baltimore will have two OMHA championship banners on display. They will commemorate the 2006-07 victorious season for their novice and atom championship teams.

I join the citizens of my riding of Northumberland-Quinte West in commending your teams' accomplishments and salute your talents, dedication and hard work. The coaches, sponsors and parents are to be applauded for supporting these young athletes and contributing to their very successful teams. These teams represent the best in our Canadian hockey tradition, and I share the pride in their outstanding accomplishments.

**MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP
AND IMMIGRATION GRANTS**

Mrs. Joyce Savoline (Burlington): The Ontario Liberals do not realize the seriousness of the problem of issuing grants to groups without a formal application or even selection criteria. The issue is handing out taxpayers' money without any process: no application, no public notice, no minutes of record, no selection criteria used, and no follow-up process to ensure value for money.

Today we are going to be debating an opposition day motion in this House that asks Minister Colle to table all paperwork on this issue. We strongly encourage the Liberals to support this motion. The Ottawa Citizen, in their April 27 edition, stated, "The Liberals have trouble with transparency. Their majority on a legislative committee has blocked an opposition request for the provincial Auditor General to review the controversial file and to report back before the next election."

It is time for the Premier and the minister to be accountable to the taxpayers of Ontario and to have these records duly audited. It is the right thing to do.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto-Danforth): What a difference a community meeting makes. Community pressure is working to stop a proposal that would see a high-voltage transmission corridor, a spin-off of the McGuinty Liberals' unsustainable energy plan, go through the city's east end. Government documents have shown that the city's east end, including Pape Avenue, could be a site for a high-voltage transmission corridor, also called the third Toronto line.

I have provided these documents and the newspaper reports on them to the Clerk for access by the members.

The proposed routes have been in the news since early April. The OPA has said it will have an assessment of the third Toronto line this summer. The minister's comments in the Legislature and comments by his staff that Pape Avenue is no longer an option have come after community mobilization happened. The Minister of Energy's spokesperson has told the *Globe and Mail*, which was among the first news outlets to report on this issue, that the eastern transmission lines "are no longer an option on Pape Avenue." The spokesperson "remained non-committal on other east-end locations."

I say to the minister now: Put it in writing. Table in this Legislature the formal legal documents that rule out the proposed route on Pape Avenue and any other proposed route through Toronto–Danforth.

SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Vic Dhillon (Brampton West–Mississauga): I rise in the House today to inform Ontarians that May is South Asian Heritage Month. South Asian Heritage Month is held throughout the month of May. It is the first of its kind in Canada and celebrates the first arrivals from the Indian subcontinent, beginning in May 1838.

It was also with great pleasure that I was able to take part in yesterday's Khalsa Day festivities with Premier McGuinty and seven of my colleagues and, of course, many constituents from my riding of Brampton West–Mississauga. Premier McGuinty has been attending this event for more than seven years.

1340

Thanks to the McGuinty government's efforts, the South Asian community and countless other ethnic communities are thriving and vibrant and have contributed enormously to the foundation of this province, despite the negative attacks from the Tory Conservatives, who would rather not see a government assist our cultural groups to help them integrate into Ontario.

Yesterday's parade marked the 308th anniversary of Vaisakhi, celebrated by thousands of Sikh Canadians, a strong indication that Ontario is and will continue to be a province where cultural groups feel at home—again, thanks to the efforts of the McGuinty government.

I'm proud to be part of a government which actively engages and encourages Ontario's many different ethnic groups. I applaud the McGuinty government for being the first Ontario government that has made efforts to contribute to Ontario's multiculturalism. I invite all Ontarians to join us in celebrating South Asian Heritage Month.

MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION GRANTS

Mrs. Christine Elliott (Whitby–Ajax): I rise today on behalf of our leader, John Tory, and the Progressive Conservative caucus in response to some very serious remarks made by Premier McGuinty to the media on

Friday when asked to comment on our recent line of questioning with respect to the slush fund scandal.

As a member of this Legislature and as an Ontarian, I was disgusted to hear the Premier of this province sink to such a low, attempting to deflect the culpability of his own government in this mess by insinuating that questioning by members on this side of the House has been motivated by racism. This is unprincipled behaviour, unacceptable behaviour, and demonstrates a shocking lack of leadership on behalf of Mr. McGuinty.

His minister's rushed announcement of an application process for the funds his government carelessly shovelled out the door this past year with no paper trail is all but an acknowledgement of guilt. Yet, the Premier still thinks it is acceptable to diminish the importance of this issue by characterizing our legitimate questions regarding millions of taxpayer dollars as a mere outburst and subsequently chalks up our approach to hold this government accountable to racism.

Dalton McGuinty used gutter politics to attack the opposition. He has tarnished the reputation of all members of the Legislature and completely damaged the political process. The Premier didn't have the character to apologize last week, but he should apologize now, and I challenge him to appear in the Legislature this afternoon to do so. His actions were completely beneath the office he holds. All members of the Legislature and all Ontarians—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Thank you.

SAULT STE. MARIE ECONOMY

Mr. David Oraziotti (Sault Ste. Marie): I'm pleased to share some more good news about our community's economy and good news for the people of Ontario.

This past week, on behalf of Minister Steve Peters, I had the pleasure to announce that the provincial claims centre, a part of the Ministry of Labour, will be hiring an additional 15 new workers with an additional \$1-million investment. This funding will provide a boost to my community's economy by adding new jobs, and this investment is part of a provincial strategy to bring more jobs to Sault Ste. Marie and northern Ontario. To date, over 300 additional public sector positions have come to Sault Ste. Marie under the McGuinty government, including approximately 200 health care positions that have been added to our community over the past three and a half years. They have been joined by new education professionals, police officers, daycare workers and countless others.

While the NDP ripped up the contracts of Ontario's public servants and the Conservatives closed schools and hospitals and fired thousands of nurses in the process, our government understands the importance of civil servants, who support local economic growth and provide valuable public services to all residents of Sault Ste. Marie.

The 15 new hires will be helping to protect employees' rights as we work to accelerate employment standards claims in our community and throughout Ontario.

This funding is part of a \$3.6-million provincial strategy to improve efficiency in the claims process and reduce wait times. The Ministry of Labour receives more than 20,000 claims annually, so it's a huge task.

We are committed to protecting workers' rights, and I'm happy to report that our government is making tremendous progress when it comes to protecting workers' rights.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot): I rise today to comment on how far the McGuinty Liberals have come in repairing our public health care system and bringing down wait times for Ontarians. I know it's an important item, and when it comes to wait times, we are not just talking about change; we've gotten real results. Hamilton Health Sciences Corp. has already been able to bring down angioplasty wait times by 84%, cancer treatment wait times by over 27%, and hip replacement wait times down by over 51%. Our government has just announced an additional \$9.8-million investment for the Hamilton Health Sciences Centre, which will go to bringing down wait times for cardiac procedures.

When the leader of the official opposition attacks our wait time initiatives, it's also an attack on front-line workers, the unsung heroes of our health care system. The member opposite's policies also include taking \$2.5 billion—do you believe it?—out of the health care system and then working to privatize it, while we have been working hard to bring in 8,000 more nurses, increase the number of doctors, and make real reductions to wait times. There's so much more to do, and we continue to look forward to the challenges of the future.

EDUCATION WEEK

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville): I rise in the House again on a positive note, like the previous speaker, to talk about just how far the province of Ontario has come in the area of public education. This week is Education Week. We are celebrating teaching excellence—we support the teachers in this province—and student achievement in the province.

The McGuinty government, unlike previous governments, has made education a real priority. Classes are smaller, test scores are higher, and graduation rates are up. The province of Ontario has come a long way since the days of the Conservatives, when 26 million learning days were lost due to full-time teachers' strikes, and when public education funding decreased and private education funding increased. The members opposite would like to take us back to those days, but we won't let them.

There's finally peace in our schools and stability in the classrooms. I ask all Ontarians, in celebration of Education Week, to look at just how far we have come together. Let's celebrate contracts with teachers and honour

them. Let's celebrate student success in literacy and numeracy. Let's celebrate students graduating. And let's celebrate moving Ontario's public education system forward together.

The McGuinty government's commitment to teachers, support staff and students ensures that our education system will not return to the bad days of damage, cuts and neglect. There's always more to do, but through the support of our government and the people of Ontario, we'll ensure that that progress continues.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman): Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 67, An Act to amend various Acts to require a declaration with respect to the donation of organs and tissue on death / *Projet de loi 67, Loi modifiant diverses lois pour exiger que soit faite une déclaration au sujet du don d'organes et de tissu au moment du décès.*

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Mr. Bradley seeks unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business. Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Mr. Bradley: I move that notwithstanding standing order 96(g), notice for ballot items 6 and 7 be waived.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): I move that, notwithstanding any other order of the House, pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House

shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Monday, April 30, 2007, for the purpose of considering government business.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 335. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say “aye.”

All those opposed will say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1350 to 1355.

The Speaker: All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Duguid, Brad	Oraziotti, David
Balkissoon, Bas	Duncan, Dwight	Parsons, Ernie
Bentley, Christopher	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Peters, Steve
Bradley, James J.	Fonseca, Peter	Pupatello, Sandra
Brownell, Jim	Hoy, Pat	Ramal, Khalil
Bryant, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Rinaldi, Lou
Cansfield, Donna H.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Caplan, David	Marsales, Judy	Sandals, Liz
Chan, Michael	Matthews, Deborah	Smitherman, George
Crozier, Bruce	Mauro, Bill	Takhar, Harinder S.
Delaney, Bob	McMeekin, Ted	Watson, Jim
Di Cocco, Caroline	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dombrowsky, Leona	Mitchell, Carol	Zimmer, David

The Speaker: All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arnott, Ted	MacLeod, Lisa	Ouellette, Jerry J.
DiNovo, Cheri	Marchese, Rosario	Prue, Michael
Dunlop, Garfield	Martel, Shelley	Scott, Laurie
Elliott, Christine	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tabuns, Peter
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Norm	Tory, John
Horwath, Andrea	Munro, Julia	Yakabuski, John
Klees, Frank	Murdoch, Bill	
Kormos, Peter	O'Toole, John	

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 39; the nays are 22.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

EDUCATION WEEK

SEMAINE DE L'ÉDUCATION

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne (Minister of Education): I'm pleased to rise in the House today to acknowledge Education Week in Ontario and to congratulate Ontario's education community.

L'engagement et le dévouement des enseignantes et enseignants, des parents, des conseils scolaires, des employeurs et de tant d'autres au cours des trois dernières années nous ont aide à appuyer chaque élève.

I'd like to take this opportunity to highlight just some of the contributions made by our education partners to help students succeed.

First of all, there are countless Ontario teachers, principals and education support staff who go above and beyond the call of duty every day. We recently recognized 15 of them with Premier's Awards for Teaching Excellence. Each of these educators has been a tremendous influence for good in the lives of our kids, day in and day out.

Award recipient Celina Cada-Matasawagon is one shining example. She works with aboriginal students to build their self-esteem and pride in their heritage. She also helped to find classrooms for students evacuated from Kashechewan and brought culturally relevant materials like dog sledding into her lessons.

There are also 1,600 student success teachers in our high schools right now determined to help struggling students get back on track—and we will add 300 more next year—and thousands of new primary teachers who have taken advantage of small class sizes to spend more one-on-one time with their students.

Teachers and principals have also been leaders within the ministry. For example, we hired 70 experienced educators to join our literacy and numeracy secretariat. They've been leading the charge towards helping all students achieve a solid foundation in reading, writing and math.

1400

Ontario's employers have been opening their doors in record numbers to students who want hands-on learning. There has been a significant increase in the number of students taking co-operative education courses because there are more employers providing a wider selection of placements. There are also 1,500 more employers and apprenticeship providers involved in our Ontario youth apprenticeship program this year compared to last year.

I also had the opportunity to work with many outstanding parents on the Parent Voice in Education project during my days as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education. We are currently reviewing 278 applications from aspiring individuals who want to join our new provincial parent board.

I've also heard from hundreds of students during my school visits across Ontario. They have been loud and clear on what they need to succeed, and that input has gone a long way in influencing our approach to education. We have received valuable help from partners working at school boards, community organizations and colleges.

Not only have these partnerships been inspiring and heart-warming; they have also produced results. The graduation rate is up for the second year in a row. It now stands at 73%, and Ontario schools remain on track to achieve our target of an 85% graduation rate by 2010-11. More elementary students are achieving the provincial standard in reading, writing and math, and in three years we are up 10 percentage points, to 64%. We have no doubt that it will continue to climb to 75%.

We have accomplished all of this during three years of peace and stability in all of our schools. This is no small feat. It's taken the shared focus and determination of everyone to put students first.

During Education Week, I encourage all Ontarians to thank someone in the education community for the energy and enthusiasm they bring to our schools.

Ensemble, nous créons un meilleur système éducatif financé par les deniers publics.

It will be a school system that reaches every student, something of which we can all be proud.

CHILD PROTECTION

Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services): I rise today to tell the House about the McGuinty government's next steps in protecting Ontario children from the dangers of Internet crime.

Earlier today, my colleague the Minister of Education and I launched Air Dogs, the second part of the CyberCops program, at the Divine Infant Catholic school in Scarborough. As many of you may recall, the McGuinty government announced the first phase of this amazing software program, called Mirror Image, in January 2005. Mirror Image is designed to teach grade 7 students about the dangers of online predators and Internet luring.

Today, we introduced the Air Dogs program. Air Dogs is intended for grade 8 students and deals with the issues of cyber-theft, extortion and bullying. This software means that tens of thousands of kids will now learn to use the Internet more safely. This program is yet another example of the McGuinty government's continuing efforts to make sure that Ontario's children are protected against child pornographers and predators on the Internet.

The Internet is an integral part of the daily lives of schoolchildren in Ontario. In fact, Canada has one of the highest Internet usage rates in the world. More and more, our children are using the Internet to learn about their world, but at the same time, many are unwittingly putting themselves at risk. With so many children using the Internet, educating them and making them aware of the dangers of the Internet is a challenge. In Ontario, we are up to that challenge.

This initiative shows that the McGuinty government is fulfilling its commitment to keep our children safe. Almost half of youth in secondary schools, especially girls, say someone has made unwanted sexual comments to them online. Protecting children from Internet crimes is one of the six key areas identified in our government's fight against crime. I'm very proud of the fact that Ontario is not only a Canadian but also a global leader in the efforts to cyber-proof schoolchildren.

The McGuinty government invested \$1 million from the victims' justice fund for the creation of CyberCops and the development of training programs for teachers. LiveWires Design developed the program and its two main components in collaboration with the Ontario Prov-

incial Police's crime prevention and electronic crime section. Their collaboration has given us a valuable tool, and I thank them for their hard work.

Air Dogs will be provided to all schools in the province in the fall. The strength of this program comes from its interactive nature and the easy way children can use it. CyberCops is based on facts from actual criminal cases.

The Ontario Physical and Health Education Association developed the training for teachers and manages the program for the Ministry of Education. Elio Antunes, the association's executive director, attended today's event. He has played a key role in the training program. I would like to thank this association and all the teachers who use CyberCops for a job well done.

Combatting Internet crimes against children, as I said earlier, is one of the six key areas identified in our government's fight against crime. We are also working to build stronger, safer communities by investing more than \$37 million annually to help municipalities hire 1,000 new police officers. Half of those new police officers are assigned community policing duties such as school visits and working with youth groups. The other 500 are assigned to six priority areas, including the fight against Internet luring and child pornography.

In addition, we are working with our justice sector partners—the Attorney General, the OPP and the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police—to implement a comprehensive strategy to fight Internet luring and child pornography. Since June 2004, we've also invested \$1 million a year in additional funding to the OPP's child pornography section, known as Project P, to increase its capacity to fight child pornography. The additional funding allowed the OPP's child pornography section to increase its number of detectives and acquire technology and specialized training.

We're acting because we want the Internet to truly be a great learning tool, a tool free of those who prey on children. This innovative CyberCops program will help us do just that.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Responses?

EDUCATION WEEK

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): On behalf of John Tory and the Ontario PC caucus, I'm pleased to recognize Education Week in Ontario. Education Week is a special opportunity to celebrate the three pillars of our education system: teaching excellence, student achievement, and exceptional administrative and community support. The theme of this year's Education Week is "Reach Every Student," and it recognizes the important work that all of our important educational partners do 52 weeks of every year to help ensure that our students are reaching their full potential in their ongoing academic, physical, social and spiritual development.

Education excellence is about the interrelationship between students and those valued education partners. It is about the important leadership role that our principals

and vice-principals play and, of course, the important leadership role of our teachers. It is about the daily interface between students and their teachers—we are all in their debt for going the extra mile to make the various academic and other subjects come alive through their dedication to the calling of teaching and to the excellence with which they carry out that calling in our schools every day.

It is also about the important ongoing role of parents and their involvement in the day-to-day lives of their children's education and through their support of the school community and the encouragement of teachers and principals.

Finally, it is about the way in which the wider community provides the encouraging support and communication of life experiences to the students as they develop into responsible citizens who will one day participate fully in all facets of the social, cultural, economic and political life of our society.

We join in acknowledging and celebrating the excellent work that our educational partners do to truly reach every student by way of encouragement, support, assistance and advice as our students face the many significant challenges, as they strive to harness life's opportunities together with their own vision of hope for their tomorrow.

1410

CHILD PROTECTION

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): I'm very pleased, on behalf of John Tory and the PC caucus, to respond to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services' comments on the Air Dogs program.

To begin with, I would like to thank former Solicitor General Bob Runciman for his December resolution recognizing February 7 as Safer Internet Day in Ontario as part of an ongoing effort to combat Internet crime against children. I notice that in the press release the minister used, he had Mr. Paul Gillespie, vice-chair of Kids' Internet Safety Alliance, offer comments, and I would like to thank him as well. He did excellent work in the child pornography unit with the Metro police service until the Liberal government cut off his funding.

We all know that Internet luring of our children is a serious and ongoing problem and a growing problem. However, regarding today's announcement, we need more resources, not photo ops, to fix the problem. The reality is that when you talk about the amount of money that has been put into the education system as a result of Internet luring, it works out to be only about \$1 million in total. With 4,900 schools in the province of Ontario—and that is not including the ones you are preparing to close in rural Ontario—that works out to \$203 per year; \$203 per school for Internet luring. I think that is disgraceful.

If you go to practically any school in the province of Ontario right now, you will see one of the big Liberal propaganda boards. If someone changes a doorknob or

they change a mirror in a washroom or they put in a flower bed, the government rushes out and puts these \$1,000 signs up—\$1,000 each. They put the signs all over Ontario. That money spent on propaganda should go into the classroom; it should go into areas like Internet luring and child pornography to teach the kids properly, not taking a million dollars out of the victims' justice fund and then taking credit for it as part of a fancy education photo op in Education Week.

A lot more has to be done. We have to get behind people like Paul Gillespie, who have done an excellent job, but what they need are more resources, not fancy photo ops, not fancy announcements in the House, but actually resources: more police officers, more help for the teachers and more help for the students themselves. Again I want to say that the fact that they put in \$1,000 signs for changing a doorknob in a washroom is not enough. They need to spend real money, and they need to spend it now.

EDUCATION WEEK

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): New Democrats salute all the teachers, support workers, administrators and trustees who work tirelessly on behalf of the students and the parents of this province. During Education Week, we want to celebrate and acknowledge many of the teachers, in fact all of the teachers, in our education system, whose job has changed over many years to include many functions. In fact, teachers these days have to be policemen and women, they have to be social workers, they have to be psychologists, they have to be mothers and fathers; they play multiple roles. It isn't just teaching that they have to do on a regular basis, but so much more. So we celebrate all of the work they do.

We celebrate as well support workers, who are doing more with fewer staff and who are working harder than ever before with less money than ever before. We celebrate education assistants, lunchroom supervisors, technicians, maintenance workers, custodial staff, people who work hard and yet are barely making a living in some of these professions. It's unfortunate that the commitment of these professionals is not matched by the Ministry of Education.

The question around Education Week is, are we reaching every student? I'm not sure. We are faced with funding shortfalls and boards that have used up reserve funds and are reporting deficits all over the place. Parents are raising millions of dollars to prop up an underfunded system and are feeling pressure every day to raise more. Oh, yes, this government is nicer than the previous regime; that is certain. But when you look at the problems that we continue to face, we have as many problems under a Liberal regime as we did under the previous regime.

Only a fraction of the \$4 billion promised three years ago to deal with crumbling schools has been spent, while students continue to sit in unhealthy, sometimes danger-

ous, buildings. Schools are threatened with closure, and communities are being disrupted. And this under a government that had a moratorium on school closures.

We have fewer art teachers than ever before, fewer music teachers than ever before. We only have 35% of our schools with physical education teachers, yet we are demanding of teachers to dance up and down with students for 20 minutes every day. But only 35% of our schools have a physical education teacher.

We have more immigrant students coming into our system, yet we have fewer ESL teachers than ever before—yes, this under a Liberal regime. We are now forcing more and more students who have special needs to be in the regular classroom than ever before. So these poor teachers now are teaching ESL students and they're teaching more and more special-needs students than ever before. No wonder our teachers are tired at the end of the day, when we are putting on them more of a burden to teach students who normally and in the past used to have specialized teachers do some of this work.

We have now larger class sizes than ever before from grades 4 to 8. The government monitors how many students we have in the primary grades, but they deliberately do not monitor how many students we have from grades 4 to 8. They don't want to monitor that. Do you know why? Because we have more students than ever before. We now have more split classes than ever before, combined classes, in some cases two and three classes in one.

Can you think of the job of the teacher who has to manage more ESL students, more special-education students, more split classes and larger classes than ever before? Is it any wonder that we are honouring teachers on a regular basis, a yearly basis? The problems are getting larger, bigger than ever before, with less support from the Liberal regime than people expected. The veneer is very thin. Oh, yes, they're saying they are spending billions, but it's all money that is circulated, money taken from one pot to fix a gap, creating another gap where there was none before. That's what the government does on a regular basis.

Do we celebrate teachers? You bet we do. New Democrats praise them on a regular basis for doing a job that is harder than ever before.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): It is now time for oral questions. Before we begin, I would like to remind members that all questions need to be placed through the Speaker.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION GRANTS

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and it concerns the McGuinty political slush fund.

You have participated in slapping taxpayers in the face by blocking the public accounts committee from asking the Auditor General to review the year-end slush fund on an expedited basis. This is the same year-end slush fund that saw hundreds of thousands of taxpayers' dollars paid out by your ministry. In the words of James Wallace, writing in the *Timmins Daily Press*, "There were no strings or accountability measures attached to the grants to ensure the money was well or wisely spent." He goes on to say, "In some cases, grant recipients didn't even ask for money—they appear to have been offered a cheque by the government."

The real Mike Colle, the real Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, not the one following the orders of Premier McGuinty or the Liberal campaign chair, would want to clear his name by calling in the Auditor General. Will you do that?

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I won't do it. You asked me if I would do it. You need to ask if the minister would do it.

Minister?

Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Our government has over the last number of years seen a great need to invest in many of our partner organizations that are providing incredibly good services for our newcomers, like the Halton Multicultural Council, Settlement and Integration Services Organization—SISO—in Hamilton, Information Niagara, the Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre.

These are organizations we've partnered with, and what we've done is tried to ensure that they have more resources to provide better expanded services. There's been a real pent-up need because there's been no attention paid to their facilities and their program expansion for years. We are proud to make those investments with those partners.

1420

Mr. Tory: We can see that the other thing Mr. Wallace wrote in his column is true, namely, "Don't ask Mike Colle the time of day, which way is up or why the sky is blue. You won't get an answer." That's absolutely the truth. I would suggest that the minister should answer the question. We saw the trouble that the Premier got into on Friday by failing to directly answer a question.

Mr. Wallace went on to say that thus far the minister has "offered muddled justifications for what at best has been a shockingly arbitrary and haphazard grant program." "Shockingly arbitrary and haphazard": Those are the words of a journalist writing about your program. That is not, I would suggest, how any government spending should be described at any time: "shockingly arbitrary and haphazard." That is why we need the Auditor General called in here.

I ask the minister, why won't you do the right thing and call the Auditor General in to have a look at this mess, clear the air, clear your name and assure taxpayers that they're getting good value for their money?

Hon. Mr. Colle: The Leader of the Opposition won't for a minute stop and acknowledge the fact that system-

atically we've ensured that newcomer programs in Ontario are funded equally to those in Quebec. We did that. We brought in legislation, Bill 124; where foreign-trained professionals have been ignored and unable to work in their professions for years, we brought in that legislation. We've created immigration gateways in London, in Windsor, in Sudbury so that immigrants can be welcome in those cities. We've also invested in more services, and those services are now being delivered in better facilities because of our systematic approach right across the province to making life better for newcomers. That's the approach we've taken.

Mr. Tory: I'll acknowledge Bill 124, which we all passed. I'll acknowledge the fact that there's an immigration agreement with the federal government. What we want to know is when are you—through you, Mr. Speaker—going to acknowledge that you have handed out the taxpayers' money with no criteria, no process, no interviews, no fairness to groups that might have wanted to know there was money available? That's what we want to know, when you're going to acknowledge that.

The North Bay Nugget is unhappy about the Liberals blocking a probe into this. They said, "Grants must be transparent." The Kitchener-Waterloo Record today said your response was, and I quote, "weak." Your sham motion in public accounts last week, they say, is "hard to take seriously." They go on to say this: "The issue is accountability." They go on to say that "full transparency would be the best policy. The government should call in the Auditor General." That's not us; it's newspapers across the province.

My question: Why won't you come clean? Why won't you let the taxpayers see what has gone on here by calling in the Auditor General now—

The Speaker: The question has been asked. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Colle: There are many long-suffering organizations, volunteer based, and also organizations that represent groups of newcomers that have not received any attention for decades. What we've done is we've partnered with them to provide much-needed new facilities and services, whether they be the Midaynta Somali Community Services, whether they be the St. George Arab Cultural Centre. At the St. George Arab Cultural Centre they told me that in 1975 their centre at St. Clair and Avenue Road burned down. They said they phoned city hall, they phoned the province of Ontario and nobody would even answer their phone call. They said now they're proud that they actually have an Arab centre here in Ontario, here in the GTA, that they can be proud of, to share their values and at the same time share services for many newcomers who come from many Arab countries to Ontario. That's what we're doing, and that's good for Ontario.

MINISTRY OF CULTURE GRANTS

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Minister of Culture and it concerns the undocumented, unaccountable fund that she's apparently

operating out of her ministry. On Friday, the Premier said that the minister is operating a year-end slush fund that saw millions, in his words, going "out the door"—and he had the sound effect—"just like that." He went on to say, "No application form. No formal process"—the Premier's words again.

Minister, how much money have you shovelled out the door to cultural groups from your year-end slush fund—no application form, no formal process, just like that? How much money?

Hon. Caroline Di Cocco (Minister of Culture): Every organization that has received dollars from the Ministry of Culture has done so because they have made a case as to the need. They have also given business plans, and they have provided to us a very, very strong case as to why it's needed. It goes through a very strict process of why the need is there, and it is to support a sector that is very much in need and that deserves every penny it has received.

Mr. Tory: That's really terrific, except it was the Premier, your boss, who said the money went out the door "just like that": no application form, no formal process. Those were his words. I'm assuming you want to stand in your place this afternoon and tell us the Premier was dead wrong, that in fact all that you said about business plans and all the rest of it is in your files and, furthermore, that you will stand in your place this afternoon and tell us you will produce those business plans and documents for all of us to see, so that we can see that that's in accord with the facts.

Minister—through you, Mr. Speaker—there are millions of dollars involved here that the Premier said went out the door "just like that." We think the taxpayers expect, no matter who is getting this money—arts groups or anybody else—that you are going to exercise the kind of scrutiny you claim to have done just a couple of minutes ago. Produce the documents and show us that's what you did. The Premier said you didn't.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Order. I need to be able to hear members place their questions. The Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal and the Minister of Energy haven't been very helpful.

Minister of Culture.

Hon. Ms. Di Cocco: I don't know what the leader of the official opposition is trying to imply here. First of all, I think it is unacceptable that he should suggest that agencies such as the Royal Ontario Museum, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Gardiner museum and the Ontario Science Centre, agencies of my ministry, should somehow not be entitled to receive dollars that they have made a case for. And, by the way, those reports are public. Those dollars are on the website. I believe that he is stretching and reaching very far to suggest that there is something untoward in their applications or in their requests for the dollars.

Mr. Tory: I'm only reaching back as far as last Friday to quote the Premier. He said these organizations received millions of dollars, "out the door just like that."

He said there was no application form. He said there was no formal process. Beyond that, he went on to say that all there was was intense lobbying by very powerful people.

Now, if it's true, as you say, that all the documents are there, all the cases have been made, all those things are available to the public on the Internet, perhaps you could bring copies of those here and point us to the Internet sites where all the business cases are available, because, at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, this minister, like all of the other ones, has a responsibility to safeguard the taxpayers' money and make sure that, no matter who is asking for it or who is receiving it, there is documentation, there are business plans, there are application forms, and people have had to justify themselves. So if those documents are there, tell us why the Premier said otherwise on Friday. Maybe he's not speaking in accordance with the facts. Maybe you could tell us that and maybe you could tell us where the documents are. Let's see them.

Hon. Ms. Di Cocco: Again, I really feel that the leader of the official opposition just doesn't seem to understand that the Royal Ontario Museum, the AGO and many of the other agencies on a regular basis continue to advocate for the needs of their agencies. The leader of the official opposition may not understand why we need to support our cultural sector in this province, but we do need to do that. Every dollar that has gone out from my ministry is accounted for. I would suggest that the leader of the official opposition—I don't know if he has time—go to the website and read the public documents that are there, because they are there. Obviously, the leader of the official opposition chooses not to read them, but chooses to have this display here in the Parliament for no reason.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The Minister of Economic Development will come to order.

New question. Leader of the third party.

1430

MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION GRANTS

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Citizenship. On Friday, the Premier said he regretted playing the race card in his attempt to silence opposition questions about the McGuinty government slush fund. The Premier should regret it, because it sullies the Office of the Premier and, frankly, it's beneath the standards of this Legislature. And it's an insult to the hundreds of community organizations and cultural groups who were denied an opportunity to fairly apply for the government assistance that was available, denied because there was no application process, no criteria for the McGuinty slush fund.

Minister, in the Premier's absence, will you apologize to this Legislature and to the people of Ontario, and will you now call in the Auditor General to immediately investigate and report on the McGuinty government slush fund?

Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): I think the Premier commented quite clearly last Friday that what we are interested in is ensuring that the issues of helping newcomers and of investing in volunteerism are looked at in a very objective way. For many years, many of these issues have been ignored, and we are trying to do our best to make sure these reinvestments occur.

I know the member still has an opportunity to apologize for calling all the settlement agencies across this province fly-by-night. He should stand on his feet and apologize.

Mr. Hampton: Minister, you have said that there was no formal application process for slush fund money. But this weekend, a Toronto Star column reported there was a process: "The Liberal caucus was told there were year-end funds available, and members were asked to recommend ... groups."

Minister, the first principle of accountability is fair and equal access to government funding, something the McGuinty government has denied to hundreds of cultural groups and community organizations when you denied them an equal opportunity because they didn't know money was available. They didn't know about this inside, back door, Liberal-connected application process.

Tell me something, Minister. Why were only members of the Liberal Party told that government funding was available for cultural groups and community organizations?

Hon. Mr. Colle: All of our settlement partners were involved in getting sectoral improvement funding right across the board. Eighty-two of them got help.

We have invested with organizations of all descriptions across the province, whether they be in the Niagara Peninsula, whether they be in the Ottawa area, whether they be in the Toronto area. They were investments that were made in organizations that were trying to provide better services, to volunteer organizations to enhance their capacity, better language training, better job networks. These were the investments that were made across the province to try to help buttress up those organizations that for too long have been ignored.

Mr. Hampton: The Liberal MPP for Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh is candid about how the McGuinty slush fund works. He told his local Cornwall newspaper that as a backbench Liberal MPP he was made aware of a funding opportunity available within the Ministry of Citizenship, that he "heard there were opportunities," and so he put forward the name of a group in his community. He acknowledges, by the way, that there was no formal application process; there was no advisory out there to community organizations about this.

My question is this, Minister: How is it transparent, how is it accountable, how is it fair that only Liberal Party members were told about this "no application, no criteria, let's-do-it-in-the-backroom slush fund"? Tell us, how is that fair? And when will you call in the Auditor General to do an immediate investigation and report on the McGuinty slush fund?

Hon. Mr. Colle: There are very worthy organizations of long standing across this province, whether it's the Glengarry-Prescott annual games, which have been going on in Ontario for over 100 years. In this case, it's Stuart House, which has been undergoing a renovation. There has been fundraising done by that community for 20 years to try and restore this Loyalist house. The member is a great advocate for his area of Cornwall and a great advocate of historical preservation. These are the kinds of interventions made by members all the time in trying to get help for their community endeavours. This is a very worthy one, recognizing the great contributions that the United Empire Loyalists made to this province.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Order. I remind members again that the questions need to be placed through the Speaker. That means, in case you're not clear, that the pronoun "you" should never appear. It needs to come through the Speaker. Thank you.

New question.

Mr. Hampton: To the Minister of Citizenship: This may be a wonderful group; the question is about the slush fund, that "no criteria, no application form, no auditing" slush fund run by the McGuinty government.

Minister, let me tell you why this is important. Members of the Hindu Samaj Temple in Hamilton are with us today. On September 15, 2001, this group's \$1.8-million centre was destroyed by arson. Police say it was a post-September 11, racially motivated hate crime. At the same time that you were telling Liberal members that there was money available through your slush fund, you told the Hindu Samaj Temple that there was no money available; no help. Can you explain the fairness in that, Minister?

Hon. Mr. Colle: I think the member is incorrect. I have never spoken to them or I have never indicated that to them.

Mr. Hampton: Minister, maybe this Hindu Samaj Temple made the mistake in doing things appropriately, because they asked other cabinet ministers, "Is there any help?"

Let me give you the depth of the problem. They have the federal government's support. They have the support of the Hamilton Police Service, who are helping them fundraise. They have the support of the city of Hamilton. But when they went to the McGuinty government on four separate occasions and asked if there was going to be any help from the McGuinty government, they were told, "No help available."

So I ask my question again: How is it acceptable that you run a backroom, let's-not-tell-anybody-but-Liberal-Party-members fund, but a legitimate organization like this comes to you four times and they're told, "Oh, we're not prepared to help you"? How is that fair, Minister?

Hon. Mr. Colle: I just wish the member of the third party would correct himself on the next opportunity he gets. The issue here again is that there are an incredible number of very worthy volunteer-based organizations, religious and otherwise, that are doing great things in

Hamilton and all over this province. We appreciate what you do; we know the trauma you went through in 2001. I know that the member from Hamilton Mountain has been working with them and trying to see how they can be helped. This demonstrates again why these investments are important. We are trying to do our best to make the process even better so that we can help groups and organizations that for many years have been ignored. We're trying to do that.

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Mr. Hampton: This temple was the victim of a hate crime. Over the last four years, questions have been asked in this Legislature, statements have been made, letters have been sent to members and ministers of the McGuinty government, and the answer that always came back was, "No help available from the McGuinty government."

The president of the temple is here today. He says, "Throughout 2005 and 2006, McGuinty Liberals told us religious organizations could not apply or qualify for government funds. We see this now to be patently untrue." He goes on, "We are incensed we were not told potential funding existed and were not given a fair chance to apply for it."

Minister, when are you going to call in the Auditor General to do an immediate investigation and report on the unfairness, the lack of transparency and the lack of accountability of the McGuinty government's slush fund?

Hon. Mr. Colle: Again, we as a government have tried to ensure that there is an acceptance, a welcoming of all newcomers of all religious faiths, and we've reached out to these organizations to try and ensure that what they do becomes a meaningful part of Ontario and that Ontario respects their volunteerism and their great contribution. So we've tried to do that, and there's much more work to do.

Finally we're addressing these needs that for years have been ignored and paid lip service to. We are trying to do it. We've got more to do. We've put up the registry now, a direct application, so we can do it right across the province, because in past years they have been ignored totally by the other party. We are trying to do something that is needed and we're very, very empathetic. Hopefully, we can continue to work with other ministers to help this temple, but we are trying to do what has not been done for a long time, and that's help our integrated community be part of—

The Speaker: New question.

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. It concerns the same grant that mysteriously seems to have fallen into the hands of the Lost Villages Historical Society. And again, to repeat what the leader of the New Democratic Party said, when the member for Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh heard there was "a funding opportunity available within the ministry he decided to seek out a much needed grant" for this organization that he once headed. The member says there

was no formal application process, and the Toronto Star says that the way it worked was that the Liberal caucus were told there were year-end funds available and members were asked to recommend worthwhile groups.

So what we want to know is this: Who told the Liberal caucus members that there was money available? No member who isn't a Liberal seems to know there was any money available in case they happen to know a group who needed some, so was the process as follows: Did the Liberal Party campaign chair, who masquerades as the Minister of Finance, call up Liberal MPPs, say there was money available and then say, "Go find me some place to shovel it out the door to get some votes"? Is that how it worked?

Hon. Mr. Colle: All across this province there are identified needs that come through our office, my office, as a result of our regional offices. They also come as a result of long-standing requests by communities that have been asking for help. In this case here it was the area of Cornwall, which is also a high-need area in terms of underemployment and economic devastation. It was an extremely worthy organization that dates back to the Loyalists, and it was well documented. This organization had raised money locally. It was well documented that they were already doing their part, and we were partnering with that volunteer organization to restore a treasure in that part of Ontario, which was the home to the first immigrants, our Loyalists.

Mr. Tory: The more the minister stands in his place and gives these kinds of non-answers, the worse it smells. It reminds us of the words of Justice Gomery, who said, "Good intentions are not an excuse for maladministration of this magnitude." That's what Justice Gomery said. You should go and read his report, because the more we ask, the worse it looks. This group doesn't even appear on the year-end list. The year-end list, we're told by the Premier and minister, is where it's all listed on the website: a list of names and a list of how much money they got shovelled out the door to them from the Liberal campaign chair. This money, in fact, was paid out in February, and the local member says that there was no application process. That's what he says. That means that this whole thing is happening outside of the year-end process. It looks like it's a different slush fund that members of the Liberal Party had access to, and this is a slush fund for all seasons, not just for the year-end.

That is why we need the Auditor General to come in and look at this sordid mess. I remind the minister again, through you, Mr. Speaker, of what Mr. Gomery said: "Good intentions are not an excuse for maladministration of this magnitude." Will the minister call in the Auditor General?

Hon. Mr. Colle: There are many needs that have been identified in the fall economic statement of various parts of Ontario that were not getting the attention they deserved. They weren't getting the investments. They had hard, difficult times, whether it was up in Thunder Bay or in Cornwall or in the Niagara Peninsula. There were needs identified that were going to be met in the fall eco-

omic statement. Some of these investments made by my ministry were to try and ensure that the great needs in many parts of this province, identified by my regional offices etc., where we could invest in agencies that were dealing with volunteerism, newcomers and with heritage preservation, were given resources so they could invest in their facilities. Those are the kinds of investments we made, to try and invest in these service providers, heritage agencies or to serve the economic needs of all of Ontario, especially those that were in tough times.

The Speaker: New question?

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, and it's returning to the issue of the Hindu Samaj Temple in Hamilton. The McGuinty government misled this group, whose leaders are here in the gallery today.

The Speaker: You need to withdraw that.

Ms. Horwath: I'll withdraw that.

But the bottom line is that a post-September 11 hate crime of arson destroyed their \$1.8-million temple and multicultural community centre on September 15, 2001. They raised all the funds themselves for the original building and another \$1 million for the rebuilding effort, but they clearly needed the Ontario government's help and approached them many times for a grant.

My question is this: Why didn't anyone in the McGuinty Liberal government—the minister or anyone else—advise the Hindu Samaj group that they had tens of millions of dollars available for cultural and religious groups for capital projects like this one?

Hon. Mr. Colle: As I said earlier, these investments that we've made are an attempt to ensure that organizations that have been long ignored, that have been reaching out culturally, reaching out for inclusion, reaching out to be full-time partners in Ontario—have been ignored. We have tried to ensure that they get some help from the government where they can get help. We've tried to do that because we recognize that there are many diverse needs. We have again gone further to ensure that now there's an established registry so that all of these can be tracked across Ontario. We hope to continue to partner with these organizations that are doing great work in communities across Ontario and are doing it on a volunteer basis. We are trying to address that need in a more comprehensive fashion with this direct online application which has been up and running since last week now.

Ms. Horwath: Back to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration: I wrote to the Premier myself in 2005, seeking funding support for the Hindu Samaj group. Three times in this Legislature I raised the issue and requested funding. In fact I've been to their temple, as have other members of this Legislature, where we were lobbied about the dire need they were in.

The government knew for at least three years that the rebuilding of the Hindu Samaj Temple and the community centre was a funding priority for them and for the city that they and I live in, and that the identified need was urgent. The group was told that the government doesn't provide grants to religious organizations, but the

group sees now that this is not the case because the slush fund went to other such groups.

1450

My question is this: Why did this minister and the government mislead—sorry; I withdraw that—shut out the Hindu Samaj group from applying for funds for this extremely important and symbolic rebuilding project? Do you not think that their organization is worthy, and did you not think that it was a great enough need?

Hon. Mr. Colle: It's unfortunate that the member opposite is attempting to put one group against the other. What we've said emphatically is that there are many organizations all across the province that have had many needs in terms of bringing forth their volunteer programs that have not had any help from government at all. They have helped newcomers with job searches; they've helped newcomers with their food banks. They've been doing this work. They've also helped newcomers in getting jobs. Therefore, we've tried to give them more resources so they can continue to do some of this good volunteer work. We hope to continue to do this. There are so many wonderful groups that are doing this. We are trying to do a better job—and we will do even better, as we've got this direct registry now—because there are many worthy groups.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Ms. Judy Marsales (Hamilton West): My question is to the Minister of Government Services and it's about the growing payday loan industry. As many of us know, a payday loan is a small, short-term loan often used to cover urgent expenses until the borrower's next payday. These loans are usually less than the amount of one's paycheck, with terms less than a month.

Statistics Canada recently released a study around payday lending. The study indicates that low-income families are significantly more likely to have used payday loans than families with more financial options. The study also highlighted concerns about questionable practices within the industry, such as high borrowing costs, insufficient disclosure and unfair collection practices.

The federal government last week passed legislation handing provinces the responsibility to further regulate the payday loan industry. Minister, what is our government doing to protect vulnerable Ontarians?

Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services): I thank the member for Hamilton West for the question. It is true; it was just late last week that the federal government passed legislation that essentially put the responsibility for payday lending in the hands of the provinces. We had argued that it's better handled federally, but that decision has been made.

Consequently, we're doing what I think the public would expect, and that is to move to provide adequate consumer protection. We have passed a regulation, I can tell the member for Hamilton West, to require payday lenders to display clearly the exact borrowing costs of \$100 or more. That will be very clearly displayed. We

also will require very clear, concise, easily understood language. As well as that, consumers who right now may not get their funds immediately would be required, upon signing their document, to get their funds immediately. I think those are three good steps that we've taken for protection of the consumer.

Ms. Marsales: Thank you, Minister. I'm pleased to hear that we are working hard to protect those vulnerable families. You can see these stores across my riding. From what I understand, there are almost 700 operators in Ontario, who I believe make up half of the country's payday lenders. Now that the federal government has passed Bill C-26, handing over responsibility for regulating the industry to the provinces, is Ontario going to set up a licensing regime? Will we be introducing legislation? How are you moving forward to regulate this industry and ensure that we protect Ontarians from unscrupulous operators?

Hon. Mr. Phillips: Again the member for Hamilton West has it right. We do have over 700 payday lenders in the province of Ontario, and I think it's growing—over half of them. We did take the three steps I mentioned earlier.

I would also say, we now will look at whether in fact the province should license these, whether in fact the province should set the rates for these, whether in fact we will now apply to the federal government to take over the regulation of these things. I do want to get some public input into it. It's a very large area affecting an awful lot of consumers.

Consequently, we now have on our website a consultation paper that will spell this out. We are asking the public and all interested parties to give us their feedback. We're asking that to be done over the next eight weeks. I would hope that by early in July we will have some input.

I will say that I think the step we've taken for clear disclosure within those outlets is a very good step, but we may very well want to move forward on licensing and setting the rates. I look forward to the public giving some input so that we can move forward, if that's what the public thinks we should do.

MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION GRANTS

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): My question is to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and it concerns the slush fund that he's running out of his ministry.

On Saturday, the Toronto Star went into some detail about the \$200,000 that he gave to the Iranian-Canadian Community Centre in Richmond Hill. That's the same organization where seven of the seven board members have close connections to the Liberal Party, including a candidate who has been given a free ride to the nomination in that riding by the campaign chair, Greg Sorbara, and also a close friend, namely the riding president, who is also a close friend of the campaign chair, Greg Sorbara. This is the same organization that

got the funds just three weeks after it registered as an animal welfare charity. The Star quotes a number of their own caucus as saying, "It looks terrible." Well, Speaker, it does look terrible, and I would ask, through you: Will the minister call in the Auditor General to review this slush fund and his practices that, as his own caucus member says, look terrible?

Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): The investments that we've made right across this province, especially investments in groups that are volunteer-based, for the most part, groups that want to service and provide language training, job training—some of them want to provide stress counselling, language interpreter services. Some want to meet the needs of a newcomer immigrant group that haven't been met for years. We have partnered with some of these organizations that have tried to do this. Some organizations have been here for decades and decades. Some are creating new services because the services aren't there. That's what we've tried to do: Make good investments in these needs that have been long-standing and long-ignored.

Mr. Klees: The fact is that those services are being provided in Richmond Hill. This group's address is David Farmani's law office. The \$200,000 cheque was sent to the home of Greg Sorbara's friend, Bohran Fouladi. The Star has been trying to reach him for over a week, with no success. The money, we're told, is just sitting in a bank account. The group itself in a year has raised \$15,000. Saeed Soltanpour is an Iranian community activist and here's what he says: "If there's money, it should be available to everyone."

What this looks like is an attempt by this government to buy the Richmond Hill election. The auditor must be called in, and I trust, Speaker, that you will agree with me that the minister should do everything he can to restore confidence in this government, in his ministry, and that the only way he'll do that is if he calls in the Auditor General.

Hon. Mr. Colle: Many organizations, big and small, are at different stages of development. Some of them have been long-standing organizations that deliver great services and have been doing it for many, many years. Whether it be COSTI in Toronto, SISO in Hamilton or the Catholic Immigration Centre in Ottawa, some of them have been there for a long time. Some are providing new services in sectors where there haven't been any. In the community in question, there haven't been full-time services provided on a comprehensive level. There's a need there. We tried to partner with an organization that was going to try and meet those needs. That's what we did.

We need to make those investments to ensure that people get the language training, the integration and the support services they need to be integrated into Ontario society.

1500

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): New question.

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): My question again is to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. For all you've ranted and raved over there for the last week, the people across Ontario are on to you and your funding fiasco. The North Bay Nugget gave you a "brick" for blocking an Auditor General investigation. The Kitchener-Waterloo Record says, "The government's response ... has been weak" and "The government should call in the Auditor General." The Toronto Sun said so many things about you and the Premier that I can't even repeat in this Legislature because they're unparliamentary.

Mr. Minister, the issue is one of accountability. It's not about the groups; it's about you. It's not about how they're spending the money; it's about how you gave it to them. Will you turn the books over to the Auditor General, yes nor no?

The Speaker: I know the member for Beaches–East York knows how to ask a question properly and will do so next time.

Minister.

Hon. Mr. Colle: The member opposite talks about these groups. Many of these groups have got exemplary reputations and have been doing exceptional work year after year without any help. I can mention the London Cross Cultural Learner Centre, the Maytree Foundation, the Mennonite Central Committee of Ontario, the Multicultural Council of Windsor and New Experiences for Refugee Women. These are organizations that have been doing yeoman work for years that we've partnered with to ensure they continue to meet existing needs and, in some cases, needs that haven't been met. That's the investment we've made. We made that investment with the goal of ensuring these long-standing needs are finally getting some attention. That is what we've tried to do.

Mr. Prue: Mr. Minister, the Brantford Expositor calls this "A Stink over \$30M in Grants." The Chatham Daily News says, "Accountability Measures Missing from Program." The Sault Star I think says it best of all: "Looking for a Straight Answer? Don't Ask Mike Colle." What they all have in common is that your answers have been "spectacularly feeble," and we agree. Minister, what are you afraid of? What are you trying to hide?

My question, through the Speaker, is: Are you going to be accountable, are you going to be responsible, are you going to bring in the Auditor General or are you going to continue to deal with this by bafflegab?

Hon. Mr. Colle: Over and over again, many very worthy organizations have been coming to governments asking for help. They have never been received by anyone who would even listen to them. I've been in the communities. I've been in their soup kitchens, I've been in their community halls, I've been in their basements where they're trying to provide services. So we are providing help to them, whether they be the Flemingdon food bank, the Ireland Park Foundation or the Midaynta Somali community association.

In Toronto, we have a Somali population that is a wonderful contribution to this province. They are provid-

ing great volunteerism, yet they have never received substantive help from any government. We are partnering with the Somali Midaynta association to provide much-needed service to that part of Ontario that has been too long ignored. That is the kind of investment we made and we think it's a very overdue investment in communities like the Somali community, for one.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Recently, Mr. Minister, you joined me in an announcement at the Working Women Community Centre in the great riding of Davenport right here in Toronto. Working Women has a 30-year history of helping newcomer women with pre-employment and employment counselling.

This group was originally created to help women from Portugal, Latin America, Africa and the Caribbean, and it now has expanded to include all women. This innovative centre provides women who are new to Canada with the opportunity to upgrade their English, math and other basic skills, as well as providing supportive services through individual counselling and group life skills sessions. I was pleased that during your visit you were able to announce how the McGuinty government is supporting the good work of this centre. Would you please share with us how these programs of your ministry benefit newcomers to Canada?

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I would ask the member to make sure that when he's asking a question he addresses it through the Speaker.

Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities): honourable member: Through you, Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for Davenport for his advocacy on behalf not only of all of the people of his riding but especially those who need additional assistance for opportunity, such as newcomers and, in this case, women in the trades. I was very pleased to have been there with my colleague at the Working Women Community Centre, which, as he says, has done a lot of excellent work for a long period of time. The McGuinty government announced a \$200,000 pre-apprenticeship program, in conjunction with Carpenters' Local 27 and the centre, that gives 16 women the opportunity to get experience in the trade, any academic upgrading that's necessary, any language skills training, but it also gets them a job placement.

This is an excellent program. It's one of almost \$9 million worth of pre-apprenticeship programs that the government has announced this year in various communities across the province. It really does give, in this case, women and newcomers the opportunity to get their foot in the door with the trades, a great future for any worker.

Mr. Ruprecht: I truly appreciate this answer. I understand that our government is well on track in its goal of 26,000 new annual entrants into apprenticeships, a result

that will represent an increase of 7,000 new apprentices each year compared to when this government first took office.

Mr. Minister, there is a global race, as you know, for talent in all sectors of our economy, to attract and retain skilled workers. This is felt nowhere more strongly than in skilled trades right here in Toronto. I am sure that members of this House could benefit from learning how you have managed to continually grow Ontario's apprenticeship systems to create opportunities for our young people and, in particular, apprenticeship training programs which have contributed to our recent success. Mr. Minister, I appreciated your comment previously. I would now ask you to continue in telling us how these programs are going to be of benefit to the members of all skills in Ontario.

Hon. Mr. Bentley: Again, my colleague from Davenport is absolutely correct. The goal is to ensure that Ontario has the skilled workers it needs. We do have a goal of 26,000 new apprenticeship registrations every year. We're very close—we're well over 24,500—and we expect to hit the goal. We've got a number of tools to achieve that.

First of all, we're investing in the pre-apprenticeship programs I spoke of: almost \$9 million this year, almost 900 people being assisted. We're also investing in the co-op diploma programs, which allow individuals to get the beginning of their apprenticeship training but which also allow them to get a college diploma. We've got almost \$14 million being invested in that this year. We made the announcement about that at Centennial College.

To encourage employers to take on apprentices, we have the apprenticeship training tax credit, and in the budget the Minister of Finance indicated that that was going to be extended, an excellent program to help take people on. We've also got the Ontario youth apprenticeship program to get high school students credits and the beginning of their—

The Speaker: Thank you. New question.

MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION GRANTS

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): A question for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration: I have an article from the Cornwall Standard Freeholder that details a \$25,000 grant given to the Lost Villages Historical Society from your slush fund. The article says that the member for the area, the member from Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh, heard there was a slush fund available and sought to get his fair share for his riding. The member says "there was no formal application process." Maybe the member is guilty of a little bit too much honesty here. I know behind closed doors the minister will probably say that he broke the code of silence or that he's a stool pigeon or that he squealed, but the truth of the matter is, there's more truth before us today of the evidence of a slush fund. So instead of punishing the member for telling the truth, Minister, will

you just please tell us, was it you or somebody else who let the Liberal members know about your slush fund?

Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Throughout this province there are volunteer organizations that have done incredible work. So here we have a case where there's an incredibly good, long-standing volunteer organization that has been restoring this site called Stuart House. They've been raising money, putting in countless hours of volunteer work. As Minister of Citizenship, I am proud to invest in that volunteerism. I am proud to ensure that our heritage is not lost. I'm also proud to ensure that communities like Cornwall get help from this government. So if you look at the Lost Villages Historical Society of Long Sault, they've had a building that they treasure, that they didn't want lost. We partnered with the volunteers to preserve our Loyalist heritage. We're proud of partnering with the volunteers of the Cornwall area in preserving Stuart House in Long Sault.

1510

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I'm sure the member knows how to properly ask a question.

Mr. Hudak: In terms of answering my question, that was quite an air ball lofted by the minister there. Minister, I'll ask you directly again—and I ask you, don't go too hard on the member; he's only telling the truth. Don't treat him like a stool pigeon; he's simply being a whistle-blower.

Minister, was it you who told the Liberal caucus that the secret slush fund was available? Was it the Liberal campaign chair/finance minister who told the Liberal members? Secondly, we all know that this grant was not even on the list that you pulled out after we dragged it out of you, kicking and screaming, last week. It wasn't even on the list. So, lastly, is there another secret slush fund that Mike Colle is running behind closed doors?

Hon. Mr. Colle: As I said, it is very clear that there are areas across Ontario that were suffering economically. Cornwall is one of those areas that has been identified, that has been crying out for help. So we made this investment in Cornwall to restore Stuart House, which was, again, run and operated by volunteers whom we are proud to partner with. We're also helping a part of Ontario that is going through troubled waters. We are there. We've been there in Cornwall, and many ministers have been there in Cornwall, to make those investments in eastern Ontario, which needs our help. We are proud to make that investment in volunteerism, heritage preservation and the economic prosperity of the Cornwall area.

The Speaker: New question. The member for Beaches–East York.

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): My question again is to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Minister, last week, Mustaq Ahmed and Shafiqur Rahman came to this House looking for some answers from you. They came here because your friend Liberal MP Maria Minna said that Bangladeshi Canadian Community Services in my riding did not receive Liberal

slush fund payouts because, and I quote her directly, "With respect, they made a choice to get involved in an election. That's their prerogative. But from my perspective, it had to be an organization not involved in one party or another."

Minister, if that is correct, can you explain: Farhana Rahman, Liberal Party member and activist, is president of an out-of-riding group that did get more than \$200,000 in Liberal slush fund money without even applying for it. My question, Mr. Speaker: How can you explain this dichotomy—one rule for Liberals and one for everyone else?

Hon. Mr. Colle: There are many identified areas of Toronto, of the GTA, Hamilton, Ottawa—many areas that are underserved, that are not getting enough newcomer services, language training, counselling. They're not getting enough job search workshops. We are investing in areas that need it. This is one of the areas that needed this service, so we partnered with a long-standing organization, COSTI, that was going to provide leadership to provide services in an area that needed them badly. That's what we did.

Mr. Prue: Again, back to the minister: Minister, the BCCS is a registered charitable organization funded by the United Way. It is not a political group. It has never been aligned with any party, not mine and not yours, but your Liberal MP friend has made some serious accusations that could threaten the charitable-status designation of the BCCS. Again, Minister, I ask you to tell this House why your Liberal slush fund punished the BCCS and rewarded an animal welfare agency which is in fact very political and which is aligned to your party.

Hon. Mr. Colle: This is the same member who stood up on his feet and slammed a volunteer organization in Peel region even though the president of that volunteer organization was a card-carrying, proud member of the NDP. He refused to apologize to that organization, which has received funding from the Conservative government, has received funding from the NDP government, and has received ongoing funding from our ministry. He slammed that organization, jeopardized that organization, but he never apologized. Stand up and apologize.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron–Bruce): My question is for the Minister of Energy. I know our government has been championing renewables since we took office. My riding is a hub of renewable energy activity, with a number of projects already operating and a few more slated to come online this next year. How far we have come in just a few short years. To think that the opposition wasted—no, squandered—13 years and watched opportunities in renewable energy just go by. Ontario has great renewable energy potential, and they couldn't see that. What a waste. Fortunately, our government sees the untapped resources our province has to offer and we are turning the wind and the sun into clean, emissions-free

power that can only improve the quality of life for all Ontarians.

Minister, you have announced another 14 projects under the standard offer program. How will these projects contribute to providing Ontario homes and businesses with the energy they need?

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy): Mr. Speaker, through you, the member for Huron–Bruce has done an outstanding job for her constituents on renewable energy. Since we came to office, we’ve gone from last to first in wind power. Since we took office, we are now the leading jurisdiction in North America on solar power. Since we took office, we have cut coal emissions below 1990 levels and cut the NO_x, the SO_x and the CO₂ accordingly.

This government has begun to address climate change in a substantial and meaningful way, all the while empowering our farmers and citizens to share in the remarkable bounty of this country’s renewable potential.

Mrs. Mitchell: Minister, Huron–Bruce is very proud that they are providing Ontario homes and businesses with a supply of clean, emissions-free power. It’s unfortunate that the opposition chooses to play politics and ridicule the hard-working Ontarians who are building these most important projects. We know all too well how the opposition likes to fudge the facts when the truth doesn’t suit them. They’d like to have people believe that we aren’t moving to combat climate change or to bring clean, renewable energy projects online. They also don’t tell the same people about their sorry record on energy, about the cancelled conservation programs, the increase in smog emissions, global warming emissions from coal, the lack of investment in new generation. No, they don’t tell them about that.

Minister, you need to set the record straight. Maybe the opposition didn’t hear you the first time. Can you make it crystal clear for them and let them know the progress that this government has made to clean up the energy system in Ontario?

Interjections.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: The opposition wants to heckle and chortle, but let’s remember something: The Tory government did nothing on conservation. They did nothing on renewables. They put a price cap on energy that effectively shut down the province’s redevelopment of electricity. The NDP cancelled all conservation programs.

John Tory says we need more nuclear power and then he won’t tell us where he’s going to put it. The Tories want to keep the coal plants open. What’s even worse is, Howard Hampton wants them up north but not down south. He’s confused about his geography. Moreover, he’s confused about global warming and their failure to address those issues, their failure to take the bull by the horns, as we have, on renewable power: number 1 in wind in Canada, number 1 in solar in the world, anaerobic digesters—clean, green, renewable power that will power this province into the future.

Those parties have no plan, no idea and no thought about climate change and cleaning up our environment. Shame on all of them.

1520

PETITIONS

CONSENT TO TREATMENT

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): “To the government of the Ontario:

“We, the undersigned, draw the attention of the House to the following:

“Whereas the Health Care Consent Act of Ontario gives to all health practitioners, indiscriminately, the sole authority to determine whether or not a child of any age has the capacity to give or refuse consent to treatment proposed for him or her” (HCCA subsection 10(1); “and

“Whereas many of the health care practitioners who are required to make such judgments have neither the training nor the knowledge of child development such that their judgments could be considered informed; and

“Whereas health care practitioners in the family planning industry are notoriously biased in their approach to supplying abortions and chemical contraceptives/abortifacients to minors; and

“Whereas the HCCA is unconstitutional as it provides no opportunity for parents to prevent health care practitioners from providing inappropriate treatment to their child before it is administered, nor any mechanism for redress afterwards;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Health Care Consent Act to prohibit health care practitioners from administering a plan of treatment proposed for a child who lives under the care and control of a custodial parent without the prior consent of the custodial parent, whether or not the health care practitioner is of the opinion that the child is capable with respect to the plan of treatment.”

I send this petition to the table with Dillon.

HEALTH PROFESSIONS

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East): “To the Legislature of Ontario:

“We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care with respect to Bill 171, Health System Improvements Act, 2006 (Schedule O Kinesiology Act, 2006, Schedule P Naturopathy and Homeopathy Act, 2006], and respectfully suggest that Bill 171 in its present format is not responsive to the needs of the Ontario public, is unfair to RNCs and other natural health professionals and will be to the detriment to our access to natural therapies in the province of Ontario and in Canada;

"Therefore we request that the minister amend Bill 171 to safeguard RNCs and other unregulated health professionals and modalities to ensure their healthy co-existence and practising rights so that we may continue to benefit from their health care services."

I'll affix my signature and give it to page Tom.

COURT SUPPORT STAFF

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): I present a petition that has been signed by Attorney General employees at the Newmarket courthouse and representing some 1,400 staff across the province. It reads as follows:

"Petition to the Parliament of Ontario;

"Whereas 1,400 members of the Attorney General's court support staff who are working under the flexible, part-time FPT model, otherwise referred to as appendix 32 under a collective agreement between Management Board of Cabinet, the Ministry of the Attorney General and the Ontario Public Service Employees Union ... negotiated in the spring of 2005, are working hundreds of hours per week in the service of the Attorney General for which they are not getting paid; and

"Whereas under the FPT agreement many court support staff are working as many as 20 hours or more per week for which payment is being withheld and will not be paid until months later; and

"Whereas when the makeup pay does eventually get paid, up to 50% may be lost to taxes because of the taxation year into which the payment may fall; and

"Whereas many of the Attorney General's court support staff who are being forced to work under these conditions are single mothers with fixed living expenses, who incur employment-related expenses such as child care and travel costs for those hours that they are required to work but for which they are not getting paid; and

"Whereas in many cases these expenses are impossible to pay without the offsetting income which is being withheld by the Attorney General under the FPT agreement; and

"Whereas many of the Attorney General's court support staff have been left no other choice but to resign from these impossible working conditions and, in many cases, are being forced onto the welfare rolls by the very government for which they are providing hundreds of hours of work for which they are not being paid in a timely manner; and

"Whereas the FPT agreement which is causing such hardship for employees of the Attorney General was negotiated by and entered into between the Ministry of the Attorney General, Management Board of Cabinet and the Ontario Public Service Employees Union; and

"Whereas the employees to whom this agreement applies insist that the terms of the agreement and their practical implications were not fully disclosed to them at the time the agreement was proposed for ratification; and

"Whereas these employees affected by this agreement have repeatedly appealed to OPSEU, the Attorney Gen-

eral and the Premier to point out the unfairness of being forced to work hundreds of hours without being paid for that work and the hardship this practice is causing in the lives of many employees; and

"Whereas repeated appeals to the Attorney General and to the Premier that they step in to ensure fair treatment of Attorney General employees are being ignored;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to call upon the Premier, the Attorney General and the Chair of Management Board to take whatever steps are necessary to change the offensive provisions of the FPT agreement as set out in appendix 32 and ensure that the Attorney General's court support staff receive fair treatment as employees of the government and that among other unfair provisions of the agreement, the practice of withholding pay for hours worked cease immediately."

I am pleased to affix my signature in support of this petition.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):

"Whereas Ontario will not meet the needs of its aging population and ensure access to hospital services unless long-term-care homes can provide the care and services that residents need; and

"Whereas staff are now run off their feet trying to keep up and homes are unable to provide the full range of care and programs that residents need or the menu choices that meet their expectations; and

"Whereas dietary, housekeeping and other services that residents and their families value are being put at risk by increasing operating costs; and

"Whereas some 35,000 residents still live in older homes, many with three- and four-bed ward rooms and wheelchair-inaccessible washrooms; and

"Whereas, on November 23, 2006, this Legislature unanimously passed a private member's motion asking the government to introduce a capital renewal program for B and C homes; and

"Whereas such a program is required to support the limited-term licensing provisions in the proposed new Long-Term Care Homes Act;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase long-term-care operating funding by \$390 million in 2007 and \$214 million in 2008 to provide an additional 30 minutes of resident care, enhance programs and meal menus and address other operating cost pressures, and introduce a capital renewal and retrofit program for all B and C homes, beginning with committing to provide \$9.5 million this year to renew the first 2,500 beds."

I'll sign this petition.

REGULATION OF ZOOS

Mr. Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward–Hastings): “Whereas Ontario has the weakest zoo laws in the country; and

“Whereas existing zoo regulations are vague, unenforceable and only apply to native wildlife; and

“Whereas there are no mandatory standards to ensure adequate care and housing for zoo animals or the health and safety of animals, zoo staff, the visiting public or neighbouring communities; and

“Whereas several people have been injured by captive wildlife, and zoo escapes are frequent in Ontario; and

“Whereas these same regulatory gaps were affirmed recently by the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario in his annual report;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support MPP David Zimmer’s bill, the Regulation of Zoos Act.”

I’m pleased to add my signature.

LAKERIDGE HEALTH

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads:

“Whereas the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has directed Lakeridge Health to cut mental health and addiction services and children’s mental health services in order to balance its budget; and

“Whereas the ministry has directed these cuts, by-passing the Central East Local Health Integration Network, whose director has stated ‘there will be no reduction in mental health and addiction services within the Central East LHIN’; and

“Whereas these cuts will likely transfer costs rather than save them, putting additional pressure on Lakeridge’s emergency department, Durham police, Whitby Mental Health and social service providers; and

“Whereas the Central East already receives amongst the lowest per capita hospital funding in the province;

“We, the undersigned, request the Ontario Legislative Assembly to revisit this decision and ensure Durham residents receive appropriate support for adults and children who need treatment for mental health and addictions.”

I affix my name in support.

1530

GRAVESITES OF FORMER PREMIERS

Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh): I have a petition from some of the hardworking volunteers from the Cornwall Township Historical Society and the Lost Villages Historical Society, two organizations that work diligently to profile the history and heritage of past and present immigrants in my riding. It’s addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Premiers of Ontario have made enormous contributions over the years in shaping the Ontario of today; and

“Whereas, as a result, the final resting places of the 18 deceased Premiers are among the most historically significant sites in the province, but have yet to be officially recognized; and

“Whereas, were these gravesites to be properly maintained and marked with an historical plaque and a flag of Ontario, these locations would be a source of pride to the communities where these former Premiers lie buried, and provide potential points of interest for visitors;

“Now therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Enact Bill 25, an act that will preserve the gravesites of the former Premiers of Ontario.”

As I agree with this petition, I will affix my signature and send it with Tom.

SMITHS FALLS ECONOMY

Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton): “Whereas Hershey Canada has announced the closure of its Smiths Falls plant, putting 500 people out of work; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government has announced that it will close the Rideau Regional Centre in Smiths Falls prematurely in 2009, putting another 800-plus people out of work; and

“Whereas these closures will result in additional job losses at local suppliers to Hershey, such as dairy farms, local tourism operators and all local businesses; and

“Whereas the 9,200 residents of Smiths Falls will be devastated by these 1,300-plus job losses;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows”—all 7,000 of them:

“That the government of Ontario continue to work with Hershey to reverse the decision to close the Smiths Falls plant;

“That the government of Ontario immediately fund infrastructure projects in Smiths Falls like the hospital redevelopment in order to attract new industry”—we’re still waiting for that;

“That the government of Ontario complete the four-laning of Highway 7 and the reconstruction of Highway 15 at an accelerated pace;

“That the government of Ontario postpone the closure of the Rideau Regional Centre at least until it has replaced the 800 jobs with an equal number of new public sector jobs; and

“That the government of Ontario create a fund equivalent to the northern Ontario heritage fund to attract investment to eastern Ontario.”

I’m proud to sign that.

DISABILITY BENEFITS

Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre): I have a petition that reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas this petition is to inform the government of the unfair conditions that people on ODSP and/or CDPP live with;

“Whereas their struggle to survive on pensions that inadequately cover the current cost of living and their inability to keep up with the cost-of-living index makes it hard to survive;

“Whereas not only can they not survive on what they receive, they cannot even buy gifts for family members or friends;

“We, the undersigned of the petition, ask that the Legislature both make the cost of living for people on disability more affordable and help them by giving a Christmas bonus.”

MULTIPLE LEGAL PARENTS

Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the appeal court of Ontario on January 2, 2007, ruled that ‘a child may have more than two legal parents’;

“Whereas that sets a precedent and leaves many unanswered questions which could result in possible multiple legal parents and unknown devastating ramifications to children and families of Ontario;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to appeal the Ontario Court decision, so that various levels of government may thoroughly study the personal, societal and legal implications of allowing more than two legal parents.”

I’ve also signed this.

SOCIAL SERVICES FUNDING

Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot): I have a petition that’s been sent to me by Catholic Family Services of Peel-Dufferin.

“Whereas the population of the greater Toronto region will increase by an estimated four million more people in the next generation, with the bulk of that growth coming in the 905 belt of fast-growing cities located north, east and west of Metro Toronto; and

“Whereas these cities are already large and dynamic population units, with big-city issues and big-city needs, requiring big-city resources to implement big-city solutions to social issues and human services;...

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the 2007-08 Ontario budget implementing measures to strengthen Ontario’s families be passed without delay, and that the first priority for the allocation of new funding in meeting the government of Ontario’s commitment to fairness for families flow to the social services agencies serving cities within the 905 belt, and that funding for programs to serve the 905 belt be allocated to established or growing agencies located within” that said belt.

I’m pleased to affix my signature to this as well.

REGULATION OF ZOOS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Regulate Zoos to Protect Animals and Communities

“Whereas Ontario has the weakest zoo laws in the country; and

“Whereas existing zoo regulations are vague, unenforceable and only apply to native wildlife; and

“Whereas there are no mandatory standards to ensure adequate care and housing for zoo animals or the health and safety of animals, zoo staff, the visiting public or neighbouring communities; and

“Whereas several people have been injured by captive wildlife, and zoo escapes are frequent in Ontario; and

“Whereas these same regulatory gaps were affirmed recently by the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario in his annual report;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support MPP David Zimmer’s bill, the Regulation of Zoos Act.”

OPPOSITION DAY

MINISTRY OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION GRANTS

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration is the fourth McGuinty cabinet minister to fall under the cloud of scandal;

That, in the opinion of this House, this scandal is a direct result of his failure to ensure the highest level of scrutiny over grants paid out of a year-end slush fund;

That, in the opinion of this House, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration should be expected to be able to answer the most basic questions about these grants, such as on what basis the money was granted and what accountability measures are in place to ensure that the money is used for its intended purpose;

That, in the opinion of this House, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration should table the list of the “hundreds” of groups to whom he spoke about these grants;

That, in the opinion of this House, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration should table the written criteria he used to determine how the grants were allocated; and

That, in the opinion of this House, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration should table any written correspondence between his office and any groups that have received funding outside of existing formal government programs, including any and all application documents.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. Tory has moved opposition day number 4. Mr. Tory.

Mr. Tory: I wanted to start today by going back to a matter that we discussed in this House before. It’s a quote

that I think is a very relevant quote, given by one Hershell Ezrin, former chief of staff to Premier David Peterson, a very active Liberal himself. He said on TVOntario a couple of weeks ago in discussing the lottery scandal, which I guess was the third of the four scandals we're talking about here, that the standard is set by the boss. Of course, by that he meant the standard of behaviour, the standard of scrutiny of taxpayers' money, the standard that's expected of people in the cabinet and in public life is set by the boss, in this case Premier Dalton McGuinty.

What standard are we talking about here? I think we're talking about the sort of standard that the people have the right to expect of all of us who are here in the Legislature. Why are we here? I think we're here to oversee the taxpayers' money. There's a standard people expect in that regard. We're here because they would expect us to make sure there is fairness and equity between and among various groups in society who are always looking for things the government might do for them or with them. We are here because they expect us to set a certain standard in respect of transparency. Care must not only be taken with respect to things like the taxpayers' money, but must be seen to be taken. So these are the things that the people expect of us when we're here. They expect us to be here to help people. In order to help people, that means that the governors, the legislators, have to be accessible to the groups. When there's money to be given out, groups have to know about it so they can know who to call, when to call, what to submit and what they could ask for in terms of programs that might help them. They expect us to be here to wisely allocate what we know are scarce public resources.

Today of all days, the day on which thousands and thousands of people will line up across the province to, admittedly late, send in their income tax returns with millions upon millions of their money they've worked hard to earn, to be sent to this government and the government of Canada, they expect that we're going to oversee that money and wisely allocate it. And they expect us to put the fundamentals in place to ensure prosperity so that we can have enough money to pay for more health care and more education and so on.

Well, you know, this story kind of starts off well in that what you have here is the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration indicating that literally hundreds of groups have approached him saying they need money for one or the other purposes of their work. You know, at no time, with the exception of one or two groups that seem to have no track record at all, has anybody in this House, on any side, questioned the work done by these groups. There is always the implication that somehow we question the work done by these groups. What we have questioned is the fact that these groups, whoever they are, were given huge sums of taxpayers' money—no application form, no process, no interview, no audit after the fact to see if value for money was received by the taxpayers. That is what is at the essence of this entire discussion.

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The minister did start off well. The implication was that he was a very accessible person. And do you know what? He is. I see him all the time out in the community, because I'm out there myself in front of a lot of these groups. He is accessible. I believe him when he says that there are hundreds of groups that ask him for the money. The problem is, that's where the good-news part of the story ends, because after that there is no log where he actually wrote down the hundreds of people who told him they needed money. There is no application form. There was no requirement for financial statements or any other kind of business plan or anything on the part of these people. There was no interview process. There was no requirement that anybody ever report in on what they did with the money.

These are all things that are bare minimum standards that the taxpayers should have the right to expect that we would do in each and every instance in which any taxpayers' money is involved at all. I can tell you, as someone who has run a very large company—in fact, more than one: There is no chance whatsoever that you'd be able to send out, even as the CEO, a cheque for a quarter of a million dollars without any paperwork. There's no chance. You can't just phone somebody up and say, "Send a cheque out to so-and-so for a quarter of a million dollars." It doesn't happen that way.

In non-profit organizations—I served on the board of the United Way for years. I can tell you: When they come to allocate the resources they take in—very much like the government does—in trust from donors, they have a rigorous process of going through who gets the money and filling out application forms and being interviewed and so on and so forth. But in this case we have the minister picking personally—he picked personally. The member for Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh says that there was no process. He got a grant for some group because he happened to be asked, as a member of the Liberal caucus, whether he had anybody who needed any money. But none of the rest of us got asked. The organization in Richmond Hill that has seven out of seven board members who were donors, that has the Liberal candidate as a director, that has the address being the Liberal riding president's address, they got a huge sum of money, and most of the other groups in the Iranian Canadian community knew absolutely nothing about the fact that there was even any money available. This is not right.

You know what? The minister may even have picked the right groups, but we will never have any way of knowing that because all the groups that could have asked didn't know they could, and when the groups on the secret list that knew about it did either put in their application or just got phoned to see if they wanted some money, there was no objective evidence put into the file at all so that anybody could tell whether these people were deserving or were the best to have it or were appropriate to have it at all. Maybe they were the best.

We will never know that, because of the way this government has done this.

What it does is it leaves open the suggestion, which has been backed up by some of the facts that have been disclosed here, that some of this money was allocated on the basis of political partisanship, was allocated on the basis of who you knew. Even the Premier says, in the case of some of this arts funding—he asked why we didn't ask any questions about some of the arts organizations that got money, as he put it, without documentation, without a formal process. That's because we didn't know until he admitted it on Friday.

Then we have the Minister of Culture come in here and say that the Premier was totally misinformed, that there was an extensive process and all kinds of documents. We want to know who's got the facts straight here, who is speaking the truth. We don't really know, because it clearly can't be both.

There is good work done by these groups, but the bottom line is—take it from the media reports and the commentary—the oversight of these groups, when it comes to the taxpayers' money, is nonexistent. Let me quote from the Ottawa Citizen. They said, “As any federal bureaucrat who has even a remote acquaintance with scandal during the Chrétien-Martin years can testify, a program that hands out public money at the end of a fiscal year, absent a proper application process and routine oversight, is ripe for abuse.

“The Ontario Liberals appear not to have learned this lesson.” That's the Ottawa Citizen saying that.

When it comes to fairness and equity between and among all the groups who might like to have had some of that money, lots of groups who are doing a great job for newcomers to Canada never knew there was any money. How are they doing in that regard, when only Liberal MPPs know about the selection process? Let me use the words the Sudbury Star used to describe this program. They called it a “shockingly arbitrary and haphazard grant program.” That's what they called it. So we failed—the government has—on the test here of fairness and equity between and among groups.

Finally, transparency: that we have to do and be seen to do. How has the Liberal government, how has Mr. McGuinty, done on that? In that case, we have here the quote from, again, the Ottawa Citizen, where they say: “The Liberals have trouble with transparency. Their majority on a legislative committee has blocked an opposition request for the provincial Auditor General to review the controversial file and to report back before the next election. Yet it's obvious that a proper audit is needed to restore public confidence that these grants bring value for money.” I agree.

I want to conclude with a quote from Mr. Justice Gomery, because I think that the McGuinty Liberals have learned no lesson whatsoever from the whole Gomery experience, which is being repeated here. It's being repeated here. This is just like another sponsorship scandal. Mr. Justice Gomery said as follows: “Good intentions”—which the minister keeps talking about

every day in this House while not answering the questions—“are not an excuse for maladministration of this magnitude.”

When it comes to those goals of fairness and equity between and among groups, safeguarding the taxpayers' money and making sure that there is not only transparency in terms of talking about it but it's seen to be done, the McGuinty Liberals have badly failed the taxpayers. I would hope that all members will decide they can vote for this resolution on the basis that it will send a signal that we've said, “Enough is enough. Enough stink in this place is enough.” Let's get to the bottom of this and call the auditor in and finally deliver for the people, for those taxpayers who are lining up today to send in their income tax returns, the kind of transparency, the kind of safeguarding of their money and the kind of fairness that they have the right to expect from us.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): I'm pleased to rise this afternoon in support of the motion that was brought by the leader of the official opposition. I do so because there has been a significant difficulty, in my own riding, of groups trying to understand how it is that year after year they've been attempting to get some support from their provincial government and have not been able to do so. Then, lo and behold, without anybody knowing how, suddenly the information starts trickling out that a couple of specifically chosen groups were able to receive money without any kind of transparency, without any kind of process, without any kind of opportunity that was opened up to all groups.

I have to say that, over two years, \$32 million is a heck of a lot of money. Do I agree that these groups absolutely need to get some support? Do I agree that they have absolutely enormous challenges to work with their communities and to provide the kinds of support, the kinds of connections, the kinds of programs—just the absolutely amazing work that they do? I absolutely agree that that work needs to be done and that the best ones to do it, in fact, are community-based, grassroots cultural organizations. I think that's absolutely essential and necessary and appropriate.

The issue, of course, as we know, that we're debating this afternoon is the extent to which this program or lack of program came about, the extent to which the information started to become public and yet no process was ever public, no opportunity was ever made public, no transparency had ever existed. My own caucus and the Conservative caucus as well are on our feet every day asking that there be an appropriate review by the Auditor General about how exactly this all came to pass.

When I talk about the various groups in my community that I've talked to about their frustration and their anxiety and their difficulties in meeting the needs of their community members—those groups run the gamut. I had been working proudly with many of those groups long before I was in this place. In fact, the very organization that was able to obtain some dollars from the govern-

ment, the Settlement and Integration Services Organization in Hamilton—I can recall, when I was working in a legal clinic, before I was even in any elected position, when that group began to come into being, through some of the work of the Social Planning and Research Council in our community. I can remember a dialogue with those groups 20 years ago about the need to make sure that grassroots organizations were able to provide some of the very important programs that were being identified as necessary to help newcomers and immigrants in their ability to succeed in their new home, in their new country, in their new community. Talking to those groups over the years about the social isolation, for example, of women particularly, who in many cases are not in the workforce so they don't have the same kinds of day-to-day connections with the new culture, if you want to call it that, that they're experiencing in Canada, and ways to find opportunities for those women to feel part of their own community as well as part of the broader community, to help them learn the language, to be able to access some of the basic necessities of life in their new community—that's one of the examples of what some of these groups turn their attention to when they talk about the programs that they need to provide in their communities.

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I also recently was meeting with a number of different community groups. One of them—more than one, actually—was talking about the concern that they have for the young people, particularly the teenagers in their communities, because similarly, these young people are kind of trapped between the culture of their parents and the culture of their friends. They are trying to assess all of this messaging from both of these different cultures, and oftentimes experience great stress and great anxiety. Teenagers already have a lot of stresses and a lot of anxieties and a lot of pressures that they have to deal with at that age, and this added level of challenge for them is something that many of these groups are trying to work out with their youth. So again, those are the kinds of programs that some of these organizations are looking to help their youth with.

Also, I know there are issues around foreign-trained professionals, around accreditation, around access to the system and the myriad of hoops that the people have to go through in order to even figure out how to go about getting accreditation. The other issue is the one that, notwithstanding the fact that accreditation may be received or obtained, barriers still exist in the employment market for newcomers and for immigrants in terms of the ever-elusive Canadian experience. Again, a number of groups have raised with me the fear that they have that this is a false barrier and it's a barrier that simply keeps them out of the employment field. It's one that has to be broken down.

All of these types of programs and all of these goals that the groups that I've spoken to have are extremely important. Of course, the Settlement and Integration Services Organization of Hamilton is one of the more

long-standing and all-encompassing groups in terms of the number of culture and faith backgrounds and languages that are spoken there. Every time there is a new significant group of refugees particularly that are coming into our community, it is SISO that pulls together and works with our social services department in Hamilton to find ways to make sure that these 100 or 200 or 300 or 400, for example, Somali refugees are brought into our community and are given a good start in terms of finding a place to settle and a place to begin to grow some roots in the community.

When I've met with people like SISO over the years—and, Mr. Speaker, you'll know that today I asked the question about the gentlemen who was here—Ram Kamath, the current president of the Hindu Samaj Temple—in fact, for those of you who weren't perhaps tuned in earlier in the afternoon, part of the frustration is in my own city, the city of Hamilton, one of the worst backlash hate crimes to take place in Canada after the September 11, 2001, attacks in the United States was the ignorant and evil burning of one of our temples, a Hindu temple, in Hamilton. I say “ignorant” because the people who burned that temple didn't know the difference between Muslim, Hindu and Arab. They had no idea about any kind of cultural realities that exist in terms of the very diverse makeup of our community. They saw people of that particular region or people of that particular colour and dress and they just assumed that somehow these people were terrorists, and they thought it was okay to go and torch that temple.

After that occurrence took place in the city of Hamilton, my entire community pulled together to try to deal with the pain, the hurt and the fear, quite frankly—the fear that, without rising up as a community and fighting against that nasty attack, more could happen. So that's exactly what happened.

At the time, I was on city council. The mayor of the day put together an effort called Strengthening Hamilton's Community Initiative. That initiative was exactly that. It was saying that our community is one community. A poster was developed by a multi-faith group of community leaders in Hamilton. It has the symbols of all the different religions on this poster and it says that an injury to one is an injury to all. That's the point of us trying to pull together as a community to say, “If you're injuring the Hindu Samaj Temple and the Hindu people of our community, then you're also injuring the Catholic people, you're injuring the Jewish people and you're injuring the Sikh people. You're injuring every single group. You're injuring those who don't have an official religion that they affiliate with or that they were raised in or that they practise.”

When that happened, the city struggled very hard to try to come together and make something positive of it, and the Strengthening Hamilton's Community Initiative was a positive thing that came from it. In fact, even to this day, six years later, that organization has kind of morphed into a new initiative, which is called Hamilton's Centre for Civic Inclusion, a new entity that is trying to

become more proactive in all of the pieces that it takes to have a community that is socially inclusive, where everybody is able to take on the responsibility of all people in the community having connections and being able to participate in the social, cultural, political and recreational life of our city.

When that fire occurred and when our community tried to start to rebuild, the city of Hamilton at the time had a small amount of grant that it was able to provide, but of course, with the downloading that it faced, the city had very few resources to help. When I got elected here, I made a commitment to the Hindu Samaj Temple and to the leadership there that I would be doing everything I could to work on their behalf to make sure that the message was getting clearly sent over to the government.

I raised the issue several times here in the Legislature. I have the documentation of all of the times that I raised this issue in the Legislature asking the McGuinty Liberals, begging the McGuinty Liberals to please become a partner in the rebuilding of the Hindu Samaj Temple and community centre. My pleas go back to October 18, 2005, March 2, 2006, May 29, 2006. On October 24, 2005, I sent a letter to the Premier begging the Premier to find a way, whether it was through citizenship and immigration—right here in the letter, it says—whether it was through some kind of fund you can find through victims of crime—something, anything that would help this group rebuild their temple because they had tapped out their community in building the original temple, so when it was left for them to rebuild after the fire, they simply didn't have the resources. They had called upon every effort in the past already to build the temple in the first place.

Here we are, six years later, and imagine the shock of those community activists, those community leaders in the Hindu community in Hamilton, when they found out that, after being told by the Premier of this province that no funds were available, after being told that funding was not something that goes to religious groups, that that's not what gets done, after being told that even though they got a little bit of money from Trillium, some \$31,000, they'd better say nice things about the government and thank them for their \$31,000 grant, because that's the way it works—this is what they were told. So they were shocked, a couple of weeks ago, when this issue started to become public; they were shocked because they thought they had made their case. They thought that for six years they were making people in this place and representatives of their own in their community well aware of the dire straits that they were in as a result of one of the most ugly, horrific hate crimes that I can remember certainly in my community.

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But instead of acknowledging and recognizing that there are groups like this all over the place, so that any opportunity for funding needs to be wide open, needs to be obvious, needs to be transparent, needs to have criteria, we have a minister who, to this day, refuses to admit he did anything wrong. When we have groups like

this that are just stunned, that are just shocked at the fact that because they didn't happen to have the inside track for some reason, they didn't happen to have the inside track like some of the other groups did, then they are shut out of the process—well, there was no process, so they were shut out of the funding. They were shut out of the opportunity to make real progress in this rebuilding effort.

When I meet with groups like the one I met with most recently—it was actually a community meeting of a number of different groups, but it took place at a facility called the Beam Education Centre. It's an education centre that has been up and running for a little while now, put together by the Turkish community. Of course, again, at that community meeting—and interestingly enough, that community meeting took place on the Saturday of the Easter long weekend. I think it was April 5 or a date around there. I had already heard—this is before the story that we're talking about today that the motion stems from in terms of the minister's lack of accountability and refusal to be accountable for this slush fund. But before it became public, I had heard from my friend the member for Beaches—East York that they were getting complaints from communities in the Beaches riding about this issue. People were saying, "Groups are getting money and nobody knows really why they got the money." The actual established group that for all intents and purposes is the one that should be receiving the legitimacy of the grants from the government had no idea that there was even going to be any money available. They were shocked to see the group that did get the money, and we know very well that it turned out that the group that did get the money was very well connected with the Liberal government. It looked extremely, extremely bad on the McGuinty Liberals. All of this I knew already because it hadn't become public yet and we were checking our facts, but the member from Beaches—East York had mentioned it to me in passing.

So when I went to this group on the first Saturday in April, we were talking about a number of different things and they were saying, "We're really frustrated. There has to be some kind of place where we can find some help. We don't want tons of money, but we need a little bit of help from the provincial government to help us with the programs that we are undertaking to help our community members in their settlement here in Hamilton."

I had known that they were going to be asking that question because they had told me in advance. At that time, I said to them, "I'm hearing rumours about some money that has been given away." But coincidentally, because I knew I was going to this meeting and I knew they were going to be asking about this question, I had had my staff at my riding office do some research with the legislative library, asking the legislative library to review what grants are available for community groups. I have the documentation right here. It's all very coincidental. My staff had asked the question on March 28 to legislative research in the legislative library: "Can you provide as much information as may be available on

provincial government grants, programs, funding available for new immigrants, whether it be employment training, ESL, funds for cultural programs, non-government offices specific to providing services for immigrants, refugees, even festivals? It's desperate timing and I need information as soon as possible."

Of course, we got the response from the legislative library. Keep in mind: This is after the slush fund had already been going out the door by probably a couple of days. From the legislative library we get this response that says, "You asked for funding information on government grants and other program funding that would help new immigrants. You gave examples," blah, blah, blah. "Please see the enclosed resources."

You go to the enclosed resources and there's a page that says, "Government of Ontario, Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration." Unfortunately, they talk about professions and trades; Ontario business programs; Ontario bridge training; "How can I improve my English?"; Ontario Trillium Foundation; Ontario Arts Council—that's it. That's all there is. Nowhere does it say, "By the way, if you're a group that's needy and does good work that we're impressed with, just call the minister's office and we might have a little bit of slush fund money. We have about \$20 million hanging around. You might actually get some if you know what number to call and you call the right person." It doesn't say that here.

The bottom line is, it was extremely disheartening, to be polite, when I found out that within a couple of days of my asking the legislative library specifically to provide information where I could send these needy groups, these groups that are doing such great work, an official place to go for their government of Ontario to help them with their programs—and it came out dry; it came up empty. There was nothing there. Nada. Then, within a week or two after the meeting I had, when I sent around this document—I made copies and gave it to everybody—lo and behold, there was money. You just had to be in the know. You just had to know that the minister had this little slush fund going. You just had to know that it would help if you might have maybe a Liberal or two on your board. You just had to know that the government didn't really want any application process, didn't really need anything that was official. You just had to pick up the phone or call your friend who's a friend of a friend who sits on the other side of this House.

That is absolutely wrong. If you're going to provide funding for programs, then that funding has to be made available to everybody. It's basic fairness. Fairness is all we wanted. Thirty-two million dollars in two years could have helped a number of organizations in my community. It could have helped the Hindu Samaj Temple, as I mentioned earlier today. It could have helped the Somali community that is struggling hard to get programs in place to help the refugees who are coming from Somalia, or similarly the Sudanese community. We have many Sudanese refugees who are coming to Hamilton. That community is organized and they need some help too.

The Portuguese Information Centre has been around a long time in my community, but their sources of funding have been drying up. They were getting a lot of money from the city, but of course cities can't afford to fund these kinds of activities anymore because of the crush of downloading that this province still refuses to fix. So because of that, our Portuguese Information Centre has been looking for extra funding for a couple of years now. I've had to tell them over and over again, "There are no pockets of funding available at the provincial level. They don't exist, unfortunately." How was I to know? How was I to know that I was carrying the wrong membership card in my pocket, and that if I was carrying the right one, I would have known all about the \$32-million slush fund over the last couple of years?

How about the Portuguese Information Centre? How about the Beam Education Centre? I just told them a couple of weeks ago—they looked at the website with me and there was nothing there at all. How about the Bangladeshi community? How about the Afro-Canadian Caribbean Association that just had a break-in in their office two weeks ago; in fact, on the very day that we were commemorating at city hall the end of trading in slave labour? On the very day that we were commemorating that anniversary, their offices were broken into, and they need all kinds of support to try to re-create their office after the attack. They could use some of these dollars.

Ultimately, that's the point. The point is, you read headline after headline: "'Collegiate' Affair Has Managed to put Liberals in a Box." "Yet Another McGuinty Government Scandal; Yet Another Cabinet Minister Left Unscathed." I think that's the very crux of the motion from the official opposition: that we have yet another scandal, another situation where the government has proven that it's not doing the right thing in terms of transparency, in terms of process, in terms of basic fairness in this province, yet they're not prepared to take ownership of this. They're not prepared to do the right thing and allow the Auditor General to review, in time for the next election—before the next election—what was really going on.

I have to say, I think everybody in this place would agree that the absolute necessity is for us to acknowledge and value and support the work that is being done by so many of these grassroots cultural organizations across the province. Absolutely that needs to happen, absolutely it needs to be built into the work that we do around here, but it needs to be built in in a formal, appropriate way whereby every group out there has a chance to access some of those resources. It cannot continue to be the way that it has been by this government. Ultimately, this government needs to own up to the fact that they made a huge error in judgment and that what they did was absolutely inappropriate and unbecoming a government that claims to have transparency as one of its values.

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I don't know what the values are across the way, but I've got to tell you, this scandal stinks to high heaven and

it needs to be uncovered to the absolute last penny so that we can know whether or not there was real wrongdoing in terms of the process that was undertaken, or the lack thereof. It's unacceptable that we are having this kind of scandal here in the province of Ontario.

So I ask the McGuinty Liberals and I ask the minister and I ask the Premier: Do the right thing, do the fair thing, do the appropriate thing, and now, after the fact, make sure that we can get to and that the residents of this province can get to what really went on and what's really happening.

I have to say this as well: At the end of the day, whether there's a program posted on the Internet or not, the bottom line is that it's disrespectful to all of the communities in this province to have done what you Liberals did with this funding scandal. It is disrespectful and inappropriate.

Mr. Khalil Ramal (London–Fanshawe): Thank you for giving me the chance and the opportunity to speak against the motion brought by the opposition leader.

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): Again?

Mr. Ramal: Of course, because it's very important to speak about our record as a government.

Let me tell you the story. Many people came to Ontario from different parts of the globe to be a part of this beautiful province—from India, from China, from the Middle East, from many different parts of the globe—because they believed strongly that this province embraced everyone. This province is built on multiculturalism and diversity, and people come to enjoy that peace and tranquility which all of us enjoy in this province.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: Member for Renfrew.

Mr. Ramal: People come with few things; some of them come with no ability to speak the language. Many people come to this beautiful province with high skills and education. In many different times, in many different years, they have been ignored by many different governments—the Conservatives to the NDP—until we had a government that recognized their value, that embraced their skills and abilities to participate and be great citizens of this province.

We are privileged to have a minister who understands deeply about the importance of engaging every person in this province. That minister, according to the Leader of the Opposition, is a very accessible person who travelled the province from Windsor to Ottawa, from Thunder Bay to Hamilton. He never missed any opportunity to engage with all the multicultural communities. He talked to them about their issues, he talked to them about their communities, he talked to them about how we can improve their lives and how we can help them to fit and integrate beautifully in this province.

That's why the Leader of the Opposition is jealous, because he's not able to communicate as the minister is with those multicultural communities. The minister has a passion; he understands their needs and what they want.

He works hard with them and visits them. He's trying to address their issues.

I had a chance to visit many communities with the Honourable Mike Colle, and many communities wanted to speak to him, to speak to a person who knows them, a person who cares about them. That's why many communities across the province of Ontario feel Mr. Colle is one of them. Whether from India or from China or from the Middle East or from Europe—from any part of the globe—they feel Mike Colle is one of them.

It's important that a person who has the job as Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has the ability to communicate and connect with every person who lives in the province of Ontario. That's why many opposition members are jealous of that position—because he established a great relationship. He told them, “The government will come to you. You don't have to come to the government. The government is working for you, working to make your life better, to help you integrate and fit in to be able to succeed, to give you the lift to walk with every person in the province of Ontario, with every community in the province of Ontario.” That's what Minister Colle has done while he has been the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, and he continues to do a great job on behalf of all of us in this great province.

Minister Colle and our government recognize the importance of many people, many talented people who want to be great Ontarians. That's why he worked very hard with them to create and pass Bill 124, the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act. That bill was very important. The honourable member was a part of it and he knows how important it was to all of us—for the doctors, professionals, engineers, pharmacists, nurses and teachers who want to be working in the province of Ontario and who want to be contributors to the economy of the province of Ontario. That's why he brought that bill. He worked hard to establish a great relationship with them and he appointed a fairness commissioner to oversee conduct across the province of Ontario. The government did this job and that minister led on this great issue to be a great advocate on behalf of all the newcomers to the province of Ontario.

I know so many different communities might be upset because they aren't thinking about the support Mr. Colle is trying to give them, because they never got used to it in the past through the PC or NDP governments. This is a new thing that came with the minister. He established it because he knows very well that those groups need help badly. Without his support and without the government's support, they cannot survive and they cannot contribute to the great economy of Ontario. That is why we know that we have a lot of jobs ahead of us. We have a lot of work to do in order to acknowledge and to support all the various groups in the province of Ontario because all of them do a great job for their communities, and also help newcomers fit in, integrate and be great Ontarians, to be full citizens and participants in this great province.

That's why some support comes to SISO in Hamilton. The member from Hamilton East was saying that she got

nothing for her city. I went with my other colleague to the city of Hamilton many different times to listen to their concerns while we were consulting people on Bill 124. They have a great community and a great organization called SISO. They're doing a great job for the Hamilton region to help many newcomers fit in and learn about the society of Ontario. Also, we have a lot of different organizations. I will give you an example: the WIL unemployment centre in London, the London Cross-Cultural Learner Centre, LUSO, Maytree Foundation—many different organizations across the province. They are working night and day in order to serve many different communities and many different newcomers to help them fit in and integrate. This is a job that Minister Colle and this government are doing for newcomers to help them be part of this great province of Ontario.

The NDP thought so many different times that they are the great champion for the newcomers, but Minister Colle and our government fit them into our agenda, worked with them, embraced them and gave them the support they needed badly, which they never got for years. That's why there is jealousy on the opposite side for the job that we are doing. That's why they're trying to create some kind of obstacle, some kind of issues, from non-issues. We understand that we have a duty in this province to benefit and utilize the money that comes from taxpayers and to give it to many different communities, agencies and programs to help us as a government to assist many different groups and many different communities, to give them, like other communities, equal footing in order to give them the chance to be able to contribute to this economy.

We have a lot of jobs to do ahead of us. So many communities probably didn't get support at the present time, but our government continues to listen to them and is willing to work with them in the future to address their issues and to help them be supported because they need support.

1620

It's very difficult when you see a community working by themselves and they have no support from government, especially when it comes to finding a job, fitting in, integrating, learning the language, especially in this nation. My colleague from London North Centre did a study about demographic change in Ontario and in this nation, and she said it clearly and loudly on many different occasions: "This province cannot exist without immigration." Therefore, the immigrants who come to Ontario are not going to be left alone. They need support, not just by talking and putting on celebrations for them but also by action, support by creating programs for them, giving them the money, giving them what they need, giving them the ability to fit into society. We cannot just tell people to come and then leave them alone by themselves and create ghettos in our society. That is not our strategy. That is not our direction.

We have one direction, one goal: Everyone who comes here will be embraced, will be respected, will be

honoured, will be supported. Our Premier has said it many different times. This is a province not only for the wealthy, not only for the healthy, not only for the people who have been here generation after generation, but this province is for everyone who comes who wants to be a great Ontarian. This is our philosophy; this is our strategy. We want to continue to be a great advocate on behalf of all the people in the province of Ontario, a great advocate on behalf of all the newcomers and also the mainstream community, because it's the only way. By helping people to integrate, to fit in, you're going to create a great society, a great multicultural community built on diversity, on love, tranquillity and peace. That's our strategy. That's our direction.

We're looking forward to working with Ontarians in the future in the same fashion, in the same way, without any hesitation. Despite all these scary tactics that come from the opposition leader and his crew, we're going to continue to do a great job on behalf of the people of Ontario in order to support everyone who wants to be an Ontarian, who wants to come to Ontario.

Thank you for allowing me to speak against this motion which creates a lot of anxiety. Many people stop me on the street and say, "What is the opposition doing? What is the NDP doing? They have nothing to complain about. They have to work on something tangible, something important, not just go on putting down this group and creating some kind of division between this group and other groups." That's not the way you run a government. You run a government for everyone, for everyone despite their background, their colour, their religion. That is our direction. This is our philosophy. This is a government I believe in and am proud to be a part of.

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): I serve here as the critic for education as well as the critic for the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, and it's in that capacity that I participate in this debate. My responsibility as critic is to hold the minister accountable. That's very difficult to do when the minister refuses to answer any questions.

One of the reasons we have this resolution before us, brought forward by the leader of the official opposition, John Tory, is to attempt in some way to bring to the floor of this Legislature and to allow people to observe a debate that has nothing at all to do with whether or not people from various parts of the world are welcomed in this province. We all agree with that. There isn't a member of this Legislature who does not commit to and embrace the fact that people from every corner of this world should have an equal opportunity to integrate into our communities, have the opportunity to be engaged as a citizen, have an equal opportunity for exercising their profession, their trade that they may have learned. And so the settlement services that the member from London-Fanshawe referred to, we are all supportive of.

I find it interesting that, when the member referred to the philosophy and the principles of the Liberal Party, he not once mentioned the word "accountability"—not once. And that is what this debate is all about. It's about

accountability. The questions that have been put to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration are: Why has he chosen as a minister to simply distribute funds to various groups without having an application process, without having some way of determining a ranking, a rating, a qualification for funds? And why has he not made that available to all groups of all various cultural backgrounds? I have many organizations within my riding that would have loved to have part of that \$200,000 that went to the Iranian Canadian Community Centre in Richmond Hill, but they were not given an opportunity. Why? Because apparently membership has its privileges, and that membership to which I'm referring is membership in the Liberal Party of Ontario. Isn't it interesting that the Iranian Canadian Community Centre in Richmond Hill has seven members out of seven directors who are all closely aligned with the Liberal Party of Ontario? Isn't it interesting that one of those individuals was in fact the individual who is the designated, blessed Liberal candidate in Richmond Hill, who was given a free passage to be the Liberal candidate by the campaign chair for the Liberal Party, who also happens to be Mr. Greg Sorbara, who happens to be the Minister of Finance of this province?

Here's the difference from American Express, which coined the term "Membership has its privileges": You see, with American Express, you have to pay your bill; with American Express, you actually get a detailed billing and there's accountability for your bill. This party, this Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, will have nothing to do with accountability when we come forward and simply ask him, through this resolution, to do three things: to table the information relating to the grants he's distributed, table the application forms that have been used, and, third, allow all of that information to be reviewed by this House. They say no. I say to you, what are they hiding? What are they hiding?

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate? Further debate?

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): Thank you, Speaker. I thought he was going to speak for a bit longer.

What the government has done is to give about \$30 million over a two-year period to approximately 31 organizations. If I recall correctly, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration hasn't been here longer than one year, which means that the previous—

Interjection.

Mr. Marchese: A year and a half? Well, if it is a year and a half, it means, then, that Mr. Colle supervised both of the two years of funding. That may be the case. What it means is that for two years, 31 organizations have been receiving money from the minister without any criteria whatsoever. What it means is that for two years the Premier's office, the Minister of Finance, all of cabinet and all the members of the Liberal Party have been following a process of their own making. The Premier has approved this process, quietly or not, for the last two years. Nowhere is there any evidence that the Premier

objected to this process, which suggests to me that he knew what was going on. That, in my view, is more reprehensible. My sense is that they left the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration out on his own, creating this process that doesn't have any application criteria.

Interjection.

Mr. Marchese: Minister of Tourism, you should stand up and defend Mr. Colle, the Minister of Citizenship.

1630

The Premier has known that for two years money has been going out without any criteria, without any application process, so my attack is not on the minister so much as on the Premier's office. How could the Premier of this province allow \$30 million to go out without an application process? What does it say of the Premier? What does it say of the Premier's office? What does it say of the government when they can defend \$30 million going out to various communities of their choosing?

As the member from London-Fanshawe said earlier, "You don't have to come to the government. The government is coming looking for you." I'm sorry, member for London-Fanshawe, that's not the way it works. The way it works is that you, the government, establish the criteria, a written process, some process that becomes public and ubiquitous, which means that everyone knows about it, rather than the process you describe where the government comes looking for you. That's wrong. That is absolutely wrong.

The characterization of all the government members who speak to this, that the opposition parties are represented as politicians who are attacking multiculturalism or a multicultural group, is, in my view, not a very intelligent defence. It is not an intelligent defence whatsoever. In fact, it is a most distasteful defence. This is not an attack on multiculturalism, because I'm a strong defender of it. It's an attack on the government. It's an attack on all of you, from the Premier's office to the minister's office. The minister should have had in place a process that was clean, clear and transparent.

Remember, you Liberals got elected on the basis that you were going to be more—I didn't say it; you said it—accountable and that you were going to be more transparent. I didn't say it; you said it. You were going to be more accountable, more transparent. You have members of the rump here who are strong defenders of this. My friend from Oakville is a strong defender of accountability and transparency, except when it comes to exposing your own problem, and then it becomes a different issue. Then it becomes that the opposition parties are attacking those who so desperately want to integrate.

I suggest to you, member from Oakville and member from London-Fanshawe, that there are more than 31 organizations desperately wanting to integrate, desperately wanting funds to help them out. There are thousands of organizations that have been around for countless years, desperately looking to apply for money. Even those organizations that don't have the money or the staff to spend on an application process would happily be

looking for an application process to be able to apply for that money. You got it all wrong. Your weak, indefensible position that somehow you're just giving money to groups because you care about integration is simply weak, indefensible and not intelligent.

What you should do is acknowledge that you made a mistake. If you had done that early, you would not have had two weeks of questions on this matter. Minister Colle would have been attacked, but he would have acknowledged that it was a mistake and that he's quickly rectifying the problem. But defending it day in and day out, saying, "Oh, these groups that have approached us and we approached them that have been looking for money, that have been neglected for decades and decades by the other parties, and finally we gave some money"—that's your defence? That's pretty bad. It's pitiful.

How can the public, citizens, including taxpayers, have any faith in the government when you give out money willy-nilly to any group that you deem to be worthy? Because in making the argument that those to whom you gave are worthy, what you're saying is that those who didn't get it are not worthy, and you wouldn't be saying that, of course. You wouldn't want to be caught saying that, but that's your argument: "The organizations to whom we gave money are worthy," meaning, suggesting, that those that didn't get it are not worthy.

Mr. Ramal: We didn't say that.

Mr. Marchese: Of course you didn't say that, but you understand the argument, in the same way that we're saying we're not attacking multicultural groups. But you are quite deliberately suggesting that we are, member from London-Fanshawe. Nobody said that on this side, but you're quite willing to say, "We didn't say that." Of course you wouldn't say that those who didn't get it are not worthy; of course not. That's the argument you're making: that the ones to whom you funded through this fund are worthy.

You have undermined government. You have undermined the political role of what it is to be a member in this Legislative Assembly. By not having standards, you undermine us all. By not having criteria, you undermine us all. By not having an application process, you undermine us all. And you are, as a government, the leader. You set the standard. When the bar becomes so low, then what does it say to other organizations? How can you make other organizations accountable when you yourself have not made yourself accountable? How can you say you're going to scrutinize the municipal level, the elementary/secondary level, the post-secondary institutions that are the MUSH sector connected to you as government? How can you say you're going to monitor them, you're going to audit them, you're going to make sure that everything they do is transparent because you give them money, yet you yourselves do not make yourselves accountable and transparent. You understand? You put yourself in a jam.

Interjections.

Mr. Marchese: Some loud people on the other side.

You are putting yourself in a very, very difficult predicament. When we say that we should have an auditor review this, it's what you would be calling for if you were in opposition. It's what you did call for when you were in opposition. It's what you will call for when you get into opposition again. It's what you would be doing under normal circumstances, except, when you're in government, rather than immediately acknowledging, "Oops, we goofed and we goofed really, really badly," you retreat in the most terrible of defences; i.e., the opposition parties are attacking multicultural groups.

Thirty million dollars—understand, when people talk about waste, they say, "This isn't wasteful? We don't know. We don't have a clue because we have no prescribed application process to be able to review them." We're calling for an auditor to review this and the government refuses it, so we don't have a clue whether or not we're getting our money's worth. So when the public, both citizens and taxpayers, say, "Who knows what it is that governments do? Who knows where money goes when the government refuses to put in place a process that is clean and transparent?" you make yourselves vulnerable, but worse, you make us all vulnerable, and that's what I decry even more.

Your final defence is, "Ah, but we now have a registry." Okay. It took a while. You had it last year and you had no registry; you have it this year and all of a sudden, a week after questions, you have a registry. But of course you're going to have a registry; of course you're now going to have an application process online. God bless. Hopefully most of these people will have a computer and be able to go online and apply. Okay. But let's assume that they'll hear through the grapevine through the Liberal MPPs that they'll be able to apply. Maybe they'll apply through some other registered agency; who knows? The point is, it took two years. The point is, we needed to expose this. The point is, if it hadn't come out in the open we would have had a third year of a Liberal government doling out money on the basis of who it is they know or who it is they approached, on the basis of a Liberal MPP contact saying, "By the way, there's money here." Because the sad thing is, opposition members didn't know. Sadly, it didn't occur to the government, the cabinet or the other MPPs to say to the opposition members, "By the way, we've got a pot of money and we'd like to be able to help you too. Here's how you do it." We were not informed.

1640

Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal): Yeah, like we knew.

Mr. Marchese: It is possible, Minister, that maybe some of you didn't know. It's quite possible. But how is it—I don't want to mention any names. If some of you didn't know, who knew? And if some of you or most of you didn't know, in spite of the fact that we hear that some did—just one minister is in the know? If that is the case, it speaks worse of the government. My sense is that many Liberals knew. My sense is that some cabinet

ministers would not have known because they might have missed a caucus meeting where that was told to them. But my sense is, having been in government, that things get discussed in caucuses and people know, basically, what governments do.

I suggest to you that the majority of you, 90% of you, knew that this fund was available. I could be wrong; it could be that only 70% of you knew. But if even 50% of you knew, 100% of the opposition parties had no clue. We did not have the benefit of the minister's advice. We did not have the benefit of the Premier's office saying, "Marchese, by the way, apply for some money. We can fit you in too." We didn't have the benefit of mon ami Greg Sorbara saying, "Marchese, apply. There's a couple of bucks here. Help out a couple of your communities." I didn't get that benefit.

Ms. Horwath: You didn't get that call?

Mr. Marchese: No call, no whispering behind closed doors—

Ms. Horwath: Nobody passed you a note?

Mr. Marchese: No little note saying, "Marchese—oh, by the way, Andrea, you could use some too, in your riding of Hamilton."

Ms. Horwath: Absolutely.

Mr. Marchese: None of that.

All I want to say to you is that if you had acknowledged early on that you got caught and that, "Good heavens, I didn't have a process; we're going to put one in immediately," my suggestion is that this might have died a week ago, a week and a half ago, possibly. I don't know. Don't quote me too much on this, because I don't know. But usually when you admit, acknowledge, that you may have committed a misdemeanour, an act of malfeasance, willingly or not, what you do is defang the enemy a little bit, disarm the enemy a little bit. Maybe a lot; it depends. I don't know; I can't speak for the others. But that's what, normally, acknowledgments do: They disarm the enemy.

But you didn't do that. You were quite happy, for two weeks, permitting communities out there on their own, and with some willing help from the Liberal members, to encourage the thought that maybe Conservatives and New Democrats are discriminatory against some groups, possibly. My sense is that some of you nurtured that feeling. My sense is that some of you encouraged some of the community groups to be outraged that New Democrats and Tories would even raise this as an issue. No process, and we became the guilty party? No standards, and we become the guilty party? No criteria, no application process, nothing open, and the opposition party becomes the problemo? No. Member from London—Fanshawe, we're not the problemo; you are. Your government, your Premier, is in the hot seat in this regard. Up until a couple of days ago, even mon ami Monsieur McGuinty, the Premier, was encouraging the thought that perhaps we might be racist in raising this issue.

Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot): No, he didn't say that.

Mr. Marchese: Maybe elliptically, by inference, he was suggesting that—

Interjections.

Mr. Marchese: He took it back. And when asked the question, "Are you suggesting that the opposition parties are racist?" he then had to say no, which is the right answer. Ted, that was the right answer. The Premier was on safe ground to say, "No, the opposition parties are not discriminatory against any group that might have received money," because that's not what the issue is about. The issue is not multiculturalism; the issue is process. The issue is not which group got the money, but which group could not apply to get the money. Those are the questions.

And you, my Liberal friends, have to live with the consequence of getting beaten up, not just by the opposition parties but, I suggest to you, by many citizens of Ontario who simply decry what you have done. Ultimately, they will make you accountable if we can't.

Ms. Deborah Matthews (London North Centre): I welcome the opportunity to speak on this issue. I've been sitting here—I think we're now into our third week of talking about this issue—paying close attention to the questions that have been asked. Frankly, I'm perplexed, genuinely perplexed, as to why the opposition continues with this. We've had a lot of interesting things happen here. We brought down a budget, and nobody—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Matthews: Let me just read from the minister's statement that was made a full week ago. Minister Colle addressed this Legislature, and for those of you who perhaps weren't able to be here or weren't able to pay attention, I'd like to reread part of that statement. He said:

"While the purpose of this funding is admirable, the process applied can be improved. We acknowledge that the process can be improved, can be strengthened. To be clear, we are taking the time now to improve that process...."

"Officials from my ministry have created a distinct application process that is more clear, helpful and accessible to all communities. This improved process will identify community needs and work to address these needs. The new application will be available online by the end of the week...." And indeed it was. It is now on the ministry website.

So one week ago the minister stood up and thanked the opposition for raising the issue, for observing that the process could be strengthened. He has moved on that. He has strengthened the process. Yet we continue to hear from members opposite about this issue. I am not going to impute any motives to anyone, because I think that is dangerous, but I do wonder why grants to newcomer communities have had the attention of both opposition parties for the last—as I say, we're now into the third week. Both parties have continued to attack not only the minister and the government—and that's their job; they can do that—but they've attacked the very organizations

that are established to help integrate newcomers into Ontario. To call them fly-by-night organizations is simply unacceptable, and I want to register my disgust at a comment like that.

I'm happy that the member from London–Fanshawe recognized the research I have done into immigration, into immigrant settlement. There's much I would like to talk about, but on this occasion I'm going to talk about one rather alarming statistic: One in six children in Ontario lives in poverty, and one in two of newcomers. This is a statistic that is old, and after the Ontario child benefit comes into play, I hope that number will be smaller. One in six in the general population, one in two of newcomers. That statistic alone underlines the importance of investing in newcomers.

In Ontario for a long time we have thought that investing in our children through their education system was just something we did. We knew that a dollar spent to educate a child would pay dividends down the road. We need to switch our thinking and invest in newcomers the same way we invest in children. We know that we are going to rely increasingly on newcomers to be our labour force and to be our society. Making investments in newcomers is something the Liberal Party has recognized. The Liberal Party has moved forward on this. If in doing so we didn't have the process that we recognize we should have had, we're prepared to accept that. But we have already fixed it.

1650

This issue, as you can probably tell, is one that is close to my heart. As I say, I don't like to pretend I understand the motives of people opposite, but I can tell you that when a party puts their immigration platform in the crime section of their platform, that speaks volumes about their attitude towards newcomers.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: I need to hear the speaker. Everybody is doing a great job this afternoon. Let's keep it up.

Member for London North Centre.

Ms. Matthews: Thank you, Speaker. I'm just trying to get a time check in here. I don't want to steal—have I used up all my time? Yes, I have. I apologize. Thank you very much.

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant): I appreciate the opportunity to speak out against the McGuinty government sponsorship scandal, the year-end slush fund. It appears to be set up to circulate taxpayers' money back to the McGuinty Liberals, as we heard described this afternoon by Mr. Tory.

In certain countries, often in banana republics, we see governments that do this kind of thing, governments that amount to little more than oligarchies. I'm referring to governments that are run by the few for the benefit of the few and the bill is paid for by the many. In my view, Dalton McGuinty has succeeded—well, he hasn't quite succeeded yet in turning Ontario into a banana republic, but he has established himself as the province's lead oligarch by actions such as this slush fund.

Just to recap, tax dollars have been shovelled out the door with little or no oversight, apparently, to prominent McGuinty supporters and donors. But it gets worse. The minister responsible, Minister Colle, refuses to answer questions or allow the provincial auditor to investigate the McGuinty slush fund. If there was nothing to hide, Dalton McGuinty would take the opportunity to clean up his scandal-tarnished image. Stonewalling by Mr. McGuinty continues to fuel a public perception that tax dollars are being shovelled out at Queen's Park only to find their way into the McGuinty-Sorbara re-election fund.

This is something that I quite honestly would have expected in a banana republic oligarchy, not in a parliamentary democracy as we have in Ontario. Dalton McGuinty just doesn't get it. Tax money does not belong to him. Tax money does not belong to his political party. It belongs to the people, the people who pay those taxes.

I'm very concerned. Welcome to Dalton McGuinty's Ontario, where this ruling regime of self-serving oligarchs seems bent on achieving Third World status. Enough is enough. Call in the provincial auditor.

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East): I have to say I'm totally and unequivocally against this motion from Mr. John Tory, because Mr. Tory is here to put up barriers in front of Ontarians, to divide Ontarians. He is not somebody who is here to build partnerships, to build a province for strength and prosperity where everybody has an opportunity.

Minister Colle, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, has done more for the immigrant experience in this province than anybody I have seen in decades. The previous government did nothing for immigrants. They were not able to secure an agreement with the federal government to bring more monies for settlement services, for cultural services. Actually, in the Conservative Party's last campaign platform, which is a very political document, they put immigrants in the subject under crime. Immigration fell under crime for the Tories. That's where they come from. That's where they see immigrants.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean–Carleton): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: The member has fallen into the gutter and his hands are too mucky to get out.

The Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order. I'd ask you to consider your points of order before you bring them up.

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: The member from Mississauga just said that Conservatives equate immigrants with criminals. I would ask that he withdraw those comments, which are inflammatory and quite wrong.

The Deputy Speaker: If the member chooses to, he may.

Member from Mississauga East.

Mr. Fonseca: I'll just say that what I did say was that they put the subject of immigration under the crime section in their platform.

Let's talk about not putting up barriers—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: Member from Nepean–Carleton, come to order, please.

Mr. Fonseca: I want to talk about taking down barriers. Let's look at some of the things that Minister Colle did: bringing forward Bill 124, which allowed for fairness of access to regulated professions. When we came into government, we had very few foreign-trained medical professionals, doctors. This is one example where they're being brought into our system, which we had much need of. Since coming into government, this party has brought forward—we are now graduating well over 200 foreign-trained professionals every year, giving access to hundreds of thousands of Ontarians to a family doctor.

I also see this motion by the Conservative Party and Mr. Tory as smoke and mirrors, trying to get away from talking about the budget—what's important to the people of Ontario. They don't want to talk about seniors. They don't want to talk about municipal property tax reform. They don't want to talk about an end to pooling in the 905. They don't want to talk about injured workers. They don't want to talk about the new Ontario child benefit. All they want to talk about is divisive politics. All they want to do is put up barriers in front of everybody. They do not want to talk about the fact that the \$920 million that Minister Colle was able to secure is doing so much good in my community, bringing settlement services into the community, allowing newcomers to have access to jobs that much more quickly—language programs. It is making a world of difference, and we can thank Minister Colle for that. He has also provided Global Experience Ontario, another program allowing for access and speedy job training and certification of our newcomers.

What's at the heart of all this is yet another negative outburst by the Tories. They have to resort to this because they have no positive policy. We don't hear anything: nothing about health care, nothing about education, nothing about the environment—nothing, nothing, nothing. So they have to find any single negative they can. They look for negatives in everything. Even when there's a positive thing—giving monies to many groups in need—they try to bring it to a negative. I have not heard a positive thing brought forward here by the Conservative Party. And when they do mention that we've done something positive, they may say it's not enough, but on the other hand, they'll talk about ripping dollars out of services. They want to take \$2.5 billion out of our health care services, much needed for immigrants when they come here. That's a safety net for newcomers. Taking money out of publicly funded education: that's also something—many of our new Canadians may not be able to afford private schools, so taking money out of that. All it is is about dividing Ontarians.

I am here to support Minister Colle, to support this government. I knock on doors. If you talk to the people of Ontario about the Ontario Liberal Party, they know that that is the party that is here helping immigrants with their experience of settlement, helping immigrants with

opportunities to be able to get them into meaningful work experiences, to be able to allow our province to prosper.

We see immigration diversity differently in the province of Ontario. We embrace it in this party. We embrace our newcomers. On that note, thank you.

1700

Ms. MacLeod: I am absolutely disgusted with the rhetoric that came out of the mouth of that member. I think, in order for this place to reach a level of decorum, he should withdraw those heinous remarks. We talked—

The Deputy Speaker: You know as well that in the standing orders you can't attack other members. We've been doing great this afternoon. Keep the debate at that level.

Ms. MacLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, but it is disappointing that this debate has been reduced to the lowest common denominator when you would attack members of the opposition from both political parties who call for greater accountability and greater transparency for public dollars by calling us racists. I think that's just awful.

I'm so pleased to be able to debate this motion today, put forward by the leader of the official opposition—

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): The next Premier.

Ms. MacLeod: Yes: the next Premier of Ontario, ladies and gentlemen. But I'm very pleased to be able to stand here today to ask for some clarification in this entire dirty process and add some accountability.

The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration should allow for the Auditor General to go in and audit these grants. He should table the list of the hundreds of groups he has talked about and he should table the written criteria of the grants, even if it is on the back of a paper napkin, somewhat like Jean Chrétien did with the hotel Grand-Mère. We all remember that. Finally, I support the idea of the leader of the official opposition that all of the correspondence pertaining to this program be tabled in this Legislature, and I'm going to tell you why.

On a few occasions since I've been elected in the last year, various ministers have come forward with various community partnership grants. I'm looking at the victims' justice fund. Stakeholders in my community were notified that there was a grant process. I was notified that there was a grant process, so I was able to communicate to my constituents to tell them that they were eligible for a grant.

Similarly, the Minister of Health Promotion—my next-door neighbour—had an application for communities in action fund grants. I was able to similarly let my constituents know that there was a process in place for them to apply and get money that their community groups so desperately need. But in absence of this, I see that only four groups from Ottawa were even given any money. What's sad about it is that there are so many good groups in Nepean–Carleton that have been left out of this process, that have been ignored. I'm thinking of the south Nepean Muslim association. I'm thinking about the south Nepean Tamil community. I'm thinking about

the south Nepean Jewish community, who, when we were trying to work as a community to come up with the south Ottawa autism centre, the three groups that came across my constituency office—one, two and three, right through the door—were the Tamil community, the south Nepean Muslim community and the south Nepean Jewish community. They're great community partners who were forgotten in this process. For that, I think there needs to be some public accountability. You should be ashamed of yourselves over there for standing up and just listening to the government spin. You should stand up. Have some accountability yourselves. Believe in yourselves for once.

This is just shameful. We're talking about public accountability. It's public money and it should be going to the public good, yet, time and time again with respect to this process, we find that the beneficiaries have Liberal membership cards. My colleague the critic for citizenship and immigration talked about, "Membership has its privileges." Why should you be privy to receiving a provincial government grant just because you hold a Liberal membership card, like Maria Minna or some other groups that have been mentioned in this Legislature who are affiliated with other members or who are candidates for the Liberal Party? Just because the people in south Nepean don't hold a Liberal membership card does not mean they should be excluded.

On that note, I'd like to cede the floor to other people to take part in debate. Hopefully, members opposite will stand in their place and join our call for today's motion.

Mr. Vic Dhillon (Brampton West–Mississauga): Thank you very much for giving me a chance to speak against the motion brought forward by the official opposition questioning our government's contribution to certain cultural groups. I'm deeply disheartened and disappointed today to respond to this motion and the allegations put forward by the Tory-Harris-Eves Conservatives. Attacking cultural groups such as those in the South Asian community who do not have powerful boards or lobbying firms to answer back has caused insurmountable damage to their reputations.

Our community and many others who apply for government funding ask for this funding to help newcomers to Ontario feel at home and welcome. It's important to speak to this House and explain why this is a very serious matter to the people of Ontario. These communities represent the backbone of this province, and in one shot, the official opposition and the third party have alienated and disrespected many of our cultural groups who, under previous governments, were simply ignored. Our responsibility is to invest in projects that support diversity and heritage, community involvement and volunteer participation, and to celebrate Ontario's cultural makeup.

We're very proud of our investments in all of these community organizations, regardless of their political stripe. Many of these newcomers embrace the freedom and democracy in Canada by actively seeking to be a part of the political process. And so, newcomers have every right to be active with the NDP, the Conservatives or the Liberals.

Our investments are made to hard-working community organizations that provide much-needed services to their communities. Our government has committed to strengthen our one-time capital grant program, which is available due to the strong fiscal management of our economy. We've put in place an online application process, a process which is clear, more helpful and more accessible.

Our government, since its inception into office, has done everything possible to reach out to the many diverse communities in Ontario. We see diversity in Ontario in a very different way. Some newcomers have difficulty adjusting, and it's our job to help these communities. Our government has stepped up to the plate in answering these needs. We're making communities stronger, and that's why we're investing in language training, counseling services, seniors' centres, museums and the like.

It's very unfortunate and sad that the opposition has chosen to characterize and isolate these investments to these communities. What's at the heart of this is that we have yet another negative outburst on the part of the opposition. Resorting to these tactics clearly outlines that the opposition does not have any positive proposals to put to the people of Ontario.

We've funded the Royal Ontario Museum, the National Ballet of Canada, the Art Gallery of Ontario. Why hasn't the opposition asked about that? I wonder, when it comes to small grants of \$50,000 to the food bank or the seniors' centre in my riding or the gurdwaras—suddenly the opposition is up in arms. Our government has supported many cultural organizations in Ontario. We support smaller community-based organizations as well. We feel a strong sense of responsibility to support our cultural communities to ensure that new Canadians who arrive here have every possible opportunity to become integrated socially and economically. That's fundamentally what it's all about.

I'm going to pass the rest of my time to the Minister for Small Business. Thank you very much.

Mr. Hudak: I'm pleased to rise in debate today. It's a sad and unfortunate circumstance that we hear members of the Ontario Liberal Party seeking the lowest refuge of debate in this Legislature by painting any legitimate questions about the process of the slush fund and the political connectedness of Ontario Liberals and how this has benefited Ontario Liberals as opposed to the general benefit of well-deserving cultural groups—absolutely shameful. They have tried to paint any questions so as to say that somehow opposition parties oppose these grants.

What we oppose are the connections to the Ontario Liberal Party, where it's not what you do, it's who you knew. If you were good buddies with the campaign chair, Mr. Sorbara, the finance minister, if you were good buddies with Mike Colle, the citizenship minister, you got your grant. Apparently, someone in the Ontario Liberal Party—probably the minister, maybe the campaign chair—told Liberal MPPs, according to the papers and according to their own member from Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh, that there was a slush fund

available. That fund was not made known generally. It was not made known to members of the opposition or of the third party. But apparently in caucus or somewhere they said, "Get your slush fund applications in now." When you see that one of the questionable recipients is a Liberal candidate in the next election and a close associate of the Liberal campaign chair, no wonder we ask questions. It's a good thing we do.

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Let me tell you about, for example, the Fort Erie Multicultural Centre and Casa El Norte in Fort Erie: organizations that work hard day in, day out, weekends and holidays, trying to help immigrants and refugees in the province of Ontario get settled. They do damn good work. They work hard. The member from Ottawa-Orléans thinks this is very funny, but did they even know about the grants? They're not on this list. They're not on this list because they didn't have a Liberal Party candidate as their chair or the president of their association. They didn't have the spouse of a Liberal MPP running their organization. They didn't make donations, I guess, to the proper Liberal war chests. Therefore, Casa El Norte and the Fort Erie Multicultural Centre, working now as the Peace Bridge Newcomer Centre, didn't get dime one, because under Dalton McGuinty's slush fund, it's your Liberal Party connections that count, not what you do for immigrants, newcomers and refugees in the province of Ontario.

Have these members here, like the member from Mississauga who makes these accusations, go down to Fort Erie or to the Italian Canadian Cultural Centre in Port Colborne or in Fort Erie that do outstanding work in their cultural communities and in the community as a whole and that have tired buildings that have been there for 40 or 50 years. They'd love to have some funding for wheelchair access, for example. They'd love to have some funding to offer more programs to the community at large. They didn't get dime one. They're not on these lists, because they don't have a Liberal candidate on their board of directors. They don't have a spouse of a Liberal MPP running the show. They weren't even notified that these grants were available. So don't give me this argument if you're an Ontario Liberal, please. It's shameful that they resort to the type of arguments that they have in this Legislature when they're outstanding organizations.

This weekend I was at the Slovenian hall, Bled Hall in Beamsville, celebrating 50 years of contributions of the Slovenian community in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I was there.

Mr. Hudak: Mr. Kormos as well had brought greetings to the Slovenian hall, because he knows as well as I do that when they escaped Slovenia, when they crossed that border, they risked life and limb. They went across the border of Austria and came to Canada: not a dime in their pockets. They worked hard and played by the rules. They raised their families; their children and grandchildren were tremendously successful. You know what, I say to my colleague from Welland. They thanked Canada. It should be Canada that is thanking them for the

contributions that they made. Bled Hall: 40 years or so old.

Mr. Kormos: Exactly.

Mr. Hudak: "Exactly," the member for Welland-Thorold says. They didn't have access to a dime of this fund. They could have used that investment. And you know what? They'd be satisfied if there was a fair process. If they had put their application forward fair and square and the projects were reviewed, rated somehow, and they didn't qualify, they would understand, because all communities in this province of Ontario, wherever they came from—my own family contributed to the Slovak Hall in Sarnia—

Interjection.

Mr. Hudak: They'd understand the principle of fairness and would support that if there was one rule for everybody, not a special rule for the Liberal Party and another rule for everyone else.

Finally, my last comment: Boy, oh boy, this reminds me of Guité, Galliano, Chrétien and the gang.

Interjections.

Mr. Hudak: You remember, right? We all remember that as soon as the question was raised about a sponsorship scandal, what did the Liberals say at that point in time? "You're anti-Quebec," or "You're anti-Canada." They used the same type of despicable attack methods that the Ontario Liberals are using today, but what did we find at the end of the day? That it was helping—

Mr. Yakabuski: Guilty.

Mr. Hudak: Guité was guilty. Money was being triggered to the federal Liberal Party. We've seen these types of Liberal smokescreens before.

I know the Slovenian hall, the Italo hall, the Fort Erie Multicultural Centre, to name just three examples—Club Rheingold in Port Colborne, for the German community—want to know and they want the auditor to come in and make sure that we get to the bottom of this and have a fair process moving ahead.

Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion):

This debate once again reminds me of how out of touch the Conservative Party is with the priorities, the values and the important issues that face our province. I've received a grand total of one call on this issue, and I received a grand total of one call on the lottery issue that they've spent 120, 130 questions on.

Last night I was at the Ottawa Muslim Women's Organization annual dinner at St. Elijah's hall. They were very appreciative of the approach that our government has taken to new Canadians, to multiculturalism and the integration of some of these groups that have been starved for funding and for programming dollars to help those less fortunate in our community. But the other thing that came up time and time again, aside from one woman I was sitting next to who was very complimentary about Minister Colle and the work that he's done in this new portfolio—time and time again I was asked about the priorities of the people of my community in Ottawa: health care, education, economic prosperity. They were very pleased that my colleague Madeleine

Meilleur and I and Phil McNeely were announcing a \$25-million contribution to help with wait times in the Ottawa area, including \$4.3 million to the Queensway Carleton Hospital. They were also very impressed with the announcement I also had the honour of making on behalf of Premier McGuinty in his capacity as Minister of Research and Innovation in the riding of Nepean–Carleton: a \$4-million contribution to Plasco and its very innovative technology program that will eliminate 85 tonnes of garbage a day.

They were also concerned that the Tory caucus from eastern Ontario seems to be continuously turning its back on the needs of our community. Why, for instance, are the members from Lanark and Nepean–Carleton not supporting the expansion of the regional cancer centre to Queensway Carleton Hospital, for instance?

We've recognized that transparency is needed in this and all programs. That's why I'm proud that we brought in the fiscal transparency act, proud that we've allowed the Auditor General to audit more services and agencies of the government and expanded the freedom-of-information act to colleges, universities and hospitals. We have instituted, under the leadership of Minister Colle, a process to ensure that there's a proper capital grant application form so that there is the sense of fairness to all individuals involved.

I'm very proud of what we're trying to do. It's really quite unfortunate that for some of these good volunteer groups, their names are being thrown around in the mud by the opposition. Let's support these groups. Let's congratulate them and applaud them for the good work that they're doing and how they stretch a dollar and ensure that the new Canadians that we hope to serve and hope to integrate in our community are properly served by our government and by all members of this Legislature.

Mr. Yakabuski: I'm pleased to join this debate today on our leader's opposition day motion that calls for accountability, which is exactly what Premier McGuinty talked about in his throne speech: He called for transparency and accountability. Well, how hollow those words really are, because you know what the old saying is: "The proof of the pudding is in the eating." Obviously, Premier McGuinty had no interest in accountability when he uttered those words from his throne speech here some three years and six or seven months ago.

I guess the Premier is the one who set the standards. He's the one who sets the level at which the government will operate. But he has lowered those standards to a new level, to a new low level, because now they have decided that, "Where there's politics involved and where it's advantageous to the Liberal Party, we can dispense with any kind of process that normal people in any kind of environment"—whether you're in business, whether you're in charitable organizations, whether you're in clubs, everybody keeps the books; everybody keeps a set of books. They keep minutes of meetings and all of this kind of stuff so that if there are questions, those questions can be answered. Well, the minister can't answer any

questions—not that he would if he could, because he has no intention of answering them, and that's been clearly displayed over the last few weeks. He couldn't answer them because he has no records to go by. He simply shovelled the money out the door, with the help of the finance minister, the Liberal campaign chair, to whatever group could produce the greatest number of Liberal connections. So it was a kind of lottery from that perspective, to bring the minister responsible for lotteries into it again.

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So here we are spending this kind of time in the House, debating this kind of issue, because the government refuses to be accountable. The government would rather stand up and accuse those people who believe that governments should be able to justify money being spent—they would rather stand up and imply that the questions are motivated by race. That is what's disgusting about this whole thing.

Then we find out, courtesy of the member for Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh, that—

Interjection: Stool pigeon.

Mr. Yakabuski: Well, who knew about this slush fund? I didn't know about it, none of my colleagues knew about it, none of my friends in the third party knew about it, but the member for Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh knew about it because the minister or somebody walked into the caucus room and said, "Hey, folks, we've got some money available. We're not telling anybody about it. We're not going to have a process. We're not going to have applications. There will be no accountability. There will be no follow-up. Any suggestions where we can put it? We need to shovel it out the door by the end of the year." That's quite a process here in the Legislature of Ontario. So here we have it all over again. The Premier defends that kind of conduct from a minister.

Let's go back to when the Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship was the Minister of Transportation and he was found guilty by the Integrity Commissioner of egregious wrongs—

Mr. Hudak: Reckless and egregious behaviour.

Mr. Yakabuski: —reckless behaviour with regard to the Members' Integrity Act. Nothing happened—the first minister in the history of this province to find himself in that position. So then we have the minister responsible for lotteries and Lottogate. When is this government going to wake up and smell the coffee? The people want accountability. Tell the people what you're doing with their money.

This is starting to smell like the sponsorship scandal in Ottawa. This is starting to smell like the sponsorship scandal that brought down the Liberal government in Ottawa. If these fellows across the way don't soon get their act together, they could fall victim to the same thing, because the people will not put up with that kind of arrogance in Ontario in the 21st century. They will not put up with that. If you are going to spend the people's money, then justify what you're doing.

Let's contrast this with the Ontario Trillium system, where those people have to go through a rigorous application process, scrupulous and rigorous; reams of paper. Then that has to go before a review team and they still may find your application wanting because there are so many applications for that money. So you still may not get the money. And if you're even lucky enough to get the money, then there's a follow-up process. So a few months later you've got to answer all the questions to actually prove that you did with the money what you said you were going to do with the money when you made your application for that grant. What's wrong with that kind of accountability? That's a great thing, the Trillium Foundation that the Conservative government brought in. That was wonderful. Why don't we operate all government agencies under that kind of system so that the people can be satisfied that their hard-earned dollars that are being spent are being accounted for in a sensible and reasonable fashion so that people can be confident that the government isn't corrupt?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship): I also want to talk about this motion. Let me tell you, I had the opportunity to work very closely with Minister Colle. He has been out in the communities, meeting with the multicultural groups, and has identified needs and tried to meet those needs on a very proactive basis.

The member for Trinity–Spadina and the member for Nepean–Carleton talked about undermining the process and also talked about the lowest common denominator. Let me just tell you who is undermining what, and how this is the lowest common denominator. What is undermined here is the credibility of some great organizations. The Leader of the Opposition had the guts to stand up and actually undermine the credibility of two Sikh organizations last week. And not only that; he didn't even get his facts right. He was talking about the Ontario Khalsa Darbar last week, an organization well respected in our community. Let me tell you, that is the same organization he has visited several times. He also talked about the Shromani Sikh Sangat. I was in the gurdwara at the same time that the Leader of the Opposition was in the gurdwara and he even got a plant from that organization. Then he had the guts to stand up in here and actually hurt their credibility. On the one hand, when he goes out, he talks about how he values these organizations, but when he comes into the House, he basically destroys their credibility. That is the standard of the party on the other side and that's why they really hate what we have done and how we have helped these communities.

Mr. Yakubuski: At least when John Tory is wrong, he's man enough to apologize.

Hon. Mr. Takhar: Man enough to apologize? First make the mistake. Then—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. You speak through the Speaker, you don't heckle, and we'll get along just fine.

Hon. Mr. Takhar: Let me just say this: He criticised the Ontario Khalsa Darbar here, that they were in a

dispute in the courts. Then, yesterday he went to the same organization and spoke at the same place. How could he do that? This is what is called a double standard. That's why they have no respect in the organization. That's why they should apologize first before they carry on any debate in this House.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Dunlop: I'm honoured to be here this afternoon supporting our leader, John Tory, the next Premier of Ontario, in his opposition day motion. You're handing it to us on a platter. Welcome to Adscam 2. That's what we've got here. Who will ever forget old man Chrétien holding that golf ball, looking funny and making fun of Gomery?

The Deputy Speaker: The level of debate in this place is usually judged by how few times the Speaker has to intervene. I think the language is just—if you want to refer to someone, you should refer to them by their elected position, I think.

Mr. Dunlop: Who will ever forget the former Prime Minister of Canada making fun of Gomery with that golf ball? He was so corrupt and crooked, he didn't even realize how bad it was. We got Guité and we got Galliano—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The member for Perth–Middlesex, come to order. All I'm asking is that you use parliamentary language. It doesn't matter who you're speaking about or where they are. Just use parliamentary language, please.

Mr. Dunlop: As you know, Mr. Speaker, people spent time in jail over that. I don't know how you say that in parliamentary language, but the fact of the matter is, welcome to Adscam 2.

Last year I had the opportunity of bringing down members of the Royal Canadian Legion, some veterans who had served this country. They were from the Penetanguishene Legion and the Midland Legion. Both of those Legions had put in applications numerous times for the Ontario Trillium Foundation, and they did it with integrity. They took a lot of time to fill out those applications and they got turned down. These are people from a francophone community in my community. They are people who have served their country. Their presence in World War II is exactly the reason why we have the kind of democracy we've got today. And what do we get out of this group over here? They're trying to brand Conservative members and New Democratic members as racists, as though we're bigots, because we expect transparency in our system. Isn't that what it's about? We expect transparency. The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration actually referred one night to the Albany Club; that Conservatives would not accept people into the Albany Club because we were racist. I'm going to tell you, I had a fundraiser there last week, April 25, at the Albany Club. I had a joint fundraiser, and it was for the riding of Brampton West. Our candidate is a gentlemen by the name of Mark Beckles. He's an African Canadian and he is the head of the Nelson Mandela Children's

Fund of Canada. You know what? He's going to win the riding of Brampton West. I had francophones there; I had East Indians there; I had native Canadian Indians there. We're not bigots; we're not racist. All we want is transparency in this House, transparency in this system. What we've seen happen with the Liberal Minister of Finance, the Liberal campaign chair handing out sums of money at the end of the season—it's unconscionable. It's absolutely pathetic. And the Liberal members of the House seem to think it's okay. Why would they think something like that was okay when other people didn't get an opportunity to spend their tax dollars?

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I could go on all day about this. I'd really like to go back to the Gomery commission, but that seems to really, really hit a sore point in this House. But the reality is that there are a many, many organizations, from the top end of Ontario—northern Ontario—eastern Ontario, down through community organizations all across our province that would love to have an opportunity to tap into some of that kind of funding. They don't mind filling out application forms. It isn't about buying a Liberal membership or being a good buddy of the man who has increased spending by \$23 billion in the four years he's been here. No wonder they have a slush fund. How much money has been wasted? How much money has been wasted in this House?

Anyhow, I will be in full support of the motion of our leader, the next Premier of Ontario. I can tell you right now that I hope all members of this House, if they have any integrity, would believe and support this opposition day motion today.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri (Etobicoke North): Jai swaminarayan, vanakkum, sat sri akal, salam alaikum, shalom aleichem, namaskar, and bon soir.

We are today in a global village. It's a phrase found in the media, a phrase found in print, on the Web, on the radio and on television. But it's more than that. It captures the hearts and minds and souls of large portions, perhaps all, of Ontarians. With these particular funding opportunities, these investments in people as part of a continuous program of support for integration for all Ontarians, particularly multicultural Canadians, this is an initiative that is worthy of the support not only of all members of this House, but of all the bureaucrats who are listening to us and indeed all members of the province of Ontario.

We all rise together. It's trite, it's a triviality, it's a cliché, but funding that is brought forward to different institutions, whether it's for the disabled, for the celebration of heritage, of culture, of language, of affirmation of values, be they family values or educational values, whatever the case may be, is surely something that the government of Ontario should be involved in, should show leadership towards and should definitely support and fund.

I appreciate the extraordinary gesture from the MPP for Simcoe North of holding a reception for a number of multicultural or diverse Canadians in the hallowed halls

of the Albany Club, but with respect, sir, receptions and opportunities of food tasting are passé. Ontarians want more. Ontarians of all different stripes want more. This is an experiment, and the world is looking towards Canada.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, come to order.

Member for Etobicoke North.

Mr. Qadri: Thank you. Toronto, and particularly Ontario, in terms of its multicultural tolerance and harmony and celebration, is an experiment, an example to the world. Whether the Honourable Mike Colle, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, is spearheading this particular initiative that is under discussion now or whether it's negotiating with the federal government for a more equitable distribution for newcomer settlement or the more recent passage of Bill 124, the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, this is simply another hallmark, a testimony not only to the Liberal vision, the McGuinty vision, but now, with the gentleman who bears the hallowed name of Trudeau coming on to the federal scene, the vision of Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

The MPP for Erie–Lincoln, who I understand from what we're hearing is the future leader of the Conservative Party, post-October, very rightly brings up the example of the Slovene community, and very rightly brings forward examples of worthy groups that require funding and that would require support. This is part of the global village and the mandate that we have as the government and stewards of Ontario.

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): Over the past couple of weeks of these debates on accountability, I've heard from individuals and groups and they're wondering why they weren't invited to participate in this process. I think one of the most long-standing is the Fiesta Week celebration in Oshawa, and indeed Durham region, which has been going on for years, and other groups like women's shelters as well as other groups that I feel were neglected in this process.

Our leader, John Tory, has brought forward this opposition day motion to bring some kind of structure around the whole debate about accountability. In fact, he is talking about the Liberal year-end slush fund and he's asking three things, quite simply: the list of hundreds of groups that were notified or not notified, the written criteria used by Minister Colle as well as the correspondence that may have ensued as part of that process, what we would like to think would be an open process similar to what was used by the Trillium Foundation when dealing with hard-earned taxpayers' money.

I think one of the articles that I read just recently about this was from the Kitchener Record. The article, published just this morning, I think summarizes it: "Let's be clear about what is acceptable. Multicultural groups are entitled to receive grants." Our leader, John Tory, would agree and has said that. "Liberal Party supporters are also allowed to receive grants. To be even clearer, it can also be said that Liberal Party supporters who belong to multicultural groups are entitled to receive grants."

This whole debate is about this question. The article goes on, "The question that does arise, however, is whether the grants that the government issued were given out properly. That's a harder question. What is known is that a \$250,000 grant to the Bengali Cultural Society was criticized by" another group. The argument here that our leader, Mr. Tory, the Leader of the Opposition, is raising is not who, but how that money is given out.

People have made references to the federal government scandal that Justice Gomery ruled on. There have been citations and there seems to be a lot of suggestion of entitlement. Some members today have said that membership has its privilege. But what is really important here is that there is an accountability mechanism. I think it's only fair. This opposition day motion is to put it before the people of Ontario—before more money, more slush funds and other such manoeuvres as was the case in Ottawa. I think it's only fair that the committee should receive the input that has been requested in this opposition day motion.

I go back to my riding and what I'm hearing, and it's cynicism that arises. On the one hand, we're debating democratic renewal and accountability and transparency, and we see these sorts of suggestions. I would say that a good review would be an appropriate response by any strong leadership.

Quite frankly, I'm disappointed that our Premier, Dalton McGuinty, hasn't asked for the minister to step aside and have a full and open review. If this fails that test, if the minister has made a lapse, then the argument has been made. But if what they're saying in defence is true, then the responsibility of the opposition is indeed to raise the questions. When people stoop to low measures of accusations about one another, it serves no purpose to advance the cause of public accountability, which is what our opposition day motion is all about.

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The Kitchener-Waterloo Record says it; my constituents say it. Why should a Liberal member, like the member from Charlottenburgh—he was actually solicited, whether or not he had some media organization. I would say to you that every member on every side, in every party, has organizations that are struggling to allow new Canadians and others to assimilate into our wonderful economy in Ontario.

What I'm disappointed in is this: We're lacking leadership on the other side on this issue. The media and our leader, John Tory, are trying to get to the truth, trying to get to the substantial facts. What are we getting? We're getting stonewalled, a failure to work co-operatively with committees. Quite frankly, I think the cynicism that's in Ontario today is a direct result of no accountability on Lottogate, no accountability by the minister of enterprise today, and no accountability by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland): I'm going to take part in this debate to talk about partisanship issues that came up over and over again. I'm just going to quote some stuff that I have here. This is an e-mail from the

Conservative candidate in my riding, Ms. Galt. By the way, she's the wife of a former member under the Harris-Eves government. This is an e-mail that went out this week. It's addressed to "Fellow Conservatives," so nobody else in my riding matters, just fellow Conservatives.

"The Ontario Liberal government is contemplating passing a law so everyone who gets water from a private well will have to install a water meter on their system." We know that is not true, but we know that's what Mr. Hillier is saying. And by the way, their picture is together on their website. Following that, she's circulating a petition, and I'll read it:

"Whereas the McGuinty government's secret agenda to require the installation of meters on all water wells in the province of Ontario was recently revealed"—

The Deputy Speaker: I remind the member for Northumberland that we're speaking to a resolution that doesn't, I don't think, include some of the subject matter you're talking about.

Mr. Rinaldi: It's referring to a partnership, about not telling the exact—but anyways, she points to—

Mr. Yakabuski: I know you're worried.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, I don't know how many times I've warned you today. Just settle down. We're getting near the end.

The member for Northumberland.

Mr. Rinaldi: She points to this information from the chief medical officer of health from Durham. I spoke to Dr. Kyle this morning; he totally denied it. There's no truth, so they're the ones—talking about partisanship and spreading rumours.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth-Middlesex): I'm just delighted to be here. I want to talk about a project in my riding that I'm very proud of, that many members are proud of on our side of the House and proud of on the other side of the House: the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame. Someone asked, the day we made the announcement, "How did you get the money?" What did Minister Sorbara say to the press? "Sorbara told the crowd that the funding came about partially because the [Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame] representatives spent a day at Queen's Park." Now, who organized that? I, the member for Perth-Middlesex, organized that. And who else was there? I had two co-chairmen. One of the co-chairmen was the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. And who was the other member? Well, it was the member from Trinity-Spadina. But now, all of a sudden, this is a controversial decision.

Minister Sorbara also said that "your MPP"—that would be me—"made clear and valid arguments as to why this is good for baseball and the community."

I'll tell you what the opposition are against. They're against this government investing some half a million dollars to make sure that the new dormitory for disadvantaged youth and the new museum are completely accessible to everyone in this province. On this side of the House, we believe that all members of society should

be able to go to a national shrine, that all should be able to go to this wonderful new museum and dormitory.

At that Baseball Hall of Fame in St. Marys we have the Kids on Deck program. The Kids on Deck program helps children from across Ontario who are underprivileged, who come from a multiplicity of backgrounds and may not know anything about baseball. The harshest critic has been the member for Beaches—East York, but I would like him to go to the Rotary Club of Beaches because the Rotary Club of Beaches in his riding donates money to the Kids on Deck program to send them to the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame in my riding. I was just wondering whether or not the member for Beaches will be so welcome in the Rotary Club of Beaches from now on, since he has told them that somehow this money should not be spent in my riding.

I want to quote a friend of mine, a constituent and someone who is not of the same political stripe as I, one Don McDougall whom I know many members of the Regressive Convertible Party know quite well. What did he say on the day that we announced the funding? He said, “This has been a long time coming and we couldn’t be happier than to see the province acknowledge the validity of the hall’s business plan by this generous donation.”

I know that the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame provided a business plan to the ministry about this thick, but the reason we gave them the money is because we believed in them. The reason we gave them the money is because we have a minister of the crown, the Honourable Mike Colle, who believes that if he goes out to the community, if he talks to his colleagues, that he’s open and accessible—and all of a sudden the members opposite believe that somehow they don’t have a job on behalf of their constituents to talk to ministers of the crown who actually write the cheques. So I know that in the community of St. Mary’s they are happy that our government believes in our vision, that the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame, the dormitory for children and the new national team should be handicap-accessible to all. I know I and my colleagues are proud of that investment.

The Deputy Speaker: Mr. Tory has moved opposition day number 4. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1747 to 1757.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Bisson, Gilles	MacLeod, Lisa	Runciman, Robert W.
Chudleigh, Ted	Marchese, Rosario	Savoline, Joyce
Dunlop, Garfield	Martiniuk, Gerry	Scott, Laurie
Elliott, Christine	Miller, Norm	Sterling, Norman W.
Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia	Tory, John
Horwath, Andrea	Murdoch, Bill	Wilson, Jim
Hudak, Tim	O’Toole, John	Yakabuski, John
Klees, Frank	Ouellette, Jerry J.	

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arthurs, Wayne	Fonseca, Peter	Peters, Steve
Balkissoon, Bas	Gerretsen, John	Phillips, Gerry
Bentley, Christopher	Gravelle, Michael	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bountrogianni, Marie	Hoy, Pat	Ramal, Khalil
Bradley, James J.	Jeffrey, Linda	Ramsay, David
Brownell, Jim	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Rinaldi, Lou
Bryant, Michael	Marsales, Judy	Sandals, Liz
Caplan, David	Matthews, Deborah	Smith, Monique
Chan, Michael	Mauro, Bill	Takhar, Harinder S.
Colle, Mike	McMeekin, Ted	Van Bommel, Maria
Delaney, Bob	McNeely, Phil	Watson, Jim
Dhillon, Vic	Milloy, John	Wilkinson, John
Di Cocco, Caroline	Mitchell, Carol	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dombrowsky, Leona	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Zimmer, David
Duncan, Dwight	Oraziotti, David	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Parsons, Ernie	

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 26; the nays are 46.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

The business of the day being dealt with and it being past 6 of the clock, this House is adjourned and will convene at 6:45 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1800.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. James K. Bartleman
Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. Brown
Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller
Clerk-at-the-Table / Greffier parlementaire: Lisa Freedman
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma–Manitoulin	Brown, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (L) Speaker / Président	Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Ancaster–Dundas– Flamborough–Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Haliburton–Victoria–Brock	Scott, Laurie (PC)
Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC) Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Beaches–East York / Beaches–York-Est	Prue, Michael (ND)	Hamilton East / Hamilton-Est	Horwath, Andrea (ND)
Bramalea–Gore–Malton– Springdale	Kular, Kuldip (L)	Hamilton Mountain	Boutrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie (L) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique
Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Hamilton West / Hamilton-Ouest	Marsales, Judy (L)
Brampton West–Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest–Mississauga	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Hastings–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Huron–Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kenora–Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Burlington	Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Milloy, John (L)
Chatham–Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Kitchener–Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L) Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, deputy government House leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement	Lanark–Carleton	Sterling, Norman W. (PC)
Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (L) Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation	Leeds–Grenville	Runciman, Robert W. (PC)
Dufferin–Peel– Wellington–Grey	Tory, John (PC) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Durham	O'Toole, John (PC)	London West / London-Ouest	Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Eglington–Lawrence	Colle, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (L) Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration	London–Fanshawe	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Elgin–Middlesex–London	Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail	Markham	Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L) Minister of Revenue / ministre du Revenu
Erie–Lincoln Essex	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L) Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship / ministre des Petites Entreprises et de l'Entrepreneuriat
Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (L) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports	Mississauga East / Mississauga-Est	Fonseca, Peter (L)
Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Peterson, Tim (IND)
Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (L) Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement	Mississauga West / Mississauga-Ouest	Delaney, Bob (L)
Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Nepean–Carleton	MacLeod, Lisa (PC)
Guelph–Wellington	Sandals, Liz (L)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)
		Niagara Falls	Craiton, Kim (L)

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	Stoney Creek	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)
Nipissing	Smith, Monique M. (L)	Stormont–Dundas– Charlottenburgh	Brownell, Jim (L)
Northumberland	Rinaldi, Lou (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (L) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)	Thornhill	Racco, Mario G. (L)
Oakville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Mauro, Bill (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Thunder Bay–Superior	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	North / Thunder Bay–Superior- Nord	
Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (L) Premier and President of the Council, Minister of Research and Innovation / premier ministre et président du Conseil, ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation	Timiskaming–Cochrane	Ramsay, Hon. / L'hon. David (L) Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L) Minister of Health Promotion / ministre de la Promotion de la santé	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Ottawa–Orléans	McNeely, Phil (L)	Toronto Centre–Rosedale / Toronto-Centre–Rosedale	Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L) Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / vice-premier ministre, ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Ottawa–Vanier	Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L) Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones	Toronto–Danforth	Tabuns, Peter (ND)
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Trinity–Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Parkdale–High Park	DiNovo, Cheri (ND)	Vaughan–King–Aurora	Sorbara, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (L) Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / ministre des Finances, président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Parry Sound–Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Waterloo–Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC) First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Perth–Middlesex	Wilkinson, John (L)	Whitby–Ajax	Elliott, Christine (PC)
Peterborough	Leal, Jeff (L)	Willowdale	Zimmer, David (L)
Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge	Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L) Minister of Economic Development and Trade, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Prince Edward–Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Windsor–St. Clair	Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L) Minister of Energy / ministre de l'Énergie
Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Yakabuski, John (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Kwinter, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (L) Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Sarnia–Lambton	Di Cocco, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (L) Minister of Culture / ministre de la Culture	York North / York-Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
Sault Ste. Marie	Oraziotti, David (L)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	Ferreira, Paul (ND)
Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Duguid, Brad (L)	York West / York-Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	Chambers, Hon. / L'hon. Mary Anne V. (L) Minister of Children and Youth Services / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse		
Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)		
Scarborough–Agincourt	Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L) Minister of Government Services / ministre des Services gouvernementaux		
Scarborough–Rouge River	Balkissoon, Bas (L)		
Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)		
Simcoe–Grey	Wilson, Jim (PC)		
St. Catharines	Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (L) Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, government House leader / ministre du Tourisme, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées, leader parlementaire du gouvernement		
St. Paul's	Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L) Attorney General / procureur général		

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Estimates / Budgets des dépenses

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Garfield Dunlop
Kim Craitor, Bob Delaney,
Garfield Dunlop, Andrea Horwath,
Tim Hudak, Linda Jeffrey, Phil McNeely,
Jim Wilson, David Zimmer
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Finance and economic affairs /
Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Phil McNeely
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Pat Hoy, Judy Marsales,
Deborah Matthews, Phil McNeely,
Carol Mitchell, Michael Prue
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Michael Gravelle, John Milloy, Carol Mitchell,
Julia Munro, Laurie Scott,
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Justice Policy / Justice

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Maria Van Bommel
Bas Balkissoon, Lorenzo Berardinetti,
Christine Elliott, Frank Klees, Peter Kormos,
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Maria Van Bommel, David Zimmer
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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mario G. Racco
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Rosario Marchese, Ted McMeekin,
Norm Miller, Jennifer F. Mossop,
Shafiq Qadri, Mario G. Racco
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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Ernie Hardeman
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Lisa MacLeod, Shelley Martel, John Milloy,
Richard Patten, Liz Sandals,
Monique M. Smith, Norman W. Sterling
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**Regulations and private bills /
Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Présidente: Andrea Horwath
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Jeff Leal
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Andrea Horwath, Jeff Leal, Dave Levac,
Gerry Martiniuk, Bill Murdoch,
Lou Rinaldi, Mario Sergio
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Chair / Président: Ernie Parsons
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Khalil Ramal
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Kuldip Kular, Jeff Leal,
Rosario Marchese, Bill Mauro, John O'Toole,
Ernie Parsons, Khalil Ramal
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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