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of Debates
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**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 12 June 2008

Jeudi 12 juin 2008

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 12 June 2008

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 12 juin 2008

*The House met at 0900.
Prayers.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

COLLEGES COLLECTIVE
BARGAINING ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR LA NÉGOCIATION
COLLECTIVE DANS LES COLLÈGES

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 11, 2008, on the motion for second reading of Bill 90, An Act to enact the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act, 2008, to repeal the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act and to make related amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 90, Loi édictant la Loi de 2008 sur la négociation collective dans les collèges, abrogeant la Loi sur la négociation collective dans les collèges et apportant des modifications connexes à d'autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Further debate.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I welcome the citizens once again to this political forum. We're on live. It's 9:03. Yesterday I postulated that the House leader changed the rules in order to have debates at 9 o'clock in order to please those who are from out of town and who have nothing to do in the evening except go to bed at 9 o'clock, and get up at 5 or 6 in the morning, and they want to get here to Queen's Park at 7 because they're so bored and they're so sleepy that they need to get here and work. I postulated that. But I could be wrong. Peter Kormos would be here at 3 in the morning if he had to. I think he's that kind of a guy.

I was worried about why it is that the House leader changed the rules. Who knows? It could be that they changed the rules because people at home were simply bored. At 9 o'clock in the morning, they just didn't know what to do, and they were looking for excitement in this place. They said, "We've got something for you." For whatever reason that you might be up in the morning at 9 o'clock—you might have a disability; you might be laid off; you might be unemployed—for whatever reason, people needed an important distraction, people needed to watch something that was exciting, that could turn them away from their boredom. So this is it; this is what they get. Early in the morning, people get up, have a coffee—not a beer anymore. No beer, no red wine; just a coffee to stiffen them up and ready them for the debate. It's 9:05 in the morning; we are on live, in case you're up, ready and alert and alive to watch this political forum.

I'm happy to continue the debate on Bill 90. You will recall that this bill is about giving collective bargaining rights to college teachers who haven't had the rights for 33 years. They've been pushing governments, and they've been pushing this particular government for the last two years. Yesterday I had an opportunity to thank OPSEC AAT president Roger Couvrette and OPSEU president Warren "Smokey" Thomas for their relentless work to persuade the Liberals that they needed to bring a bill forward that finally recognized their right to collective bargaining. Yesterday I pointed out—

Mr. Khalil Ramal: We listened.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: They listened. It takes two long, painful years to listen. The minister yesterday said that when he went to that reception of college teachers, it was at that moment, when he spoke to them, that he finally realized he had to do it and that he had to deliver it for them—because he might never have met a college teacher before. But only at that time, when he met them face to face here at Queen's Park, he was given some revelation, and he said, "I've got to do it. I've got to do it today." That is what he said.

Delay and deny. Then people make reference to what other governments may have done in 1862, 1892, 1940 and so on. You are in government with the four big wheels that take you all over Ontario. You are the managers of this place. Not to say, "What did you do?" We are in opposition pushing you to do something. You are the government who says, "We're doing it." We wait and we wait, and finally when they deliver, they say, "We had to take our time to do it right." Whenever they don't want to do something, they need to take their time to do it right. It takes so long for governments to listen to what people have to say. That's why we introduced Bill 13.

My bill—I introduced it twice in this place. The government never listened to me, never even acknowledged that I introduced that bill or that I had asked questions in this Legislature or that Roger Couvrette, who was in this place, had anything to do with convincing, persuading, pushing this government to introduce this bill. It's okay; we don't need to be acknowledged by the government. The only time the government acknowledges someone is when a Liberal backbencher stands up, asks a silly question and then they say, "What a great member we've got from here and there, doing great things." That's the only time they praise somebody. When opposition members have questions or bills in this House, they dismiss you. That's what they always do. But that's okay. Our job is to do our job, to present the facts, to present the arguments, to help the government every now and then to do some-

thing. It takes time, but that's okay. Eventually they deliver.

Here's the point. Remember the context in which I presented these facts. Colleges have been underfunded for a long time. In spite of what the government says about their historic funding, we are still numéro dix, at the bottom of the pack, in terms of funding in Canada. We are number 10. In spite of your Reaching Higher plan, the supposed \$6 billion, you are proudly number 10 in per capita funding. I say to you: It's nothing to be proud of. It's a shameful statistic.

0910

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: It's just a statistic.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Exactly. It's just a statistic; \$6 billion is just a number. You just throw it out there. You're absolutely right. That's typical of what Liberals do on a regular basis. We have given so much and we are at the bottom of the heap. You can't be proud of those facts; it's embarrassing.

Here's a little fact—it's not a prop, really; it's written by Colleges Ontario, the very groups the Liberals were praising yesterday. They rarely praise them except when they do something that may please them, and then they say—actually, this doesn't necessarily please them all that much.

Here's a stat: Real operating funding per FTE—full-time students—for colleges in 2007-08 remained about 16% lower than in 1992-93. You understand, in 1992-93, when we were in government, in a recession—you're giving less today than we were in a recession. You have faced years of good economic times. In contrast, college enrolment levels were almost 20% higher, you understand. You are giving 16% less per capita than we were in 1992-93—nothing to be proud of; nothing at all to be proud of.

That's the context that I give: that people need to understand the problems that colleges have been facing. They have been cutting back and they have been hiring part-time teachers in order to save as much money as they possibly can. Half of the college teachers in the system work part-time. They're part-time because they're cheap labour. That's what it was: cheap labour in order to save money. Colleges did that because they haven't been getting enough support from this provincial Liberal government for many, many years. Finally, we have Bill 90, which is going to give collective bargaining rights to college teachers and other support staff. We believe it's time they delivered; after denying and delaying, they've delivered something.

Here's the problem: The Supreme Court said they have a right; the International Labour Organization said they have a right. You, Liberal government, should deliver on that right. It isn't enough for the Liberals simply to give the right; they have to give the right by taking something else away. That's the way the Liberals do it. It wasn't simple enough for them to just give the right; they have to give and take at the same time in order to divide labour as best they can, in order to divide the opposition

as best they can. That's what Liberals do on a regular basis.

What have they done? The new bill removes the deemed strike and lockout provisions. These provisions determined that when a bargaining unit was on a legal strike or lockout, the employees were deemed to be on strike or locked out and, as a result, no employee would receive any pay or benefits for the duration of the strike or the lockout. This provision effectively dissuaded any bargaining unit employee from crossing the picket line and prevented the employer from hiring employees from the unit during a lockout.

OPSEU president Warren "Smokey" Thomas said, "It is pretty outrageous that this government thinks that recognizing the charter rights of one group of workers means that another group of workers must give something up." He's absolutely right. You just couldn't give a right without having to take something else away. We decry that; OPSEU decries that; many college workers decry that. That is why we want to have the hearings: to allow college teachers and OPSEU members to come and speak to this bill, to either give praise or criticism of this particular bill. After that, we can come back, debate it one final time and deal with the problems that have been raised for the last 33 years.

With that, we have submitted our arguments as New Democrats. We have no desire to delay the hearings. We want hearings to happen. We will not put up other speakers; we feel the arguments have been made. We look forward to the hearings this summer to give the workers an opportunity to speak to Bill 90, after which we can come back, debate those changes and deal with this as effectively and efficaciously as possible.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Questions or comments?

Mr. Reza Moridi: Yesterday and today, the honourable member for Trinity-Spadina spoke quite lengthily, though he spent a good part of his speech on matters that really didn't relate to this bill. He claims that our government delayed in bringing this bill to the House, but the honourable member failed to acknowledge the fact that when his party was in government in 1992, they didn't look into this bill.

I'm proud that our government, under the leadership of our Premier, looked into this bill, looked into this fact that our part-time college teachers need to have the right to collectively bargain. Our Minister Milloy, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, took the leadership and looked into the case. He asked Kevin Whitaker, who is one of the most expert persons in labour relations, to review the current act, consult stakeholders and come up with a report.

Changing this bill is not something where you can just look at it, delete some articles and add another article. This is very important legislation before this House. It affects the lives of 17,500 people. We have to look into this very carefully. That's what our government, our minister, has done.

We have asked a very expert person in this area to review the current legislation and come up with a report.

The report is public. This present bill that is before the House is based on the recommendations given by Mr. Whitaker. In our college system, there are 39,000 people working, and 17,500 of those people didn't have the right to collectively bargain. Based on this legislation—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. Further questions and/or comments? Being none, further debate?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak this morning on Bill 90, An Act to enact the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act, 2008, to repeal the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act and to make related amendments to other Acts.

I'll begin by saying what other members of the caucus have said, including my colleague from Simcoe North yesterday, that we fully appreciate, as does the PC caucus, the work of all the world-class universities and colleges that we are fortunate to have here in the province of Ontario.

I know that many of our offices have met over the years with the part-time workers at the colleges, asking for this act to be repealed and changes made. In my riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, I had, a couple of times, a great delegation—I believe they were all ladies—who came in to see me about the repealing of this act and the changes they would like to see happening. They do tremendous work at our colleges. All the staff do.

I know that in my riding we have Fleming College, formerly known as Sir Sandford Fleming College. I have the Frost campus in my area, in Lindsay. I also have a satellite campus in Haliburton, which is a school of fine arts, but it does offer many different classes as the years have evolved. They have a beautiful new campus there. In the last six or seven years since it opened, it's been just a tremendous campus to visit. The home campus, Fleming College, is in Peterborough, so I share that with my colleague from Peterborough; Fleming College has branches in both of our ridings. Trent University is in Peterborough, and of course a lot of people from my riding go over to Trent University.

0920

Bonnie Patterson is at Trent University, and we now have the great Tony Tilly as president of Fleming College. The past president, Brian Desbiens, was president for over two decades, and they just dedicated a great technology wing of Fleming College in Peterborough to him for all the work he has done, not just with the college, but he's a tremendous community person—all the committees he sits on that have helped and enhanced our communities. I thank him for that dedication and work. I know that the principal at Fleming College, Blaine Harvey, is doing a great job at the Frost campus.

The college system was the brainchild of Bill Davis, the former Premier. It was a fabulous idea. I myself am a graduate of the nursing diploma program at Loyalist College. The nursing program has evolved; it's now a degree program. But the colleges are still a big part of that. I know that Fleming College and Trent University have a

partnership—many others do across the province of Ontario—and the coordinated efforts that both of them make are truly exceptional. Fleming College is always coming to my office and asking, “What do you think the community needs? What courses can we offer?”

Fleming College has an incredible reputation for its environmental wing, which was built within the last 10 years. They have the Centre for Alternative Wastewater Treatment, which promotes constructed wetlands and other innovative forms of waste water treatment, and they have a demonstration site right there where you see the weeds and cattails and everything that's filtered through. They've gone up to northern Canada and instituted that. I know that they've been recognized globally for their awards, and all from a small campus in Lindsay: the Frost campus. They have certainly been great partners in our community. I know that they were working with business incubators, and we'd love to see some environmental businesses come and start up in partnership with them, using Fleming College and other close-proximity properties we have. That initiative is going to expand, and that is just fabulous for our area. The colleges are fortunate to have Linda Franklin as CEO of Colleges Ontario.

I have a November 2007 note from the College Compensation and Appointments Council with respect to the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act, which is the topic of the bill we're discussing today, and I want to get a couple of points on the record. In terms of support staff, the college pays 100% of the wages and benefits for the support union bargaining team, which consists of seven members, for every day of face-to-face negotiations, plus seven days' preparation—in 2005, that was increased to 10 days' preparation. The last round of negotiations, in 2005, which was a total of 23 days, cost an estimated \$33,651; in 2003, that cost was \$43,548. So in terms of academic staff, the college pays the seven members their full wages and benefits from the date that notice is given until the signing of a collective bargaining agreement.

In this case, notice of the last round of negotiations for academic staff was sent in January 2005, and negotiations ended in August 2006, 19 months later—long negotiations. The average annual salary for the seven members of the support union bargaining team was nearly \$75,000. The total cost of the negotiation—again, it lasted some 19 months—was \$1,007,000. I just want to put it out there that this isn't cheap; collective bargaining agreements cost a lot of money just to get established in the first place. So I'm very interested in what the minister would have to say about the increased cost of negotiations. What are his estimates going to be on this? Have they considered it? I know that we're here today and we want to send this to committee for further discussion, but I'm hoping that the ministry has done some background work on the cost. It's essentially taxpayers' money, and it's only fair that taxpayers know what that money is being used for.

I know that the PCs and the Liberals differ greatly on accountability. It's quite apparent that for the Liberals,

accountability only matters once the media catches on, which leads me to this real issue of funding. I know that my colleague just mentioned that Ontario colleges received the lowest per-student government funding of all the provinces. That's a pretty pronounced fact that we can't ignore. The Premier, as has his MO, in fact promised to bring the funding to the national average. He signed a pledge—another one of his MOs; signing pledges saying he would do so. I think it was over eight years ago that he signed the pledge. Extending those bargaining rights would increase the cost to colleges up to the \$200-million figure.

If the colleges are to go down this path, they'll have to have financial support from the government. This is going to cost. You can't expect the colleges themselves to bear the full brunt of this; they'll have to have some provincial money. I've already mentioned that they receive the lowest per-student government funding of all the provinces. So I think it's a fair question to the minister to explain this to the people of Ontario.

I want to comment on the apprenticeship-journeyman ratio in this province. I know that my colleague from Simcoe North has been a strong advocate of apprenticeships for many, many years—ever since I've been in the Legislature. He's been a great mentor to me; I'm very passionate about the apprenticeship program. He has brought forward some good suggestions, and I hope we're here next Thursday, because I want to debate my resolution that would establish—

Mr. Peter Kormos: Dream on. The Liberals have run out of steam.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I know. I wish they wouldn't, because they need to change this apprenticeship ratio to one to one, instead of being the odd one out in the whole country. In Ontario today, it's a three-to-one ratio. We want more skilled trades out there. We want the one-to-one apprenticeship ratio. We need it for our province; we need to do this for our children. This motion is being brought forward next Thursday, and I hope the government would support that. The one thing that is highlighted many, many times is the need for more skilled trades in Ontario.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak this morning and brag a little bit about the colleges in my riding: Fleming College and its two campuses in Lindsay and Haliburton. I know that this bill is going to committee. I have raised some questions this morning, and more questions will be raised as we go to committee, so we're going to end this debate from our side. Thank you very much for the opportunity.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Questions and comments?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I'm delighted to comment on the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. She spoke about many details. It's important to remind the member that there's been no government in the past that has worked with the colleges and universities like our government has. While we're looking forward to—

Mr. Mike Colle: Dispense.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Your own whip is trying to shut you down.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: It's very important for all of us to—

Interjections.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Nobody is listening this morning.

It's important to remind the member about our initiative to always support the colleges and universities. I'm happy to go out there and tell the people.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Questions and comments? Further debate?

The member has two minutes to respond. No?

Mr. Milloy has moved second reading of Bill 90. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Hon. Michael Bryant: I ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): So ordered.

Orders of the day.

0930

PRAYER IN THE LEGISLATURE

Hon. Michael Bryant: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion respecting the report of the Speaker's panel on prayer in the Legislature, and that each party be allotted up to 10 minutes to speak to such motion, following which the Speaker shall put the question without debate or amendment.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Michael Bryant: I move that the Speaker commence each meeting day of the assembly by reciting the Lord's Prayer, followed by another prayer, or the presentation of a verse or passage, or call for a moment of silent reflection, or any such other similar activity which, in the opinion of the Speaker, will serve to reflect over time the general demographic composition of this chamber and of the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Debate?

Hon. Michael Bryant: We are debating a motion the subject of which has not been considered by this Legislature since 1969. It is a motion addressing an important ritual that takes place at the opening of this Legislature—namely, the opening prayers.

This subject and issue, this ritual, the reading of the prayers by the Speaker, is the domain of the Legislature. We are debating a legislative recommendation which is set out in a report unanimously submitted by an all-party panel, chaired by the Speaker, and signed by the committee members, MPPs Balkissoon, Dunlop and DiNovo, and attached to a letter to the Premier from the Speaker of June 11.

The recommendation was—and I'm going to read from the report: "The panel has concluded that it is appropriate for each day of the Legislature to continue to be opened with the recitation by the Speaker of the Lord's Prayer." It goes on to say: "It is not explicitly and un-

ambiguously inclusive of all faiths. To address this shortcoming, the panel recommends that the existing non-denominational prayer be discontinued—that's the prayer that takes place at the immediate opening of the Legislature—and that “the Speaker will lead the House in an additional prayer” following the recitation of the Lord's Prayer. That additional prayer could also be a “moment of silent reflection such that the faith and non-faith demographics of the chamber and of the province would be proportionally expressed over time. It is expected that the Speaker would be assisted in the collection of suitable prayers for this purpose by members of the Legislature and by faith groups.”

That recommendation is being effected in this motion. The report was a response to a letter sent by the Premier to the Speaker on February 11—sorry; let me correct that. It was not a letter to the Speaker; it was a letter to the leader of the official opposition and the leader of the third party, Mr. Runciman and Mr. Hampton. In that letter, the Premier stated:

“The last time the Ontario Legislature updated the daily prayer recited in the legislative chamber was in 1969. Our counterparts in other provinces and the federal government have adjusted their customs to reflect the diversity of the population.”

The Premier goes on to propose “that we form a legislative committee to be chaired by the Speaker,” and then it goes on to propose what the all-party agreement ended up consisting of: one member from the government, one from the official opposition and one from the third party. The Premier then writes, “Based on that advice, [the panel] would make recommendations to the Legislature on a new procedure to open our daily proceedings.”

He says in closing, “The members of the Ontario Legislature reflect the diversity of Ontario—be it Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or agnostic. It is time for our practices to do the same. That is the Ontario way.”

That is the Premier in his letter to the leaders of the official opposition and the third party. Again, we are today debating an all-party committee recommendation. Is it a perfect result? Perhaps not. Is it a consensus recommendation? Yes. Is it the resolution of an all-party committee? Yes. Is it one that certainly members of our caucus and, my understanding is, all members of this Legislature support? Absolutely.

I want to give credit to the members of provincial Parliament—Mr. Balkissoon, Mr. Dunlop, Ms. DiNovo—and the Speaker for forging a consensus and finding a way in which this Legislature would open that not only had the support of the Legislature but reflected the differences of the members of this Legislature and the differences that exist within our province.

I always personally felt that the Legislature opening with a Christian prayer—and it is a Christian prayer. It's one recited in my church; it's not one that I am aware of being recited in synagogues, temples or mosques. It made me wonder whether the members of the Legislature who were not members of the faith that I have, the faith that

recites the Lord's Prayer, found this to be an exclusionary moment—in other words, a moment where the official ritual of the Legislature included one denomination's prayer but not another's. The effect of that was certainly not the intention of any members of the Legislature, I know.

In 1969, when this was looked at, the diversity of the Legislature was nothing like it is now. The diversity of the province was nothing like it is now. It was without question an inadvertent ritual, arguably, of exclusion for those people who do not share the mainstream religious faith that is shared, held and worshipped in some cases by a majority of the population here in Ontario.

This is an effort to reflect the diversity not only of this Legislature. I think we can all imagine standing in the shoes of those who do not share the religion to which the Lord's Prayer is attached and imagine what it would feel like if that was the only prayer recited in the Legislature. It might be one of exclusion.

I want to say in closing that I believe this to be a very good resolution, not just because we have addressed the issue of equality and equal liberty and religious equality. Governments must, under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, take a position that is not fundamentally secular but in fact is equal. In other words, one religion cannot be preferred over another.

The Legislature does not operate under the domain, for example, of the Human Rights Code. That has been settled by the courts. The Legislature is governed by the people in the Legislature. By forging this solution, resolution and recommendation, I believe that the province and this Legislature—again, very much to the credit of Mr. Balkissoon, Mr. Dunlop, Ms. DiNovo and the Speaker—have come forward with a recommendation that also reflects our politics.

The religious divisions in the United States, for example, drive into political divisions, and parties form around those divisions. The democratic debate, to a large degree in the United States—perhaps decreasingly so, but nonetheless it is the case that much of that debate is driven by those political divisions based on religious divisions.

We have not done that. We have found in this Legislature a solution. The report has recommended a solution that is not divisive but rather seeks to be inclusive; that does not reflect division within the Legislature but in fact is one that is unanimous of the panel. It is my hope that it will be supported by this House, but it will be for this House to decide.

In doing so, I believe we have not only modernized the ritual of the Legislature but we have also allowed for Ontario and Canadian politics to reflect a unique identity that does not allow religious divisions to drive political parties and to drive political movements but is one that reflects the equality in Canada for which we are very proud; one that reflects political divisions, yes, but is not driven by denominational differences; and one that reflects the multiculturalism of the province and of Canada.

I would say, as the Premier says in his closing words: That is the Ontario way.

0940

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Further debate?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm very pleased this morning to respond on behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party to the motion that's before the House.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to begin by thanking you for your leadership on running the all-party panel and coming forward with this motion, which I think is a very fair motion for this House to adopt. I also want to thank Mr. Balkissoon and Ms. DiNovo for their input and of course your staff and the legislative staff that assisted us in the drafting of this resolution. In particular, I'd like to thank my leader, John Tory, who asked me to sit as a member of this all-party panel to examine the use of the Lord's Prayer in the Legislature, and I'm very proud to do so. Ms. DiNovo, Mr. Balkissoon and yourself, Speaker, were great to work with, and I think we've come up with something that is very fair.

In particular, I'd like to thank the citizens of Ontario who have come forward with petitions—I believe it's way over 20,000 by now. They're rolling in each day, with 11,000 hits to our website. It was fairly evident from the beginning, particularly in the area that I represent, that 85% to 90% of the people supported retaining the Lord's Prayer to be recited in this Legislature each day. We didn't know this was coming at us to begin with. We had this debate back in 2000, and that followed a court hearing that a fellow by the name of Henry Freitag took against the town of Penetanguishene, which removed the Lord's Prayer from municipal council meetings. It was determined after that that only parliamentary privilege would remove it from this chamber.

As a representative from the riding of Simcoe North back in those days, I can tell you that people were hurt; they were really saddened to see something as powerful and traditional as the Lord's Prayer removed from the municipal council meetings. Many, many councils across this province were opposed to and hurt by this decision. We felt that by bringing a petition into this Legislature at that time, in summer 2000—we actually had another 11,000 signatures back in the year 2000 asking for the Lord's Prayer to be retained in the Legislature.

There are a lot of reasons for it. I have to say, from the beginning back in February, when we spoke to the media, to the Premier's office and to people in our ridings, it was clear from our party's perspective, the Progressive Conservative caucus, that removing the Lord's Prayer was not an option. It had to stay as far as we were concerned, but we were very clear that we were also open to other suggestions and other prayers being added. I know that our leader, John Tory, mentioned it a few times. I think even the Premier got around to mentioning it, along with our member from Oak Ridges, Frank Klees—he mentioned that a second, rotational prayer reflecting multi-denominational faiths would be something that we would clearly accept.

I have to stand in the House today and tell you that we are very pleased with the outcome of this motion. Why? I want to just back up for just a moment and talk about

why we are so pleased about having the Lord's Prayer retained. Personally, I, myself, and a lot of people in our caucus—and, I hope, a lot of the people in the House—are very strong traditionalists, and I know they believe in the heritage and culture of this wonderful province and this wonderful country. Our system here in Ontario and in Canada is based on the British parliamentary system, and that of course dates back to the Magna Carta.

I wanted to add a couple of things just for the record. In the British parliamentary system, before parliaments were formed, the original meetings of Parliament were held in cathedrals. We have so many symbols in our Legislature: the carvings, the coat of arms, our flags, our mottoes. The very architecture of these buildings is based on Christianity and on the British parliamentary system.

In our caucus, we're just not prepared to send that out the door. We believe very strongly that the Lord's Prayer is part of that, that Christianity is part of the very foundation of our wonderful country, and we want to retain that. Again, that's why we are so pleased.

On the other hand, I took a walk last night down Yonge Street—I always walk each night or each morning for exercise—and I can tell you, when you look at the culture, when you look at the makeup of our province, when you look at the makeup of the citizens of our cities and our province, it's clear that we are a wonderful, wonderful place in the world to live. Regardless of the political policies that we fight about with each other, you know what? This is a place we should be proud to call home, a place to accept other people into our culture and into making Canada their home.

I think a good example was made yesterday. There were two things that happened yesterday. First of all, I thought that the apology that Prime Minister Harper made to our First Nations people was a very brave move. All people, all Canadians, should be proud of that moment: that our Prime Minister would come forward and say that.

As we move forward with how we perform the prayers in the opening sessions, I think we can accept this well into the future. Obviously there will be years ahead when we will re-examine this once again, but for now, I'm proud to say that, working with our all-party panel, we've come up with a very reasonable solution. The Speaker already has in his hands a number of the prayers from other denominations that have come forward. We'll be happy to see those proceed in the weeks, months and years ahead in this Legislature.

In hindsight, as I said earlier, we didn't expect this to come at us. We thought there were probably more important things to be debating and more important things to spend committee time on, because we believed that the Lord's Prayer was part of this, part of our daily routine. But we have problems. We have issues around smog, around the loss of manufacturing jobs, around poverty, around the declining economy. We have to remember that those are priorities as well. As we move forward, we in our caucus did not want to spend a lot of time debating this. That's why, as we bring the recommendations of the

panel forward, we're so pleased to see that we have something that all members of this House can accept and hopefully support well into the future.

Mr. Speaker, with that I want to once again thank you for your efforts. I hope I'm not letting anything out of the bag, but I think you told me originally that you were on a beach in Cuba when you got your first phone call on this. I hope you don't take your BlackBerry and your cell-phone to the beach.

But you know what? It has been a challenge. It was interesting to read through the thousands and thousands of letters and e-mails that we received as we went forward with this motion.

I hope everyone in the House will support this. I appreciate the—

Mr. Peter Kormos: Too much.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Once again, I hear Mr. Kormos heckling. I meant to say, Mr. Speaker, that you needed a break. It was good that you got away. The reality is, he mentioned it to us at our committee. He made it clear that he was tired and was there for a rest.

This was a surprise to him. It's something that we didn't really need, but the all-party panel has reported. Our caucus is extremely happy with this. We hope that the members of the assembly will be happy with this and we hope that the citizens of Ontario will be happy with this.

Once again, as I close, I want to thank the citizens of Ontario who have responded in such a positive manner to seeing the drafting of this resolution come forward. We will be supporting it 100% in this caucus. On behalf of John Tory, Bob Runciman and the Progressive Conservative caucus, I'm pleased to make these comments today and to thank Ontarians once again for responding to this all-party panel.

0950

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Further debate?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and indeed thank you for your role in this. I also want to thank Todd Decker and Larry Johnston, and Maggie—I don't know her last name; the assistant to the Speaker. Certainly, everyone worked very tirelessly on coming up with this.

Before Dalton McGuinty started talking about possibly revoking the Lord's Prayer—which, let us be clear, was implied when he said "review the Lord's Prayer"—before he mentioned it, I don't believe I received one e-mail on revoking or reviewing the Lord's Prayer. Here are the top e-mails that I receive: One in six children living in poverty in the province of Ontario; 200,000 manufacturing jobs lost in the province of Ontario; 120,000 households waiting for housing in the province of Ontario; only one in 10 children having a space in daycare in the province of Ontario; and of course the minimum wage in the province of Ontario that keeps people in poverty. That's what I receive e-mails on; that's what New Democrats receive e-mails on—not revoking the Lord's Prayer and the saying of the Lord's Prayer in this place. Not one e-mail did I receive on that.

It's interesting that this move of the government has more of figures than faith in it, more of expediency than ethics in it, because of course what this represents for Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal Party is retreat. It's a retreat in the face of the overwhelming number of e-mails and responses from the people of Ontario. You heard the Progressive Conservatives talk about the sheer number—20,000 and counting—who wrote in demanding that the Lord's Prayer be said, with a small portion asking for the revocation of prayer in this place. That's what this is about.

I wish I could say it were something else. I'm a United Church minister by trade and I'm first and foremost a United Church minister. I am a politician by avocation, not by vocation. Every morning, my husband and I say prayers together. One of the prayers we say is the Lord's Prayer. The other prayer we always say—it's why I'm standing here; it's why I survived one of the ugliest by-elections in the history of this province—is that we pray for our enemies. We pray for those who want to harm us. We pray nothing but blessing and joy upon them for that day. It's prayer that keeps me here. It's prayer, I believe, that keeps us all here. That's what my husband and I do every single morning. For us, it's about faith. For us, it's not a "ritual," to quote Mr. Bryant. It's not an empty ritual; it's something in the very substance of our beings. And for many out there in the province of Ontario, it is as well, clearly.

I love a quote from 1 John. The quote from 1 John defines God for me, where 1 John writes, "God is love." God is love. There's an equal sign there. "Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God lives in them." I used to say that at the beginning of every wedding I performed.

Clearly, out of love, Ontarians responded here. Even those who are humanists and secularists responded out of ethics, out of a real sense of what is right, of what is just. They responded out of love. They didn't make their decision based on the numbers, on polls, on expediency; they made it from the very marrow of their being, from something that really meant something to them.

A year ago, I brought in a motion to this House called "A place for all people." What I asked for in that motion was that there be a place for all people in this place which people of all faiths and of no faith could use for meditation, time out. There is such a place on Parliament Hill. Just about every large institution where people work has such a space. We need such a space here.

I witness many who are Sikh or Muslim running across four lanes of University Avenue to go over to the Hart House chapel to pray because there is no space here for them; none whatsoever. I have the assurance of the Speaker, and I'm delighted in it, that that place will be found, a place that's accessible and open for everyone. I'm delighted about that. I'm delighted that that is a by-product of what has happened here today.

Jesus, when he said the Lord's Prayer, was a Jew; he was a Rabbi. Certainly, Dow Marmur, in his comments in the Toronto Star, highlighted that. Jesus said those words in Aramaic. "Abba" is what he calls "Daddy"; he's

saying “Daddy” in Aramaic. It’s a very intimate prayer. It’s a prayer that he said out of love. It’s a prayer that one should never—and, may I just say, and put great emphasis on this—be forced to say. Faith is the antithesis of force. No one should ever be forced, in this chamber or anywhere else, to say a prayer they don’t believe in, simply to mouth the words, simply to get along. That goes for all prayer, and I hope that everyone here takes that to heart: that what we’re saying has nothing of force in it; absolutely nothing. Those who don’t want to pray should leave the chamber and be allowed to stand and not pray, and that a moment of silence should be one of those options. We made sure that we included a moment of silence.

When we’re talking about what’s right, what’s just, what’s of faith and ethics and not of expediency and figures, we’re talking about something for everyone, particularly something for the minority. Our secular and humanist brothers and sisters made a very good point when they said that human rights is about, in a sense, marginal rights, minority rights, and not just what the majority wants.

Of course, that’s not what this government has done here. Again, there is more figures than faith, more expediency than ethics about their move this morning. Because it was very clear what Dalton McGuinty did. It was very clear the move he made when he looked at the possible revocation of the recitation of the Lord’s Prayer in this place.

I was delighted to be on the panel; I think we came to a very good conclusion. We came to the conclusion that most Ontarians came to. Most Ontarians—and let us be clear about this—voted with their e-mails, with their deputations, with their letters, against what Dalton McGuinty wanted, against what the Liberal Party wanted. They spoke out of ethics. They spoke out of deep compassion and a sense of justice. They spoke the same way that Jesus spoke: out of love. They spoke out of love, compassion and ethics. They didn’t speak because they were frightened. They didn’t speak because they were in full-scale retreat. They didn’t speak because it was politically expedient to do so.

I’m delighted that the Lord’s Prayer stays. I’m delighted that we’ve opened the door to the prayers of other faiths. I’m also delighted that we will now have a moment of silence as well to acknowledge those who do not share faith.

I’m delighted, again, that Ontarians, like New Democrats, speak out of a sense of justice, a sense of compassion, a sense of what’s right and not what’s popular—the same sense, we might say, out of which those who embody the spirit, those who embody love of all faith traditions and no-faith traditions speak; that is, out of, at the end of the day, a sense of love.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues who sat on that panel. I think this is a just solution to a problem not of our creating, but a problem of Dalton McGuinty’s creating. Finally, finally, we’ve put that to rest. Finally, we’ve done what’s right.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Bryant has moved that the Speaker commence each meeting day of the assembly by reciting the Lord’s Prayer, followed by another prayer, or the presentation of a verse or passage, or call for a moment of silent reflection, or any such other similar activity which, in the opinion of the Speaker, will serve to reflect over time the general demographic composition of this chamber and of the province of Ontario.

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.

Under the new standing orders, this vote will be deferred until this afternoon.

Vote deferred.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Orders of the day.

Hon. Michael Bryant: I seek consent for the House to recess until 10:45.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

The House recessed from 1000 to 1045.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Please be seated.

Interjection: Pray be seated.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I think only the Lieutenant Governor can say that.

On behalf of the Minister of Health, we’d like to welcome a number of guests to the chamber today as part of the Cancer Care Day of Education: Richard Ling, chair of the board, Cancer Care Ontario; Dr. Terry Sullivan, president and CEO of Cancer Care Ontario; Dr. Carol Sawka; Dr. Bill Evans; Dr. George Pasut; Dr. Linda Rabeneck; Sarah Kramer; and Michael Power. To all of our guests, welcome.

ORAL QUESTIONS

SCHOOL SAFETY

Mr. Frank Klees: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Yesterday, I brought to the Premier’s attention a situation where a principal failed to report to the police a situation of student-on-student assault during school hours on school property. The Premier responded by assuring us that he would ask the Minister of Education to look into the matter, to investigate the matter, and he also assured us that the safety of our children in our schools was an absolute priority for this government.

I would ask if the Deputy Premier could advise us what steps the government is taking to ensure that students are in fact safe and that the appropriate reporting will take place should an assault take place.

Hon. George Smitherman: To the Minister of Education.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I appreciate the member opposite bringing the incident to our attention. Obviously all students have the right to be safe in their schools, and more than that, I completely agree with the member opposite that families have a right to know what is happening in schools and when there have been incidents. My understanding is that the director of the board has indicated that the principal did not follow protocol in reporting the incident. We are actually in the process of reviewing police protocols and we are monitoring those very closely.

Mr. Frank Klees: I appreciate that, and I appreciate the minister following up on that. We'll look forward to the specific reports.

The government must know that currently there is in fact no legal obligation under the Child and Family Services Act for school officials to report a student-on-student assault to the police. Currently the only legal obligation is to report child abuse at the hands of a parent or person in authority, not abuse or violence at the hands of another student.

Given the Premier's assurance yesterday and the minister's assurance now that student safety is a priority for the government, can the minister assure us that the government will bring forward legislation that closes that loophole that does not require mandatory reporting under the law? And will the minister commit to bringing that legislation forward so that we can deal with it before we rise for the summer?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Obviously these are very serious issues that the member opposite raises, which is why we re-enacted our safe schools action team, led by my parliamentary assistant, the member for Guelph. She is currently looking at both the police protocols and also the reporting mechanisms, because there are various reporting mechanisms and requirements in place. What we want to be clear about is that any gaps in those are filled, and that is certainly what I will be expecting in her report within the coming months.

1050

Mr. Frank Klees: We know what needs to be done. Apart from protocol and reporting obligations, we know that there's a loophole in the law today that can be fixed by this Legislature before we rise for the summer. Given the Premier's commitment for student safety, we, the official opposition, are ready to co-operate with the government to approve that legislation—the amendment to the act that will make it a requirement for school officials to report assault directly to the police when it happens.

My question to the minister is this: Will she commit to bringing that legislation and count on the support of the opposition parties to pass that legislation, so when kids go to school in September, parents can rely on the law and the obligations under law that administrators will look after the safety of their children?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: What's interesting in this situation is, the precipitating event for the member's questions was a situation where in fact the protocol was

not followed. I've already said that we are looking at protocols, we are going to be looking for the gaps, and we're going to be reviewing those reporting mechanisms.

The point is that, apart from all the protocols, what we need is good communication. In this instance or in any other instance where there's an incident at a school, parents need to be apprised of that; they need to be apprised the incident in a reasonable period of time. There's a blend of common sense and protocol that needs to be in place in the running of any school. We're looking at the protocols; we're looking at the reporting mechanisms. In this case, it's very unfortunate that the parents were not apprised of the situation. That should have happened.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade: To paraphrase Albert Einstein, if you repeat the same experiment over and over again, don't expect different results. The massive job losses that we are seeing make workers and businesses wonder whether this government's investment strategy is caught in a cycle of failure. Minister, will you allow for an independent review of your auto investment strategy so that taxpayers, and especially auto workers, can be sure that they aren't being taken to the cleaners?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I appreciate this question, because it gives us once again the opportunity to show Ontarians that their taxpayer dollars are working hard to bring investment to this jurisdiction. I would reference the launch of the Flex at the Oakville plant with Ford Motor Co. That was an opportunity for Wayne Gretzky to assist in launching this Flex vehicle that only happened because of the Ontario government's investment with Ford Motor Co., to the extent that Ford Motor Co. is busy hiring 500 people for that Oakville plant. That's an important symbol of investment in innovation to land new investments and new product in this province in our automotive sector.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I'm afraid I'll have to take that as a no.

We need to shine a light on these contracts, because we keep getting different answers about what's actually in them. This government doesn't even know whether GM job guarantees have been breached or not. The Premier says, "Yes"; the minister says, "We'll have to wait and see." This confusion does not instill confidence in either workers or manufacturers.

As we hopefully enter into new contracts with GM and other auto manufacturers, Ontarians deserve to know that their tax dollars will guarantee results. I ask again, Minister: Will you allow the Auditor General to perform a value-for-money review of the entire auto investment strategy?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I would hope that some of the MPPs opposite who actually come from the region north of Toronto would appreciate the fact that our participation with the GM Beacon project meant a \$60-million investment in post-secondary institutions to assist

in the development of new technologies that will make our auto industry strong. I would hope that people who represent the area around UOIT would understand that \$58 million in participation by this government will allow that university to be built up, to grow, to be strong, and that \$2 million of that amount going to McMaster allows for the kind of innovative R&D that that sector needs for the future products that will be going into our cars.

This is an important investment through the Beacon project. It's exactly why we may well have an opportunity to land a new car product: because of the Flex system that we helped to develop for that plant. I expect this member in particular to understand the importance of this.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: The thousands of people who've been laid off at General Motors, Ford and Chrysler may not agree with that answer. The PC Party has always supported creating an investment environment that brings good, sustainable jobs. I remind you of the million new jobs that we created in our term of government. Your auto investment strategy is not achieving this goal.

Make the contracts public. Let the Auditor General review them. Learn from your mistakes, so that any future discussion that we hope you will have with GM and other automakers will bring positive results for businesses and workers alike. Will you do that, Minister?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: What I think we have to acknowledge is that the big mistake that was made was in this very House when members of the opposition refused to support the automotive sector. They refused to be supportive when initiatives came forward, either through the automotive investment strategy, through budget initiatives meant directly to help the sector—the very sector that looks like they're needing the help the most. These members opposite refused to stand up. They don't stand up for the workers and they don't stand up for our automotive sector either.

I would ask this member to call on the very individual who leads all of those automotive workers, Buzz Hargrove. Have you had one conversation with this individual? Have you had one conversation with the very leader who has said, "Without provincial support, including its participation in GM's Beacon project, the situation facing the industry today would be far, far worse"? Those are the words of Buzz Hargrove.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Howard Hampton: My question is for the Acting Premier. In 1937, in Oshawa, the historic strike by auto workers against General Motors happened. David Croll, the Minister of Labour in the Hepburn Liberal government, made a difficult decision: He resigned from the Liberal government and issued this statement: "Thousands of working men and women of the province of Ontario have come to look to me as their protector and their champion. I feel that I cannot now fail them. In my official capacity I have travelled the middle of the road,

but now ... my place is marching with the workers rather than riding with General Motors."

An hour from now, I and my NDP colleagues will be marching with the workers in Oshawa. My question is: Whose side is the McGuinty government on—General Motors'?

Hon. George Smitherman: To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I think there will be no mistaking where the Ontario government sits when it comes to General Motors and the thousands of workers who work for General Motors. Not one government has been more supportive of the automotive sector than this one, and not one Premier has been more supportive of the Canadian auto workers than this one.

Last night, we had an opportunity to fete Buzz Hargrove as he celebrated his many years in service, not just to the automotive sector but to this nation. Who was there first in line? It was Premier Dalton McGuinty, to establish the two of them not only as close colleagues but to understand the deep respect we have grown to have for the CAW. I challenge the members of the opposition; I challenge them to ask that very leader if they feel that the Ontario government has been supportive of them.

Mr. Howard Hampton: If the McGuinty government calls the layoff of tens of thousands of auto workers—unprecedented in the history of Ontario—a success, then I would hate to see how they measure failure.

But my question was very simple: Will we see any members of the McGuinty government marching with the auto workers in Oshawa today? I suspect we can conclude: No.

The fact is, this government's handling of the present crisis in Ontario's manufacturing and resource sectors has many parallels with the Liberal government of Mitch Hepburn. The McGuinty government hands \$235 million to General Motors but doesn't get a production guarantee that the new hybrid-powered, fuel-efficient half-tonne will be built in Oshawa by Oshawa workers. This is a major setback.

My question is: Will any member of the McGuinty government march with the workers, or are you going to continue—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

1100

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I find it a little bit strange that the leader of the third party wants to quote Senator David Croll, the member who actually came from Windsor, Ontario, and understood the automotive sector better than most people in the House even at that time. There are members of this Legislature who have stood up for automotive workers since day one, since their election to this very House. Since this government became one in 2003, there has not been a government that has been more behind these automotive workers than these members of the Legislature right here.

When I ask you today if you will stand up for the automotive workers, you haven't been standing up for these last five years, but this government has.

Mr. Howard Hampton: The McGuinty government wants people to believe that handing \$235 million to General Motors, and then watching General Motors break what it promised in a collective agreement and lay off thousands of workers, is somehow the McGuinty government's standing up for workers. Hogwash. Nonsense. No one would measure that as any kind of success.

The McGuinty government has bungled its own auto strategy. It has allowed General Motors to bully not only communities but workers.

My question is: What is the McGuinty government going to do to force General Motors to meet the very things it promised before it signed a collective agreement a few short weeks ago—keeping a product at the truck plant in Oshawa?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: This is the very leader of the political party who was quoted, when talking about the CAW: “You can bash your head against a wall talking to these people. It's just not worth it.” That's what the leader of the third party said when it came to talking about the CAW.

I just ask you: If you think that you're going to speak on behalf of the CAW, why is it that the very leader of the CAW doesn't agree with you? Why is it that Buzz Hargrove in fact stands together with Dalton McGuinty to make the automotive sector stronger? Why is it that the leader of the CAW has said, “There's not a leader in the free world who has delivered the way Dalton McGuinty has for our automotive sector”?

Thank goodness we wouldn't leave it to you, because if it was up to you, we would be marching at the back of the parade instead of at the front.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Howard Hampton: To the Acting Premier again: The fact is, General Motors signed a collective agreement with the workers just last month. Before they signed that collective agreement, they said that the truck plant in Oshawa would continue to have a vehicle to produce into 2011. Despite General Motors getting \$235 million from the McGuinty government, despite what they said before signing the collective agreement, 2,600 workers at that truck plant are now being laid off. That's why they're marching today.

My question is this: Having bungled its negotiations with General Motors, when will the McGuinty government finally show some backbone and do something to force General Motors to at least meet the obligations and the promises they made before they signed the collective agreement?

Hon. George Smitherman: To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I think, once again, I would like the member opposite to listen to the words of Buzz Hargrove. He purports to support and stand for automotive workers, and here's the one leader who has garnered more support from his own membership than anyone in the history of the CAW. He says, “The attacks of

Runciman and Hampton on Ontario's auto strategy are anything but informed. They're an attempt to make cheap political points at the expense of tens of thousands of hard-working auto workers in Ontario who quite rightly fear for their future.” Buzz Hargrove says, “My members and I are deeply offended.”

You go on and show up at that parade. What we know is, you're an offence to the CAW.

Mr. Howard Hampton: I gather that members of the McGuinty government think that the 2,600 workers are going to be marching today because they're happy about being laid off; they're happy that the McGuinty government gave General Motors \$235 million of the public's money and didn't get a product guarantee for the truck plant.

The fact is, this sets a very bad precedent. What will now stop Ford, which received \$100 million, from simply going back on its promises and laying off workers? What will stop Chrysler, which received close to \$100 million, from simply going back on their promise and laying off workers?

I ask again: When is the McGuinty government going to stand up to General Motors and say to them, “You must keep the promises you made before you signed the collective agreement”? When is the McGuinty government going to stand up for the workers and stop simply toeing the line for General Motors?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I think it's very clear. The people who are speaking on behalf of the CAW understand full well where this government has been for the automotive sector. I think it's very clear that General Motors themselves have said they may well be in a position to prepay that loan on the strategy that we signed with them. That's an acknowledgment by General Motors themselves.

What I do know is that we move forward our discussions, on practically a daily basis, with representatives of the auto workers. The very people who may be losing their jobs don't see the NDP as supportive of them. They only see that this Ontario government has been prepared to look out and say: “How do we bring future projects to this jurisdiction? How do we find ways, in the face of a challenge that is worldwide, to bring investment to Ontario?” The only government that has been on this aggressive path has been the Dalton McGuinty government. That is acknowledged by the leadership of the CAW. You, sir, do not speak for the auto workers in this country.

Mr. Howard Hampton: I've been to meet with the auto workers in Oshawa twice now outside GM headquarters. I haven't seen any members of the McGuinty government there. I haven't seen anyone there from the McGuinty government supporting those workers.

My question is this: New Democrats believe that government has an important role in trying to sustain manufacturing jobs in this province. Part of that role is that if you're going to hand out hundreds of millions of dollars to multinational corporations, you get product or job guarantees. The question that those auto workers are now asking is this: Is the McGuinty government going to do

anything to require General Motors to live up to the promise they made before they signed the collective agreement to maintain product and jobs at the Oshawa truck plant? Are you going to do anything at all?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I do find it quite amazing that, perhaps in these last couple of weeks, all of a sudden you're supportive of government participation with the automotive sector. Where were you when our Minister of Finance tabled a budget with the most historic investment available for participation with our auto sector? How did you vote on those initiatives? You said no to the auto workers.

Where were you when we tabled those business initiatives to lower costs for business? The very initiatives that you suggest in this House we should be doing, you voted no to. But when the big camera is on you, you want to march over to Oshawa and stand behind the auto workers. I think it's time that you showed your true colours. You either support the automotive sector or you do not. I suggest that you have never supported the automotive sector, and it's apparent by your behaviour today.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Minister, media reports today indicate that the Premier is opposed to federal legislation that ensures that taxpayers' money is not used to finance the production of films that are pornographic, excessively violent or denigrating to identifiable groups.

Minister, your government doesn't fund drugs approved by Health Canada for cancer victims; you've delisted chiropractic services, physiotherapy, eye exams, and on and on. But your Premier is quite prepared to spend limited tax dollars on films that most Ontarians would find offensive. Why is that and how do you justify that?

Hon. George Smitherman: On the matter of the supplementary, I'll be asking the Minister of Culture to comment, but the comments by the honourable member really are not appropriate to leave unaddressed. On a day when courageous individuals who work on the front lines of health care delivering enhanced capacity to support people in our province with cancer—for you to talk up and make a suggestion that back in the day when you were in charge, every drug that Health Canada approved you automatically put on the formulary is phooey.

Since the amendments that we've made to drugs alone, 14 additional cancer drugs have been funded in our province. We've made investments all across the health care landscape. The honourable member's suggestions are to play one thing off against another. I want to see this honourable member stand up in his place, talk about health care and acknowledge that it is his party's plan to cut \$3 billion out of health care, rather than playing one group of Ontarians off against the other.

1110

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: I ask the honourable member to withdraw that statement.

It is well known that only thing we wanted to cut out of health care was him.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): That's not a point of order.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: That's cheap theatrics, with a dose of dishonesty tossed in.

The legislation in question passed the House of Commons with the support of all parties, including the Liberal Party. Five provinces have similar constraints in their film tax credit programs with no problems. It's called spending public money responsibly, and that's a concept you're not very familiar with.

Minister, when you can't find the money to fund cancer drugs, to provide PET scans, to unclog emergency rooms, why are you prepared to pour scarce tax dollars into a pornographic, violent and derogatory film?

Hon. George Smitherman: The honourable member's assertion is incorrect on all points. First off, he says we haven't funded cancer drugs. We've tripled the funding for cancer drugs in the last five years and recently added 14 new cancer drugs. He says we can't find the resources to address emergency rooms, but we've funded \$109 million in the last two weeks to enhance our capacity to provide support for Ontarians who go in search of care to Ontario's emergency rooms.

It's unbelievable that the honourable member, who leads a party in this Legislature that holds firm to the position that they would eliminate the health premium and thereby eliminate \$3 billion in expenditure for health care, has a lot of audacity to stand in his place and pretend that this is the party that—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: For months now we have been listening to this false information from the minister that we would eliminate \$3 billion from—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): That is not a point of order, and I have ruled on that in the past.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: He's not telling the truth.

Hon. George Smitherman: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order: The honourable member knows that in estimates committee yesterday, I tabled a press release from the finance critic of that party indicating that—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): New question, leader of the third party.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I know it's a Thursday and—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member from Niagara West and the Minister of Health: If you want to have that discussion, take it outside, please. I know it's a Thursday. It's been a very warm week—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Excuse me. I'd just like some order in the House for a moment, please.

It's a Thursday. It's been a warm week. Everybody has worked hard, but let's end this week. We've got a lot of students here. Remember how we should be carrying ourselves in this chamber. We expect things of these

students in their schools. I think we should offer the same thing to them within this chamber. So I just ask members to tone it down a bit.

New question, the leader of the third party.

NORTHERN ONTARIO HERITAGE FUND

Mr. Howard Hampton: To the Minister of Northern Development and Mines: The northern Ontario heritage fund announced less funding in the eight months since the last election than it announced in the four days prior to the last election being called. Can the Minister of Northern Development and Mines tell us how that could be?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: We're very proud of the tremendous job creation opportunities that are brought about as a result of the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp. We're particularly proud about the fact that our government has committed to increasing the heritage fund from a \$60-million-a-year fund to a \$100-million-a-year fund, and again confirmed in our budget.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: From the party that stole \$60 million from the heritage fund.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thank you very much for reminding me of that. From the party that indeed took money out of the heritage fund on their way out of office in 1995, it's an interesting question.

We're very proud of the investments that we've made since then. We've created and retained over 9,000 jobs as a result of the heritage fund. We've spent \$345 million in new investments in the north, creating jobs once again. We're very proud of how the heritage fund has performed and the difference it has made in terms of job creation in northern Ontario.

Mr. Howard Hampton: The minister talks about jobs. I think the only thing that people have experienced in northern Ontario is a loss of jobs.

What's interesting is that in the eight months prior to the election call last year, the McGuinty government announced \$105 million in heritage fund projects. In the week just prior to the election call, more than \$31 million was announced. In the eight months after the election, only \$29 million has been announced—more in the four days before the election was called than in the eight months since the election. Why is the minister continuing the tradition of the McGuinty government of banking the northern Ontario heritage fund money until just before an election?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: That is simply not true. The fact is that, as the member knows, we have a northern Ontario heritage fund board made up of individuals from all across the north who meet once every six weeks to try to make some decisions related to good projects that are moving forward. We were very, very pleased about the projects. Since I've become minister, we've had three or four meetings, some very good projects have been announced, and we're very proud of the funding that was done in the last government.

The fact is that over that four-year term of the McGuinty government, after we changed the criteria to allow the private sector to once again play a role in terms of job creation, with the heritage fund's help we created over \$300 million in new investments, and some 9,000 new jobs were created or retained. I'm extremely proud to be the minister leading the heritage fund and chairing it and I'm very proud of the Ontario government for increasing the amount of the heritage fund from \$60 million to \$100 million a year. We look forward to more important investments in northern Ontario.

BROWNFIELD SITES

Mr. Charles Sousa: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. In my riding of Mississauga South, we are blessed with a gem of a lakefront. It's where people live, businesses thrive, and it is famous for its beautiful lakefront. However, some of our lakefront is sitting empty and unused because it is in need of remediation. We have two huge brownfields on our lakeshore corridor. The former Imperial lands on Mississauga Road are 70 acres, and the site of the former Lakeview coal plant has 200 acres. Both sites are prime waterfront locations, and the people in Mississauga South don't want them to sit empty any longer.

I understand that the major hurdle in developing these and other brownfields in Ontario is one of liability. The companies that own such lands would prefer to leave them as is rather than assume the legal risks involved in developing them. Can the minister please inform the House and the people of Mississauga South of what he is doing to resolve the liability issue and facilitate the rehabilitation of these sites?

Hon. Jim Watson: A very good question. I thank the member for Mississauga South.

Reforms passed as part of the 2007 budget included legislative changes that make Ontario the leading jurisdiction in Canada when it comes to addressing liability and regulatory issues with respect to brownfield redevelopment. We're proud of those changes that were brought forward. Let me just give the member a couple of examples of those regulatory and liability changes.

We've increased protection for municipalities from civil suits when they approve plans or issue building permits based on inaccurate information in a record of site condition, allowed the province to take steps to ensure adequate protection of the health and safety of the public on abandoned properties, and increased liability protection provided to property owners who redevelop a brownfield site.

Ontario is a leader when it comes to brownfield redevelopment. We were recognized by the Canadian Urban Institute and will continue to do what we can as a government to ensure that we rehabilitate these brownfield sites for the betterment of all Ontario.

Mr. Charles Sousa: Minister, as you know, Mississauga is preparing for intensification, which will bring more residents and businesses to our city. This means

there will be a need to redevelop some residential neighbourhoods, but accommodating intensification could be made much easier if our brownfields, especially on the lakefront, could be put to better use.

This strategy is in keeping with smart growth. For example, the Lakeview visioning project has proposed that the Lakeview site be redeveloped to accommodate a new mix of residential and business, with a boardwalk area on the lake. In addition, proposals abound for projects like a new stadium, an aquarium, or even a university campus. At the Imperial Oil site, residents have high hopes of building recreational and commercial facilities.

The residents and developers are excited about these proposals and want to get started on them as soon as possible. In addition to their aesthetic benefits, these developments would also be a major economic boost to the riding. But as long as these lands sit unremediated, none of these areas and ideas can become a reality.

Minister, can you—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

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Hon. Jim Watson: I'd like to tell the member that where there's a will, there's a way. I know that Mayor Hazel McCallion, who's a good friend of the member from Mississauga South, is very determined to deal with a number of these brownfield sites. So I will assure the member that I will continue to work with him, Mayor McCallion and the city of Mississauga.

Our ministry is making it easier for cities, developers and environmental leaders to redevelop brownfield sites. Recent changes to the Municipal Act put municipalities in a better position to deal with abandoned brownfield properties. We've removed crown liens and introduced greater flexibility in the tax sale process. Our government's brownfields financial tax incentive program continues to provide tax assistance to landowners in order to encourage environmental rehabilitation, and we have streamlined the administration of this program, making the regional offices of municipal affairs and housing the key points of conduct for program approval. So I can give the member my assurance that we will work with him to get the job—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

TOURISM

Mr. Ted Arnott: My question is for the Minister of Tourism. Yesterday, my friend the member for Simcoe North informed this House that North Bay city council is supporting John Tory's idea to suspend the retail sales tax on attractions and accommodations this summer. This would provide an immediate boost for tourism in its time of need to avert a summer of discontent. Thousands of jobs in communities across Ontario are at stake.

Today, I spoke with Doug Reynolds, the executive director of NOTO, Northern Ontario Tourist Outfitters.

He said that this should be a non-partisan issue and that our tax break proposal makes a lot of sense.

Yesterday, the minister dismissed the considered opinion of the duly elected council of the city of North Bay. Today, is the minister going to dismiss NOTO's views as well?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I thank the member for Wellington-Halton Hills for the question. I ask often about good ideas and ask our ministry staff and everybody in the ministry if we've gotten any calls on this proposal, this poor band-aid solution by the Tories and John Tory: zero emails, zero letters, zero phone calls. It's gotten almost zero support from all our partners in tourism.

Where we've had great success in tourism has been with our marketing campaign, "There's no place like this." That campaign has really bolstered tourism within Ontario, which is 80% of our tourism market. The Tories would like to scrap that campaign. So where we've had success, where our partners are telling us that we're doing the right things, that we're moving in the right direction, the Tories have decided that that is not—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Ted Arnott: The minister is completely out of touch. Yesterday, in reply to the member for Simcoe North, the minister said that the opposition voted against the government's budget. To that, I say it's our job to oppose your broken promises, your high taxes, your out-of-control spending, your questionable priorities, your slush funds and your cuts to the Ministry of Tourism.

It's unfortunate that some Liberal MPPs whose ridings are dependent on tourism are apparently not even speaking up to support it. For example, a quick search of Hansard shows that the member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan hasn't even mentioned the word "tourism" in this House in the past year. When will this minister start listening to NOTO, to the city of North Bay, to the tourism industry which has expressed their support for this initiative, and to anyone outside of the Premier's office?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: We are listening to our partners in tourism, in all the regions across Ontario. Ontario is a wonderful, four-season destination for tourism.

The member fails to mention that last fall we had an economic stimulus package from the Minister of Finance, a \$30-million injection into tourism. That party—those parties—voted against it. In our budget bill—again, \$92 million over the next five years in tax measures, in initiatives to be able to help the tourism sector: That party voted against it.

What we are doing is making sure that we have a comprehensive strategy working in lockstep with our partners in tourism to make sure that the tourism sector is strong, viable, and sustainable, today and well into the future.

CHILD CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Today the Canadian Labour Congress released a

report card to rate federal and provincial progress on quality, affordable, accessible child care. How does the Deputy Premier explain the McGuinty government's D grade for child care, the second-poorest rating in all of Canada?

Hon. George Smitherman: I do think that the rating will provide interesting analyses for individuals, but I think everybody would agree that if the federal New Democrats had not killed a government in Ottawa that believed in national child care, all provinces would have been substantially advanced. We always find it passing strange that the party in the Legislature here can conjure up such a sense of excitement about daycare, but when there was an opportunity to build on the strength of national programs and to create a national child care program, they decided that their political interests were more important, that it was more important to get Olivia Chow into the House of Commons than it was for the people of Canada to have a national child care plan.

Notwithstanding that blow, we've created 22,000 additional quality spaces. We think it's important that we continue to build on these sorts of capacities. It would be nice if their actions met their words.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Deputy Premier would know very well that the only reason there was a child care plan for the federal Liberals was because Jack Layton put it there. The reality is that the federal Liberals are propping up a government that refuses to fund child care. What's his excuse for that?

The reality, and every child care advocate knows it, is that 75% of mothers are in the workforce right now, but there are only enough regulated spaces for about 12% of children in Ontario.

The McGuinty government is advertising spaces right now—they're sending out flyers with spaces and subsidies being advertised—yet everyone knows that the waiting list for those subsidies and spaces is about one to two years. I have to ask the government, why such poor grades and why the false advertising in terms of subsidy availability?

Hon. George Smitherman: I want to thank the honourable member for her acknowledgment about the expansion of child care programs that is ongoing in Ontario, a part of 22,000 new spaces that are being built, 2,090 of them in the communities of Hamilton and Niagara, where the member comes from.

But I found it curious that the honourable member, who claimed credit for Jack Layton, then went on to basically acknowledge the story that, after he pushed for it, he decided to take the actions to kill it. We know that those party members sign a joint federal and provincial card. Why is it that they bring this tone to the Legislature of Ontario, but when they stand up in the House of Commons, they act to kill national child care? This is the legacy of that party. Notwithstanding that, we've been working to enhance the capacity for Ontarians to access these crucial services.

We're proud of the progress that we've made. We acknowledge that there are opportunities to continue to

make improvements. It would be nice if their actions were the same as their words.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Bob Delaney: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Ontario's climate change plan includes a wide array of initiatives, including the phasing out of coal-fired generation and developing renewable sources of energy, as well as investing in public transit. Trees are also an important component as forests are home to a wide range of biodiversity. Planting trees can assist us in mitigating the effects of climate change.

Having large forested areas and planting trees throughout the province is vital to the health of Ontarians. In southern Ontario, forested areas can be hard to come by due to the lack of foresight in past development practices. To the minister: How does the government's plan to fight climate change address the importance of planting more trees in southern Ontario?

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield: I thank the member for the question. We have a very aggressive program in place to plant 50 million trees by 2020. I think it's difficult at times to recognize exactly what that might mean, but by 2054 it would mean that the carbon dioxide in the air would be reduced by 172 million car trips between Toronto and Barrie.

I sent a note to every member of this House to help them get involved in Trees Ontario planting and the rural Ontario tree program through the Ontario stewardship program. I encourage each and every one of them to help make a difference as we move forward with this very aggressive tree-planting program. You're right: It can make a difference for the air we breathe, a habitat for a species that might be at risk, and also provide the shade and the energy savings for our homes. I encourage everyone to get involved. You can go to the Ontario "Plant a Tree" website..

Mr. Bob Delaney: The minister mentioned trees being planted in rural regions of southern Ontario, which is great, but I need to ask about urban areas. Urban areas are indeed hot spots for greenhouse gas emissions. This makes cities more susceptible to smog and other pollutants, and this is particularly evident now as the hot weather approaches. Many Ontarians living in urban environments feel that the green space in cities is hard to find. Would the minister describe any initiatives that the ministry has outlined and whether they specifically target urban centres?

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Hon. Donna H. Cansfield: Absolutely. We have Trees Ontario in the rural, and we have Evergreen in the urban. We plan to plant 100,000 trees in 2008-09, and, of course, involving the community. You can get hold of Evergreen, and they will help you in terms of planting some of those trees.

Without question, we know that if we are to make a difference, each of us has to take some responsibility. Encouraging changing, for example, the concrete jungles

that we have around some of our schools and ensuring that they become more natural landscape, and going back to our Carolinian forest and planting native trees, can make a huge difference. What we're doing is encouraging everyone to get involved. So in rural Ontario, it's Trees Ontario; in urban Ontario, it's Evergreen. I ask each and every one of you to do your part to make Ontario a little greener in the future than it was in the past.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): New question? The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question was to go to the Minister of Small Business, but after watching the behaviour of the other side today, I choose not to ask a question of this House. There will be no intelligent response.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. In the ongoing negotiation with the OMA, will the minister agree to support a 100% salaried model for physicians working in community health centres and aboriginal health access centres so that Ontarians' access to community-based primary care is not undermined?

Hon. George Smitherman: I think it would be highly suspect for me to be leading negotiations with the Ontario Medical Association from the floor of the Legislature. As I had a chance in the estimates committee to identify to the honourable member, we're very proud of the expansion that we've made of community-based models and interdisciplinary approaches, which sees Ontario leading in the reform of primary care delivery across the country.

On the specific matter at hand, it would be inappropriate to comment further, given that we are in negotiations at present with the Ontario Medical Association.

M^{me} France Gélinas: The minister knows that CHCs and AHACs are concerned. CHC and AHAC physicians deliver some of the most complex and demanding primary care to the most vulnerable populations and patients. The incentive introduced in the 2004 OMA agreement is tearing the CHC and AHACs health care teams apart and eroding the collaborative care that they deliver.

An independent OMA poll survey showed that 98% of CHC and AHAC physicians want to be paid on salary. In the ongoing negotiations between the OMA and the Ministry of Health, the physicians from CHCs and AHACs are asking for your support. Will you support a 100% salaried model for physicians?

Hon. George Smitherman: I understand where the honourable member is coming from, and I think the principles are very good. We had a good exchange on this matter in the estimates process, but I don't think it really is appropriate for me to be taking an issue with respect to something that is being negotiated in the con-

text of our ongoing discussions with the Ontario Medical Association.

Of course, they're part of a section within the Ontario Medical Association. They've been making their views known as well to the OMA side in these discussions. I think we have a really fantastic group from both sides who are working on an agreement which can build on the progress that we made in the last agreement, which resulted in 650,000 more Ontarians enjoying access to family health care. We'll look for progress to occur at the table but not speak more specifically to any matter that is currently a subject of negotiation.

TOURISM

Mr. Phil McNeely: Recently, the state of Canada's tourism industry has been featured in headlines on a national scale. With gas prices soaring, the parity of the US and Canadian dollar, and confusion regarding identification and security requirements for crossing the border between Canada and the United States, it seems that the tourism industry is entering into a summer of economic uncertainty. I know that in Ottawa, tourism is a strong economic contributor during this time of year.

To the Minister of Tourism: How is the McGuinty government working with our partners in the tourism industry to ensure that the upcoming summer months are prosperous?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I want to thank the member for Ottawa–Orléans. He's quite right, as usual: The issues facing the tourism industry are apparent across the country, not only here in Ontario.

The McGuinty government recognizes that this industry is such a strong economic driver in so many areas across our province. That's why we're implementing a long-term strategy to address these challenges. In 2007, we announced \$30 million in funding to enhance our successful marketing and promotional campaigns, like the "There's no place like this" campaign. Just weeks ago, we voted to approve a budget that is going to provide investments and tax measures totalling \$92 million to the tourism sector over the next five years. These investments are a vital step in accessing Ontario's share of what is a huge global tourism market.

Mr. Phil McNeely: The government has made investments in the tourism sector that will help promote Ontario and even address the issue of dwindling visitors from the US.

Minister, you made mention of Ontario's current marketing campaign. Recently, the Leader of the Opposition said that this campaign is a waste of money and that it's time for the McGuinty government to stop "misusing taxpayers' money for feel-good ads that don't fill a single motel bed or put a bum in a theatre seat anywhere."

I wonder if the minister would tell us if there's any reason to believe that these ads are making a difference in Ontario's tourism numbers.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: They are make a huge difference. The "There's no place like this" ad campaign,

which was launched in March through June 2007 to have Ontarians travel within Ontario—we just got the numbers back from Statistics Canada. In their report, they said that Ontario saw an increase in domestic travel of 5% over that period. That means 21 million visits. Also, Ontarians are spending more money within the province. We saw an increase in that period of 3.7% over the previous year. That's \$2.3 billion to our economy. And from April to June 2007, Ontarians made more overnight trips—an increase of 6.2%—and they spent \$1.4 billion on those trips. That is a great success.

PESTICIDES

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is to the Minister of the Environment. It has to do with Bill 64, a bill that makes for good headlines but is not science-based. On Monday, during committee meetings on this bill, we heard presentations claiming that products like 2,4-D are harmful. Government members opposite agreed. It's interesting that over one year ago, Industry Task Force II wrote to your ministry asking if the province took issue with 2,4-D. Your own ministry responded by saying that the decisions on this matter remain with the federal Pest Management Regulatory Agency. This government's very own pesticide advisory committee also responded by saying that there was no need for additional restrictions on this product.

Minister, over the course of a year, who have you spoken to who has convinced you that you should abandoned science-based risk assessment and risk management protocol in this matter?

Hon. John Gerretsen: First of all, I look forward to that party's voting in favour of Bill 64, because it's all about unacceptable health risks to children. That's what the bill is really all about. We want to make sure that those children who play in their front yards, who play in their backyards, at the playgrounds and in parks etc., are not subject to an unacceptable risk. That's what it's all about.

As the member well knows, at the same time that we came out with the bill, we came out with about 80 different ingredients and about 300 different products, which are on a list right now and are going to be looked at. We're going to have consultation on this to determine exactly what should be in the regulations. It may very well be that some of the products and ingredients that are listed there may be taken off or put on the list, but I can assure you that the entire bill and the entire regulatory process will be science-based.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I've been watching very closely to make sure that it is science-based. On Monday, in committee, I asked your members if the Ontario Pesticides Advisory Committee, OPAC, had been consulted on the drafting of the legislation. One of your colleagues said that she couldn't answer the question, but a few minutes later, your own parliamentary assistant said, "My understanding is, the group was consulted with three times during the preparation of the proposed bill."

Given that your own parliamentary assistant couldn't confirm whether or not OPAC had been consulted, why didn't you call on OPAC to testify, or are you choosing to ignore the scientific evidence that OPAC has suggested? I have their letter right here for you.

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Hon. John Gerretsen: I can tell you that I've met with the chair of the committee. We intend to involve the committee, through its regulatory process, entirely. We have great faith in the pesticides committee that's been set up. I can assure you that the work that will be done by the committee and the ministry with respect to the 80 different ingredients and the 300 different products that are out there right now in the regulatory framework of things will be based on a scientific basis. We want to make sure that at the end of the day we have a piece of legislation and we have protection for children out there to a much greater extent than currently exists. We believe in what we're doing, and we look forward to the support of both that party and the third party in the passage of this bill as soon as possible.

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, you will know that there are a number of communities where people are having to undergo life-sustaining treatment such as dialysis, radiation therapy or chemotherapy. One such community is Hearst. We have people who are having to travel three times per week to get dialysis services because it's not offered in their home community.

My question to you is simply this: Are you prepared to work with myself, Hôpital Notre-Dame and others to find a way to allow the northern travel grant to pay somebody travelling for these types of treatments when they're just under the 100-kilometre limit that's set out currently in regulation?

Hon. George Smitherman: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I'll address two parts of it, both chronic kidney disease and also the northern health travel grant.

Just last year, we made very substantive improvements to the northern health travel grant, extending by \$10 million or \$15 million a year the support that's on offer to residents of northern Ontario. We know that it is a very vital lifeline. I'll look at the very specific question that the honourable member asked.

In addition, I want the honourable member to know that under active development at the moment is a chronic kidney disease initiative which also ought to enhance our capacity to provide nocturnal dialysis, as one example, right in the home community. This is something the honourable member from Sudbury has been championing very vigorously, amongst others, and I hope that the combination of these two efforts might allow us to make some progress.

We can understand that it's a big hardship for people to have to make that trip, and I'll try to work with the honourable member to make improvements.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I recognize the work we're doing in trying to bring dialysis services to communities. In fact, Hôpital Notre-Dame, the mayor of Hearst, Roger Sigouin, myself and others have been working towards that in co-operation with the LHIN and the Ministry of Health. But the specific problem is that until we get there, we've got people who have to travel—and it happens to be that Hearst, like other communities, is just under the 100-kilometre number that you need to qualify for a travel grant. In the case of Hearst, they're 98 kilometres, but because they're 98 kilometres, the individuals who have to travel to Kapuskasing for dialysis treatment can't get their travel grants approved.

So I ask again—and I think I got a partial answer earlier: Will you work with us to ensure that we can get these patients to qualify for the travel grant in those types of situations?

Hon. George Smitherman: I think it's important that I acknowledge the issue but not make up policy on the fly. If the 100 number is reduced to 95, then someone who's at 93 asks, "Why not 90?" I think that any time you have a number, it's going to create some difficulties.

But I understand the matter at hand. It's a substantive matter for those individuals who, three, four times a week, are in need of these services. That's disruptive enough when it's in your local community, much less that you have to make the distance. That's why we're opening more satellite dialysis and looking at nocturnal options.

I will take a look at the underlying issue of the northern health travel grant and endeavour to get back to not just this member but all members who represent northern Ontario.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: My question is to the Minister of Labour. Every year, about a quarter of a million workers are injured in this province. These hard-working Ontarians are fathers, mothers, uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters and sons and daughters who deserve to go home safe and sound to their families at the end of each shift. Minister, can you tell us about what our government is doing to improve the health and safety of workers not only in my riding of Scarborough–Rouge River but across the entire province?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'd like to thank the member for Scarborough–Rouge River for his work with injured workers in his community. I know how passionately he feels about injured workers in his community and across the province.

Yes, indeed, yesterday I had the privilege of announcing our Safe at Work Ontario plan, which is our plan to enforce the Occupational Health and Safety Act. This plan builds on what was a very successful four-year strategy brought in by this government to target the bad actors in workplace health and safety as best we could, and it did have good results. We saw a 20% reduction in workplace injuries—significant. That's 50,000 people,

50,000 families, that did not have to suffer the pain and suffering of a workplace injury. That's \$5 billion in costs that our business community did not have to incur. That's significant. It's great success, but we've built on that success.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I want to thank the minister for that information and to commend the Ministry of Labour for the work they're doing to ensure that Ontario workers are safe at work. Minister, can you tell us more about this new program and what the ministry is doing to build a strong health and safety culture throughout Ontario's workplaces?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I was honoured yesterday to be able to announce our safe-at-work strategy. This strategy focuses on workplaces with higher-than-average lost-time injury rates and claim costs, but it focuses on a number of other items as well, which is very, very important, because we listened to our stakeholders—our employer stakeholders, our labour stakeholders and advocates for injured workers. We listened very carefully to what they had to say, and they wanted us to broaden the factors that we take into consideration when we target those workplaces.

We're considering the history of compliance with health and safety regulations. We're considering hazards inherent to the work itself. We're considering the length of time businesses have been operating. We're considering the size of the businesses. We're considering the incidents, such as critical or fatal injuries, and I know that this is very important to all of us here in this Legislature. We're considering the presence of—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is for the Deputy Premier. This year's Ontario budget noted, "The government will be developing a comprehensive mental health and addictions strategy," but did not mention any timelines or any funding for it. I'm disappointed to see that nothing seems to have been happening today. Deputy Premier, can you please advise us when you intend to start developing a comprehensive mental health and addiction strategy for Ontario?

Hon. George Smitherman: If the honourable member wants to be disappointed, she should look at the history of her party with respect to helping people with mental illness in the province of Ontario. Including during the time when the predecessor member from her very riding was the Minister of Finance, including at the time when the deputy leader of their party was the Minister of Health, community-based mental health services in Ontario received not one single penny for growth.

In the time since our government has come to office, we've increased the support by tens of millions of dollars. She talks about addiction; she misses that two days ago in Ottawa we announced the expansion of youth treatment drug capacity, and more announcements are

forthcoming. If the honourable member wants to come and join in the debate at estimates, I'll be very happy to give her much more information about what we've done and about what she didn't do.

PETITIONS

LORD'S PRAYER

Mr. Frank Klees: I want to present a petition that bears the names of more than 2,500 members of the Greek Orthodox community across Ontario. They were collected and sent to me by His Eminence Metropolitan Archbishop Sotirios, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in Canada. It reads as follows:

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty has called on the Parliament of Ontario to consider removing the Lord's Prayer from its daily proceedings; and

"Whereas the Lord's Prayer has been an integral part of our parliamentary heritage that was first established in 1793 under Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe; and

"Whereas the Lord's Prayer is today a significant part of the religious heritage of millions of Ontarians of culturally diverse backgrounds;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to continue its long-standing practice of using the Lord's Prayer as part of its daily proceedings."

I'm pleased to affix my signature to this petition, and we trust that the Legislature will do as petitioned.

1150

HOSPITAL SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have a petition that goes as follows:

"Whereas the government-appointed supervisor of the Huronia District Hospital (HDH) has recommended a merger of HDH with the Penetanguishene General Hospital (PGH);

"Whereas the supervisor recommended changes to the governance of the hospital to eliminate community memberships and the democratic selection and governance of the hospital board and directors based on an ideology and not on the wishes of the community;

"Whereas the supervisor has also recommended the splitting up and divestment of the mental health centre in Penetanguishene, creating uncertainty in the future of mental health beds and services; and

"Whereas hospital mergers and restructuring under the local health integration network can result in a loss in the total number of hospital beds and services provided to a community...."

They ask the assembly,

"Protect the current levels of beds and services at all the sites in Midland and Penetanguishene; and

"Protect the community memberships and the democratic governance at the new hospital created by the merger of HDH and PGH."

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it with page Ellen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Mr. Jeff Leal: I have a petition today—literally hundreds of names.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the current Liberal government is proposing to eliminate the Lord's Prayer from its place at the beginning of daily proceedings in the Ontario Legislature; and

"Whereas the recitation of the Lord's Prayer has opened the Legislature every day since the 19th century; and

"Whereas the Lord's Prayer's message of forgiveness and the avoidance of evil is universal to the human condition; it is a valuable guide and lesson for a chamber that is too often an arena of conflict; and

"Whereas recognizing the diversity of the people of Ontario should be an inclusive process, not one which excludes traditions such as the Lord's Prayer;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to preserve the daily recitation of the Lord's Prayer by the Speaker in the Legislature."

LORD'S PRAYER

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I'm pleased to present a petition from the Polish community at home given to me by Dr. Andrew W. Caruk.

"Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty has called on the Ontario Legislature to consider removing the Lord's Prayer from its daily proceedings; and

"Whereas the Lord's Prayer has been an integral part of our parliamentary heritage that was first established in 1793 under Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe; and

"Whereas the Lord's Prayer is today a significant part of the religious heritage of millions of Ontarians of culturally diverse backgrounds;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to continue its long-standing practice of using the Lord's Prayer as part of its daily proceedings."

I'm pleased to sign this petition along with the 300 others.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. I thank many of the staff at Credit Valley Hospital for having sent it to me. It reads as follows:

"Whereas wait times for access to surgical procedures in the western GTA area served by the Mississauga Halton LHIN are growing despite the vigorous capital

project activity at the hospitals within the Mississauga Halton LHIN boundaries; and

“Whereas ‘day surgery’ procedures could be performed in an off-site facility, thus greatly increasing the ability of surgeons to perform more procedures, alleviating wait times for patients, and freeing up operating theatre space in hospitals for more complex procedures that may require post-operative intensive care unit support and a longer length of stay in hospital;

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

“That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care allocate funds in its 2008-09 capital budget to begin planning and construction of an ambulatory surgery centre located in western Mississauga to serve the Mississauga-Halton area and enable greater access to ‘day surgery’ procedures that comprise about four fifths of all surgical procedures performed.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this petition and to ask page Taylor to carry it for me.

LORD’S PRAYER

Mr. Jim Wilson: “Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty has called on the Ontario Legislature to consider removing the Lord’s Prayer from its daily proceedings; and

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer has been an integral part of our parliamentary heritage that was first established in 1793 under Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe; and

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer is today a significant part of the religious heritage of millions of Ontarians of culturally diverse backgrounds;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to continue its long-standing practice of using the Lord’s Prayer as part of its daily proceedings.”

I agree with this petition and I’ve signed it.

HARBORD COLLEGIATE

Mr. Rosario Marchese: “Whereas the Toronto District School Board has decided to close the MID program at Harbord Collegiate and relocate the students outside of their community; and

“Whereas the students have benefited greatly from the program and the involvement in their community;

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

“That the Minister of Education intercede on behalf of the MID students at Harbord Collegiate to keep the program open.”

I support this petition.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Joe Dickson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Central East Local Health Integration Network ... board of directors has approved the Rouge Valley Health System’s deficit elimination plan.... ; and

“Whereas, despite the significant expansion of the Ajax-Pickering hospital, the largest in its 53-year history, a project that could reach \$100 million, of which 90% is funded by the Ontario government, this plan now calls for the ill-advised transfer of 20 mental health unit beds from Ajax-Pickering hospital to the Centenary health centre in Scarborough; and

“Whereas one of the factors for the successful treatment of patients in the mental health unit is support from family and friends, and the distance to Centenary health centre would negatively impact on the quality of care for residents of Ajax and Pickering; and

“Whereas it is also imperative for Rouge Valley Health System to balance its budget, eliminate its deficit and debt and realize the benefits of additional Ontario government funding;

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

“That the Rouge Valley Health System continue to provide the current level of service to our Ajax-Pickering hospital, which now serves the fastest-growing communities of west Durham; and

“That the Ajax-Pickering hospital retain the badly needed 20-bed mental health unit.”

I shall affix my signature to this and pass it to Ellen.

LORD’S PRAYER

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the current Liberal government is proposing to eliminate the Lord’s Prayer from its place at the beginning of daily proceedings in the Legislature.... ;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to preserve the daily recitation of the Lord’s Prayer by the Speaker in the Legislature.”

I agree with this petition. I affix my name thereto and give it to page Alie.

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr. Mike Colle: I have a much shorter petition here from Sol Mednick and the members of the Forest Hill Lions Club in support of animal protection. It says:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act has not been updated since 1919;

“Whereas Bill 50 would require all veterinarians to report suspected abuse and neglect, protecting veterinarians from liability;

“Whereas it would allow the OSPCA to inspect and investigate places where animals are kept;

"Whereas the bill would prohibit the training of animals to fight;

"Whereas Bill 50 would allow the OSPCA to inspect roadside zoos;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 50, entitled the Provincial Animal Welfare Act, 2008, to protect our animal friends."

I support this petition and give it to page Aaron.

LORD'S PRAYER

Mr. Norm Miller: I have hundreds of petitions here from the Powassan and Nipissing area to preserve the Lord's Prayer. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty has called on the Ontario Legislature to consider removing the Lord's Prayer from its daily proceedings; and

"Whereas the recitation of the Lord's Prayer has opened the Legislature every day since the 19th century; and

"Whereas the Lord's Prayer's message is one of forgiveness, of providing for those in need of their 'daily bread' and of preserving us from the evils we may fall into; it is a valuable guide and lesson for a chamber that is too often an arena of conflict; and

"Whereas recognizing the diversity of the people of Ontario should be an inclusive process, not one which excludes traditions such as the Lord's Prayer;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to preserve the daily recitation of the Lord's Prayer by the Speaker in the Legislature."

I support this petition.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have another petition, signed by many people in my neighbourhood in western Mississauga, in support of the western Mississauga ambulatory surgery centre. It reads:

"Whereas wait times for access to surgical procedures in the western GTA area served by the Mississauga Halton LHIN are growing despite the vigorous capital project activity at the hospitals within the Mississauga Halton LHIN boundaries; and

"Whereas 'day surgery' procedures could be performed in an off-site facility, thus greatly increasing the ability of surgeons to perform more procedures, alleviating wait times for patients, and freeing up operating theatre space in hospitals for more complex procedures that may require post-operative intensive care unit support and a longer length of stay in hospital;

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

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care allocate funds in its 2008-09 capital budget to begin planning and construction of an ambulatory surgery centre located in western Mississauga to serve the Mississauga-

Halton area and enable greater access to 'day surgery' procedures that comprise about four fifths of all surgical procedures performed."

I am pleased to sign and support this petition, and to again ask page Megan to carry it for me.

1200

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms. Sylvia Jones: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas many young people with developmental special needs have no meaningful social, recreational or vocational opportunities after high school; and

"Whereas many of these young people have no real options for living independently in the community; and

"Whereas current supports in place are insufficient to meet the needs of these young people;

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

"That the McGuinty government allocate an appropriate level of funding to advance a transformation agenda of individualized funding for adults with developmental special needs in the province of Ontario to allow them to live with dignity and to reach their full potential as members of our communities."

I fully support this petition.

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr. Reza Moridi: "Support Bill 50, the Provincial Animal Welfare Act

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act has not been updated since 1919;

"Whereas Bill 50 would require all veterinarians to report suspected abuse and neglect, protecting veterinarians from liability;

"Whereas it would allow the OSPCA to inspect and investigate places where animals are kept;

"Whereas the bill would prohibit the training of animals to fight;

"Whereas Bill 50 would allow the OSPCA to inspect roadside zoos;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 50, entitled the Provincial Animal Welfare Act, 2008, to protect our animal friends."

I sign this petition and pass it on to page Taylor.

LORD'S PRAYER

Mr. Tim Hudak: In the interests of time, I'll be brief. I want to present a petition to preserve the traditional Lord's Prayer in the Legislature, sponsored by St. Ann's parish in Fenwick. It says:

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to continue its long-standing practice using the Lord’s Prayer as part of its daily proceedings.”

I affix my signature in support.

LORD’S PRAYER

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: This is a petition that thousands of Nepean–Carletonites have signed, and I have 503 total signatures again today.

“Whereas the” Premier “has called on the Ontario Legislature to consider removing the Lord’s Prayer from its daily proceedings;

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer has been an integral part of our parliamentary heritage that was first established in 1793 under Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe;

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer is today a significant part of the religious heritage of millions of Ontarians of culturally diverse backgrounds;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to continue its long-standing practice of using the Lord’s Prayer as part of its daily proceedings.”

I affix my signature because I am wholly in support of this petition.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. I’d like to seek unanimous consent to extend the time for petitions three extra minutes so as to allow everyone to present their petitions today.

Interjections: Agreed.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Can the Speaker say no? Member from Oakville.

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I’ve got a petition in support of Bill 50, the Provincial Animal Welfare Act.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act has not been updated since 1919;

“Whereas Bill 50 would require all veterinarians to report suspected abuse and neglect, protecting veterinarians from liability;

“Whereas it would allow the OSPCA to inspect and investigate places where animals are kept;

“Whereas the bill would prohibit the training of animals to fight;

“Whereas Bill 50 would allow the OSPCA to inspect roadside zoos;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 50, entitled the Provincial Animal Welfare Act, 2008, to protect our animal friends.”

I agree with this and will be sending it down with page Alie.

LORD’S PRAYER

Ms. Laurie Scott: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the extension of the time.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the current Liberal government is proposing to eliminate the Lord’s Prayer from its place at the beginning of daily proceedings in the Ontario Legislature; and

“Whereas the recitation of the Lord’s Prayer has opened the Legislature every day since the 19th century; and

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer’s message is one of forgiveness, of providing for those in need of their ‘daily bread’ and of preserving us from the evils that we may fall into; it is a valuable guide and lesson for a chamber that is too often an arena for conflict; and

“Whereas recognizing the diversity of the people of Ontario should be an inclusive process, not one which excludes traditions such as the Lord’s Prayer;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to preserve the daily recitation of the Lord’s Prayer by the Speaker in the Legislature.”

This is signed by thousands of people from all the communities in my riding.

POPE JOHN PAUL II

Mr. Bob Delaney: Just to be a little different, I’m going to present this petition to the Parliament of Ontario, signed by a large number of people in Mississauga in support of an initiative by my colleague from Newmarket–Aurora. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the legacy of Pope John Paul II reflects his lifelong commitment to international understanding, peace and the defence of equality and human rights;

“Whereas his legacy has an all-embracing meaning that is particularly relevant to Canada’s multi-faith and multicultural traditions;

“Whereas, as one of the great spiritual leaders of contemporary times, Pope John Paul II visited Ontario during his pontificate of more than 25 years and, on his visits, was enthusiastically greeted by Ontario’s diverse religious and cultural communities;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to grant speedy passage into law of the private member’s bill An Act to proclaim Pope John Paul II Day.”

I’m pleased to sign this petition and to give it to page Damian to carry.

HUNTER SYNDROME

Mr. Tim Hudak: I’m pleased to present a petition signed by over 500 people in the Pelham community. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Andrew Lanese is a 10-year-old boy who suffers from MPS II, also known as Hunter syndrome,

which is an ultra-rare and life-threatening genetic disease. There is currently a drug called Elaprase that is designed to treat the underlying cause of Hunter syndrome by replacing the enzyme which is deficient or absent in people with Hunter syndrome. This is an enzyme replacement therapy (ERT) for the treatment of MPS II. There are currently many MPS II patients in the USA receiving and benefiting from Elaprase. Elaprase is not a cure for MPS II, but it provides physical benefits such as improved airway, increased energy, increased range of motion in joints and reduced liver and spleen size, just to name a few. Unfortunately, the annual cost of this drug is approximately \$500,000. Due to the huge cost, Andrew's family has no choice but to ask the province of Ontario to fund this drug for Andrew. Recently, Andrew and his family have been denied funding by the Ontario government to obtain this drug for Andrew, and therefore we are petitioning for the approval of funding of Elaprase for Andrew Lanese.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to act now to provide funding for Elaprase for Andrew Lanese."

In support, I affix my signature.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. The time for petitions has expired. This House stands recessed until 1 o'clock this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1207 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

DISABILITY BENEFITS

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Later this afternoon, I plan to introduce a private member's bill entitled the Social Assistance Statute Law Amendment Act (Registered Disability Savings Plans), 2008.

In July 2006, federal Minister of Finance Jim Flaherty appointed the Expert Panel on Financial Security for Children with Severe Disabilities. The panel submitted its report, entitled *A New Beginning*, in December 2006. The report provided 16 recommendations, one of which was the establishment of the RDSP, a plan to assist parents, grandparents and other family members to save for the long-term financial security of children with disabilities. The RDSP was subsequently introduced in the 2007 federal budget.

The panel also recommended that the provinces should exempt the RDSP in the calculation of disability benefits to make the RDSP a more effective saving mechanism. At present, the provincial governments of British Columbia and Newfoundland have taken that step. To date, Ontario has failed to follow up on the panel's recommendations.

If the RDSP is not exempted as an asset when determining a person's eligibility for disability benefits, the benefit amount decreases. This removes the incentive for parents to make the investment in their child's long-term financial security.

The purpose of my private member's bill is to implement the panel's recommendation for Ontario by removing the RDSP as an asset when calculating disability benefits. I encourage all members to support this legislation when we debate it.

CANADIAN CANCER SOCIETY

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Today is Cancer Care Ontario day at Queen's Park, and I rise to thank the Canadian Cancer Society for all they have done and continue to do, whether it is in cancer awareness education, fundraising for medical research or giving support to families and friends across Canada who are and have been affected by cancer. It is their mission to educate about cancer and enhance the quality of life for individuals living with the disease.

I am sure there is not a person in this Legislature who has not been touched by cancer in some way, which is an indication of how important the role of this organization is to Canadians. The volunteers and staff at the Canadian Cancer Society follow four important values: caring, courage, integrity and progressive. They show respect and empathy to all those affected by cancer; they have the courage every day to continue their mission to eradicate cancer; their organization is respected not only across Canada but worldwide for the work they do; and they have continued to progress as an organization with cutting-edge research, medicine and treatments.

I am honoured and privileged to stand today to speak in their support. We congratulate all the members who work at the Canadian Cancer Society for the job they do on behalf of all of us in this province.

PHILIPPINES INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. Peter Shurman: It gives me great pleasure to speak in the Legislature today to mark the 110th anniversary of Philippine independence. Today, as Filipinos around the world mark this auspicious occasion, we celebrate the contributions that Filipino Canadians have made and continue to make to the development and prosperity of Canada and of Ontario. Their courage and their entrepreneurship and vision have helped make Ontario the great province it is today.

I had the opportunity to attend the Filipino flag-raising both outside today and last weekend in Vaughan in my riding, and it gave me a true sense of how people from all over the world are drawn to Canada, and in particular to Ontario.

On a personal note, I have had the opportunity to meet a number of Filipino Canadians over the past few years, and I know we shouldn't generalize, but all the Filipinos I know are remarkable and tremendously compassionate individuals. They are the type of people we should want to welcome to Ontario with open arms.

The story of Filipino immigration is a quintessentially Canadian story of newcomers leaving their homes in search of a new life for themselves and their families.

Such determination embodies the spirit of individualism. It is that spirit that we celebrate in the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario. The values of our newcomers—hard work, individual integrity and achievement—are indeed the values of our party.

On behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, I wish all Filipino Canadians the very best. Mabuhay Philippines.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr. Rosario Marchese: For 33 years, part-time college teachers have been denied the right to organize and collectively bargain as full-time college instructors. It has been a right that has been denied for a long, long time. In fact, the International Labour Organization said a couple of years ago that McGuinty ought to give this right and that they deserve to have the right to bargain collectively. The Supreme Court of Canada ruled in the same manner.

I had presented Bill 13 twice here, urging the Liberals to give this right to part-time college instructors to organize and collectively bargain. It took two long years to get the government to finally bring in Bill 90, and they did so under relentless pressure from people like Roger Couvrette, who is the president of OPSECAAT, and OPSEU president Warren Thomas. We congratulate their work because, without that political lobbying from Roger Couvrette and so many others, this government simply would not have listened.

Unfortunately, they've introduced some other measure that is going to affect our workers. They have eliminated the "deemed" provision, which will effectively allow scabs to work in a strike-out situation. We think that's unfortunate, and we'll hear more from that in the hearings that will be happening over the summer.

PORTUGUESE CANADIAN COMMUNITY

Mr. Charles Sousa: I am pleased that June is Portuguese Heritage Month in Ontario. The Portuguese Canadian community is a vibrant community in Ontario and continues to make many significant contributions to our society. Portuguese Canadians have a rich history, language, culture and work ethic.

In fact one of the earliest discoverers of Canada, Gaspar Corte Real, was Portuguese. In the year 1500, he received a charter from King Manuel of Portugal to discover and claim jurisdiction over lands in the new world. He explored the northeast coast of Terra Nova, now known as Newfoundland, and then Conception Bay and Portugal Cove. He sailed up the coast and named it Labrador, which means "farmer" in Portuguese.

The year 2001 marked the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Portuguese explorers in Canada. For the past 500 years, people of Portuguese heritage have settled and made their homes in Canada. In June 2001, Ontario

proclaimed June 10 as Portugal Day and the month of June as Portuguese History and Heritage Month. This year's annual Portugal Day parade took place on June 8. The annual parade celebrates the strength, vitality and solidarity of the Portuguese community in Ontario.

Yesterday, we raised the Portuguese flag at Queen's Park. I'm sure I speak for everyone in this House when I say that we all appreciate the boundless pride that events such as this instill in the Portuguese community and the great benefits they bring to our province. I extend my sincere appreciation to all those whose vision and hard work make these celebrations possible, and I wish all Ontarians a happy Portugal Day.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I rise to make a very short statement today, purposely short, because I rise today to congratulate the Liberal government on an impressive feat. In four years, they have done the impossible: In a spectacular display of incompetence, the McGuinty government has doubled the manufacturing job losses that we witnessed during Bob Rae's reign of terror in the early 1990s—doubled the number of job losses.

Losses out of the NDP: 100,000. Losses out of the Liberals: 200,000. I never thought I would see the day. I never thought that this Minister of Economic Development would ever make Bob Rae look good. She's done the impossible; she made Bob Rae look good. Wow. Congratulations, Premier. Congratulations, Minister. You are now officially the worst economic leaders that this province has ever seen since the Great Depression.

MISSION LEGACY AWARD

Mr. Dave Levac: I wish to recognize in the House today the recipients of the Mission Legacy Award in Brantford. This prestigious award, established by Sisters of St. Joseph of Hamilton, pays tribute to the key individuals who, through their dedication and compassion, have contributed in an exceptional manner to the health care ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Hamilton; the St. Joseph's Lifecare Centre and Hospice in Brantford; and the St. Joseph's Health System and the St. Joseph's Resource Development System, joint organizations founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph.

1310

The Sisters of St. Joseph began its legacy in the 17th century in Le Puy, France, by Father Medaille and six women in reaction to the challenges of the gospel at the time. Their healing ministry included work in caring for the sick—working with them during plague outbreaks—the aged, the orphans and the imprisoned, instructing young women and ministering to the poor.

The recipients of the Mission Legacy Award continue to follow the beautiful tradition of the Sisters of St. Joseph by promoting and providing dignity and respect to the citizens of the riding of Brant in need. I wish to congratulate the exceptional individuals of this award,

not present here today, who serve as a leading example to all Ontarians. They are Bob and Jan Kennedy, Dr. Grant Honeyman, Dr. Jay Hill, Dr. Donald Swan, Father Emmanuel Demerah, J. Gordon McMillen, John Quinlan, Karl Kurtz, "Rocky" Rocheleau, Phyllis Rayner, Shirley Martin, Sister Anne Anderson, Sister Kathleen McKenna, Vince Bucci and Vyrnt Sisson. We thank them for their unselfish contributions to our community.

PLAY WORKS

Mrs. Linda Jeffrey: Last week I was invited to attend a presentation ceremony for the 2007 youth-friendly community recognition program, held by Play Works, the Ontario Partnership for Active Youth, which every year identifies and recognizes communities that are youth-friendly. Play Works began recognizing youth-friendly communities in 2005. Since that time, 25 communities in Ontario have received recognition.

This year, the city of Brampton, the city of Welland, the municipality of Port Hope, the town of Caledon and the town of Whitchurch-Stouffville were all welcomed into the select group of communities that have received the youth-friendly community recognition status. The Honourable Margaret Best, Minister of Health Promotion, was in attendance to present the plaques to each community. The city of Brampton representatives, including my former colleague city Councillor Sandra Hames, were in attendance, along with Donna-Lynn Rosa, Mary Held, Diane Butterworth, Andrew Stangherlin, Liz Van Eysinga and Tammy Reynolds.

It's my understanding that Play Works received over 440 applications for this recognition program. Five were chosen this year, exemplifying the best in communities who demonstrated leadership in creating new youth initiatives. Congratulations to those five communities who were identified as youth-friendly and to Play Works for their leadership in health promotion across Ontario.

VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARDS

Mr. Vic Dhillon: It is with great pride for the people in my riding that I rise today to tell the House about the Ontario Volunteer Service Awards and the recipients from my riding. With the awards being in their 23rd year, they are one way for the government to publicly thank the literally thousands of volunteers across Ontario for their tireless work and dedication to the community. These awards recognize youth who have volunteered for two or more years of continuous service to an organization, as well as adults who have put in five, 10, 20, 25, 30, 40, 60 and 60-plus years of continuous service.

I was quite proud to see that 33 of my constituents are recipients of a Volunteer Service Award from the province of Ontario. I would like to especially highlight the work of Eric Williams, who volunteers for Malton Black Development Association, and Joanne Watson and Margaret Collins from the 1st Brampton Trefoil Guild, who all received awards for 30 years of continuous service to their organizations.

The theme of this year's awards is Volunteers Build Communities. I think this is quite fitting, especially when you think of how volunteers build our communities from the ground up. They give their time and their energy to those around them. We need to recognize this and cultivate it so that others may emulate this in their actions. I congratulate my constituents and I say, keep up the good work.

REPORT, CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that today the Chief Electoral Officer tabled the following: the report on the 39th general election in the province of Ontario entitled Placing the Elector at the Centre of the Process, and the report on the provincial referendum on electoral system reform.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Mrs. Linda Jeffrey: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on General Government and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 69, An Act to protect children from second-hand tobacco smoke in motor vehicles by amending the Smoke-Free Ontario Act / Projet de loi 69, Loi modifiant la Loi favorisant un Ontario sans fumée pour protéger les enfants contre le tabagisme passif dans les véhicules automobiles.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT (REGISTERED DISABILITY SAVINGS PLANS), 2008 LOI DE 2008 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI A TRAIT À L'AIDE SOCIALE (RÉGIMES ENREGISTRÉS D'ÉPARGNE-INVALIDITÉ)

Ms. Jones moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 94, An Act to amend the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997 and the Ontario Works Act, 1997 to take into account funds held in or withdrawn from registered disability savings plans / Projet de loi 94,

Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur le Programme ontarien de soutien aux personnes handicapées et la Loi de 1997 sur le programme Ontario au travail pour tenir compte des fonds détenus dans des régimes enregistrés d'épargne-invalidité ou retirés de ceux-ci.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My bill would amend the Ontario Disability Support Program Act and the Ontario Works Act to exclude funds held in registered disability savings plans from the determination of assets. It also amends the acts to exclude funds withdrawn from a registered disability savings plan from the determination of income.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY
AMENDMENT ACT
(SCENTED PRODUCTS), 2008

LOI DE 2008 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LA SANTÉ ET LA SÉCURITÉ
AU TRAVAIL (PRODUITS PARFUMÉS)

Mr. Levac moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 95, An Act to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act with respect to scented products in the workplace / Projet de loi 95, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé et la sécurité au travail à l'égard des produits parfumés dans le lieu de travail.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Dave Levac: This bill, if passed, will require employers to prepare and review annually, in consultation with workers, written policies on the use of scented products in the workplace. It will also require that employers develop and maintain programs to implement the policies. As such, it encourages employers and employees to work out a fragrance strategy that promotes a safe and healthy workplace while recognizing people's desire to wear and use scented products, promoting workplace safety and personal freedoms at the same time.

REGISTERED RETIREMENT SAVINGS
PROTECTION ACT, 2008
LOI DE 2008 SUR LA PROTECTION
DES RÉGIMES ENREGISTRÉS D'ÉPARGNE
EN VUE DE LA RETRAITE

Mr. Leal moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 96, An Act respecting protection for registered retirement savings / Projet de loi 96, Loi visant à protéger les régimes d'épargne-retraite enregistrés.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Jeff Leal: The purpose of the bill is to protect registered retirement savings plans and registered retirement income funds as well as deferred profit-sharing plans from most creditors. Those plans, however, will still be subject to support orders enforced under the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996, and orders respecting the separation of property in family matters.

MOTIONS

CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

Hon. Michael Bryant: I seek unanimous consent to present a motion without notice regarding the Chief Electoral Officer.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Michael Bryant: I move that an humble address be presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council as follows:

"To the Honourable Lieutenant Governor in Council:

"We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, request the appointment of Greg Essensa as Chief Electoral Officer for the province of Ontario, as provided in section 4 of the Election Act, RSO 1990, c. E.6, to hold office under the terms and conditions of the said act,

"And that the address be engrossed and presented to the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor in Council by the Speaker."

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd just like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the committee who worked so diligently on this appointment: Michael Prue, John O'Toole, Greg Sorbara, and as well Nancy Marling from human resources. Thank you.

DEFERRED VOTES

PRAYER IN THE LEGISLATURE

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Bryant has moved that the Speaker commence each meeting day of the Assembly by reciting the Lord's Prayer, followed by another prayer, or the presentation of a verse or passage, or call for a moment of silent reflection, or any such other similar activity which, in the opinion of the Speaker, will serve to reflect over time the general demographic composition of this chamber and of the province of Ontario.

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

The division bells rang from 1323 to 1328.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those in favour of the motion will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Elliott, Christine	Prue, Michael
Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Qaadri, Shafiq
Arnott, Ted	Fonseca, Peter	Ramal, Khalil
Arthurs, Wayne	Hardeman, Ernie	Ramsay, David
Balkissoon, Bas	Hudak, Tim	Runciman, Robert W.
Bentley, Christopher	Jaczek, Helena	Sandals, Liz
Best, Margaret	Jeffrey, Linda	Savoline, Joyce
Bradley, James J.	Jones, Sylvia	Scott, Laurie
Broten, Laurel C.	Klees, Frank	Shurman, Peter
Bryant, Michael	Kular, Kuldeep	Smith, Monique
Cansfield, Donna H.	Kwinter, Monte	Smitherman, George
Chudleigh, Ted	Leal, Jeff	Sousa, Charles
Colle, Mike	Levac, Dave	Takhar, Harinder S.
Craitor, Kim	MacLeod, Lisa	Van Bommel, Maria
Delaney, Bob	Marchese, Rosario	Wilson, Jim
Dickson, Joe	McMeekin, Ted	Witmer, Elizabeth
DiNovo, Cheri	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dombrowsky, Leona	Miller, Norm	Zimmer, David
Duguid, Brad	Moridi, Reza	
Dunlop, Garfield	Phillips, Gerry	

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those opposed?

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 58; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): As we move on to a new set of prayers to open this House each day, I'd like to take this moment to express appreciation to a former member, Fred Young, who was the primary author of the members' invocation that we have recited in this House since 1969. It has served us well.

I want to take this opportunity as well to thank the committee: Garfield Dunlop, Cheri DiNovo and Bas Balkissoon. I want to thank Todd Decker, from the Clerk's office; Susan Sourial, a committee clerk; Larry Johnston and Carrie Hull, research officers; Sal Crisanti, research assistant from Research and Information Services; and Maggie Head and Ana Pontoni, from my office.

Most of all, I want to thank the citizens of Ontario. As a committee, we received over 11,000 e-mails and letters from citizens of Ontario, and there were well in excess of 25,000 petitions presented here as well. Thank you all very much.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

HANDGUN MANUFACTURERS' AND IMPORTERS' LIABILITY ACT, 2008 LOI DE 2008 SUR LA RESPONSABILITÉ DES FABRICANTS ET DES IMPORTATEURS D'ARMES DE POING

Mr. Flynn moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 82, An Act to make manufacturers and importers liable for harm caused by the unlawful use of handguns / *Projet de loi 82, Loi imputant aux fabricants et aux importateurs la responsabilité de toute atteinte causée par l'utilisation illégale d'armes de poing.*

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to rise today to introduce private member's Bill 82 for the consideration of the House. The reason for this is that the influence of handguns in our society, certainly in the city of Toronto and now creeping out into the suburbs and into many other urban areas in this province, is simply becoming an issue that needs to be dealt with in ways that we haven't dealt with it before.

It seems to me that we have a different approach to the ownership and use of handguns than our great neighbours to the south—two different societies, friendly to each other, but certainly the approach to handguns in the United States is much different than our approach here in Canada. Many of the handguns that are found in the commission of crimes by the police in our cities and by police services throughout the province are found to have originated in other countries, most specifically in the United States.

This bill would allow the victim of a violent crime that has been committed with a handgun to hold responsible the manufacturer of that handgun if he could prove that that manufacturer had been negligent in the manufacture, storage, transportation or security of that handgun.

The reason I'm bringing this forward is that many tragic incidents—any of you who read the newspapers today would have seen on the front page of the Toronto Sun two more young people shot—one in the chest, the other in both legs in Regent Park just yesterday, not very far from here. It seems to me that this is happening far too often, and we need to stem the flow of guns into this country.

There are a number of ways that we could do that. My first preference, obviously, would be a handgun ban. The federal government does not seem to be inclined at this point in time to bring in a handgun ban, so it's left to the provinces, the police services boards, and provincial Legislatures to bring forward ideas that may stem the spate of violent crime in the absence of a handgun ban.

I'm saying that, as a society and as a province, we need to look at where these handguns originate, where they come from, where they're made and how they're getting into this country. Somewhere along the line these guns are leaving the legal system of manufacturers, storage and ownership and are entering the illegal system. All illegal guns begin their life as legal guns. Criminals aren't out there making guns; they're acquiring these guns. They're acquiring them through the legal system; they're acquiring from the legal system. I'm saying that a person who is a victim of violent crime, somebody who has been hurt in the commission of a crime involving the use of a handgun or the threatened use of a handgun, should have the right to hold the manufacturer of that product responsible, should you be able to prove that in the handling of that product, that manufacturer has been negligent.

We have a growing approach to some of the more dangerous products in our society: It's called product stewardship. We do it from an environmental perspective. We do it with such things as toxins. We do it with a variety of things where you have a product that you know can cause harm to your society. What we are saying is that you expect the manufacturers, those that make a good living from the manufacture of those products, to be held to a much higher standard. What supporting Bill 82 would do is allow manufacturers to be held to that higher standard, and it would allow the victims to take action against those people to recover some costs, to recover some compensation for the often tragic circumstances that people find themselves in after having been the victim of a handgun crime.

I want today to read a quote I was able to get from a lady we've probably all heard of who was a victim of a drive-by shooting in Toronto not very long ago. Her name is Louise Russo. What she says is, "I fully support Kevin Flynn's private member's bill, the gun manufacturers' liability act. Too many innocent lives and the lives of their families have been scattered and destroyed by gun violence. No one but authorized personnel should be allowed to have a firearm."

She was an innocent victim, as I said, of gun violence. She was left paralyzed. This was a shooting that took place in 2003. I think it caught the attention of the entire city, to see somebody who I believe was just sitting in a restaurant, living her own life, and suddenly had her life changed by a group of individuals who had somehow found their way to own handguns, and were able to use those handguns to turn this lady's life on its head. At the end of the day, she had no recourse. She was doomed to a life of poverty, she was doomed to a life in a wheelchair, and simply had no recourse against the system that had allowed those handguns to fall into the wrong hands.

She goes on further to say, "This bill is an instrumental part of ensuring that the victims of handgun crimes can make manufacturers or importers"—and I should note here that when I talk about importers, I'm also talking about smugglers—"take responsibility if they are found to be negligent."

I was really pleased that Louise would step forward on this, because I know she's become a symbol of everything that is wrong with the use of handguns in our society. She's become a symbol of what can happen in a split second when we allow those people who own handguns or have acquired handguns, the criminal element in our society, to change somebody's life in the way that hers did.

1340

All types of firearms, obviously, can be legally possessed by residents in Canada under the terms and conditions that are set out by a variety of forms of legislation. Right now, there are over 600,000 legally registered, restricted and prohibited weapons in Canada. Many legal gun owners actually possess more than one gun.

In 2006, our Canadian police services reported there were over 8,000 victims of violent gun crime, ranging

from assault to robbery and homicide. That's a rate of almost one person per hour in Canada who is victimized by violent gun crime. What that says is that by the end of this debate on Bill 82, another Canadian will have been shot, another Canadian will perhaps have been paralyzed and another Canadian will have been touched in a tragic way by handgun use. On average, more than 1,200 Canadians are killed each and every year, and more than 1,000 are injured by firearms each year.

When you look at the Toronto area, and more specifically at the city of Toronto, one quarter of firearm-related victimizations occur right here in the city. A total of almost 2,000 people were the victims of a violent offence related to guns, and that's about one quarter of the national total. According to Stats Canada, in 2006, one quarter of all the firearm-related violent crimes in Canada occurred right here in the city of Toronto. Handguns accounted for 86% of all firearm homicides in Toronto in 2006, and Toronto has almost three times the national proportional rate of restricted and prohibited firearms.

What I'm saying is that these guns are being manufactured primarily in other countries. There's a use for handguns in Canada. I can think of three uses. I can think of sports shooting and target shooting; I have no problem with that. I can think of use by our police services; I certainly have no problem with that. I can think of a use by our armed services as well. There certainly is a use for weapons by our army, navy and air force. But what I don't see any use for is handguns proliferating on the streets of our cities and being used in the commission of crimes. We need to stem that flow. We need to find the people who are responsible for the manufacture of guns and we need to ensure that their products do not enter our province, that their products do not illegally find their way into the hands of people who want to use them with criminal intent. It has become far too common for guns to be used in the commission of a crime.

According to the Canadian Journal of Public Health, firearm deaths have now become the third-leading cause of death among young people between the ages of 15 and 24. Among 26 industrialized countries in the world, Canada ranks fifth in the rate of firearm deaths among children under the age of 14. That's not a high ranking you want; that's a ranking you want to be at the bottom of the pile on. In 2004-05, 49 Ontario children aged 10 to 14 required emergency department visits due to firearm injuries, and a rate of more than three youths per day are accused of a firearm-related offence.

We look at the United States, at the murder rate and the crime rate in some of the urban cities in the United States, and we say, "In the city of Toronto and in the province of Ontario, we do not want to become like that." What I'm saying is that unless we're able to stem the flow of guns into our society, we are going to become like that. I've heard the glib remarks that guns don't kill people; people kill people. I've heard that forever and ever, yet the deaths keep happening. The young people keep dying, the Louise Russos of the world keep getting put in tragic circumstances. It's something that I think

just has to end, and the way to end it is to go to the source of the problem.

I'm going to close by reading a quote from Bill Adair, executive director of the Canadian Paraplegic Association. He says:

"For too long, handgun manufacturers and distributors have hidden behind the fallacy that their product was merely for sport. In the meantime, they've saturated the streets with weapons that have been the cause of too many murders and too many spinal cord injuries. The economic and social cost to Ontario has been far too great and it has to stop.

"The Canadian Paraplegic Association of Ontario applauds Mr. Flynn and his private member's bill. We urge all members of the Legislature to support this bill and stop a direct cause of murders and spinal cord injuries in Ontario."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm pleased to rise this afternoon and speak on Bill 82, An Act to make manufacturers and importers liable for harm caused by the unlawful use of handguns. I wanted to read the explanatory note, which is very brief:

"The bill provides that when a person is injured or killed as a result of the actual or threatened unlawful use of a handgun, the person (or the personal representative) and his or her dependants are entitled to bring an action against the handgun's manufacturer or importer. The crown in right of Ontario is also entitled to bring an action against a manufacturer or importer of handguns to recover the cost of health care benefits caused or contributed to by the actual or threatened unlawful use of handguns."

I certainly can understand what the member from Oakville is getting at, and I applaud him for his efforts, but I have to tell you this is a bill that is very, very difficult to enforce. He mentioned earlier that guns don't kill people; people kill people. The reality is that there are a number of questions that I would have with this particular bill, and not only this particular bill—other weapons that people might use as well.

For example, when a gun is imported from, let's say, another nation—let's say it's from Africa or a European country or Asia, wherever the gun may come from—who will help the person who's been victimized? Who will help them with their legal costs? That's my first question. It could be absolutely impossible to even consider what the cost of that might be, to actually sue someone in another country who manufactured a gun, probably in good faith, and someone illegally imported it into our country, and someone shoots somebody, like in the case of Mrs. Russo, and in fact they've got a serious injury. Who's going to help them with the lawsuits? That's my first question, and I hope that when the member stands up later and responds, he can answer that.

I also have a question around the theft of guns. For example, he mentioned police and people who target-shoot and practice-shoot with handguns. So what hap-

pens if someone has a collection of guns that they use for target shooting, or someone might even acquire by illegal methods—whether it's theft or whatever—a police handgun, and they use that gun to hurt someone or to injure someone? Who will be responsible then? Obviously, the police are required to have guns. Does that mean that if a police gun gets stolen, someone will be able to sue the manufacturer of the handgun that was sold in good faith to the policing community? That's a question I would want to have asked as well.

The other thing that I think we should question here—and I wonder where we're going with this certain line of legislation—is other weapons. It's not only handguns that are killing people; it's not only handguns that are maiming people. We also have people who go at people with a baseball bat. Does that mean the next piece of legislation will sue the manufacturer of the baseball bat because they come forward, because that baseball bat has injured someone? Or someone with a kitchen knife: There have been many people stabbed over the years with a kitchen knife. Are we going to go down that path where, if you're a knife manufacturer and you manufacture knives so that people can use them for cutting bread and carving turkeys, the next thing you know, you're going to be sued because somebody got stabbed with one? That's a problem that I think we have to zero in on.

If the member wanted to really help Ontarians, right now we need about 1,000 new police officers in this province. That's what we require. The policing models of the police associations and the OPP, the Toronto Police Service, all these organizations, right now are about a thousand members short. What we have in front of us right now is \$156 million sitting in the hands of the Ontario government that the Ontario government can utilize. It's federal money transferred to the provincial government to actually hire and train more police officers. That's how we're going to eventually eliminate crime and gun violence: by having the resources in the hands of the people that know best, the police officers in our province.

1350

I would suggest that if there's one thing this government can do over the summer months—we're probably going to adjourn here in a few days—it's to push the Premier and the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services to hire those additional police officers who are required.

I know right now—I'm critic for community safety and correctional services—I hear from police officers on a daily basis, particularly the OPP, who are in my home riding of Simcoe North at the OPP general headquarters. They tell me, day in and day out, that they need about another 500 officers to fill the complement to properly police the province of Ontario.

I would encourage the member opposite from Oakville to zero in on that as opposed to trying to come up with this type of legislation that's going to be almost impossible to enforce and almost impossible for the in-

dividuals to pay for. He did mention poverty for some people—that's why we have the victims' justice fund. Why are we not capitalizing on that more often to help people like Mrs. Russo? If she's actually living in poverty, there's a fund there to help her along. That's what it was put aside for, so that when someone gets injured like Mrs. Russo did, there would be funds set aside so she could live her life better. That would be money through the victims' justice fund.

I appreciate this opportunity. I'll turn it over in a few minutes to Ms. Elliott to continue on.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I just want to compliment my colleague from Oakville for bringing forward this particular bill, An Act to make manufacturers and importers liable for harm caused by the unlawful use of handguns.

I wanted to speak to this bill for a particular reason. I'm very concerned about gun crime in the Toronto area, and especially gun crime in my riding of Scarborough—Rouge River. In 2004, before I got elected, I would say gun activity in my riding was rampant. It has dropped lately. I will continue to support and do anything possible to target handguns, because it is the underlying cause of all these problems that we're having.

The statistics today tell you that roughly 2,000 people were victims of violent offences related to gun crimes in just one year, in the year 2006. Handguns have accounted for 86% of all firearms homicides in the Toronto area in 2006. In my own riding, if I remember correctly, in 2004, handguns were responsible for well over a dozen incidents in my area.

It makes me very concerned that something has to be done. I have to say to the members here that in the 20 years that I've been in office, everyone has been talking about doing something about handguns. Handguns have been a problem. But we all seem to sit and wait for that perfect solution. I would say to you that I don't think the perfect solution is out there. What we need is incremental activity to stem this gun problem that we have that is growing in Toronto. It's growing in Ontario, and it's growing in Canada.

Just last month, the people in my community were shocked after a young man was gunned down in front of a high school in broad daylight. The Toronto Police Services had to lock down the two high schools in the area, and the entire community was under siege until they actually conducted their investigation. I don't think I want to promote this. I want to do something about it.

I have to say to you that this government is doing something, but our federal friends have to be at the table to support us to do something about handguns. We've been asking them to ban handguns. They don't really seem to get it. I hope we can continue to pressure them until they get it.

Another good example of work by our government is my colleague the member for Eglinton—Lawrence's recent private member's bill: If anyone is found with a handgun in their vehicle, we can seize their vehicle and take their driver's licence away and suspend it immediately. These are the kinds of incremental things we need

to do, and continue to do, until we stem gun crime activity in our community.

We have asked the federal government, and I think police forces around Ontario are saying to the government, that we need to have gun marking in Canada, where all manufactured guns have serial numbers and markings on the parts, so that when there is a problem, the police can trace a particular handgun to where it was manufactured, to who bought it and, if it was lost, to someone else. This would reduce the cost of investigation.

I am in favour of my colleague's bill and will be supporting it. I want to thank him again for taking this action in trying to stem handgun activity in this province.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I appreciate the opportunity to make a few comments with respect to the Handgun Manufacturers' and Importers' Liability Act. Let me say at the outset that the Progressive Conservative Party will not be supporting this bill, not because we condone gun violence and the needless deaths of our young people, but because this bill is simply not going to do anything in reality to deal with this. In fact, if you consider the ramifications of this bill, it could lead to some quite bizarre results. I would like to take a moment to explain why that is so.

Let's start with a few facts. For all intents and purposes, there is a handgun ban in Canada right now. Despite what the Liberal members are saying, despite the hue and cry about calling on the federal government to do something, there already is a handgun ban, except for people who are lawfully allowed to own handguns: members of our police services, our armed forces, and recreational shooters.

I note that in his correspondence with respect to the bill, the member from Oakville referenced a similar law that was passed by the city of New York in 2005. It would appear that the current bill has been modelled after the New York statute. I would say that the situation in the United States is vastly different from the situation we deal with here in Canada. So what we are really doing here is comparing apples and oranges.

If you read the resolution for the city of New York council, which passed this statute in 2005, there is a section that deals with legislative findings and intent. I'd like to quote from that briefly:

"In order to reduce gun-related crime, New York City has in the past two decades adopted a thorough background check and licensing scheme aimed at ensuring the responsible handling of firearms and the registration of all firearm owners in the city. Unfortunately, despite such efforts, the problem of gun crime persists at the alarming rate of approximately one firearm death per day. This fact is largely a result of the proliferation of illegal means of firearm procurement, such as unlicensed importation from other states with less restrictive gun laws, unregistered sales at trade shows and so-called 'straw purchases' in which authorized purchasers buy guns and provide them to unauthorized users, including minors and convicted felons."

The section goes on to state that if manufacturers follow appropriate procedures and practices, the illegal flow of firearms will be reduced and manufacturers will not be liable for damages. That is because the manufacturers will not have been negligent in the manufacture or handling of the handguns, which I think is what is reasonable under the circumstances—they will have taken reasonable precautions.

There is, however, no suggestion in the New York statute that a manufacturer could be responsible for damages relating to illegal use of a gun by someone for whom they're not responsible. That, I believe, is a reasonable position to take.

What we have in the present situation is confusion between the negligent use of a gun—that is, doing something you shouldn't have done or failing to do what you ought to have done—and an actual illegal activity, which is knowingly doing something you shouldn't have done, such as smuggling guns and using them improperly.

What we have in this piece of legislation is an amalgamation of the two, with a result that simply doesn't make sense.

The member already knows that here in Canada we have a handgun ban, for all intents and purposes. We have very strict rules around the manufacture and distribution of guns. So the possibility of negligence in the manufacture of guns here simply doesn't exist. The statute that the member is proposing goes on to say that it's not only negligence with respect to the distribution and importation of guns, it also deals with the design and manufacturing. That is not likely to happen.

1400

What the member is really trying to get at here is to take a product that's actually legal—because the manufacture of guns is legal—and make it into an illegal product. So if it's used for an illegal purpose, the manufacture is going to be responsible, no matter how it's used. That simply can't exist. It doesn't make any sense.

It's very similar to the situation that my colleague the member for Simcoe North mentioned, which indicated that you can't hold a knife manufacturer responsible if it's used in the commission of a crime, or a baseball bat. I would say, very similarly, you can't hold General Motors responsible if someone takes a product like a car, goes out and gets drunk and kills somebody with it. You cannot possibly expect General Motors to be responsible for that. That, in effect, is what the member is proposing with this bill, however, and that is why we're opposing it.

We are all in favour of any reasonable proposal coming forward that's actually going to do something to prevent gun violence. But, yet again, what we have from the Liberals is something that's this wide and about this deep, something that really doesn't have any substance about it but appears to be doing a great deal about it. I propose that the Liberal member should go back and actually try and do something instead of blaming others with respect to this.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I'm delighted to stand up to congratulate my colleague the member for Oakville for

bringing such an important issue to this House: Bill 82, An Act to make manufacturers and importers liable for harm caused by the unlawful use of handguns. I've listened to many speakers on this side of the House who spoke before me. They spoke about the protection and safety of our communities in Ontario. As the member for Oakville mentioned, the federal government didn't come to the table, and is not coming to the table, to create safety across this nation.

It's very important to ban handguns and make this province very safe. We hear a lot on the radio, TV, and from reading the newspaper on a daily basis, about how many people get killed or injured during their activities by handguns, by people who are shooting while driving cars, or attacking restaurants, coffee shops or variety stores—many different issues.

I think it's our obligation and duty as elected officials to create laws and mechanisms to create safety for the people who live in this province of Ontario, especially when we read so many different statistics. More than 1,200 people across Canada die on a yearly basis from shootings by lawful guns. Also, more than 1,000 get injured. Some of them cannot work again and cannot walk again. Many different injuries happen on a daily basis across Canada. There's also a big percentage here in Ontario, in our big cities and our small cities.

Not long ago, my colleague from Eglinton-Lawrence brought a bill to make sure that people who get caught by the police with a gun in their car will have their car seized and will lose their driver's licence. All these initiatives come together to create a safety net in Ontario, to protect the people of this province.

I want to congratulate the member for his thoughtful ideas and for thinking about the safety of the people of Ontario. There's no community in Ontario that is safe these days. So many youth watch TV, read the newspapers, and they think it's easy to carry a gun and sometimes use it against their friends, neighbours and different targets. So I think it is our obligation and duty to have some kind of tough rules and regulations.

Since we cannot control the movement of guns across Canada, I think we should go after the manufacturers who produce those guns. I think that's a very important tool to scare those companies from selling guns to anyone at any time. So I think it's a very important step. That's why I'm standing up and speaking in support. Whatever issue makes sure that this province of Ontario will be safe, I'm going to support it. I want to congratulate the member again for his thoughtful ideas and for bringing this bill forward, to make sure that our province and our communities are safe.

Mr. Michael Prue: I'm going to state at the outset that I rise to support the bill—not because I think that the bill is going to work, because I do agree with my Conservative colleagues—to send it to committee, to provide the necessary support in committee to do some other things to help make it work, to strengthen it so that it can actually do something.

My friend from Oakville cited the case of Louise Russo. We all know of her very tragic case in this House.

Those of us who live in Toronto—who saw what happened to her on the way to a sandwich shop to get some nourishment for her children one night, to see her struck down in a hail of bullets—will remember the sadness and anger of the people of this city when that happened. We remember the struggle she had to try to rehabilitate herself, to be in a wheelchair, to try her best as a very brave woman to do everything she could to get her health back into some kind of order so that she could continue to look after her family.

It is in that nature that we are supporting the bill, because no matter how small the provision of the bill and no matter how small the chances of actually taking guns off the streets with this bill, we all know that we need to do something. That's why I supported the member from Eglinton-Lawrence's bill. Even though I understand that it may not have much of a deterrent effect, at least he is trying to do something, as is the member from Oakville.

To use the Louise Russo case: Look at what happened here. It was a tragedy to her and her family. She ended up with some \$2 million of compensation from the people who had put her in the wheelchair. This was extremely contentious—not only in the courts but in the court of public opinion in Ontario, the editorial opinion—because in fact a type of plea bargain took place, a type of plea bargain in which the perpetrators of the crime were allowed to plead guilty to a lesser charge. They received only 11 years in jail—which to some might seem a lot, but we all thought they were going to face much more severe consequences—provided that some \$2 million went to her, so that she could care for herself and the pain and suffering of her family, and to look after the needs, the restructuring of her household, so that she could reach appliances and things from a wheelchair.

Part of the reason that this happened, that the court case and settlement took place, is because in Ontario we have woefully inadequate compensation for victims of crime. The maximum that anyone can get is \$365,000. So there was Ms. Russo and her lawyers going and negotiating a settlement with the perpetrators, that they would only get 11 years, provided that there was \$2 million made available to look after her in her time of greatest need. I can understand why the family did it and I can understand why the lawyers negotiated it. But I have to say that I think the system let her down as well, because the compensation of \$365,000, which is the maximum allowable by law in this province, was not enough to compensate her.

Having said that, I have to question what would have happened if Mrs. Russo had had this bill in effect at the time she was tragically struck down by the bullet. What would she have been able to do? She negotiated in a court, and her lawyers did what was, I guess, in her and her family's best interests. But what would she have done under this bill?

The first thing she would have had to do was sue for negligence. She would have had to sue for negligence on the part of the manufacturer, the importer, the salesperson or wherever the gun came from. That is what she

would've had to do. In the body of this bill, she would have had to prove in a court of law that the “design, manufacturing, marketing, importation, sales or distribution practices could result in the actual or threatened unlawful use of the handgun.” That is a mighty tall order in a court of law, to prove that the manufacturer or the importer knew that that handgun was going to be used for that nefarious purpose.

1410

As the member from Oakville correctly stated, all handgun sales, or virtually all handgun sales, at the initial stage are legal. They're legal in the United States and, if they are sold in Canada, they are sold to people who are registered to carry a handgun and are, in themselves, legal. It is what happens to those handguns virtually after that that makes them illegal.

A question has to be asked under this bill, and I'm sure the first lawyer who gets his hands on it is going to ask the same question: Is the maker, is the distributor, is the importer negligent if a handgun is stolen? We know that most of these handguns are stolen. We know they're stolen from private people. We know they're stolen from pawnshops. We know they're not obtained illegally, as the member himself has stated. Is a maker, distributor or importer negligent if someone takes stolen property, not intended for their use, and uses it illegally?

Of course, the second problem and the second question I have to ask is the citizens' resort to the courts, which will be required under this legislation. We know, in Mrs. Russo's case, this was part of a criminal lawsuit that the province of Ontario was prosecuting fully and with full intent to have the perpetrators get jail time, and a deal, a plea bargain, was made. This did not cost Mrs. Russo any money.

In future, if we are to litigate—like we litigate in the United States or like Americans litigate—then you are going to find that those selfsame citizens who are the subject of gun violence are going to have to have pretty deep pockets. We know people have had pretty deep pockets when they took on the cigarette manufacturers, when they got cancer years down the road and the cigarette manufacturers were said not to have released the studies that showed that cigarette smoking would cause cancer. We know the same thing is going to happen here.

You're going to have to have pretty deep pockets before this goes—the gun groups and the gun manufacturers have much deeper pockets, unfortunately, than most citizens. If you're going to put the citizens to this kind of risk, this bill needs to be strengthened so that there is money available to people to litigate. I'm not sure that that's in the bill, but if the bill passes, we can send it to committee and we can look at that too.

We need to look at the entire question of the \$365,000 limit—is that why this is being proposed? Is this being proposed as a sop not to increase the limit? What if the limit was \$1 million? What if the limit was \$2 million? Mrs. Russo could have gone right for compensation and the people who shot her might have had a higher sentence.

She needed the money desperately. Her family needed the money desperately for medical expenses and lifetime expenses, as a result of her being in the wheelchair, unable to work, unable to perform household duties—the whole range of things—and having to reconstruct a house. We know that all took place. She needed \$2 million and there was an avenue to get it. What if that avenue was in the criminal compensation fund? Would that not also do the same thing? Then the courts would not have to negotiate or allow the negotiation of a deal, and who knows? The people who committed those crimes might not have gotten 11 years, they might have gotten 20 or 30 years, which is probably more in keeping with what the people of Ontario wanted them to get.

The reality of all of this is that we have to stop the flow of handguns coming into the province. The only, only way I am convinced that this can be done is to interdict them at the border. It means a stronger police presence, a stronger customs presence and a stronger immigration presence at the border. If any of you have gone down to the border, you will see that the flow of traffic is enormous crossing the United States border—Americans coming to visit Canada, returning Canadians coming back after having visited the United States—and it is very easy for people to smuggle.

I am not naive. I worked in the immigration department for some 20 years, along with my customs brothers and sisters, and I saw the amount of contraband that was taken. Most often, people would be trying to smuggle back an extra bottle of booze, or they would be trying to bring in a Rolex watch—or something they thought was a Rolex watch, anyway—from wherever they had travelled, and they were caught. We need the customs officials to be on that border. We need them to search any suspicious person a lot more often, I would suggest, than they do. We need to have the kind of technology that will allow trucks and cars to be X-rayed to see whether there are guns in them, because they do give off an X-ray. They will be shown. The people get out of the car and the car is X-rayed. You can tell pretty soon whether or not there are handguns or other metal objects, other than the car itself, by the shapes that appear on the screen. We need to have that kind of technology, and we need to put the full force of the law on people who insist on smuggling those handguns across our borders.

I recognize that this is a federal responsibility, but I think that this Legislature has an obligation to make the case known that we expect the full punishment of the law. We don't expect that when people are found with illegal handguns in their houses, as happened to a former member of this House not too long ago—that person received a conditional or an absolute discharge. We need to get serious, and it doesn't matter who the person is who has an illegal gun. If they knowingly keep that in their home, in their car, in their possession, then it should carry a mandatory sentence on indictment, and by that I mean at least two years. All indictable offences carry sentences of at least two years. I would suggest that that's the way we need to get serious.

I am supporting the member from Oakville's bill because I want it to go to committee. It needs to be strengthened, and we need to make sure that it is going to have the desired effect. Having said that, I promised my constituents and my former constituents, when I was the mayor, that I would do everything I could to get those handguns off the street. Even though this is a small measure, I still support it.

Mr. Mike Colle: I'm very proud to stand up and support the member from Oakville's private member's bill trying to control the proliferation of handguns by putting the responsibility on the manufacturers and importers of handguns. It's almost laughable to hear the Conservative member stand up and say, "There is a handgun ban in Ontario and Canada. We don't have to do anything." Wake up and smell the coffee. Just tell the people of Toronto about this handgun ban. It's a joke. There probably are more handguns now on our streets than there ever have been and they're in the hands of criminals. The police know it. We've put out more police, and the police are doing an incredible job, but we're endangering the lives of all of our citizens and of the police because we're not doing anything to plug the handgun loopholes.

This week we heard an RCMP intelligence report which told us that there are hundreds of guns coming into Canada every day from importers who say they're importing guns and weapons for the film industry. But there are no checks and balances: When the film company gets the weapons, they then have no tracking mechanism. The RCMP has said to the federal government, "You have no way of tracing where these hundreds and thousands of weapons are ending up," and they're saying that they're ending up in the hands of criminals.

The member is trying to do something that's been tried in a couple of US cities and states because they too are desperate to stop the proliferation of these guns. Who wants the handguns? It's the criminals, it's the drug peddlers, it's the gangsters who want these handguns. For the life of me, why can't we see through the basic, common-sense action of this, putting more responsibility on the people who import the weapons—and they do it for big money. They are, in essence, arming the criminals in our society with these handguns, and we're doing nothing about it.

It's going on and it's threatening people. They talk about, "Well, you should then look at banning baseball bats and kitchen knives." How ludicrous is that? In my own riding, on March 14, six young teenagers standing in front of their house were approached by two thugs. One with a handgun shot six of them. Luckily, only one died, and the one who died covered the other five up, or all six would have been dead by that lethal handgun in the hand of a criminal, who was already known to have this kind of weapon in the past.

1420

This is the type of reality in our streets, and some people say, "Well, it's not happening in my town. It's not happening in my riding." Believe me, it's a plague that

will affect all of us. We can't just say, "Oh, there are great laws. We don't have to do anything." The laws have loopholes you can drive trucks through. My colleague from Oakville is saying that we have to get to the point of taking some action on this. Provincially, we're trying. This is another great idea. It has been tried in Chicago and New York with some success. We can't afford to just defend the status quo and say, "Everything is okay with handguns. Be happy; don't worry. There's a handgun ban in Canada." We need to get real with this issue. This is an attempt to get real. Whether you live in Toronto, Oshawa, Mississauga or Oakville, these criminals have these guns; they're readily available; they're coming across the border because there's no checking of it across the border. They're coming in by the thousands. There's money being made here, because with guns go drugs, crime and gangsterism. So let's do something. This is an attempt for us to support a member who feels strongly about doing something.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The honourable member from Oakville, Mr. Flynn, you have up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'd like to thank all the other members who have responded in their own way to this. It has gone a little bit as I predicted it might. My thanks to the members from Scarborough—Rouge River, London—Fanshawe, Simcoe North, Whitby—Oshawa, Eglinton—Lawrence and Beaches—East York.

As I said, this debate would take about an hour. Since that hour has passed, another 160 handguns have been manufactured in the United States. Some of those are going to find their way onto our streets. Some of those will be used in the commission of a crime. Some of those may kill Canadian men and women. We need to do something about that. I can think of a million and one excuses as to things you can't do or things you shouldn't do, but it simply is not good enough. I think you have to decide whose side you are on on this. Are you on the side of the victims of gun crime? On the side of the paraplegic association? People like Louise Russo and Halton Regional Police Chief Gary Crowell? Or are you on the side of the gun manufacturers and the gun lobby? It's that simple. There are simply too many guns entering our country from the United States, and we can do something about that. We, as a province, can send a message to the gun industry: "Do everything you possibly can to keep your guns out of Ontario. If somehow they're leaving your supply system, and somehow they're leaving pawn shops and gun dealers close to the border, and you suspect that maybe some of the guns are ending up in Ontario, then maybe you need to look at your supply system. Maybe you need to do something with your own company to make sure that those guns do not make it onto Ontario streets." By supporting this message, we're sending a message to those who manufacture handguns that, should that happen and should one of our citizens become a victim, we're coming after you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We'll vote on this matter in 100 minutes' time.

SKIN CANCER PREVENTION ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR LA PRÉVENTION DU CANCER DE LA PEAU

Mr. Ramal moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 83, An Act to help prevent skin cancer / Projet de loi 83, Loi aidant à prévenir le cancer de la peau.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Pursuant to standing order 97, you have up to 12 minutes for your remarks.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Before I start, I'd like to welcome two members of the Canadian Cancer Society here with us in the gallery: Stephanie Murray and Irene Gallagher. They came to witness the discussion on this very important issue. I also want to thank my assistant, who worked very hard for the last month to prepare all the documentation and research to provide to all the members of this House about the importance of the initiative.

It's important for all of us in the province of Ontario to protect our citizens, especially the youth. Two members from the Canadian Cancer Society came to my office some time ago in the early fall and brought to my attention this issue, and explained to me in detail how important it is to ban ultraviolet treatment, especially for people who are under 19, because it causes cancer. Since that time, this idea has developed in my mind, and I've drafted it as a bill to introduce it today for second reading. Hopefully we'll get support from all the members of the House in order to create some kind of safety net in Ontario.

As you know, this initiative is important because it will provide for a prohibition on selling or supplying tanning services or ultraviolet light treatment services to a person under the age of 19. The prohibition does not apply to ultraviolet light treatment prescribed by authorized medical professionals for conditions prescribed by the regulations.

Since we live in a very complex society, many people try to use many different cosmetics in order to look beautiful, to look different than others, which has attracted so many different youth among us—not just in the province of Ontario and in Canada, but also across the globe. And those issues—the ultraviolet radiation, which can cause cancer on many different occasions. I was reading some statistics: Ultraviolet radiation, if we are subjected to it, will cause skin cancer. We have statistics showing that in Canada almost 68,000 have non-melanoma cancer, with a third of those caused by ultraviolet radiation. That ultraviolet radiation comes from the sun, but also from tanning salons and tanning beds. Many youth use these to do their tanning, and they cause cancer.

So we have cancers called non-melanoma and melanoma. Non-melanoma is the famous one, the biggest one—almost 68,000 in Canada. We also have melanoma, with some 3,000 being diagnosed. This one causes a lot of dangers; most of the time it causes death. Those numbers, incidences and diagnoses have been increasing since 1960. In the beginning of 1960-61, almost four per

100,000 among men used to be diagnosed with those cancers, but by 2000, the number had increased to 15 per 100,000 among men and 11.5 among women. The number did not just double but almost tripled among men and women. This affects mostly people who have fair skin, who are taking medications or who have freckles or moles. It increases the activities of the cancers, and those cancers, as you know, are not good for our youth.

All the statistics and all the medical research show us that people under 19 are more subject to cancer because their skin is still fragile and not mature enough to be able to resist the ultraviolet radiation that comes from the sun or from the artificial lighting of the tanning salons.

I think it is our duty and obligation as elected officials to create awareness and also to ban the different tools being used across the province that cause death and cancer among our youngsters. As you know, the youth among us are important to carry on this province and also to create a healthy province. So I want to thank the Canadian Cancer Society for their initiative and also for their continuous campaign to create a healthy society.

As you know, not long ago we banned smoking in cars when there are kids. This initiative was brought by my colleague the member from Sault Ste. Marie, who was also encouraged by the Canadian Cancer Society to introduce that bill. Success with that bill—it saw the light and has been passed, supported by both sides of the House. Hopefully it will be a law in the province of Ontario soon.

1430

I think this initiative to ban the different tools, whether it's smoking, tanning or many other things—we were debating in the House last week, and also in committee this coming week, banning cosmetic pesticide use in many different places in the province. All these initiatives, I think, are a very important step to creating a healthy society.

That's why, in private members' bills, many members of the House bring very different initiatives. I know that some people think those bills do not go anywhere, just for consumption of time, but I don't agree. Most of the time, those bills at least create awareness if they don't pass, and most of the time are also carried by the minister or the ministry or the government and become a law of the land. I think this bill is important to create healthy habits among our youth in the province of Ontario.

Today, as you know, was Cancer Care Ontario day at Queen's Park. Many vendors came to Queen's Park and displayed different pictures and sites and spoke about cancer and how we can attack cancer in the province of Ontario and how we can protect ourselves. I think that campaign continues, not just with the Canadian Cancer Society but also with many different stakeholders across the province and many different organizations who care very much about people, about protection of the people.

I brought this bill because I know that a lot of people, especially the youth under 19, go to tanning salons and they sit for one hour or two hours. They want to change the colour of their skin because, for some reason, they

think they look sexy or more beautiful, or they want to change their image to show off among their friends, but they don't understand the result of their actions. Most of the time, those actions cause skin cancer. So I think if we had a ban to prohibit people under 19 from using those salons, it would create some kind of safe environment for many youth in the province of Ontario.

Also, those salons open at many different places with no regulations and no educational materials for the people using the salons. Sometimes they sit for many long hours, and that will cause some kind of cancer.

As I mentioned, all the statistics from the Canadian Cancer Society and many other health organizations worldwide show it's caused as a result of ultraviolet, which comes from the sun or from artificial lighting like that in tanning salons. I think it's important for all of us to ban these tanning salons for people under 19 because, as I mentioned at the beginning, their bodies are not mature enough to resist or absorb those lights. Therefore, I think it's our obligation as elected officials to put some kind of ban or regulations to regulate this industry and create some kind of campaign of awareness among the people. Also, before the people use the salons, they have to be educated about the consequences of using or being subject to those artificial lights.

When we talk about health care in the province of Ontario and how much it costs us, I think it's our duty to have regulations to lower the pressure on health care. As you know, when we got elected, health care was about \$29 billion a year; now it's up to \$40.4 billion this year, in budget 2008. It's still not enough, because so many different diseases, so many different illnesses, develop in Ontario and in this world as a result of technology, as a result of changing our habits and life and of many different issues: as I mentioned, cosmetic pesticides, smoking in cars, drinking without regulation and also exposing our bodies to the sun and to artificial ultraviolet—many different issues. Also, there is pollution in the environment. All this stuff is causing a lot of damage to our bodies and it creates many different diseases that didn't exist in the past. Life in the past was very simple, was very regular, and people normally used to eat whatever they grew in the backyards. They would never expose themselves to artificial things like ultraviolet that comes from the lights created to change the colour of the body. So all these initiatives are causing disease, especially cancer, and cancer has grown in society as a result of the foods we eat today and also exposing ourselves and our bodies to artificial light. All this concentrated light which normally comes from the sun to a certain degree comes automatically into the body, and most of the time, for those people who are taking medication and also have a freckle on their face or their body, it doubles the reaction and in the end will cause cancers.

I'm looking forward to hearing from many speakers in the House. I've learned that many of the doctors among us in this House are going to speak and give us their wisest of ideas on why we have to ban tanning salons and exposing the bodies of people under 19 to this artificial

lighting, because it's important, as I mentioned, to create a safe mechanism for people who live among us, especially the youth, because it's our obligation and duty to create a healthy society. So by banning this, we will create a healthy society and a healthy future for the people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Shurman: Given that this is perhaps the last time that I'll have a chance to rise in debate before we close for the summer in this House—

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Say it isn't so, Peter.

Mr. Peter Shurman: One never knows. It's possible we'll go on, but it looks like potentially the last time.

I'd like to make some comments specific to Bill 83, the Skin Cancer Prevention Act, as well as to more broadly address a category of bills that this fits under, and I'm talking specifically about bans, because we have discussed bans almost incessantly. As this session comes to a close, I suppose also coming to a close is the categorization that I fall into, which is "new member."

Over the session, I have had the opportunity to observe the member from London–Fanshawe in this chamber in debate, and I must say, first of all, that he is always a willing participant in debate. He is a likable colleague, but I'm sorry that I cannot support this bill, because while the intent of the bill is excellent, the legislation, for a variety of reasons, is bad, and I'll explain why in short and then elaborate.

First of all, it's yet another ban and, second, it is very poorly written legislation as it exists. Bill 83 is yet another example of the unimaginative and inept legislation that Ontarians have come to expect from the McGuinty Liberals. It's yet another ban. Liberals seem to have—I'm sorry to members on the other side—no faith in the intelligence of Ontarians. Progressive Conservatives value freedom of choice above all else, and I think that's the single largest division between the two parties: freedom of choice. We believe in personal intellect; we believe in personal responsibility.

The McGuinty Liberals believe that people need to be protected from themselves, and they have become expert nanny-state practitioners. Bill 83 is another piece of nanny-state legislation—government for the sake of government and for no other reason. The legal age to drive is 16, the age to join the armed forces is 18, and the voting age is 18. If I can provide an example of what I'm talking about, someone could sign up to fight courageously for Canada in Afghanistan, but God forbid that he or she should go to a tanning salon prior to deployment, because the age is 19. My God, I'm feeling like I'm a talk show host again. Forgive me the observation.

Who knows how to take care of their kids better than a loving parent? If you ask members of the Progressive Conservative caucus, and indeed if you ask Ontarians, the answer is, "No one." No one is better than a parent. Yet the member from London–Fanshawe would have everyone believe that he knows best. My colleagues in

the PC caucus and I know that that is simply not true. It is simply not true.

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Let's take a look at a few things the McGuinty Liberals, in all their benevolence, have seen fit to ban for the benefit of us mere plebeians. They began the session by banning trans fats. If I look at a package—I would like to think that, as an intelligent person, I look at packages—and see trans fats, I don't buy the product. Pit bulls: an entire breed of dog banned. Smoking in cars with kids present: I've said in this House before that if you do that, you must be something less than normal, and when you pass a bill like that, you have it, we all agree—I voted for it—but nobody has explained to me how you're going to enforce it.

We're going to pass a bill on cosmetic pesticides, but no one bothers to call attention to the fact that after all the exemptions, what we're passing is a bill that bans the use of cosmetic pesticides in residential areas, which accounts for less than 2% of the use of all pesticides, period. Displays of cigarettes in convenience stores: Going on 40% of all cigarette sales in this province emanate from smoke shacks on First Nations properties and are not policed at all. So you can ban things, but you don't have to worry about enforcing them.

Speeding in trucks: Isn't speeding illegal already? Where I come from, the 400 highways have a speed limit of 100 kilometres per hour, but we're going to limit trucks to 105. Okay. There is a ban on illegal firearms in vehicles. I have a question: If owning an illegal firearm is illegal, why do we need to ban them in vehicles? Let me ask that question again, in case you didn't hear me: If owning an illegal firearm is illegal, why do we need to ban them in vehicles? Oh, and by the way, if owning an illegal firearm is illegal, why do we need to ban them in vehicles? I keep asking myself this question, as a person who started here seven months ago, and I just don't get it. My personal favourite is the ban on banning clotheslines. That's what the members on the opposite side did. Cities banned clotheslines because they weren't pretty, and now we've banned their ability to ban clotheslines.

I have an idea: Let's introduce a ban on bans. How about a ban on being stupid, or how about jail time for stupid legislation? Perhaps certain members of the government benches should hope that such a bill never, ever gets passed. Let's have a ban on walking into oncoming traffic, or maybe we can have a ban on standing under trees on golf courses in lightning storms, or maybe we can have a ban on eating yellow snow. Think about this: How many things can you ban? This government legislates first and thinks later.

How will all of these bans we have be enforced? Enforcement is a detail that the McGuinty nanny-statists don't want to worry about. They don't want to worry themselves with it, so their response is to leave it to beleaguered municipalities, with no cash to support them, to do the enforcement. These things exist. People in their busy lives hear them on the radio and read them in the paper and say, "That sounds like a good idea." But

there's no thought about what happens when it comes to enforcement.

Let me make a few comments on Bill 83, which is simply bad legislation. It's absolutely rife with gaps, it leaves too much to bureaucratic interpretation and is, in effect, legislation by regulation. What constitutes tanning services? Tanning beds? Selling tanning products? It could be the tanning of leather, because there are no definitions. Under this legislation, if passed as it exists, an 18-year-old could go with a piece of cowhide to a tannery and say, "I want tanning services," and if they're sold to him, that's illegal, because there are no definitions.

What constitutes ultraviolet light treatment? We don't know. Dentists use ultraviolet light to cure fillings and crowns. Does that constitute ultraviolet light treatment? If it does, and there are no exemptions for dentists, they would be committing a crime. If it does, we're in trouble. Why? Because, unlike members of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, which my friend has included as an exemption, and members of the College of Nurses of Ontario, members of the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario are not exempt from this legislation. Does the member from London-Fanshawe propose to make it illegal for a dentist to use ultraviolet light to treat a kid's cavities? I think not, but he doesn't say so. I dare say it is not likely his intent, but we all know what is paved with good intentions. Legislation by regulation, all fluff and no substance—hallmarks of the McGuinty nanny-statism.

I will assume for a second that tanning services do refer to tanning beds. Of course, I don't think young kids should use tanning beds. Who would? But that's for a loving parent to decide. It's up to us to provide them with the material necessary to make an informed decision. We are not helping anyone by passing a do-nothing, waste of time bill like this. The bill represents all that is wrong with the McGuinty-Liberal nanny-statist government, and I cannot and I will not support this bill.

The numerous legislative bans that the McGuinty government has burdened our province and our citizens with are not about good government and the wellbeing of Ontarians; they're about PR. This private member's bill, Bill 83, is another example. We are coming to the end of this session of the Legislature. We'll be breaking for the summer. Since being elected in October, what legislation has this government passed that is of any substance? The answer is nothing.

I want to talk about the economy. I want to talk about health. I want to talk about crime. I want to talk about transportation. But what am I talking about? Legislation on signage in Niagara Parks properties, legislation regarding snowplows on private property, the Made in Ontario Act, the Buy in Canada for Mass Transit Vehicles Act, the Great Lakes Shoreline Right of Passage Act, the Apology Act, the Pesticides Act, the Smoke-Free Ontario Act—for goodness sake, these are all diversions to distract Ontarians from what is really happening.

Ontario's economy is crumbling. Our cancer patients, whom you're trying to address, wait for too long for

treatment, if they see any treatment at all. Our infrastructure buckles under the strain of new migration to our urban centres, our manufacturing sector rusts, our farms are uprooted, our hotels are at a fraction of capacity, and what do we get from the Liberals while all this is happening? Bills like this.

I ask, when this Legislature resumes in the autumn, can we expect real governance from the McGuinty nanny-statists? Can we, please? Or can we expect more of the same drudgery? I think I know what the answer is already, and I am saddened for the people of Thornhill—my riding—and all of Ontario.

I came here to work hard and I think that I do work hard. I know that everybody does as well. But can we get a grip here and can we focus? It truly is a terrible commentary on the state of governance in Ontario that we get garbage bills like this.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: It's a pleasure to rise in support of the member of London-Fanshawe's Bill 83, An Act to help prevent skin cancer. I think it's an excellent initiative to draw attention to this issue.

Ultraviolet radiation has been recognized as a carcinogen. It, in fact, is a particularly insidious and invisible carcinogen. That's why I believe it's so important to draw attention to this fact. I think most people are clear that sun damage occurs because of ultraviolet radiation and that sun damage can include everything from aging of the skin to cancers, whether they be relatively benign such as basal cell or squamous cell or an invasive type of cancer such as melanoma.

These are important issues. Many authorities have made statements in relation to the use of tanning beds, which, of course, are another source of ultraviolet radiation, so we have not only the Canadian Cancer Society but the World Health Organization. That organization has specifically stated that the use of tanning beds can increase the risks of skin cancer, especially for those under the age of 18. The US Department of Health and Human Services has also made a similar conclusion. The Canadian Cancer Society has also stated that those exposed to artificial tanning as young adults have a 65% increase in risk over those exposed later in life in developing skin cancer.

1450

Health Canada has issued guidelines in terms of the safe use of tanning salons and tanning beds. As a former medical officer of health, it was my responsibility under the mandatory health programs and services guidelines pursuant to the Health Protection and Promotion Act to ensure that every tanning salon in York region was aware of those guidelines and was prepared to follow them. I think most people are aware that in many areas of this province a tanning salon pops up overnight, practically. Therefore, my inspection staff found it extremely difficult to get around to all the tanning salons and to ensure that they were following these guidelines.

Health units across Ontario are concerned about the use of these tanning salons, because that use is really quite considerable. A number of health units have

gathered some statistics: Some 7.2% to 11.5% of adults aged 18 or over have used artificial tanning in different areas. It varies across the province. We don't have any actual data on those under the age of 18, but certainly anecdotally I have heard of parents preparing for a holiday down south where the whole family goes to put what they consider a healthy glow on their skin. Of course, we know that they are in fact potentially endangering their children.

It's particularly important in a country such as ours, where we have many people of European descent. North America, Australia and New Zealand are leading in terms of the number of cases of melanoma. Those with fair skin, those with freckles and those with moles are particularly susceptible to skin cancer.

This is why I'm firmly in support of this legislation. It will bring attention to the issue, over and above what our health units are able to ensure does occur in each jurisdiction according to Health Canada guidelines. Those guidelines are a good step; this legislation is even better.

Mr. Michael Prue: I rise, and I am going to support this bill. Notwithstanding the sometimes humorous and sometimes correct assertions of the member for Thornhill, this is a serious issue that needs to be discussed, and I think this is the appropriate venue. Although I would agree with the member from Thornhill that much of what has taken place in this Legislature during this particular government has conveyed a nanny-state approach to government, this is a private member's bill. I think we all need to remember that it is not a government bill; it is a private member's bill by a person who happens to be on the Liberal side of the House. But it is his bill.

I always try to look at bills differently: those that are private members' bills versus those sponsored by a government. A government bill, as we all know, will be voted for, virtually in every single case, by all the members of the government. A private member's bill is an option for people to cross party lines, an option for people on all sides of the House to see merit in a bill. You can either vote for it or against it on the strength of what that private member is trying to put forward. In this case, I think he has a pretty cogent argument. He has an argument that has been adopted in many places in the world.

If I can state for the record some of the organizations that are onside in terms of this bill, the first one is the Scientific Committee on Consumer Products. This is a European think tank that advises European governments. They stated that the use of ultraviolet tanning lamps—sun beds—is likely to increase the risk of melanoma. Any doctor can tell you that and probably any doctor will tell you that, but there is scientific evidence, and virtually every European government in the European Union abides by what they have been advised. They know it's likely to do it—and that's just one organization.

The second organization that's onside, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, published a report in 2006. The Canadian Cancer Society came on board. The World Health Organization is on board in

terms of their advocacy of warning notices, client consent forms, operator training, supervision and the mandatory use of eyewear inside tanning salons or tanning beds.

All of these organizations can't have it wrong. They know there is a very real risk to people who use tanning salons, tanning beds, of contracting various forms of skin cancer. As the learned doctor and my colleague said as she spoke just before me, there are some serious types of cancer—I guess they're all serious, but some are more serious than others, like melanoma. Certainly if you have ever had a colleague, a friend or a loved one die of melanoma, you have to know that that is an absolutely horrendous disease. It is unstoppable; it is deforming. It is a horrible, horrible way to die. We have an obligation to make sure, even if one is accused of being in a nanny state, that if we know something about it, we can warn somebody about it to stop them from taking actions that might invariably lead to that.

I remember when I was a boy and the first scares came out about smoking cigarettes. I remember them showing on the television news that they had put nicotine and other carcinogens on mice, and you saw the cancers growing out of them. I know it was enough in my own mother's case: She quit on that very day, and advisedly and rightly so. But it has taken generations for us to come to the point where today cigarette use is actually declining among young people, and I'm hoping within my lifetime to see a time when we don't see that habit continuing, because of the deleterious side effects of cigarette smoking causing cancer.

This is nothing much different. I want to say that other governments have already taken this step. The government of New Brunswick prohibits the use of tanning beds for people under the age of 18. This is not groundbreaking legislation. It already exists in one of Canada's provinces. The state of California bans the use of tanning beds for those under 14, although it will permit the use of tanning beds for those between 14 and 18 upon parental approval. You need a signed statement from a parent or guardian if you are between those ages. The government of the United Kingdom prohibits tanning beds for those under 16. The governments of Australia, depending on which state in Australia you're in, universally ban the use of tanning beds for people under 16 in some states and under 18 in others.

We have a very real problem here in Ontario, and it isn't just with the use of young people. It's about the whole tanning bed and spa industry that uses this tanning equipment. It is virtually unregulated. There is nothing for health practitioners, city officials or anyone else to go in and say anything because there are no regulations surrounding it.

Health Canada has asked for voluntary guidelines. There are no standards of training whatsoever. I can go in, I'm sure, tomorrow, and if I'm willing to work for the wages, the working hours and conditions in a tanning salon, I can get a job, be shown how to flip a few switches, how to turn them off, how to time them, and I could become a tanning bed operator. It's as simple as

that, and I'm not sure that we in Ontario should be allowing this.

I am supporting this being sent to committee because I want the bill to work. It needs to be strengthened. It's just not enough to say that people under 18 shouldn't be allowed to go to tanning beds as today they are not allowed to buy cigarettes. It needs something more than this. We need, first of all, to look at a ban of marketing of tanning beds.

It is very sad. I went to a school graduation and saw the school flyers of the new graduates. One of the advertisers was giving away coupons to the new graduates of a high school to come on down and get reduced costs on tanning bed facilities. The marketers are very smart. They know the market where people pick up this habit of thinking that looking tanned is being very healthy, and I must admit I thought that way in my youth too. I must admit that to have a tan in the summertime was the ultimate; to lie out there and bake yourself until it hurt was the ultimate. I'm much more careful now, I want to tell all of you.

Mr. Tim Hudak: And still very handsome.

Mr. Michael Prue: I inherited my mother's Irish skin, and sometimes the tanning and the overdoing of that actually hurt.

But we need to get a ban on the marketing, first and foremost, because we know that some 11% of all of the tanning sold in the province of Ontario is sold to young people between the ages of 16 and 18, those people who are in grades 11 and 12, those people who succumb to the marketing, who see the coupons—two for one, or tan for \$5, unlimited for the month, all of the stuff that is being marketed out there—are particularly susceptible to it. We need to stop the marketing of those coupons in high school yearbooks and in high school newspapers and stop handing them out at the doorways of high schools across the province.

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We need to look to a registry of providers. We need to have a registry so that we know who is providing the service, the types of equipment they have, monitoring the types of equipment to make sure they are safe. We need to look for mandatory training, as the World Health Organization said. We need mandatory training so it isn't possible for someone like me, looking for a job or a part-time job, to go in and say, "Yes, I'll work for \$10 or \$8.75 an hour. Yes, I know how to look at my watch and tell when 15 minutes is up and flip this switch or flip that switch and make sure that the place stays clean." We need to know that when people are performing this function, they are doing so in a much more professional capacity, and they should be accredited. We have an obligation to make sure, when people's health might be put at risk, that they are accredited.

We need to follow what the World Health Organization said about warning signs. A lot of people will think the tanning bed is perfectly safe. They'll think it is just as natural and just as normal as walking out on a summer day. They have to be told, and they should be,

that it is not. There are warning signs on tobacco products. There are warning signs, when people go into bars and restaurants that serve alcohol, for particularly women who are pregnant or think they may be pregnant not to consume alcohol because of fetal alcohol syndrome. I don't see anything untoward in following the World Health Organization's dictates and simply having that kind of statement on the wall or next to the actual tanning bed so that people will have an opportunity to read it and make sure they understand it.

We need to have mandatory eyewear. Again, the World Health Organization said that people should wear those eye coverings when going into tanning salons because the ultraviolet light can actually harm retinas and can cause irreparable difficulties in sight. We need to make sure that, if people are going to use these facilities, they wear the mandatory eye coverings, because in the tanning salon it's just like staring into the sun. Although it may not seem as intense, it's just like that; you will harm the retina and you'll do it very fast.

We also need to make sure that we have client consent forms—again, the World Health Organization said that this was necessary—so there is proof that people are given the information that what they are doing may be harmful to their health, and before they are allowed to lie on the bed, they should have to sign that form and be so informed.

Having said that, I understand the whole argument about the nanny state. I understand that the regulations that would bring this about are problematic for some people who think we are mature adults and that we need not have the state intervene in what we want to do in our lives. But I've heard those same arguments throughout my life around cigarettes. I've heard those same stories told throughout my life about other dangerous things and dangerous factories. Quite frankly, there is a role for the state.

I commend the member for doing what he is doing. I absolutely commend him. It does need to go to committee, it does need to be strengthened and it does need to be mandatory, and not only for young people—all of those mandatory safeguards for those who are over the age of 18, who likewise need to be protected from something that is potentially a cause of cancer.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: First of all I would like to commend my colleague Khalil Ramal, from London–Fanshawe, for bringing forward this bill. I'd also like to recognize the very measured and civilized remarks of our colleague Michael Prue, from Beaches–East York. I'd also like to commend the very elegant sound and fury emanating from the MPP for Thornhill, having elevated the tone of the debate, essentially saying that this bill, which attempts to prevent cancer downstream for Ontario's population, particularly children, is a waste of time; essentially calling the MPP from London–Fanshawe stupid; and calling this debate garbage. I'd like to commend him for the continued thrust of the new John Tory civility in this House.

A couple of things were very important. My colleague the MPP for Thornhill essentially wanted to rely, as he

put it, on a loving parent, a loving mother, which of course is something we would absolutely support. Having said that, I would ask that loving mother to explain to me the difference in the margins between, say, a basal cell carcinoma, a squamous cell carcinoma or a melanoma; or when, for example, does solar keratosis actually graduate into a melanomic type of cancer; or what prolonged ultraviolet light exposure will actually interfere with DNA polymerase or ligase, enzymes that are responsible for healing normal wear-and-tear skin damage; or what should be the actual excision margins?

I cite all those particular issues, because those of us who are entrusted with using our various levels of expertise have that responsibility, brought to bear in coordination with first-class, world-class organizations like the Canadian Cancer Society, which is ably represented here.

I would concede one comment to the MPP for Thornhill, who asked for good governance emanating from this government. I would say that, in coordination with organizations like the Canadian Cancer Society, using our collective expertise, we, of course, must help and frame the debate and legislation and initiatives and regulations and laws and so on that will help, in our best interests, downstream protection from major killers, major disease domains.

For example, we have something on the order of 30,000—I repeat, 30,000—individuals who will be diagnosed with skin cancer in Ontario this year. For those of us who travel across Ontario in our various responsibilities, that's a pretty healthy-sized town, or perhaps two communities together. Of course, we, as physicians, deal not only with the problem where the lesion, as we say, or the offending cancer, is just on the skin, but also when that cancer decides to leave home, when that cancer, as we doctors would say, becomes metastatic and travels, say, to the brain or the liver or to other parts. Of course, these are very important issues.

I would absolutely commend the MPP from London—Fanshawe and his coordinated work with the Canadian Cancer Society, who are here to bear witness to this initiative and would hopefully negate a lot of the sound and fury emanating from the Tory side. They also deeply support the idea of no person under the age of 18 using artificial tanning equipment, of course addressing some of the enticements to youth under 18; the advertising, as was ably brought up by the MPP from Beaches—East York; and, of course, a number of different areas, including public awareness campaigns. At the end of the day, along with things like smoke-free Ontario, seatbelts and pesticides, that is how we guard the collective health of Ontario, and that is good governance.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It is a pleasure to join the debate on Bill 83, and I want to commend the mover of this motion, the member for London—Fanshawe, for what I think is a very thoughtful bill.

The great thing about private members' time is that we can put our partisan differences aside. I thought the comments of the member for Beaches—East York today were right on the money as far as what private members' time should be all about.

When I heard the member from Thornhill speak, it went from mildly amusing to interesting to disrespectful, and at the end of it all, I think it was just downright silly and not in keeping with the tone of this place. I think that those of us who have been around for a little bit will understand that that's not what private members' time is all about; that's not what private members' bills should be all about. So I especially appreciate the comments of the member for Beaches—East York.

Private members' time allows us to give opinions through debate. So far today, I have heard from the member for Etobicoke North and the member for Oak Ridges—Markham, from the government side, and I have been having a conversation with the member for Bramalea—Gore—Malton. All three are health professionals. One is a medical officer of health and two are family doctors. They're speaking very, very strongly in support of this bill, and they're doing that for a reason.

1510

There should be one thing that we should just take a look at here: "Those exposed to artificial tanning as young adults have a 65% increase in risk over those exposed later in life to developing skin cancer." That's very serious, and that's something that we can do something about. Whether you want to get into convoluted arguments about nanny states or convoluted arguments about governance, you can't lose sight of the issue that we have the ability in this House, by supporting this bill, to do something that's going to have a positive effect on the health outcomes of a great many of our young people.

You see a lot of emphasis today—I think in our term of government, you've seen a lot of emphasis on health promotion. You've seen the establishment of a Ministry of Health Promotion. In the past, I think we just concentrated on trying to cure illness, allowing people to get sick and then trying to find a way to get them better again. Now we've turned that on its head and we're trying to stop people from getting sick; we're trying to prevent the cancer in the first place. I think that the bill that's being put forward today, Bill 83, speaks directly to that. It has the support of the Canadian Cancer Society. Some of the facts that they have brought forward speak volumes about what good this bill can do; they say, "Overexposure to UVRs for children and adolescents plays a pivotal role in the likelihood of developing skin cancer later in life." What more evidence would a member of this House need, other than that, in order to support this bill?

As I said, we're promoting wellness now, instead of trying to cure sickness, and we've heard from health professionals from within our caucus, from within this House who have given us information that is right on the money, and it's something that we should be acting on and we should be prepared to act on. The other comments aside, which came from the member of Thornhill, I would hope that each and every other member of this House has the good grace to support this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Ramal, you have up to two minutes to reply.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I want to thank the members from Oak Ridges–Markham, Beaches–East York, Etobicoke North and Oakville for their insightful and professional comments—and also the member from Thornhill; For a person who was a journalist sometime in his life, I think it's insulting to the people listening to us, especially if the cancer society was with us in the gallery here today—his comments.

One other thing that I think is insulting to all the people listening to us is that this member definitely didn't read the bill. He had no idea about the content of the bill. I guess he was speaking from anger, so I'm not going to listen to his comments and I'm not going to say anything. I want to agree with him on one thing: We should be banning the stupidity in this House. That's why it's important to us to bring issues that are important to our communities.

We listened to many professionals among us here today—two doctors spoke, and also the member from Beaches–East York and the member from Oakville—who know this issue very well and who have dealt with it in their lifetime in their past capacity as city members, doctors and mayors. The importance of prohibiting many bad things from being used in the community, from smoking by people under 19 to people who drive while they're drinking to banning cosmetic pesticides—all these initiatives are not stupid. They're not stupid. While you're trying to protect the health of people, I think it's a noble cause and it should be supported. Many people, not just those among us here, but also the people who are specialists, the Canadian Cancer Society, the World Health Organization, support this initiative. I think it's worth thinking about that.

It's important for all of us as members and as elected officials to support our people and to create a mechanism and a safety net to make sure our community is healthy and safe.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We'll vote on this item in 50 minutes.

FAIRNESS FOR FAMILIES ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR LE TRAITEMENT ÉQUITABLE DES FAMILLES

Mr. Hudak moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 88, An Act to provide fairness for families by amending the Taxation Act, 2007 to allow income-splitting for taxation between cohabiting spouses and common-law partners / Projet de loi 88, Loi prévoyant le traitement équitable des familles en modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts pour permettre le fractionnement du revenu entre conjoints ou conjoints de fait visés aux fins de l'impôt.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Hudak, pursuant to standing order 97, you have up to 12 minutes for your presentation.

Applause.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I thank my colleagues for their kind applause; we'll see how the vote turns out. I thank my colleagues in advance for their comments. I look forward to them in debate on this exciting new concept, in the province of Ontario, of fairness to families through family filing, if you will, or joint income tax returns. I also thank in advance my colleagues Sylvia Jones, the member from Dufferin–Caledon, and Lisa MacLeod, the member from Nepean–Carleton, who will address this bill—two dynamic, young women who have joined the PC caucus in the last couple of years. I look forward to their comments.

I think we know that today, Ontario families face a significant number of challenges. When they see gas prices going up, mortgage costs increasing, the cost of food in the grocery store going up and 200,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs leaving this province, it puts a squeeze on the pocketbooks of many Ontario families.

Most importantly, we all know that families make decisions as families. They make major decisions together, not as groups of individuals. For example, if I were to try to replace my car or do a home renovation or go on vacation, I wouldn't dare make those types of significant decisions without first consulting my wife. Families consult on these types of decisions. The same type of framework should exist for taxation in our society, not as individuals, but as total income for a family unit, to reflect that the family, not individuals, is the basic decision-making unit in our society.

I think members know that this is not a new idea. It was raised some 40 years ago when Prime Minister Diefenbaker appointed the Royal Commission on Taxation, led by Kenneth Carter. The 1966 Carter report called for equal treatment of families who earn the same level of income, and for making total family income the basis for administering our taxes. In a nutshell, Bill 88, the Fairness for Families Act, would allow married or common-law couples to elect to file a joint tax return and pay taxes as a family unit, rather than simply as two individuals.

Now, we already know that benefits are not based on individual income; they're generally based on family income. In Ontario, the Ontario sales tax credit and the property tax credit, OSAP loans and grants, the Ontario child benefit, the Ontario child care supplement for working families and GAINS are based on family income at the provincial level; and federally, the Canada child tax benefit, the guaranteed income supplement and the GST credit as well. So the basis for benefits in our system is family income.

I'd argue, therefore, that the basis for the flip side—how governments raise revenue—should be through family income and not through individuals. We know as well that income-splitting is effectively allowed today in the province of Ontario but is chiefly the domain of wealthy individuals through setting up corporate structures. I would argue in the assembly today, and hope my colleagues would agree, that all Ontario families, no

matter what their income level, should benefit from the opportunity to split their income.

We may remember that the federal government's 2007 budget did take initial steps in this direction by allowing pension income to be split between married or common-law couples. The 2007 provincial budget similarly passed on income-splitting provincially for pension income. This act, if passed by the Legislative Assembly, would allow that benefit to go to all income that a family earns, not just pension income. It would bring about greater equity among single-earner or two-earner couples, ensuring that families with equivalent taxable income would pay the same amount of provincial tax.

Let me give you an example of how this works. Let's say there is a single-earner couple where one spouse makes \$70,000 a year and the other spouse stays at home. Right next door is another couple who make \$35,000 each. The single-earner couple would pay a total of \$14,165 in federal and provincial income taxes. The two-earner family, with each earning \$35,000, the same level of total family income, would pay a combined \$10,364—a difference of \$3,801 or \$316 per month—a significant tax difference. That is categorically unfair.

1520

This bill, if passed, would deal with the provincial level. We can't influence the federal level, but, hopefully in supporting this act, we can signal to the federal government to go the distance and allow income-splitting across all families in this country.

Again, benefits are based on family income. This is currently available to wealthy Ontarians through various corporate structures. The federal budget made initial steps for pension income-splitting, and it reflects the reality of Ontario families today that make decisions as a family, not as a group of individuals.

So back to my example of the single-earner couple that chooses to have one spouse stay at home and has a tax penalty of \$3,801 per annum in combined federal and provincial income taxes: I do not believe that government policy should penalize couples who choose to have a stay-at-home spouse or a spouse working part-time. Government policy should be neutral and allow families to choose whatever structure is the best option for their home.

It's not just me saying this. I think my colleagues will know that a significant part of the world's population has this type of regime. France, Germany, the United States, the Czech Republic, Ireland, Luxembourg, Poland, Switzerland and Portugal, to name a few, have addressed this tax penalty that's imposed in Canada and in Ontario on families that choose to have a stay-at-home spouse or a spouse working part-time. We should join those 20 other countries and allow for income-splitting in the province of Ontario.

Let me tell you about friends of ours, a dual-income family. One worked in public relations; another actually worked here at Queen's Park. Like many of your staff members, the individual worked for a minister at the time. They had a little girl, and a decision was made that

the husband, who worked in politics, would resign from his job to help raise their daughter. The wife continued on in public relations. They made that decision at significant financial sacrifice so they could invest in their daughter's future. If they make that choice, a legitimate choice, they should not suffer an additional tax penalty. Again, we should be neutral in those decisions; let families make their own.

When I introduced this bill for first reading last week, I received a number of e-mails, and I thank those at home who took the time to send in e-mails. Let me give you an example of somebody who wants to see this bill passed into law.

This woman wrote in. She and her husband have five children. One was born with a severe hearing impairment and requires diagnoses, surgeries, speech therapy and speech tutoring. She has two children who are dyslexic, who require extra one-on-one work in tutoring to help them overcome their disability. They made the difficult choice that she would stay at home to help out with the children, and now, because of that extra attention, the dyslexic children are doing very well and they're continuing on in French immersion programs in our school system. She guarantees that her children would no longer be in immersion if a parent didn't make the time to dedicate to their additional educational requirements, in this circumstance by staying at home.

Why should her single-income family of five children pay significantly more in income taxes compared to a dual-income, five-member family with exactly the same income? That is unfair and needs to change here in the province of Ontario.

We've had a number of groups that have been kind enough to send in their support for Bill 88. David Quist, the executive director of the Institute of Marriage and Family Canada, said: "I am pleased to see that MPP Tim Hudak has recognized the financial burden that many families are under. His private member's bill, the Fairness for Families Act, will lighten this financial burden for many families."

Sara Landriault, president of the National Family Childcare Association, said: "The NFCA would like to thank Tim Hudak for introducing Bill 88 into Queen's Park. This is a major step towards a family tax fairness policy for Ontario families. Bill 88 is a progressive tax bill that will bring all working families on an equal economic level, without discrimination. Bill 88 will give parents the freedom to raise their children the way they see fit and not be financially discriminated against."

Kate Tennier, the founder of Advocates for Childcare Choice, said: "I spoke with countless Canadians, many of them Ontarians, about their desire to have child care choices remain in families' hands. But what my fellow citizens repeatedly told me was what they really wanted was income-splitting. Young, old, left, right, single- and double-earning families alike are united in this view for two reasons: Not only is it the fair thing to do, but it sends a strong message that families are the primary social and economic unit in our society."

My last major point in this discussion: As you know, Ontario is likely on the brink of recession. We've seen some 200,000-plus well-paying manufacturing jobs leave our province. We've seen families' budgets squeezed by higher gas and food prices and higher taxes.

Let's say, by way of example, that a steelworker in Hamilton living in my riding of Glanbrook recently lost his job. His wife is working. She makes about \$60,000 a year. He has gone down from a well-paying job, working part-time to try to make ends meet at \$10,000 a year. Under this scenario of income-splitting, they combine their income and pay much lower income taxes, saving them about \$1,041. It's not a huge amount of money when you lose a well-paying job in manufacturing, but it will help this family to get through difficult times. Considering financial circumstances, and that we've lost 36,000 talented Ontarians to other provinces, I think this is an important economic measure to help families like those in Glanbrook adjust to these circumstances.

I recognize that Bill 88 may not be a perfect bill. The Fairness for Families Act is right in principle. If there are ways to improve it through committee, I look forward to that. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the government and the third party, and my own Progressive Conservative caucus, to make this bill the best it can be.

I want to thank Michael Wood of legislative counsel in helping with this bill, and Kayla Monteiro, my intern, and Trisha Rinneard, my chief of staff, for their help.

I believe that if members of all three parties rise in support of Bill 88, it will send the strongest of signals to the federal government to demonstrate that Ontario supports fairness for families, and then will help extend it from ocean to ocean to ocean for all families across Canada. Filing joint taxes will modernize the way our tax system works, reflect the complexity of our times and the higher cost of living, and support families facing difficult choices in difficult circumstances. If one spouse chooses to stay at home to help a disabled daughter, she or he should not be punished with higher taxes by the provincial government for making that decision. The choice to stay at home, sadly, is too often left only to the wealthiest in society.

I ask my colleagues for their support to pass this legislation and bring fairness to all Ontario families.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: I'm pleased to join the debate this June afternoon on Bill 88, the Fairness for Families Act, introduced by the member from Niagara West-Glanbrook.

I just want to go over very quickly my general understanding of the bill and then some further comments. The bill as presented, as I understand it from the member, would allow for married and/or common-law couples to elect to income-split their provincial income tax. This would take effect on or after December 31, 2009. It would be effective either in full, i.e., a full calendar year, or in part of a calendar year. So if a couple were together in a married relationship, a common-law relationship,

whatever that might be, or a partnered relationship for some part of the year, then they would carve out a proportionate amount of that year that would allow them to income-split during that period of time. That presents its own modest difficulties. Nonetheless, as I understand the bill in general, that's the intent, and the objective would be to see a family income scenario or a couple's scenario whereby, combining those incomes and jointly submitting, they may find themselves in a position of some reduction in the income tax payment to the province of Ontario. Without getting into detail, that's the thrust of it.

There are some issues that I want to raise with respect to the bill that I think are important, not the least of which is that the bill—many private members' bills tend to be thin. It's not unusual for someone to stand in the House—I've heard it said on more than one occasion—and say, "That's a pretty thin bill. It's only two pages long." The shortcoming of that is that bills of this nature are such that they don't have depth, and you can't have the depth available that the government can put together with all their research capacity.

1530

What's missing in part, in my view, is the debate and the fulsomeness of debate around: What's the cost? As the savings accrue, there has to be a cost to the revenue of the province of Ontario that I suspect is potentially rather significant. And to have the revenue streams necessary to provide the service in Ontario, we have to presumably recover those resources in some fashion or adjust spending and service programs accordingly.

I think there's a significant matter around what this means in a very broad sense—the implications to the fiscal house of Ontario. It's more than just the desire of families. Whether they have children or don't have children, whether it's a spousal relationship or a simpler common-law relationship, that affects them. This potentially affects the fiscal house of the province in a substantive way.

There is another matter in respect of the bill. The owner of the bill, the member from Niagara West-Glanbrook, maybe has glossed over a little bit, although, in some of his comments, as he speaks to sending a signal to the federal government that would see this extended from sea to sea to sea—my understanding is that, under our agreements with the federal government, Ontario would not be able to allow couples to jointly file their income tax: this would require an amendment to the federal Income Tax Act.

Often, in this Legislature on a Thursday afternoon, we have either private members' bills that the government of Ontario, if they were adopted, could then enact and actually put into place and formulate, or motions that come to this House that provide a degree of desire, direction, or enhanced debate of some sort that draws to the public attention a particular strategy, desire or need that has broad public support. I'm not sure, based on the context of the provincial government's relationship with the federal government as it comes to tax collection, that

a bill that would effectively make a statement about what the intent would be of a joint submission but under our agreement with the federal government couldn't actually be enacted, would be fair to the constituents of Ontario—having a set of expectations that can't actually be fulfilled unless the federal government chose to amend the federal Income Tax Act to allow it to occur.

I'm hoping that the member will be able to provide some clarity in that regard, this issue of sending a signal to the government on income-splitting to all families as opposed to being able to enact such, readily.

I mentioned earlier, at the beginning, some of the cost issues and having a handle on what that would mean to us. Certainly, all of us within our ridings in Ontario have projects and initiatives that we want to see undertaken, and we can only achieve those with the resource capacity that's available. The member opposite, within his own jurisdiction and on a number of occasions during budget and otherwise, has pressed the case for revenue streams into his riding that would support business and industry, families, transportation and the like within the riding. I'm always concerned when we begin to diminish the capacity by reducing the tax burden, through income-splitting, as an example, and not knowing how we're going to offset that revenue stream and still be able to continue the activities that we want to undertake.

Recently, as the member spoke about, the federal government introduced income-splitting, and opted to do it in a very limited fashion. They opted to do it in respect of certain forms of pension income-splitting. They didn't even extend it fully across the range of a population group, of seniors. They chose to do that with pensioners. They were far more specific in doing that. I would suggest that they may—and I can't speak for them but, in my mind, I would suggest that potentially they were testing the waters to see how effective this strategy was.

What's proposed here is a far broader perspective on income-splitting in Ontario without having the test of time, even of what we've undertaken in response to the federal initiative, to do the same thing provincially. There are jurisdictions, I understand—and the member spoke to those—that are moving, or have moved, to joint submissions, income-splitting. My understanding is, there are jurisdictions that are moving away from it. Among that list, as I understand it, are countries like Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. There are those who are moving in different directions. Not all are moving in exactly the same direction in respect to income-splitting at this point in time.

Although I'm appreciative of the member's initiative to find ways for couples to be able to maximize their tax-benefit opportunity, I'm not convinced at this point in time that income-splitting, broadly, in the province of Ontario is where we want to be, based on Bill 88, as we have it before us.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's a pleasure to support my colleague from Niagara West–Glanbrook on his private member's bill. He has been a very effective finance critic

for our party. He always brings to the floor of this Legislature progressive ideas on the fiscal front. This bill is no different.

In fact, I'd urge all members of the Legislature to support this bill on income-splitting, because it is a sign of the changing times in this country. It is really about fairness for all Ontario's families. As a mother who had the great fortune of staying at home with my little girl for the first year of her life, I can tell this chamber that there are few greater rewards in this life than time with our children: to help them grow, to care for them and to let them know that they are part of strong families.

Should one parent in a home choose to stay at home to care for their child, I would argue that they should not be penalized by a tax regime that does not take into consideration these circumstances. It is a fact that in Ontario and across Canada, single-earner families pay much, much higher income taxes than dual-income families. That hardly seems fair to me. That's why I support a more fair and equitable system. I agree with my colleague for Niagara West–Glanbrook that families should be able to income-split if only one member of the family is taking in pay. I would say "earning a pay," but that would be incorrect.

I know a lot of stay-at-home moms, and I will tell you that right now, they have earned our respect, and they deserve fairness. The jobs they do, and the jobs stay-at-home dads do, are as tough as any other job in this province. It is high time that this chamber and this government recognized that. This bill put forward by my colleague, the Fairness for Families Act, would correct the inequality that these families face in the tax regime. I think income-splitting that is extended to all Ontario families is common sense. It is the right thing to do.

I want to share excerpts from an e-mail sent to me by Natalie Gallimore from my city of Ottawa. She wants this chamber to know that there are several scenarios of why one parent may take in significantly less pay than another. She says:

—one person has a very demanding job, with travel and long or odd, hours so most of the family/household responsibilities fall upon the other adult, who chooses to have less, or no, paid employment in order to establish a work-family balance;

—the family decides to home-school;

—one adult decides to go to school themselves;

—there are disabilities or critical illnesses within the family (physical or mental);

—there are caregiving responsibilities for older members of the extended family; and

—there is a calling for volunteer or charity work."

I have friends and constituents who live all of those scenarios. My friend Charlene is a stay-at-home mother. She has three beautiful girls, and she cares for her disabled sister. Her husband, Bruce, is as involved in the community as she is. He's an economist.

I don't understand why they should be penalized by our current tax regime. Charlene's work is every bit as important as any other person's work in this province.

We should be encouraging her and more men and young women to follow their calling, regardless of what it is, not to abandon it. This bill put forward by my colleague from Niagara West—Glanbrook will help them.

1540

With the exception of seniors who can now enjoy some income-splitting measures, Ontario's young families, those who are trying to put their children through school, through soccer and other extracurricular activities are being treated as unequal if one parent chooses to work inside the home. It is the single-income family under the age of 65 who suffers under this government's current tax policy, particularly when they are compared to dual-income families who are basically earning the same pay. I think we need to change that.

We need fairness, and I would argue we need fairness for all families. If a mother wants to stay at home to care for her children, or if a father wants to go back to school to improve his family's quality of life, why should they be paying more taxes than a family in the same neighbourhood, making the same annual household income, but who are dual-income earners?

This bill will level the playing field by amending the Taxation Act. It means families with equivalent taxable income would finally pay the same in provincial taxes. My friend Sara Landriault supports his bill. She feels this bill "will bring all working families on an equal economic level without discrimination, and that it will give parents the freedom to raise their children the way they see fit and not be financially discriminated against." I agree with her. Time and again I hear concerns, particularly from my residents in Nepean—Carleton. We boast one of the highest birth rates in all of Canada, and that's why these issues of fairness—and let's not forget parental choice—are top of mind for me and for the constituents I represent. Under the principle of fairness and the spirit of parental choice, I wholeheartedly agree with my colleague from Niagara West—Glanbrook. I will be supporting Bill 88.

Like Sara Landriault asks, and I will conclude on this: "Why will the government allow me to income split if I am divorced but not while we are married? A true feminist believes in equality for a woman whether she is married or single." The fact of feminism, she says, is that "we should all be treated equally in all aspects of our life. Unfortunately, without income-splitting, women at home are not equal." I agree with Sara and I agree with the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook.

Mr. Michael Prue: I am rising to speak to Bill 88, put forward by my friend and colleague from Niagara West—Glanbrook. I must state at the outset that I will not be supporting the bill, but this is private members' business and I understand that my colleague from Welland may be speaking to it and may in fact support the bill. This is private members' public business, as I said during the last debate; we have to kick around ideas, and it is not bound by party policy.

My own review of the bill shows as follows. This is intended so that people who are married or living in a

common-law relationship will be able to file a joint tax return and be allowed to conduct income-splitting. In virtually every case where income-splitting is undertaken, it is done by those people to reduce their level of taxation. People don't income split to raise their taxation. It doesn't happen. They don't do it. They don't want it to raise their taxes; they want it to reduce their taxes.

So let's be very clear what this is about. This is a measure that will help some people to reduce the level of taxes that they pay. Who wants the taxes reduced? Maybe some would say all Ontarians, but primarily, those fighting for reduced taxes are those at the higher income levels who have the highest rates of taxation in a progressive tax system; they are looking for ways and means to reduce that taxation. This is one of the ways that has been suggested by groups like the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, by some right-wing think tanks that will in fact allow people who earn good money to help reduce their taxes, particularly in the event that their spouse earns little or no money at all.

It will have three effects if it is passed. The first is that it will benefit those who are in the higher tax brackets much more than it will benefit people in lower income tax brackets. Even though there are couples where one spouse works and the other doesn't, in both brackets those who earn a lot of money stand to benefit a lot more than those who earn less. The second thing that will happen is that it will reduce the premise that we as Canadians and Ontarians have adopted, for at least a couple of generations, a graduated income tax; that if you earn more money, you are expected to pay more money towards the income tax and the upkeep of the system. The third and final effect it will have is that it will reduce treasury revenues. If it is adopted across Canada, and if we are in sync with the federal government, it will reduce revenues significantly. I will deal with the approximate amount towards the end of my speech. So it will have those three effects.

My colleague from Niagara West—Glanbrook quoted a number of things, but it follows on statements that have been made for the past number of years by the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. They use exactly the same argument, and I was pleased to hear him make exactly the same one: that one spouse earning \$70,000 a year and another zero will pay about \$361 a month—the figures are identical—versus those two spouses who earn \$35,000. They use the same argument: that it will help stay-at-home moms and people who want to go back to school and that kind of stuff. They said, and Mr. Hudak, my friend from Niagara West—Glanbrook, used the same argument as well, that it will assist—it's already been worked out for elderly couples on pension income.

However, I have to point out that most tax experts in Canada do not agree with this proposal. Most tax experts in Canada believe this will not do what it intends to do, and they correctly note that income-splitting is not a step to a more equitable tax regime. My friend quoted the number of countries that have such a scheme, and in fact they do. He quoted seven or eight of them. In fact, 21 out

of 30 OECD countries do not allow for income-splitting. Although he is correct in naming the seven or eight that do, the majority do not.

There's a good reason for that, and that is the cost to the treasury. The cost to the treasury is estimated to be about \$5 billion if undertaken by the federal government, and the cost of his proposal to the treasury of Ontario is estimated at being about \$2 billion. If people think we can get by with \$2 billion less, then I think he has an obligation, and people who support this have an obligation, to say, "Where would we cut that \$2 billion? Where would the cuts take place?" We have a \$95-billion budget. I've heard my colleague speak many times about cuts that the current government could make, but I think it behooves all of us to understand that if we were to pass this, and if this bill was to go to committee and pass, where would the government find its other \$2 billion? Or would we cut services to do it?

We have another difficulty: living next to the United States, which does have a form of income-splitting and allows for joint filing. But it creates what in the United States tax parlance is known as marriage penalties. It shows that if two spouses have similar incomes and are required to file jointly in the United States—which happens—unless there is a disparity in their incomes, if they earn more or less the same, then actually couples end up paying more for their taxes than two singles in the United States.

This is a disincentive for families. It is a disincentive for people to stay together. It is a disincentive for people to cohabit or to get married. It is a disincentive if the couples earn approximately the same salary. It only works, and this will only work, where one person in the couple earns significantly less than the other.

1550

I'm going to close with this and leave time for my colleague from Welland. We also have the difficulty of coordinating the federal and provincial tax regimes. If Ontario were to go this alone—and I don't know whether we could—it would be very difficult to coordinate that with the federal income tax system. It will require, if it is passed here, that a similar move be made in Ottawa. I have not seen that there is a stomach for that, because I have not seen the government in Ottawa, albeit a Conservative one, willing to forgo the approximately \$5 billion that this will cost.

A lot needs to be done if it is passed. A lot needs to be done in terms of coordination, of finding the revenue, of making it fair to couples who have like salaries versus those where one has an inordinately higher salary than the other. I just find, as an idea, it is not as progressive as it is made out to be. We have adopted a system of taxation in this country and this province that is graduated and, in my view, is fairer than that which is being proposed. Unfortunately I cannot, as an individual member, support this bill.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Thank you for giving me a chance to comment on Bill 88, An Act to provide fairness for families by amending the Taxation Act, 2007 to allow

income-splitting for taxation between cohabiting spouses and common-law partners. I know the member from Niagara West–Glanbrook has a passion in this area, and from his own ideological philosophy, I think it's important to his constituents.

I was listening to both the member from Pickering–Scarborough East—the PA for the Minister of Finance—and the member from Beaches–East York. They raised very important concerns about how we can implement this bill, if we support it in this place, since all the tax regulations are controlled and regulated by the federal government, and whether the federal government is willing to amend the Taxation Act or they want to leave it as it is. According to the collective agreement between us and the federal government, we cannot change anything without their amendment. Therefore, if we pass it here, it's not going to go anywhere, because it's controlled by the federal government.

Second, as was raised by both the PA and the member for Beaches–East York, if we do that, it's going to affect our treasury a great deal. As the member for Beaches–East York mentioned, it would cost Canada almost \$5 billion, and Ontario \$2 billion. That's a lot of money that would enable the government, enable us, to provide services for many different areas, whether health care, education, municipalities, tourism. Many different areas are crying for money. Also, I think it's important to remember that whatever we implement in this place is going to affect the lives of the people of Ontario, whether negative or positive.

I think the member from Niagara West–Glanbrook believes strongly that this is the best way to support families. I respect his idea and his direction, but as a matter of fact, when we introduce anything in this place, we have to remember the side effects in other areas. As I mentioned, it's going to cost the treasury a great deal of money, and we cannot afford it. Even if we passed this bill, we have no jurisdiction to make a change without an amendment from the federal government.

In the end, as has been mentioned, it's a private member's bill. Any member can introduce whatever they want and raise any issue, whether a motion or a bill, in order to create awareness among us and also send a message to the people of Ontario.

I think this bill would cause damage for the treasury, would cause trouble for us, and according to the agreement between us and the federal government, we cannot pass it and implement it. Hopefully, by good connection with the federal government, especially the finance minister of Canada—he was a member here and a former colleague—maybe you'll be able to convince him to do something about it, to bring in some kind of amendment that would allow us as a province to do so.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased to join the debate today and support my colleague the member from Niagara West–Glanbrook on his legislation, Bill 88, the Fairness for Families Act.

I commend the member for bringing forward this legislation because it is a bill that deals with practical issues

facing a lot of families in Ontario. It is not uncommon for families across Ontario to have a single earner, and for these families to pay a higher rate of income tax than a dual-income family with the same income is unfair.

As the Progressive Conservative critic for community services, I'd like to speak to the fact that many families with a disabled child are single-earner families. One parent will go to work while the other remains at home to look after their disabled child. In most cases there are additional expenses for education, care at home or supportive equipment. Income-splitting is an excellent way to provide support to families who have children with a disability.

Bill 88, the Fairness for Families Act, represents an opportunity for this Legislature to help single-income families in a real way. It tells Ontarians that the Ontario Legislature cares about families.

Since becoming the PC critic for the Ministry of Community and Social Services, I've heard from many families who have expressed concerns about the current Passport program that the community and social services ministry has put together. In many regions of the province, there are less than 10% application approval rates. This means that 90% of the families will not receive the funding they need.

Regardless of the reason the Passport funding was denied, the fact remains that parents still have to take care of their children. One parent decides to remain at home to provide the care needed for their child. Despite receiving no provincial support, the working parent is taxed at a higher rate than a dual-income family earning the same income. Taking into consideration the fact that raising a child with special needs does involve more resources than a child without special needs, the system is not treating them fairly. In fact, it penalizes them for staying home.

I encourage all members to support Bill 88 today. It would give financial support to all families, and in particular to families with a disabled child.

As I indicated earlier, support for families can be in many forms. A package of measures can improve real financial support for families.

Today, I had the opportunity to introduce a private member's bill, the Social Assistance Statute Law Amendment Act (Registered Disability Savings Plans). The bill is aimed at stopping the provincial government from clawing back disability benefits based on investments into the federal registered disability savings plan, or RDSP. The registered disability savings plan was introduced by the federal government in the 2007 federal budget to assist parents to save for the long-term financial support of children with severe disabilities. The federal government asked provinces to ensure that investment in an RDSP would not result in a reduction of provincial disability benefit payments. Both British Columbia and Newfoundland proactively moved forward to exempt RDSPs as assets in determining eligibility for disability benefits. Unfortunately, Ontario has not made this change, so families, if they invest in their children's

future, will have their disability payments clawed back. I hope all members will support this legislation to prevent a clawback from happening.

Imagine if we improved income-splitting today by passing Bill 88 and then passed my private member's bill so parents with disabled children could invest in their children's future. Imagine if we cared enough to provide a range of support to families. Imagine if the Liberals across the aisle were willing to recognize innovative proposals from private members and support their passage because it would assist families in Ontario.

Let's go back for a moment to private members' public business two weeks ago. The Liberal government voted against, and therefore defeated, the bill introduced by my colleague the member from Thornhill, Bill 78, An Act to provide property tax deferrals to low-income seniors and low-income persons with disabilities. I must say that I'm very disappointed that this bill did not pass. If this bill had been passed by the Legislature, it would have improved the lives and financial situation of many low-income seniors and persons with disabilities.

Community Living Ontario told me that they were supportive of the innovative idea from Peter Shurman, the member for Thornhill. Adults with disabilities who own their own home could have benefited, as it would have provided much-needed tax relief that would have allowed them to continue to live independently. Bill 78 would have created a province-wide and provincially administered program whereby low-income seniors and disabled persons could defer property tax payable on properties such as their residence. Voting against Bill 78 was a lost opportunity for the McGuinty government to provide tax relief to help persons with disabilities.

Again, why can't we as legislators embrace good ideas and make a real difference for families?

1600

I urge all members to work together today to pass Bill 88. The measures proposed in this bill present the Liberals with yet another opportunity to provide financial help for families with a disabled child. I hope the opportunity is not overlooked or ignored, but rather that every member of this House will see the importance of the measures contained in Bill 88 and recognize that help would be provided to families.

Mr. Peter Kormos: I'm pleased to be able to join in the debate. My colleague Mr. Prue, the member for Beaches—East York, whom I listened to carefully during his comments, was quite right when he suggested that I'm going to be supporting this particular bill. I listened carefully to Mr. Prue's comments about the bill. I spoke with him before this debate began and I have a great deal of regard for his perspective on these sorts of things. He knows all about this stuff.

But just briefly, the issues that have been raised and concerns that appear to be raised by the government members—for instance, about the undue benefit to overly wealthy people, the obscenely wealthy, the disgustingly wealthy, the Conrad Blacks of the world. Obviously, the Conrad Black scenario would be the worst-case scenario

described by Mr. Prue, when you talk about high-income people being able to split income. Conrad Black, for one, is very unlikely to want to share any of his income with Barbara Amiel. He probably has lawyers working overtime to make sure that she couldn't access any of his assets if her life depended on it. But one of the propositions to that and one of the responses could be to simply cap the amount of money that could be transferred over to a spouse for income tax purposes. That would address that problem.

Overall revenue issues: That's a red herring. Governments have revenue targets, they have revenue needs and they have to generate that amount of money. What that results in is cross-subsidization from one taxpayer to another. Inevitably, when you reduce somebody's tax burden, somebody else's tax burden goes up. As a New Democrat, as a lefty, I think that's an ideal opportunity to increase the taxes of the very wealthy, and I'm pleased to see that my colleague Mr. Hudak proposes a scheme whereby the tax burden will be more fairly shifted onto the very wealthy. Seriously, this could be perceived as a very enlightened piece of legislation, because the Hudak formula here is one that would make the rich pay, while hard-working people get a bit of a break.

The fundamental element here that makes this most attractive to me is that this allocates value to the work of a homemaker. I think that's something all of us should be very conscious of. This gives value to the work of the homemaker. Women or men who don't work outside the home but certainly work inside—caring for children, raising children, caring for their family—work incredibly hard. In many cases, they work far harder than their spouses. That's an undeniable reality. Short of divorce and marriage breakdown, there's rarely an opportunity to ascribe monetary value to that, and I say that's regrettable. I think what this bill does is it ascribes monetary value; it recognizes the economic value of a homemaker who forgoes a career to be at home to care for a spouse, a family, to raise children and to care for a household.

Finally, this is the sort of bill that should go to committee. Once it goes to committee and it's dealt with by committee, the government controls it. The government doesn't ever have to call it again. Here we are in private members' public business, you've got a member of this Legislature who comes forward with a creative solution to an acknowledged problem, and I say he deserves the opportunity to make his case in committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Hudak, you have up to two minutes for your reply.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I thank all of my colleagues for their contributions. Let me address some of the issues. The Liberal position is a curious one which seems to support the principle, but their answer is that they just don't want to do it quite yet. They don't actually have a clear position on the concept of allowing income-splitting. This is allowed to families in France, in Germany, in the United States, in Portugal and in the Czech Republic, to name but some.

They throw up an administrative issue and say that, because of the federal-provincial tax administration agreement, this is not possible. That's actually not true. We could administer this regardless of the administration agreement.

What I've tried to do, in crafting Bill 88, is to craft it in such a way that is consistent and allows that agreement to continue. I've said that if amendments can be made at committee to improve the bill, to maintain that consistency with the tax collection agreement, I welcome it. If the government wants to address this purpose of fairness for families through other means, I welcome that as well. I'd certainly be supportive. The point is that we need to achieve the principle of fairness for families and not to punish, with higher taxes, families who choose to have a stay-at-home spouse or one who works part-time.

The government also raises a spectre of revenue loss. I estimate about \$1 billion is the revenue loss that would occur. That's basically one cent on the dollar when this bill would be implemented in fiscal year 2009-10. Heck, their end-of-year slush funds are \$2.5 billion spent in one month alone.

Mr. Kormos, my colleague from Welland, has a very good point, by the way: Wealthy Ontarians largely, many of them, currently have this opportunity to split income through various corporate structures. Why can't we extend the same opportunity to split income among spouses that is available to wealthy Ontarians to average working families across the province of Ontario? He's right as well that it equates values to the work of a stay-at-home spouse. If the husband or wife stays at home or works part-time to support a child, this would recognize that as well.

I do hope for the support of all members and look forward to making improvements to the bill at committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

HANDGUN MANUFACTURERS'
AND IMPORTERS' LIABILITY ACT, 2008
LOI DE 2008 SUR LA RESPONSABILITÉ
DES FABRICANTS ET DES
IMPORTATEURS D'ARMES DE POING

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will deal with ballot item number 31, standing in the name of Mr. Flynn.

Mr. Flynn has moved second reading of Bill 82, An Act to make manufacturers and importers liable for harm caused by the unlawful use of handguns. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Could I have this bill referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Shall this bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy? Agreed.

SKIN CANCER PREVENTION ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR LA PRÉVENTION
DU CANCER DE LA PEAU

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will now deal with ballot item number 32.

Mr. Ramal has moved second reading of Bill 83, An Act to help prevent skin cancer. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Could we send the bill to the Standing Committee on Social Policy?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Is it agreed that the bill be sent to the Standing Committee on Social Policy? Agreed? Agreed.

FAIRNESS FOR FAMILIES ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR LE TRAITEMENT
ÉQUITABLE DES FAMILLES

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We'll now deal with the next ballot item.

Mr. Hudak has moved second reading of Bill 88, An Act to provide fairness for families by amending the Taxation Act, 2007 to allow income-splitting for taxation between cohabiting spouses and common-law partners. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1608 to 1613.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Hudak has moved second reading of Bill 88. I'd ask all those in favour to stand and remain standing.

Ayes

Dunlop, Garfield	Klees, Frank	Savoline, Joyce
Elliott, Christine	Kormos, Peter	Sergio, Mario
Hudak, Tim	MacLeod, Lisa	Shurman, Peter
Jones, Sylvia	Miller, Paul	

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): All those opposed, please stand and remain standing until you are recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Albanese, Laura	Dickson, Joe	Ramal, Khalil
Arthurs, Wayne	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Ruprecht, Tony
Balkissoon, Bas	Fonseca, Peter	Sandals, Liz
Bentley, Christopher	Jaczek, Helena	Smitherman, George
Best, Margaret	Jeffrey, Linda	Sousa, Charles
Broten, Laurel C.	Moridi, Reza	Van Bommel, Maria
Cansfield, Donna H.	Phillips, Gerry	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Colle, Mike	Prue, Michael	
Delaney, Bob	Qaadri, Shafiq	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 11; the nays are 25.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negatived.

Hon. Gerry Phillips: Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): All those in favour? Adjourned.

The House adjourned at 1616.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, Sophia (L)	Hamilton Mountain	
Albanese, Laura (L)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (L)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (L)	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / procureur general
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (L)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (ND)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (L)	St. Catharines	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Brotten, Laurel C. (L)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Brown, Michael A. (L)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (L)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)	St. Paul's	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, government House leader / ministre des Affaires autochtones, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (L)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique
Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. M. Aileen (L)	Barrie	Minister of Culture, minister responsible for seniors / ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Colle, Mike (L)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (L)	Niagara Falls	
Crozier, Bruce (L)	Essex	Deputy Speaker, Chair of the committee of the whole House / Vice- Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Delaney, Bob (L)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (L)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (L)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (ND)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (L)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / ministre des Finances, président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L) Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (L)	Oakville Mississauga East–Cookville / Mississauga–Est–Cookville	Minister of Tourism / ministre du Tourisme
Gélinas, France (ND) Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)	Nickel Belt Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hampton, Howard (ND)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie (PC) Hillier, Randy (PC) Horwath, Andrea (ND)	Oxford Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Third Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House / Troisième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hoy, Pat (L) Hudak, Tim (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	
Jaczek, Helena (L) Jeffrey, Linda (L) Jones, Sylvia (PC) Klees, Frank (PC) Kormos, Peter (ND)	Oak Ridges–Markham Brampton–Springdale Dufferin–Caledon Newmarket–Aurora Welland	New Democratic Party House leader / leader parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Kular, Kuldip (L) Kwinter, Monte (L) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L) Leal, Jeff (L) Levac, Dave (L) MacLeod, Lisa (PC) Mangat, Amrit (L)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton York Centre / York-Centre Glengarry–Prescott–Russell Peterborough Brant Nepean–Carleton Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (ND) Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (L)	Trinity–Spadina Cambridge London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Children and Youth Services, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mauro, Bill (L) McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (L)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier and President of the Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (L)	Ancaster–Dundas– Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
McNeely, Phil (L) Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L)	Ottawa–Orléans Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (ND) Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)	Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Carol (L) Moridi, Reza (L) Munro, Julia (PC) Murdoch, Bill (PC) Naqvi, Yasir (L) O'Toole, John (PC) Oraziotti, David (L)	Huron–Bruce Richmond Hill York–Simcoe Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre Durham Sault Ste. Marie	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (L)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Minister of Energy / ministre de l'Énergie
Prue, Michael (ND)	Beaches–East York	
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (L)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (L)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (L)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Leader of the Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (L)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (L)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (L)	Nipissing	Minister of Revenue / ministre du Revenu
Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / vice-premier ministre, ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Sorbara, Greg (L)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (L)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (ND)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship / ministre des Petites Entreprises et de l'Entrepreneuriat
Van Bommel, Maria (L)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Research and Innovation / ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Second Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	Opposition House leader / leader parlementaire de l'opposition
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (L)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Zimmer, David (L)	Willowdale	

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COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Garfield Dunlop
Gilles Bisson, Kim Craiton, Bob Delaney,
Garfield Dunlop, Tim Hudak, Amrit Mangat,
Phil McNeely, John O'Toole, Lou Rinaldi,
Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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Finances et affaires économiques**

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Toby Barrett, Pat Hoy, Jean-Marc Lalonde,
Leeanna Pendergast, Michael Prue, Charles Sousa
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Robert Bailey, Jim Brownell, Linda Jeffrey,
Kuldip Kular, Rosario Marchese, Bill Mauro,
Carol Mitchell, David Oraziotti, Joyce Savoline
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Présidente: Julia Munro
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Michael Brown, Kevin Flynn, France Gélinas,
Randy Hillier, Lisa MacLeod, Julia Munro,
David Ramsay, Liz Sandals, Maria Van Bommel
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

Justice Policy / Justice

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Jeff Leal
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Christine Elliott, Peter Kormos,
Jeff Leal, Reza Moridi, Yasir Naqvi,
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski, David Zimmer
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

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Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Kevin Flynn
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon, Bob Delaney,
Joe Dickson, Kevin Flynn, Sylvia Jones,
Norm Miller, Mario Sergio, Peter Tabuns
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

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Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Jerry Ouellette
Laura Albanese, Ernie Hardeman, Andrea Horwath,
Phil McNeely, Jerry Ouellette, Liz Sandals,
Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel, David Zimmer
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**Regulations and private bills /
Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Michael Prue
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Paul Miller
Bas Balkissoon, Mike Colle, Kim Craiton,
Gerry Martiniuk, Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch,
Michael Prue, Tony Ruprecht, Mario Sergio
Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Social Policy / Politique sociale

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vic Dhillon
Laurel C. Broten, Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo,
Helena Jaczek, Dave Levac, Shafiq Qaadri,
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Second reading agreed to	2555
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