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Wednesday 1 October 2008

Mercredi 1^{er} octobre 2008

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 1^{er} octobre 2008

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I ask members to join me in the recitation of the Lord's Prayer, followed by the Sikh prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR DES IDÉES D'AVENIR

Mr. Duncan moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 100, An Act to amend the Corporations Tax Act and the Taxation Act, 2007 / Projet de loi 100, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'imposition des sociétés et la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Debate? Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time this morning with my parliamentary assistant, Wayne Arthurs, the member for Pickering–Scarborough East.

I'd like to talk about this important piece of legislation which I introduced last week. Bill 100, Ideas for the Future Act, 2008, is designed to attract individuals with great ideas from all across Canada to set up their businesses in Ontario. What we're talking about here is turning innovation into Ontario jobs by establishing high-tech companies that will in turn provide a boost to the economy. This bill, if passed, would provide a 10-year corporate income tax exemption for new companies that turn home-grown ideas into Ontario jobs and products.

We have the support of post-secondary institutions. The president and CEO of Colleges Ontario, Linda Franklin, claims that half of the jobs in the next 15 years will require the ability to use technology that has not yet been invented. Ms. Franklin supports this measure, which would promote applied research and innovation across Ontario's 24 colleges.

The Ontario government is helping workers and families across the province as well. We are helping businesses and communities. We are helping to make the transition to a new period of economic growth.

With this bill, the McGuinty government is helping to turn ideas into high-tech jobs. What we are trying to do is encourage Ontario's entrepreneurs to commercialize public research in these leading areas. This is a landmark

corporate tax measure and is the first of its kind in Canada. It provides a strong incentive for firms to take ideas and turn them into real commercial products. We are supporting innovative businesses in commercializing research at post-secondary schools and research institutes. New businesses in Ontario that commercialize eligible intellectual property developed at qualifying Canadian colleges, universities and research institutes would be eligible to claim this 10-year corporate income tax refund if this bill is passed.

This legislation supports Ontario's ambitious innovation agenda. Our 2008 budget promotes a culture of innovation and builds on the government's innovation agenda through almost \$300 million in new investments and proposed tax initiatives that support the start-up and growth of innovative firms. Right now, somewhere in a lab in Waterloo or Ottawa or any number of places—Leamington—Ontarians are helping to invent our future. They are discovering cleaner ways to generate power. We certainly see that, Mr. Speaker, in the greenhouses in your neck of the woods. They are discovering new ways to treat disease. They are developing new technologies for empowering businesses and connecting communities. From the discovery of insulin to the BlackBerry, the phenomenal impact of Ontario inventions has spread around the world.

Our economic and social prosperity is dependent on this ability to be innovative and to compete. We are investing in an aggressive innovation agenda to ensure that we are one of the winning economies in the 21st century. This agenda builds on the strengths of Ontario's creative environment, our diverse culture, our highly skilled workforce, our world-class education system and our internationally recognized research community. It builds on this province's greatest strength. That strength is the talent and ingenuity of our people. Ontario is truly a home to innovation and a destination for success. For example, last week the Premier was at the Honda engine plant opening in Alliston. Honda opened this new plant to make fuel-efficient engines. The Premier thanked Honda for its continued confidence in Ontario's highly skilled workforce.

Our innovation agenda is aimed at igniting growth in the industries that will shape our future and create Ontario's next generation of jobs and prosperity. With this bill, eligible intellectual property would include patented property and copyrighted computer programs that constitute a technological advancement. Commercialized ideas will create jobs for Ontario's future. This bill, if passed, would encourage Ontario entrepreneurs to com-

mercialize public research in areas like bio-economy, clean technologies, advanced health technologies, and telecommunications, computer and digital technologies. These are important sectors of the economy we must succeed in if we want Ontario to be a global leader. They are the keystones of a new evolving economy. This bill, if passed, would allow a start-up company to take new ideas developed at Canadian public research institutes to market and enable more highly-skilled people to work in a more robust and productive economy.

In an increasingly global market, we are helping to launch the next wave of Ontario's innovators. This new and exciting program is aimed at encouraging economic growth, new energy development and assisting the environment. We are doing this by reforming the tax system through this bill—if passed—to promote leadership in investment and economic growth in the province.

The McGuinty government believes that our colleges, universities and research institutes provide a wealth of knowledge to be tapped to capitalize on innovation. I would like to talk about some of the key programs and tax incentives we have in place that are designed to encourage innovation in Ontario. The Ontario innovation tax credit allows small and medium-sized Ontario corporations to claim a 10% refundable tax credit on qualifying research and development expenditures in Ontario. The Ontario research and development tax credit for taxation years ending after 2008 allows corporations to claim a 4.5% non-refundable tax credit on qualifying research and development expenditures in Ontario. The Ontario business research institute tax credit is for Ontario corporations to claim a 20% refundable tax credit for qualifying research and development expenditures incurred in Ontario as part of an eligible research contract with an eligible Ontario research institute. The innovation demonstration fund provides financial support of up to 50% of eligible costs to help Ontario companies with the commercialization and initial demonstration of their innovative technologies.

0910

Our Next Generation of Jobs Fund has three streams of funding. The first, the jobs and investment program, is designed to help companies in a range of sectors to expand in Ontario and develop innovative products for global markets—up to 15% of eligible project costs. The second, the biopharmaceutical investment program, supports the expansion of research and advanced manufacturing by pharmaceutical and biotechnology firms—up to 20% of eligible project costs. The third, the strategic opportunities program, supports industry-led public-private collaborations focused on increasing Ontario's innovation expertise in the bioeconomy and clean technologies, advanced health technologies and creative industries—up to 25% of eligible project or program costs. In addition, the Ontario research commercialization program provides grants ranging from \$100,000 to \$750,000 a year for up to three years. This helps publicly funded Ontario research institutions and not-for-profit organizations transfer their research to the marketplace.

For this Ideas for the Future Act, 2008, we also have the support of Dr. Paul Genest, president and CEO of the Council of Ontario Universities. Dr. Genest says that this new tax measure would help create a greener, healthier, economically stronger province by tapping into our research excellence, strengthening the partnerships between researchers and businesses, and promoting commercial success. If this bill is passed, a qualifying corporation that commercializes an idea would be eligible for the tax exemption if developed at a Canadian university, college or research institute.

We're taking the next step in sending a message to researchers and companies around the world. That message is that if you've got an innovative project that will build on our research strengths and create jobs, Ontario is the place to be. In fact, when foreign venture capital invests in Canada, 60% of that capital comes to Ontario. Ontario's competitive strengths do attract business investment and create jobs.

The McGuinty government is investing in key sectors and making the tax system more competitive to promote investment and encourage economic growth. But we have to do more. A fast-moving global economy is the reality, and Ontario must compete—and compete to win. Innovation is one of the keys to the future of our economy, and the McGuinty government recognizes its importance in an increasingly competitive global market.

As I mentioned when I introduced the bill earlier this month, I'm working closely with my colleague the Honourable John Wilkinson, Minister of Research and Innovation.

This legislation would also provide for flexibility so that other innovative technologies can be added in the future.

I'd like to mention some of the key qualifications for this proposed tax incentive. The company must be a new start-up incorporated in Canada after March 24, 2008, and before March 25, 2012. In addition, substantially all of the company's revenues must come from a new active business in the priority areas for economic growth. Priority areas for economic growth include advanced health; bioeconomy, which includes initiatives related to clean energy and telecommunications; and computer or digital media technologies. Eligible intellectual property must be developed by an employee or a student of a qualifying Canadian research institute. Finally, the company must be in the business of commercializing eligible intellectual property developed at a qualifying Canadian research institute.

The Minister of Research and Innovation, my colleague Minister Wilkinson, will be responsible for certifying an eligible commercialization business and would issue a certificate of eligibility to the qualifying corporation for the purpose of applying to the Minister of Revenue for a refund. I ask members to pass this measure, so that we can get these ideas of the future working here in Ontario today to create jobs. This initiative builds on our existing measures to cut taxes for businesses, such as eliminating Ontario's capital tax and reducing high business education tax rates across the province.

I'd like to take a moment to speak about that economy. There are challenges, and they include the slumping US economy and the current global economic turmoil. We saw these challenges ahead, and that's why last fall we introduced a comprehensive five-point plan for the economy. We will continue to implement that plan of investing in skills and knowledge, investing in infrastructure, enhancing Ontario's competitiveness through strategic tax cuts for businesses, strengthening the environment for innovation, and forming key partnerships to strengthen Ontario's industries. The plan does not and cannot cover everything, but it does effectively help with matters that we can control.

Since October 2003, more than 449,000 net new jobs have been created in Ontario—51,000 net new jobs this year—with real wages increasing. However, as we all know, certain key sectors, such as manufacturing, forestry, agriculture and tourism, face serious challenges. So far in 2008, we know that employment is up 1.7% from a year ago, retail sales are up 5.4%, wages are up 4.6% and housing starts are up 19.6%.

Two days ago, I released the economic accounts for the second quarter of calendar year 2008. While second quarter GDP is up, my concern is not whether we have two quarters of negative growth in a row but a protracted period of little or no growth. That's why, like Ontario families who are tightening their household finances, we will continue to make the necessary adjustments to best respond to the needs of the economy and of all Ontarians. This bill is a fundamental part of Ontario's five-point economic plan, which will help us sustain the high quality of life we enjoy today and create the high-value-added jobs of the future.

In closing, I'd like to talk about an important point in the big picture. We believe that for much of our work to count in a meaningful way, Ontario requires a true partner in the federal government. Ontario is reaching out to the federal government, and our hope is that it will listen. We're not looking for a special deal or anything beyond what is fair for Ontarians. The Premier recently launched an online petition that's getting people talking during this federal election. He is asking Ontarians to sign the online petition to ensure fairness for Ontario, and I encourage all Ontarians to visit www.fairness.ca.

What we're going to require after the next federal election is a partner who is more committed than in the past, a partner who understands that you can't leave our auto sector on its own, that you can't have unfair employment insurance benefits, that you can't have a situation where Ontario doesn't get equal per capita health care funding—and not have to wait for that until 2014. The facts about employment insurance, health care funding, economic development and infrastructure funding are there and, in many cases, acknowledged by the federal government. We're also calling on Ottawa to put in place an economic development strategy for southern Ontario. Every part of the country except southern Ontario has such a strategy.

I ask my honourable colleagues to pass this measure, so that we can get these ideas for the future working here

today in Ontario. By helping to maintain a tax system that promotes investment, encourages economic growth and supports Ontario's fundamental strengths, all Ontarians win.

0920

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Pickering–Scarborough East.

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: I'll keep my comments relatively short, so that all sides of the House will have an opportunity during this period of debate to share equally in the time allocated.

I'm happy to rise on Bill 100, the Ideas for the Future Act. This is a cornerstone piece of legislation that will encourage turning innovation into Ontario jobs by establishing high-tech companies here in Ontario. As the minister said, I certainly urge all members, when the time comes, to offer support to this bill. It's intended to attract individuals with great ideas from across Canada, not just Ontario, to set up businesses right here in Ontario. The bill will provide a 10-year corporate tax exemption for new companies that turn homegrown ideas into Ontario jobs and products.

In an increasingly global market, we're helping to launch the next wave of Ontario innovators. The legislation allows for flexibility, so that other innovative technologies can be added in the future. We're sending a message to researchers and companies around the world. That message is that if you've got an innovative project that will build on our research strength and create jobs, Ontario is the place to be. The Ontario government is helping workers and families across the province, and we're helping businesses and communities, too. We're helping to make the transition to a new period of economic growth. The McGuinty government is investing in key sectors and making the tax system more competitive to promote investment and encourage economic growth. A fast-moving global economy is the reality, and Ontario must compete, and compete to win.

This bill would encourage Ontario entrepreneurs to commercialize public research in areas such as bio-economy/clean technologies and telecommunications, advanced health technologies, and computer and digital technologies. These are important sectors of our economy that we must succeed in if we want Ontario to be a global leader. They are the keystones for the new and evolving economy.

Here is how the bill would work. A researcher working at a college or university develops an idea to improve upon an existing product. He or she then proceeds to take that idea to market and sets up a corporate entity to make that happen. The corporation could then be eligible for this 10-year tax exemption. This is a rather simplified version of the events that would have to take place, but it gives you an idea of how the legislation would assist in promoting innovation in Ontario.

Innovation is one of the keys to the future of our economy, and the McGuinty government recognizes its importance in an increasingly competitive global market. This landmark corporate tax measure is the first of its

kind in Ontario and in Canada. It provides a strong incentive for firms to take ideas and turn them into real commercialized products. The government is helping to maintain a tax system that promotes investment, encourages economic growth and supports Ontario's fundamental strengths.

What we are trying to do is encourage Ontario entrepreneurs to commercialize public research in these leading areas. We're supporting innovative business in commercializing research at post-secondary educational institutions and research institutes, because this government believes that our colleges, universities and research institutes provide a wealth of knowledge that can be tapped into to capitalize on innovation. In fact, the associations that represent Ontario's colleges and universities support this bill. The bill has a champion in Dr. Paul C. Genest, president and CEO of the Council of Ontario Universities. The bill also has the clear support of Linda Franklin, president and CEO of Colleges Ontario.

Right now, somewhere in a lab here in Toronto, in Oshawa or in any number of places throughout the province, Ontarians are helping to invent the future. They're discovering new ways to treat disease and cleaner ways to create power. This legislation supports Ontario's ambitious, innovative agenda. Our 2008 budget promotes a culture of innovation and builds on the government's innovation agenda through almost \$300 million in new investments and proposed tax incentives that support the start-up and growth of innovative ideas. We are investing in an aggressive innovation agenda to ensure that we are one of the winning economies in the 21st century.

As I said in the beginning, I encourage all members of this Legislature to support Bill 100.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm pleased to rise on behalf of the people of Wellington-Halton Hills this morning and participate briefly in this debate on Bill 100, Ideas for the Future Act, 2008, and respond to the Minister of Finance and his parliamentary assistant.

I've had a chance to review some of the issues surrounding this bill this morning and I find it something that I believe I can support in principle. It's a modest proposal on the part of the government to attempt to address the economic challenges that we're facing in this province today. As I understand it, this bill will support innovation, as the government has said, allowing companies to apply for a tax refund—if they create a brand new company, I should say, and take an idea developed at a university, college or research institute and turn it into marketable goods and services.

I have one question for the Minister of Finance or perhaps his parliamentary assistant, if they will answer it. The question is, why is it that research that is developed at colleges and universities and research institutes is the only research that is deemed eligible for this sort of favourable tax treatment? Why is it that research that is developed in the private sector is not eligible for this same kind of tax treatment? I would hope that the parliamentary assistant will respond to this.

I'm looking forward to the presentation this morning by our finance critic, the member for Niagara West-Glanbrook. He's going to speak for approximately an hour, I think. I look forward to his thoughts on the economy, generally speaking, as well as the challenges that we're facing, because as you well know, the province of Ontario has lost more than 200,000 manufacturing jobs in—

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: It's 240,000.

Mr. Ted Arnott: My colleague from Halton, who is our economic development critic, advises me it's 240,000. Clearly, the government needs to come forward with an action plan that is actually effective in addressing this serious concern. We're talking about many thousands of families who are facing real economic hardship because they've lost a good-paying job that they may have had for many years and, I'm sure, are finding difficulty replacing that lost income.

I would ask the parliamentary assistant to address this issue and answer my question.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Prue: I listened intently to the minister and his parliamentary assistant today, and they used two perplexing words, given the scope and the magnitude of this particular bill. The minister called this a landmark bill. By "landmark," I take it that this is something that is going to set Ontario and Canada and the world aside because it's going to be so magnificent that it's going to be like the Eiffel Tower or Niagara Falls or something you just can't miss. My colleague the parliamentary assistant called it a cornerstone, and by "cornerstone," I think of that by which a whole building is built and upon which everything else rests, that which is the foundation. So you can understand how perplexed I am when we made some inquiries yesterday as to approximately how much the government is going to spend on this particular bill, how much the taxpayers are going to foot for this magnificent new experiment, this landmark, this cornerstone, of legislation, and discovered to our dismay that it's \$5 million this year and \$7 million next year. I want to say that if this is such a landmark and a cornerstone, then I find it passing strange that the government is investing so little of its budget in this area and is investing so little of the capital of this province, if in fact they intend that this is going to do something. Five million dollars this year and \$7 million next year is not going to establish a lot of jobs in this province. In a province where we bleed jobs almost every day, in a province where this morning I woke up and saw what was happening in Goderich, it saddened me to the quick.

0930

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Ms. Leanna Pendergast: I also have been listening intently this morning, and it's my pleasure to rise and join the discussion on An Act to amend the Corporations Tax Act, or the short title, the Ideas for the Future Act.

I am proud to reinforce that this government has a five-point plan for the economy, which includes invest-

ing in creating an environment for innovation. This legislation is a key component to encourage investment and also fits in with strategic tax cuts to encourage investment. This is about jobs. This is about the next generation of jobs. This is about bringing those jobs to Ontario, both now and in the future.

I just want to take a minute to talk about my constituents in the riding of Kitchener–Conestoga. We are very, very familiar with innovation and the positive effect that innovation has had. Specifically, we have Conestoga College right in the riding, and in the larger Waterloo region we have the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University. We have experienced the wonderful phenomena of Pickstream, of Canada's Technology Triangle and, of course, Research In Motion—you're all familiar with the BlackBerry.

We have seen how things have developed and strengthened in our communities. We have seen and witnessed first-hand the effect this innovation has on our economy, the effect this innovation has on our infrastructure and on our partnerships, the effect this innovation has on our lives in general. We have witnessed first-hand the skills of our youth, the retraining of our workforce and our competitive edge in a global economy. The McGuinty government is opening doors to the future, opening doors for our youth with these ideas for the future.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: I think this is another one of those good ideas, but a huge missed opportunity. It's really unfortunate that the bill is too narrowly defined and that it helps just a tiny segment of the business community. It actually would only contribute to about 2% of the jobs in Ontario when we are in such tough economic times and have lost so many manufacturing jobs. I believe that what this bill does is list more ineligible than eligible companies and entities, and it lists them in a way that makes it so difficult for even the eligible organizations to participate, through all the paperwork that needs to be completed, that perhaps it may take the entire eligibility time of this initiative to do so. I think what that does is discourage.

It also could cost these organizations a lot of money to go through the process. It's been proven in other parts of the world and in other parts of Canada that this type of process is cost-ineffective. It costs the organizations a lot of money to hire additional staff just to go through the process.

I think we had an opportunity here to allow not just new organizations and not just public organizations to participate, but existing corporations that have proven themselves and perhaps could work through and bring to an end these new innovations much more quickly. After all, we need to do this to be competitive in Ontario. It's a missed opportunity.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Response?

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: I want to thank the members from Wellington–Halton Hills, Beaches–East York,

Kitchener–Conestoga and Burlington for their comments. Let me say that I'm particularly pleased, obviously, that folks were listening carefully to the minister in opening second reading debate and to the comments I had the opportunity to make as well.

The member from Wellington–Halton Hills was querying the sort of public-private sector initiative. Clearly, this legislation is targeting our colleges, universities and research institutes here in Canada to be able to create great ideas and see them commercialized here in Ontario. There are tax incentives in place already for research opportunities for the private sector, but this is clearly targeting that public sector, that new innovation, those in colleges and universities and research institutes in the country. This is a cornerstone, and the member from Beaches–East York spoke to the issues of cornerstone legislation and the like—it is. It is because it's a first in Canada. It's a clearly defined focus on the next generation of activity, that brainpower that comes out of those sectors, in turning great ideas into real products and creating real jobs here in the province of Ontario.

My friend from Kitchener–Conestoga mentioned RIM during her comments, and that's just one example that we're all so terribly familiar with. It wasn't that long ago in this Legislature—I recall arriving five years ago and was somewhat surprised to find that so many members on all sides were yet to use a BlackBerry. It was like a new tool, and by that time I'd had the opportunity to use one for a few years. Now, virtually everyone here is taking advantage of those types of opportunities. Those are the types of great ideas that we want to see produced here in Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Tim Hudak: I want to say at the start it's the first time I've seen on the second reading of a bill that the parliamentary assistant's two-minute rebuttal was longer than his entire remarks. Holy smokes, they call it a landmark piece of legislation, a cornerstone for the economy, and they barely gave passing remarks here in the Legislature, not even using up half their time.

Landmark legislation, cornerstone—glory hallelujah, Bill 100 is at second reading. Hark, the herald angels sing. This is going to turn the economy around because of, as my colleague from Beaches–East York said, a \$5-million to \$7-million investment in the economy. Holy cats: \$5 million to \$7 million, the Minister of Finance's own figures on what the economic impact of this legislation is going to be.

Let's put that into perspective, by the way. My friend the member for Wellington—

Mr. Ted Arnott: Halton Hills.

Mr. Tim Hudak: —Wellington–Halton Hills points out on page 26 of the Ontario budget 2008-09 that the Ministry of Tourism is “investing \$8 million ... to conduct research on new tourism markets, inform Ontario's tourism strategy” etc. Eight million dollars in a tourism study alone actually dwarfs the value that the Ministry of Finance believes that this will have for Ontario businesses.

By the way, on that topic—and I know my friend from St. Catharines, a former tourism minister, probably has the exact same concerns that I do: \$8 million, a sort of farewell party for Greg Sorbara, is a bit of an abuse of taxpayer dollars. Maybe I'll give him the benefit of the doubt. We'll see what kind of study comes at the end of the day. Well, listen, he was successful. He won by a large margin last election. To give him credit as chair of the Ontario election campaign, he did have two majority government wins. So in the annals of Liberal Party history—

Applause.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Go ahead and applaud Greg Sorbara. You are sending him off on a world tour to the tourism capitals of the world to thank him for all his work on behalf of the Ontario Liberal Party. We don't see him much here in the Ontario Legislature anymore, because he is probably travelling to Tokyo and Paris and Milan and New York and San Francisco and Auckland—the list would go on and on. Probably the places Greg Sorbara is going to visit on the backs of the \$8 million from Ontario taxpayers would take my entire hour, so I won't go into that much longer.

Interjection.

Mr. Tim Hudak: No, Greg Sorbara is a good friend of Dalton McGuinty's. He helped him to win two election campaigns and he's being rewarded with this gold-plated, \$8-million fun fund—paid for, by the way, by hard-pressed Ontario taxpayers, who are facing higher fuel costs, higher home heating costs, higher grocery costs, higher taxes and, thanks to Dalton McGuinty's new assessment scheme, skyrocketing property assessments, coming in their mailboxes this fall.

Bill 100 is at second reading. I'll give a little bit of credit to the Minister of Finance. He is at least finally proposing some form of tax reductions in the province of Ontario. I know it's one of these “We're freezing over” type things—the Liberals actually proposing a tax reduction of some kind. To keep the religious theme, it's a bit of a conversion on the road to Damascus, although, sadly, the Liberal wagon pulled over on the road with Damascus barely in sight. As has been pointed out, this so-called tax break is extremely narrow in focus, heavily bureaucratic, and weighed down by ideology that says government bureaucrats and politicians are better at picking winners and losers than the markets or full-time, experienced investors.

0940

Interjection.

Mr. Tim Hudak: It's true. My friend the Minister of Research and Innovation groans at that comment. But you're going to be a busy fella. You're going to be an extremely busy fella if this legislation passes, because the Minister of Research and Innovation personally, according to the bill, is going to sign off on these certificates of eligibility. You, sir, will be the judge, jury and executioner when it comes to these companies coming to Queen's Park to ask you to bless their projects and approve them under the narrow confines of this legislation

so they can benefit from a tax reduction, which, by the way, in the majority of cases, I think will be relatively small because for many of these firms it takes some time before they're making profits of any particular value.

Why don't I get into that a little bit early in my remarks? When you look at the actual legislation—I know my colleague the Minister of Research and Innovation is listening quite closely—the Minister of Research and Innovation, under Bill 100 as it reads today, would determine who is eligible for a certificate of eligibility. So every company that wants to take advantage of this tax incentive would then apply to the Minister of Research and Innovation for a certificate of eligibility. This is section 57.15 of the legislation:

“Certificate of eligibility

“57.15(1) To be eligible to apply for a refund under this part, a qualifying corporation must apply for, be eligible to receive and receive a certificate of eligibility for the year issued by the Minister of Research and Innovation.”

I will ask the minister, and maybe he could reply later on during debate, if this means that every year, each individual corporation would have to reapply for the fund, according to 57.15.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Do you have to be a Liberal to apply?

Mr. Tim Hudak: My colleague from Halton asks if you have to be a Liberal to apply. I don't think that will be the case. It doesn't say that in the legislation.

However, the point I'm making is, when the McGuinty government is convinced that the bureaucrats who will be hired to run this new program—because we know there will be a significant number of hirings of more government workers to determine which companies are eligible and ineligible, what year they're eligible for etc. Maybe the minister will reply on exactly how many new individuals he will be hiring. Maybe those 600 or so people who lost their jobs, sadly, at Volvo in Goderich or the 800 individuals who lost their jobs at John Deere in Welland with the decline in the manufacturing sector in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario will be looking for jobs. I hope the minister will describe exactly how many jobs they are going to create in his ministry to referee this particular part of the act.

My colleague from Halton asks, “Do you have to be a Liberal firm to qualify?” Well, it doesn't say that in the legislation, but I worry that if it's the minister himself who is deciding what companies are eligible and ineligible—and it's very grey in the legislation which companies are going to be eligible because of the definitions; it gives great scope for regulation-making—there will be heavy lobbying efforts upon the minister himself, or herself, if that changes down the road, to determine whether a company is eligible. So while you may not have to be a Liberal to apply, I say to my colleague from Halton, it certainly is going to help sell tickets to the minister's fundraiser.

Section 57.15 goes on to detail how the application system will work: “An application for a certificate of

eligibility for a taxation year shall be made to the Minister of Research and Innovation after the end of the year to which it relates, in a form approved by the Minister of Research and Innovation.” So not only will you be determining, from a big stack of papers on your desk, who will be eligible for these certificates, as you sign them one by one, but you also get to determine exactly what the form will look like. So I’m sure you’ll be busy in the time ahead, if Bill 100 passes, in determining what this form is going to look like.

Let me point this out as well: The government describes this as a tax reduction. In reality, when you look at Bill 100, it’s a refund with a very heavily, thickly bureaucratic process to apply for those funds. So if you picture some of the companies that are being targeted, and my colleague from Kitchener–Conestoga had spoken about young university students etc., they are going to be relatively, I would think—well, actually, extensively—hard-pressed to work through a thick bureaucratic system, first to apply for the certificate of eligibility from the minister and then to take that certificate in hand to the Minister of Revenue, another ministry altogether, and begin negotiations to receive a refund from the Ministry of Revenue. I’m not sure that the process—all paperwork, by the way; it’s not electronic—dealing with two and perhaps three different ministries is conducive to helping these young entrepreneurs who may be recent graduates, may be university or college students etc.

“Additional information or records

“57.15(3) A corporation applying for a certificate of eligibility shall provide such additional information or records as the Minister of Research and Innovation may specify in order to evaluate the application.

“Criteria for issuing certificate of eligibility

“(4) The Minister of Research and Innovation may issue a certificate of eligibility to the corporation for the year if he or she is satisfied that the corporation carried on an eligible commercialization business during the year.”

What does that mean, “eligible commercialization business during the year”? Well, our young entrepreneurs, busy making new innovations and trying to get them to market, will have the distinct pleasure of reading through Bill 100 and the extensive definitions.

Under the definitions section:

“‘eligible commercialization business’ means an active business,

“(a) that in the opinion of the Minister of Research and Innovation is,

“(i) an advanced health technology business,

“(ii) a bioeconomy business,

“(iii) a telecommunications, computer or digital technologies production business that is primarily engaged in activities described in categories 3341, 3342, 3344 or 5112 of the North American Industry Classification System 2007–Canada, as published by Statistics Canada, or,” the catch-all,

“(iv) a business that is prescribed by or that satisfies the conditions prescribed by the Minister of Finance....”

And that’s not all. So if you are a young entrepreneur with a new innovation you want to take to market and you want to benefit from this refund, not only would you have to win the support of the Minister of Research and Innovation to get one of these prized certificates of eligibility, but you would have to find out what an eligible commercialization business is; you would have to read through Bill 100. And then heaven forbid you’re in communications, computer or digital technologies, because you’re going to have to figure out what the heck categories 3341, 3342, 3344 or—don’t forget—5112 of the North American Industry Classification System 2007—Canada, as published by Statistics Canada, are. If I listened closely to the minister and the parliamentary assistant, I don’t think they described exactly what categories 3341, 3342, 3344, or 5112 in fact are.

But, as the expression goes, that ain’t all. Our young, intrepid entrepreneur then would have to satisfy a second criterion:

“(b) that in the opinion of the Minister of Research and Innovation has as its sole purpose,

“(i) the sale of property that derives more than 50 per cent of its value from eligible intellectual property,

“(ii) the sale of property an essential element of which is eligible intellectual property,

“(iii) the licensing of computer programs that are eligible intellectual property, or

“(iv) such other purpose as may be prescribed by the Minister of Finance; and

“(c) that satisfies such other conditions as may be prescribed by the Minister of Finance....”

So let’s take this back a step. Not only would our young entrepreneur with an innovation that she wants to take to market have to win the support of the Minister of Research and Innovation, would have to be in one of those very narrowly defined fields, very much open to interpretation, and then satisfy the Minister of Finance that certain conditions are met with respect to the value of the intellectual property—if we’re talking about small firms, we’re talking about entrepreneurs who have an innovation and are desperately trying to get it to market, who have small levels of capitalization, and who are very busy in developing those markets. To think they will have the spare time to walk through this heavily thick bureaucratic process is, I fear, wishful thinking at best. It gets worse, by the way.

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There are further definitions in terms of exactly what a bioeconomy business is and what exactly an advanced health business is. Let me see here:

“‘advanced health technology business’ means a business that is primarily engaged in using technology,

“(a) in the development of assistive medical devices, pharmaceutical drugs, regenerative medicine, biologics, medical procedures or surgical procedures, or

“(b) in human tissue engineering....”

“Bioeconomy” is also defined:

“(a) the production of biofuel, biogas or bioplastics, or

“(b) the development of technology or processes that enable the use of wind, water, a biomass resource, hydrogen, biofuel, biogas, landfill gas, solar energy, geothermal energy, tidal forces or thermal waste as a source of energy...”

I will look forward, with some interest, to the estimates for 2009-10, if the minister does appear at that committee, to see exactly how many staff have been hired to referee all of these definitions, to referee this thick process and to referee exactly how somebody will get a certificate of eligibility, let alone before they begin the negotiations with the Ministry of Revenue. I would expect that the costs of implementing the regime, as you have brought forward, probably exceed the benefits. If it is \$5 million to \$7 million, then I would fully expect that the costs of actually running this through the three ministries involved—I wouldn't be surprised if it exceeded that level of benefit because of the complexity of their system.

We as Progressive Conservatives believe in broad-based tax reductions. We have faith that businesses, if they are given the ability to compete on a level playing field, will be successful, hire more people, will innovate, will create wealth in our economy and help to turn our economy around. We have always known an Ontario that was a leader in Canada, and now, under the McGuinty government's tax-and-spend approach, it has fallen to last in Confederation in economic growth and in job creation.

Let me give you a few more reasons why I am concerned about the very narrow focus of Bill 100. As I said, I don't want to discourage the government. Finally they have seen the light that their early decisions to raise taxes on working families and seniors, which sucked up disposable income from our economy, their early decision to raise business taxes to the point now where, according to their own special adviser to the Premier, Roger Martin, they are now the highest on new business investment in all of North America—we have seen a price in terms of lost jobs in the province, slow growth and low levels of wealth creation. So I think, though they probably won't admit it here during debate on Bill 100, finally the McGuinty government understands that their early decisions, some of which were clear election promises that were broken, have been harmful to our economy. Dalton McGuinty's penchant for runaway spending, high taxes on businesses, consumers, seniors and working families, runaway red tape and high energy costs have exacted a real price on Ontario families and on Ontario businesses.

So Bill 100, as I've explained, when you actually read the bill, far from a landmark or cornerstone piece of legislation, is actually very narrowly focused, heavily bureaucratic and weighed down by an ideology that says that the minister and the staff around him are best at picking winners and losers, rather than markets or people who are full-time investors.

The refund—I should be careful; it is not really a tax cut—is only available, as well, to new businesses, so

businesses incorporated between March 24, 2008, and March 25, 2012, and it excludes the merger of two existing businesses and provides no incentive whatsoever for existing businesses to commercialize new intellectual property. So if there is a business in Ontario—and there are many—that is successful and has a demonstrated track record of success in commercializing new businesses and taking the innovations from the labs, from the think tanks etc. and bringing them to market, this actually will cause a disincentive for new innovations to use successful businesses to go to market.

Interjection.

Mr. Tim Hudak: My friend the minister disagrees, but there is no tax benefit, there is no refund to existing businesses. If I wanted to benefit from this and I had an innovation, I would have to start my own company, rather than relying on somebody or partnering with somebody who already has demonstrated expertise and success in the marketplace.

I do appreciate my colleague from Wellington-Halton Hills's suggestion that this would go to committee, that we would hear from those who are impacted by this legislation and look for ways of broadening its impact, from the very narrow-focused and bureaucratic approach that Minister Duncan has decided was superior.

The second major concern we have in the official opposition: The refund under Bill 100 is only available to new businesses in the following government-identified priority areas—as I read through earlier on in the definition section of the bill, what's called an eligible commercialization business—advanced health technology, bioeconomy, telecommunications, and computer or digital technologies production. These are all important industries. They're all job-creating industries. They have impacts in various parts of the province. The problem is that that represents approximately only about 2% of GDP in the province of Ontario. So some 98% of other industries who may be bringing an innovation to market, who may want to commercialize a new discovery, a new way of doing things, would not have any benefit whatsoever from Bill 100. We think that should change and we will bring an amendment forward that will change that, so the other 98% of new businesses in the province could benefit from this approach, if this is the one the government chooses to take.

The other major concern we have on the narrow focus of the bill is that it is only available to businesses that bring to market intellectual property developed at qualifying institutions, excluding intellectual property developed outside universities, colleges, non-profits and hospitals. “The sole purpose of an eligible commercialization business must be the sale of property that derives ... 50% of its value from eligible” IP “developed at a qualifying institute.” Therefore, Mr. Speaker, if you or I were to patent an idea or a product that was developed outside of one of the government-approved institutes, we would not qualify for the tax refund. Maybe we'll hear from members of the government side during debate why they have narrowly limited where the intellectual prop-

erty can come from. If you do this on your own, in your own home, you would not be eligible for this fund. If you, heaven forbid, worked in the private sector, where the wealth in the province of Ontario actually comes from, you would not be eligible for the tax benefit, because the intellectual property would be deemed ineligible.

I really can't for the life of me understand why they have done a very, very narrow focus. We will bring forward an amendment to this bill that broadens its impact. Obviously yes, intellectual property developed at our outstanding universities and colleges should qualify; those in hospitals should qualify. But I don't know why you draw the line and say that only those that are approved by the government under the regulation-making authority of this bill should benefit, why it's not more broad-based or why the McGuinty government, because of its ideological bent, which if you read through Bill 100 is anti-private sector—

Hon. John Gerretsen: We have no ideological bent.

Mr. Tim Hudak: No, no, I say to my colleague the minister, this is very ideological, right? You're basically saying that the private sector need not apply. If you are a private small business, if you are an individual who doesn't work at a university or a college or a hospital, you can't apply for this. Only those deemed eligible by the McGuinty government, the limited list that I read a bit earlier, qualify for this. We think it should be broader. We think it should include a much broader range, including those that come from the private sector, those who are individuals that make the government short list not just because of their ideological bent in Bill 100, which is anti private sector and only supports government-approved institutions.

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The sole purpose of the eligible business must be the sale of property that derives 50% of its value from eligible IP developed at the qualifying institute, which I discussed, a very narrow focus of those that would qualify under this legislation.

The other important point—and I'm pleased that the Minister of Research and Innovation is here for debate, because he will play an important role in this and the Minister of Revenue.

Mrs. Julia Munro: That's why it's Waterloo.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Because he lives close to Waterloo? Fair point.

Interjection.

Mr. Tim Hudak: The minister lives in Stratford? The minister lives in Stratford, so not too far down the road from Waterloo.

Certainly, the Cambridge-Kitchener-Waterloo triangle has many of the businesses that we want to see qualify for Bill 100 under the amendments that we will propose, given that we're in committee.

I would strongly suggest to the minister—given these are, ideally, businesses to make a profit, to create jobs and wealth in the province of Ontario—that you put a timeline into the bill, so that when people apply for their

certificate of eligibility they will have a response, yea or nay—and hopefully, if our amendments pass, more yeas than nays—so that they will know that it was done in a short time frame so they can move forward with their decisions, their investments and their growth plans without spending months and months or years on end waiting for this thick bureaucratic process to end. I see the minister has made some notes on that. I appreciate that, and hopefully we'll see that improvement to the bill—strict and clear timeframes for responses for those who apply for the refund under Bill 100.

At the same time, if I did read Bill 100 properly, this is a paper-based process: The applications are paper-based, the certificate of eligibility is paper-based and the refund would be paper-based. It's relatively ironic that when this government is focusing this legislation in large part on new technologies, improvements, software etc., the application process would be paper-based. I do hope that we will see in this legislation an ability to apply for this tax refund electronically, which would be the way that most of these businesses will do business. That certainly would, I expect, expedite the process. I hope those changes are made.

But most importantly, we will be calling for, in addition to our usual approach of broad-based tax reductions to encourage businesses to invest in the province of Ontario, to remove Ontario's image under Dalton McGuinty's government of having the highest taxes on new business investment to one that is actually open for investment and job creation and a leader in all of Canada. As I said, Bill 100's impact on that larger picture, if Ministry of Finance figures are accurate, between \$5 million and \$7 million would not be up to the level the government would boast of in their grandiose language and their opening remarks. We do hope, though, that amendments to Bill 100 that will be proposed by the Progressive Conservative caucus would make this a much more valuable tool for new businesses.

During my response at first reading, I had a chance to give some views of experts in the field on Bill 100, and I know that these well-respected individuals' comments will be taken quite seriously by the government. They seem to reinforce the critique that the official opposition is bringing forward, and what I expect my friend from Beaches—East York, on behalf of the third party, would also recommend. Roger Martin, in his appearance at the finance committee in pre-budget consultations, January 1, 2008—so not too long ago. Roger Martin, of course, the dean of the Rotman School of Management and a special advisor to the Premier, was also one of our guest speakers at the recent economic summit hosted by John Tory and co-hosted by Ted Chudleigh, my colleague the economic development critic, and I. Mr. Martin, in his comments on the government's general approach during the finance committee, said the following:

“We've got to define and support innovation broadly. Innovation is critical to upgrading competitiveness, innovation and policy, and Ontario cannot characterize innovation so narrowly as it does. Whether or not there is

a truly conscious consideration of the issue, innovation policy in Ontario construes innovation to be something that happens in a narrow range of industries—computer hardware and software, communications hardware and software, aerospace vehicles and engines, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology, and medical devices—and that innovation is all about scientists working on technology.”

Mr. Martin went on to say that many of the firms that have been successful innovators, have created jobs and wealth in Ontario and have been successful, many of the multinationals, would not actually fit in with the very narrow definition of “innovation” used by the McGuinty government.

Let me give you an example: Innovations made by Masonite, Four Seasons, Couche-Tard, Gildan, Magna and McCain, which are all global leaders, companies of which we should be proud in terms of the investments and jobs that they’ve created in our country, would not be counted as innovations under the McGuinty government’s extremely narrow definition. That was Roger Martin appearing at the finance committee.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: That was before we introduced Bill 100.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Yes, sure. My friend from London—Fanshawe says that it was before we introduced Bill 100. It’s true: It was the January 21, 2008, finance committee. But the same types of decisions that you were making in January with the very narrow definition of “innovation” continue in Bill 100. My earlier points, when you read through under the legislation what an eligible commercialization business would include—it’s very narrowly focused. So I think Roger Martin’s comments to the finance committee in January hold true as we enter the first day of October 2008, when you read through Bill 100’s definitions.

Jim Milway, executive director of the government-funded Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity—they do some excellent reports, as you know, Mr. Speaker. They’re always very good reading and thoughtful. Mr. Milway criticized the government’s decision to give a 10-year tax reduction to new businesses.

“If a new technology becomes available, he said, an existing business will have no particular incentive to develop it—even though an already successful firm might be able to do so faster and better than a start-up company could. Lowering overall taxes would be more effective, he said.

““It would do more for innovation.””

That was Mr. Milway, quoted in an article entitled, “Ontario’s ‘Innovation Agenda’ Does Nothing to Save Jobs, Tory MPP Says; Critics of Plan Say it Does Little to Help Existing Businesses.” That was the Ottawa Citizen, May 1, 2008—a similar critique that we are bringing forward in the official opposition: that successful existing firms could actually bring a new innovation to market faster and, because of their experience, successfully, have no benefit whatsoever in this bill. In fact, it creates an incentive for new innovators not to use existing and successful businesses.

Gary Will, in the Waterloo Tech Digest, May 6, 2008, said the following:

“I’m still opposed to the government’s proposal to offer income tax exemptions to companies commercializing university-created IP—but not to other companies commercializing innovation. This may be the final relic of old-school innovation theories— that innovation is something that primarily happens in universities and labs and that university-generated innovation should be given special treatment over other innovations, regardless of the potential economic impact that each offers.

“Great ideas with the potential for significant economic benefits to the province can come from anywhere. With any luck, it won’t take another two or three years to overthrow the view that innovations generated outside universities and labs are less deserving of support.”

Again, that was Gary Will, Waterloo Tech Digest, May 6, 2008. Mr. Will makes a very important point, again reflected in the critique of the official opposition on Bill 100. No doubt that if they’re using this approach of a refund under Bill 100, the universities, colleges, hospitals—the innovations that stem from there, good research—should benefit. The question we have is, why does the government limit it to only these government-approved institutions? Why does it have this bias against everything else? Why does it have this ideological bent against the private sector coming up with innovations? Gary Will echoed those concerns in his comments in Tech Digest in May.

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Paul Mayne, in an article in Western News, April 7, 2008: “According to the C.D. Howe Institute, Ontario’s new 10-year corporate income tax holiday for commercialized intellectual property developed by qualifying research institutions is ‘ill-designed.’ Tax holidays, also used in Quebec, are high-cost, low-impact policies, typically found in Third World countries and well proven to be ineffective.” Those are some pretty harsh comments. Sources: Chen and Mintz, Limited Horizons: The 2008 Report on Federal and Provincial Budgetary Tax Policies, C.D. Howe Institute, July 2008; and Anwar Shah, Fiscal Incentives for Investment and Innovation, Oxford University Press, 1995.

Rob Herold, industry liaison officer for engineering and sciences at the University of Western Ontario, my alma mater—go, Mustangs—says that long-term capital-intensive opportunities, such as nano-materials and therapeutics, may take as much as 10 years to become profitable, although they may generate lots of knowledge-worker jobs in the process. “I don’t see the program necessarily changing the investors’ decisions in these cases.”

There are other things I want to say about the bill, so I’ll end with this quote, again from Gary Will in Waterloo Tech Digest, May 6, 2008: “If the Ontario government wants to give a tax break to new companies commercializing innovative technology, let it extend that benefit to all tech start-ups regardless of their starting points. If the goal is to assist in the economic develop-

ment of the province, it shouldn't matter whether companies that drive our economic success are university spinoffs or not."

I agree, and I would think that my colleagues across the floor in the government benches would agree. I don't think this bent by Dalton McGuinty to be anti-private sector is shared by the colleagues in the Legislature today. Many of them come from private business backgrounds, and I hope they will support the PC amendment that follows the advice of Gary Will and others to allow the benefit to accrue to other start-ups, not simply those that come from the university sector.

Let me read that one last time. Gary Will had good advice, and I hope it does sink in as we deliberate on Bill 100. Mr. Will said, "If the Ontario government wants to give a tax break to new companies commercializing innovative technology, let it extend that benefit to all tech start-ups regardless of their starting points. If the goal is to assist in the economic development of the province, it shouldn't matter whether companies that drive our economic success are university spinoffs or not."

Let's delve into that a little bit and give some real-life examples.

Waterloo region has a venture capital firm, Tech Capital Partners. My colleagues from the area or those who follow this may be familiar with Tech Capital Partners. The companies that Tech Capital Partners invests in would be ranked among the most promising tech companies in the area. It's an impressive record from Tech Capital Partners. Of the companies it has invested in over the last eight years, 79% were not commercializing technology from university employees or students. Tech Capital Partners has a successful track record of investing in companies, helping them take new innovations into the marketplace, creating jobs and wealth in the province of Ontario—mind you, the more people are working, the more wealth is created; the more companies are operating in the black, the more revenue to government to help them to finance things like health care, education or the train to Peterborough, by way of example. The sad thing is that under the extremely narrow and ideological approach of the McGuinty government that seems to be anti-business, only 20% of the firms that Tech Capital Partners has invested in would be eligible under the narrow confines of Bill 100. They said that 79% of the firms they've invested in to help get into the marketplace were not commercializing technology from university employees or students.

Metranome: Metranome is a developer of wireless digital media applications—supposedly one of the government's priorities. But it was founded by ex-Research In Motion employees, and under the definitions under Bill 100, as I understand it, wouldn't qualify for this tax refund.

Primal Fusion—it's a good name—is a developer of sophisticated software that it hopes will revolutionize how we collect and organize ideas and find information on the Web. It has doubled in size over the last year. It's an Ontario firm creating jobs, investing in our province—not eligible under the definitions of Bill 100.

Client Outlook has created imaging tools. Again, it's digital media used in the health care field for remote collaboration and training; again, a successful company, entrepreneurs, innovative, the kind of model you'd think the government would want to support, if they're doing a tax incentive like this. It doesn't fit the definitions, the narrow constraints of Bill 100.

I hope I get a response from the government members in their time in debate on Bill 100. If they want to replicate, if they want to support these types of entrepreneurs, those that are creating jobs in the new economy, that are in the tech sector, why then are they not emulating the success and supporting the companies that have successfully commercialized? Why then are they narrowly defining the scope of this legislation so that these types of companies or the next generation of them would be ineligible?

Speaking of the tech side, let me get to the crux of the matter here. I'm going to recommend this article to members, a National Post article of March 5, 2007. It was just over a year and a half ago, but I would suspect that the issues raised in this article have grown as a concern in late 2008. Mr. Speaker, you may remember this article. It was entitled, "Tech Start-ups Find it Tough to Raise Cash: Ontario a Wasteland for Technology Capital": Tony Wanless, National Post, March 5, 2007. Mr. Wanless tells the story of Dan Matlow, chief executive officer of Toronto's Medworxx. Though Mr. Matlow "is a veteran technology entrepreneur with a string of successful businesses behind him, it wasn't easy for him to find money to expand his latest venture. That's because there isn't much available to technology businesses these days."

In 2004, "Mr. Matlow co-founded Medworxx, which provides knowledge management software to the health care industry in Canada and the United States. It was financed by his own money with the support of some angel investment backers." Angel investors, of course, are high-net-worth individuals who invest privately in a company's earliest stage.

I'll pause Mr. Matlow's story for a second. I want to give credit to my colleague from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, who is the critic for the Ministry of Research and Innovation and at the estimates committee pressed the minister about this very issue: the lack of angel investors or incentives to bring capital to these early start-ups to address this issue that the article deems Ontario "a wasteland for technology capital." She asked the minister some excellent questions about this, and unfortunately the response in Bill 100 falls well short of what the true nature of the problem is, when it comes to these types of innovators and start-ups.

So in 2004, Medworxx was formed. Mr. Matlow co-founded, with his own money and financing from angel investors. Since then, Mr. Matlow "followed a predictable fundraising pattern to raise about \$2.4 million to expand his company from seven to 35 people," a fivefold increase, "and about 150 client hospitals throughout North America." That's impressive, right? In three years, he increased his workforce fivefold and has expanded his clients to 150 hospitals throughout North America.

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After bringing in the investors, “he received seed capital from the venture capital company, Growthworks, which manages several labour-sponsored investment funds (LSIFs), also known as labour-sponsored venture capital corporations (LSVCC).” We’ll get into these LSIFs and what happened to them under the McGuinty government momentarily.

“Usually, seed funding leads to follow-up rounds of larger financing by syndicates of venture capital companies, but when Matlow began looking last year for more than \$2 million for further expansion,” according to the article, “he hit a brick wall.”

Mr. Matlow’s story points out what the true nature of the problem is here, and that’s the gap between seed funders and investment banks and the lack of venture capital in these types of innovators and start-ups. I don’t think Bill 100 gets to the crux of the problem. I think Bill 100 falls well short of addressing the true issues.

I had the chance to do a roundtable with my colleague and friend from Nepean–Carleton, Lisa MacLeod. She’s very concerned about the demise of the tech sector that we’ve seen in Ottawa. A few months ago, she gathered up some young entrepreneurs and some veterans in the industry for a roundtable meeting to discuss how we can help take advantage of this enormous human capital in the Ottawa region that has been displaced from the larger firms, a lot of these types of start-ups. In 2001, they addressed this issue about access to capital in moving from the smaller phase into commercialization. I don’t remember them highlighting an approach as Bill 100 does, which is a relatively minimal refund. Hopefully, it will be helpful to many companies, particularly if they follow our advice and broaden its impact. But they said the true nature of the problem was encouraging angel investors, encouraging loans and investments in these small start-ups to get to that second phase, as Mr. Matlow’s story illustrates.

“After weeks of scouring Toronto for investment, Matlow put together his funding. But he had to be creative: He brought his original angel investors into a syndicate that included a couple of boutique private investment firms.

“‘I had no choice really,’ Matlow says. ‘The VC pool is drying up out there. You can take a lot of meetings, but you won’t get many deal offerings. Most VCs are just servicing the companies they already have.’”

Why am I talking so much about Dan Matlow and Medworxx? Well, “Matlow’s quest illustrates a unique situation that is affecting entrepreneurial companies in Ontario, and threatens to stall economic growth in the province’s industries of tomorrow—technology and other knowledge-based businesses,” according to Mr. Wanless in the *National Post*. “The private investment vertical has been hollowed out, almost stopped dead between the start-up and seed stage, and the higher publicly listing stages served by investment banks.”

The article says that, as we heard during Ms. MacLeod’s roundtable session, “This is partly because many

investors shied away from technology after the crash of 2001 and never came back, especially after traditional resource play investments began to boom again.”

By the way, I know my colleagues from northern Ontario and other parts of the province will be concerned. Take the mining sector, for example. Ontario has some of the most innovative, leading mining companies. We’re the mining capital of the world, or at least we have that potential. It’s been downgraded a bit in recent surveys by the Fraser Institute because of the government’s policies of raising taxes and hydro rates and such. The TSX is the main source of raising funding for mining plays. There’s enormous mineral potential, great innovators and entrepreneurs. The mining sector is not eligible under Bill 100.

There are those concerned about the forestry sector in the province of Ontario, which has hit very difficult times. The government has said that the forestry sector needs to be more innovative. That’s usually the line they use. The forestry sector, which has seen mills shut down and northern and rural communities decimated, is not eligible under the definition of Bill 100.

I say to my colleague from London–Fanshawe, because I know he’s concerned about this, Ontario’s second-largest industry is agriculture, the agri-food business, impacting on many, many ridings here in the province of Ontario, the backbone economically of ridings like my own in Niagara West–Glanbrook. The agriculture sector is not eligible under the narrow definitions of Bill 100. I know the Speaker will be concerned about that, and I hope he’ll speak with the finance minister and Minister of Research and Innovation about that, that the second-largest industry in Ontario, agriculture, is deemed by the government not to be innovative or creative enough. “You don’t need to apply for this fund.”

Mining, forestry left out; I hope the government will reconsider its very narrow definitions under Bill 100.

And back to Mr. Matlow. In 2006, according to the article, the Ontario government added to the problem; again, the problem is lack of investment, where you’re moving from entering the market and moving into bank investment: “The Ontario government added to the problem when it knocked out a strong underpinning to private investment by killing its participation in labour-sponsored investment fund tax credits. The system funnelled funds from ordinary investors to LSIFs by providing 15% federal tax credits and,” you’ll recall, “matching 15% provincial tax credits.”

When Minister Sorbara, in his 2004 or 2005 budget—anyway, one of his budgets—said that he was going to phase out the 15% tax credit, beginning in 2008, funding immediately dried up for most Ontario-based LSIFs, which meant there was a shrinking pool of capital to invest in companies that needed it.

Let me tell you what that meant. According to the article, the fallout of the McGuinty government’s decision was palpably illustrated “when the Canadian Venture Capital and Private Investment Association (CVCA) released its 2006 year-end results. LSVCCs raised \$907

million in 2006, down a full 25% from the previous year. And Quebec, which still has a tax credit system intact, accounted for about 85% of that fundraising. The article points out that the fundraising problem, because of the government's decision to phase out the tax credit for the LSIFs without an adequate replacement or other incentives for this type of venture capital investment, had ripple effects in the venture capital industry. "This is especially acute at the early stage of the financing chain that helps companies expand from start-up to maturity," which, I think, if I listened to my colleagues opposite, they said was the main purpose of Bill 100.

Here are the numbers. It's quite striking. In 2000, 283 new Ontario companies received \$1.6 billion in the early stage—called A-round—financing.

Let's pause for a second here. According to Ministry of Finance figures, read to the Legislature by my colleague from Beaches–East York earlier this morning, the tax benefit will probably be between \$5 million and \$7 million. In 2000, 283 new Ontario companies received \$1.6 billion in early-stage financing. So, "landmark cornerstone legislation"? Horse feathers.

Let's get back to the point. In 2000, 283 new Ontario companies received \$1.6 billion in early-stage financing. But last year—and for the sake of this article, it says 2006—"only 60 new companies received a mere \$120 million, less than 10% of the 2000 total," so a 90% drop in the venture capital invested in these types of firms.

That's the true nature of the problem. You heard the round table in Ottawa talking about the tech sector, we had a round table in Waterloo; we're expecting to hear debate during public consultations. The true nature of the problem is access to venture capital. No doubt there were concerns expressed about LSIFs, but the government sort of wantonly eliminated the tax benefit. Causing these types of ripple effects without an adequate replacement was a major error that has had impacts on these types of start-ups, as illustrated by Mr. Matlow and those like him.

1030

"According to Les Lyall, head of the Association of Labour Sponsored Investment Funds," these impacts have "slowed commercialization of promising technology, and left tech companies unable to expand. Already, he says, many young and educated people in the technology field are fleeing to the United States where they are receiving more encouragement to innovate." Here's the quote from Mr. Lyall, as I finish referring to this particular article: "In Ontario, the whole effort and initiative to commercialize has stopped because of financing problems. We're in a crisis"—a strong way to end the article.

Given the realities of the drop in investments in these types of start-ups, given the realities of young entrepreneurs heading to other provinces or across the border into the States, where there's a more positive environment for innovation and job creation, what did the McGuinty government do? It increased taxes on businesses to the point where, again according to Roger Martin,

C.D. Howe and others, Ontario now has the highest level of tax on new business investment in all of North America. There's a good way to punish entrepreneurs: Whack them with the highest level of taxation in competing jurisdictions.

The red tape that spools out of this government day after day after day is strangling entrepreneurs and innovators in the province of Ontario. Certainly, they're decisions that have led to higher prices in energy and other products. Particularly fuel and home heating will have an impact, no doubt. Despite early boasts of major investments in public infrastructure to support job creation, it's hard to think of a major project that people like Mr. Matlow will see as beneficial to creating jobs in the province of Ontario and supporting these young entrepreneurs.

The government basically has done everything to work against these types of businesses: higher taxes, higher utility rates, more red tape and rapid increases in government spending. Their approach under Bill 100 is to have an extremely narrowly defined benefit, where companies like those that I listed earlier on need not apply. Their approach has been to be very ideological, to say, "If you come from the private sector, you need not apply." Their approach has been so narrow in focus, in picking particular industries, that if you work, for example, in agriculture, if you work in mining, if you work in forestry, if you work in many aspects of manufacturing—which has seen some 200,000 jobs leave our province, including, sadly, many well-paying jobs at John Deere, in my colleague from Welland's riding, impacting also on many of my constituents—you need not apply. It's far from landmark or cornerstone legislation.

You know, I'm disappointed. When you hear the trumpets roaring on the other side of the Legislature about this bill in the short remarks at second reading, compared to what the bill actually contains, it's a far cry from the government's boasts.

As I said, we in the official opposition—and I'm very pleased to be sharing critic's responsibility on this with my colleague from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, Ms. Scott, who I think has been an outstanding critic on research and innovation. Working together, we will bring forward some amendments to this bill to broaden its impact, because I know my friend from Peterborough would probably object quite strongly, when he reads through this bill, to see that if it's a company that is doing an innovation in Peterborough for example, or an individual, maybe a former staffer, that the vast majority of those, representing some 98% of our GDP, would be deemed ineligible.

We're debating Bill 100 at a time when a recent report by Scotiabank says that Ontario is dead last in economic growth in Confederation, last in job creation. Other surveys that have come out from other banks put Ontario, if not last, second to last. Just this past week, TD Economics put out its report: Time for a Vision of Ontario's Economy—Much of the Foundation of Past Economic Success Has Crumbled. A very important part of the

report says, "Slowing economy no excuse for inaction." TD Economics goes on to say, "Tax cuts need to feature more prominently ... in the vision than they have in recent budgets ... the priority should become improving business and personal income-tax competitiveness." TD has other recommendations that I don't have the time to address in my remarks today, but they do start off by noting, "The Ontario economy is currently in its biggest funk since the early 1990s downturn...."

That's Dalton McGuinty's Ontario. Dalton McGuinty's Ontario is one that now sees more talented Ontarians leave to go to other provinces. It sees the flight of some 200,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs and brings forward Bill 100, which I hope we can improve with our amendments from the official opposition, but it's a far cry from making up for the high taxes, runaway spending and increased red tape this government has brought forward.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Prue: I listened intently for the entire hour to what my friend had to say, and I want to commend him for what I think was a well-reasoned, well-rounded speech and for raising the issue of financing, because I think the whole thing will come down to financing.

If this bill is going to work, and I would suggest that it does have some merit within the body of it, the government has to expand it, as my colleague from Niagara West–Glanbrook had to state. It needs to be expanded. To spend a paltry amount of money—\$5 million for this fiscal year and \$7 million for the next fiscal year, as the Ministry of Finance has stated is the intent of this bill—is not going to give true measure to it.

My friend also raised the whole issue—and I hope to be able to deal with this on the next date, when my turn to come to speak will be up—of venture capital. That is a problem, a far greater problem, in this province than is going to be resolved by this particular bill. Since 2001-02, the amount of venture capital in this province has dried up considerably; at first, because of the crisis that took place that year with the meltdown, but secondly, because policies and procedures within the Ministry of Finance have not been such that would allow for companies and for people who want to risk their funds to come forward.

Certainly, the whole issue about labour-sponsored investment funds needs to be carefully looked at. The government has indicated its desire to phase these out. This was one of the greatest venture capital pools possible. It's being phased out by 2010. I don't know where the government is coming from on this, when they want to invest only \$5 million or \$7 million, as my friend from Niagara West–Glanbrook had to state, but the reality is that, if we are going to use new technology to create jobs, there has to be capital for it. This bill is not the answer, although I really have no real problem with the bill. The real problem is venture capital.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I was listening carefully to the member from Niagara West–Glanbrook in detail. I know

he wasn't totally negative about the bill and thinks strongly that this bill is a very important bill for the province of Ontario, to allow many researchers and innovators to come to Ontario and launch their companies. He talked about the limitations of this bill, but this bill came as a complement for many different initiatives launched by the government last year. I want to remind the member from—

Mr. Michael Prue: It's a complement, not a cornerstone.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: It's a cornerstone for the purpose of inviting innovators and researchers to come and launch their companies in Ontario, when they give them a 10-year tax break. I think that's a very important issue.

Last year, I believe, our government launched a program they called the Next Generation of Jobs Fund. The member was talking about how come we don't support a private company or organization that wants to expand in Ontario. I know that many different companies in the province want to go to the Next Generation of Jobs Fund and apply for those funds if they want to update their equipment and turn it into a green technology. I think they'll be eligible for this one here. We have set aside almost \$1.2 billion. Also, when you apply for that fund, within 45 days you get the result. I think that's a very important initiative.

When we talk about Bill 100, I think the member opposite should remember exactly: We have to support Ontario and Canadian companies that want to launch in Ontario and want to patent their innovation and research in this province. We also don't want to give it to multi-billion dollar international companies that have a small branch in Ontario or in Canada. That's why we want to narrow the scope in order to support homegrown companies, innovators and researchers.

Also, we welcome anyone from across the globe who wants to come to this province and launch their ideas, because we believe strongly that this province will be the hub of research and innovation if we pass this bill because of the things that are cornerstones for many researchers and innovators.

1040

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I enjoyed the speech of my colleague the member from Niagara West–Glanbrook; it was most thoughtful.

What are we dealing with with this particular bill? I believe what we're dealing with is another smokescreen: \$7 million in tax cuts. We're talking about the Premier who will go down in history as the high-taxation Premier, the Premier who let in tax increases at one time greater than any other in history. He has spent billions in deficit since he was elected, combined with his higher taxes. So what all of a sudden is his interest in lowering taxes? Well, I believe it's a matter of a smokescreen.

First of all, he has the fairness campaign: Let's blame the feds. You know, sometimes Dalton McGuinty is like a jet engine; he really moves quickly. The big difference

is that when you turn off a jet engine, it stops whining. That's what we're getting from our Premier: Instead of action, we're getting whining.

Something has got to be done, because they know the deficit is now on the horizon. How do I know that? I'm not an economic expert. Dalton McGuinty's newsletter called the Toronto Star recently did an article on Mr. Maynard Keynes about how deficits are good. That's got to tell you something. They know a deficit is coming. It's that light in the tunnel coming toward us, and they're doing nothing about it. We are in big trouble, as a province. We are in grave trouble, and Dalton McGuinty is turning his back on the problem.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Pat Hoy: I'm pleased to join in this debate this morning.

What we're talking about here in Bill 100 is part of our five-point plan. It is to strengthen the environment of innovation, and this is one part of that.

The opposition has been remarking about \$5-million to \$7-million costs, and I want to remind persons in the Legislature and those who might be watching this debate that this is the Ontario tax exemption for commercialization and would involve an exemption on Ontario corporate income tax and corporate minimum tax for its first 10 years. So I don't think that we can reliably predict what the forgone revenues to the government would be 10 years from now. However, we are trying to point out to persons that there would be some initial cost or forgone revenues to the government. Perhaps that \$5 million or \$7 million is correct or perhaps it will exceed that by a greater amount.

I have the opportunity to talk to school-aged children often, and I talk about education being the key. It is the ticket to success in the modern world that we live in. To point this out to younger children who might be in grade 5 or less, I talk about something as simple as the television set that is in most of our homes. At one time, television was black and white, then came colour, then came remotes—we didn't have to get up and turn that channel; there were remotes involved—then came flat-screen televisions, then came plasma, then came high definition.

We don't know what innovation out there lies for the people of Ontario, but we have to be on the cutting edge of that innovation here in Ontario, and that's what this bill will help Ontario to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Niagara West—Glanbrook has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I thank my colleagues all for their comments. I say to my colleague from the Chatham-Kent area that—I mean, the working figures were given, so we have been given these figures from the Ministry of Finance of \$5 million to \$7 million. If it's more, then please have the ministry communicate to us what the benefit is going to be. Let me point out again that in 2000 the types of companies that this bill purports to help received some \$1.6 billion in early-stage financing, and

under the McGuinty government, by 2006, it had dropped by some 90% to about \$120 million. If it's \$5 million, \$7 million, \$10 million, \$14 million, that is still a far, far distance from the \$1.6 billion that had existed previously in 2000.

The crux of the problem is the access to venture capital for these firms. This bill is very narrowly defined. It only supports IP developed at government-approved institutions; it only impacts on about 2% of the value of GDP. Major sectors like agriculture, mining, forestry, the majority of manufacturing need not apply. I do question the ideological bent of the McGuinty government that is anti-private business under this legislation, that basically says that if you come from the private sector, if you come up with innovation on your own, or you come from an existing successful company and are bringing forward your own innovation, you need not apply. Only those that are approved by the government through a very thick red tape process would be deemed eligible. Successful Ontario companies like Sandvine, Metranome, Primal Fusion, Client Outlook and Covarity, among others, the types of companies that tech capital partners invest in, would not be eligible because of the extremely narrow and ideological focus.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The time for debate has ended.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We have a number of guests we would like to welcome to Queen's Park today.

On behalf of the member from Welland, in the west members' gallery, Denise Oertle from St. Gallen, Switzerland, and Reverend Maria Lallouet from the Hungarian Presbyterian Church in Welland: Welcome today.

On behalf of the member from London—Fanshawe, in the east members' gallery, we would like to welcome Paul and Deedee Ingram to Queen's Park today.

On behalf of page Scarlett Michael, in the public galleries today is Jane Michael, her mother. Welcome.

LEGISLATIVE SPRINKLERS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just wanted to let the members know that there were a number of inquiries that came to my office yesterday: In the middle of a rainstorm, people were querying as to why the sprinklers were running on the front lawn. I just wanted to let you know that they weren't running; they were being drained to be put to rest for the winter. We were not wasting water in the middle of a rainstorm, so anybody that had queries, and especially the media who were curious as well, that was what was being completed.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: There are a lot of tears around this place too, but I don't think you can do anything about that.

My question is for the Minister of Finance. Yesterday the Premier, in a scrum, made some disturbing comments, which I suspect he now regrets, when he said certain parts of our economy are gone, never to return. He effectively was the coroner issuing a death certificate for far too many families and communities who have lost jobs under your watch. For years now, the Premier has been telling Ontarians, "Don't worry; this too shall pass," and now he tells them, "Actually, you're dead in the water; no lifeguards in sight."

Minister, these are challenging times for Ontario. Do you share your Premier's fatalist view for the future?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The Premier of Ontario has a plan that is designed to ensure Ontario has a better future. No Premier in the history of this province, I would argue, has done more in difficult circumstances to promote employment growth, to promote investment, to promote innovation, to promote better working relationships with other governments. There is no doubt that there are challenges in the economy, and every time a family loses its job, this government takes it very seriously.

We will continue to make investments in skills. We will continue to make investments in innovation. We will continue to invest in infrastructure. We will continue to work to build partnerships with all levels of government and the private sector. That's the plan that will see us through these difficult times, led by a Premier who cares as much as anyone could for the well-being of the men, women and families of this province.

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: That response will instill confidence—not.

With the United States heading for a recession, Ontario perhaps already in one, about 240,000 manufacturing jobs lost in the past four years, now is not the time for the Premier of Ontario to be waving the white flag. Ontarians are proud of their province and they want a leader to be courageous and inspirational in troubled times, not a complaining defeatist.

Minister, will your government finally listen to experts like TD Economics and include their recommendations and those of other experts and economists, recommendations you've blithely ignored for the past two years? Will you include those recommendations in your upcoming economic statement?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I'll remind the member opposite that it was Jim Flaherty who advised people not to invest in Ontario, and that's a shameful thing to do—absolutely shameful—for a federal finance minister.

We routinely receive advice from economists, including Mr. Drummond, who has offered very good advice to this government on many occasions. His most recent report recommended a number of things and, by the way, I'll remind the member opposite, also congratulated this government for a number of initiatives it has taken and has endorsed this government's approach; that is, a multi-pronged approach. He called for skills training investment, infrastructure investment, targeted tax cuts.

Our government has laid out a plan that is working, recognizing that there continue to be challenges in the economy and there will always be more to do. Our government has the right plan. We'll continue to pursue it in the context of all the challenges in the world economy today.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: This morning the Premier, apparently trying to justify his ill-considered remarks, said he was just being honest. I don't know how Liberals define "honest." We know keeping campaign promises doesn't fall under that definition. I guess telling a community like Goderich, which just lost 500 jobs with Volvo, that there's no hope is the Premier's idea of honest. I call it depressing defeatism, unbecoming a Premier of this great province. If you want to be honest, Minister, stand up today and admit that you're not up to the job, that your government policies over the past five years have weakened Ontario and placed our economy in jeopardy. Try that on for honesty.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I think the people of Ontario rather decidedly determined who wasn't up to the job, I would remind the member opposite. To the people of Goderich, this government will work with them. To those families at Volvo, we will continue to offer the services we've offered at every one of these. I'll remind the member opposite, this government is investing at Bruce Power, for instance. Thousands of jobs have been created there, the largest infrastructure project anywhere in this country.

There's no doubt that there are challenges. There's no doubt that jobs are being lost in certain sectors. In spite of your criticism of the Premier, I'll remind you what your own leader said in today's Toronto Star: "I think we do see that when plants close and equipment moves out that some of those particular jobs are not coming back." That's John Tory.

The people of Ontario have endorsed this government's plan through their votes—

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

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Do you want to give me an extra supplementary, Speaker?

My question is to the Attorney General. As you know, this afternoon we'll be debating a Progressive Conservative motion calling for strengthening of young offenders

legislation. I'd like to give you a chance to clarify your position, because you can't seem to figure out where you stand on the federal government's new proposal to deal with youth crime. In one breath you say the feds have got it all wrong and then in the next breath you say they're not being tough enough. A straight answer would be appreciated here, Minister. Do you support amending the YCJA to allow judges to emphasize public safety and deterrence when dealing with older repeat and serious young offenders? Yes or no?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: It's unfortunate that the member opposite wishes to play politics with an issue that is very important for all Ontarians, and that's the safety of our communities. Our position throughout is that we should have a legislative and an enforcement approach that is as tough as it needs to be on those who pose risk to society—the greatest risk to our communities—and that we need to invest in the programs that will ensure, particularly for young people, that when they make that first non-violent entry into the criminal justice system, we have the supports to keep them out of justice for the rest of their lives.

Now the member wants me to comment on another Harper promise. I know I will have two more opportunities in the supplementaries to do that, and I look forward to it.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I'm asking the minister to comment on a motion that's before the House today. Last week, in response to a question on youth crime from the member for Whitby–Oshawa, you said that you asked the federal government to bring in changes that would get tougher with youth who “posed the greatest risk.” That's exactly the issue our motion addresses: improving the way the system deals with the most serious and repeat offenders.

Minister, we've recently experienced a wave of violent youth crime, even into our schools. We've heard your rhetoric. Now is the chance to walk the walk. Will you support our motion?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: The member quite rightly outlines the problem. He wants me to comment on a promise by the Prime Minister, Mr. Harper, a promise by the Conservatives. Well, let's look at the risk of commenting on those promises, because let's see whether they delivered on previous promises.

First of all, they promised 2,500 police officers across Canada; just a couple of years ago they made that promise. How many have we got? Money for a thousand. For how long? Five years. A broken promise—so it's a bit risky commenting on that promise. They promised to deliver tougher youth legislation, and what did they deliver? They delivered amendments to the Youth Criminal Justice Act that didn't even comply with the recommendations made by the Nunn Commission in Nova Scotia. The promise missed the mark—big risk buying into Tory-Harper promises.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Bluster and baloney—a double-talk sandwich. We're talking about a motion before the House this afternoon, specifically tying in with comments you've made publicly. Out of one side of your mouth, for public consumption, you say you want tougher laws for youth posing the greatest risk to society, but when you're given the opportunity to put your money where your mouth is, the real Liberal apparently comes out—a false front, a sham. When it comes to taking real action against repeat, serious young offenders, you're missing in action. If that's not the case, stand up right here today and say that you will support our motion and that your colleagues will support our motion to do something really meaningful to impact youth crime in this province.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: So rather than a motion to comment on Tory-Harper promises that are going to be broken, how about the Leader of the Opposition and his party supporting our plan? First of all, ban handguns throughout the country. You don't need handguns. He talks about a risk of youth violence. Why would you want to put handguns in the hands of the youth of the province? Ban handguns. Stand up for the people of Ontario. How about more police officers on the street? We funded an extra thousand police officers on the street. Will he pick up the phone, call his buddy Mr. Harper and tell him to live up to the promise to put more police officers on the streets of our communities like London, like Toronto, like Ottawa and like Belleville to support real community safety? And will he call upon his chum Stockwell Day to improve border security so that smuggled guns don't get across the border in Ontario? Why won't you stand up for the people of Ontario?

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FEDERAL LIBERAL ELECTION PROMISES

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Since the days of John Robarts, every Premier has run a fairness-for-Ontario campaign. On this side of the House, we agree that Ontario needs a federal partner on employment insurance and economic development—no question—but the Dion Liberals released a 76-page platform with not one mention of expanding employment insurance eligibility or introducing an economic development agency for hard-hit southern Ontario. Would the minister agree that the Dion Liberal platform will not deliver fairness for Ontario?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I remind the member opposite that Premier McGuinty wrote to the leaders of all the federal parties and asked them to respond by October 3. That is the day after tomorrow, I believe. We look forward to those responses from all of the party leaders and, indeed, from candidates throughout Ontario.

A number of our members today were out distributing Vote for Fairness Ontario brochures at subway stations here in Toronto. Signs will be going up in different ridings. I know I'm going to be putting one and my col-

league from Sudbury will be putting one on his front lawn.

We look forward to those written responses from all of the party leaders and for a realistic plan as to how they will address all the things they say they're going to do that won't harm the overall Canadian economy.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Minister, despite your government's call for employment insurance fairness, the Dion Liberal proposal will only mean more EI unfairness for laid-off Ontarians, and despite this Liberal government's call for the creation of a southern Ontario economic development agency, the Dion Liberal platform will only mean more job losses in hard-hit manufacturing communities like Welland and your own community of Windsor. Only the federal NDP platform promises to help protect jobs and support unemployed workers. Since the minister has been highly critical of the Dion plan, when will he endorse Jack Layton and the NDP as the right choice for Windsor and all of Ontario?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The government of Ontario is committed in a non-partisan way to fairness for the province of Ontario. We have asked all the federal party leaders to respond. We have asked candidates across Ontario to respond to four specific issues. When we are in receipt of those responses, we will publish them. We will advise the people of Ontario. We will continue the campaign.

This is a serious issue. Whether you're talking about fairness in health transfers, employment insurance reform or equalization, it's about laying out a plan that's realistic and achievable and isn't just a bunch of promises to everybody with no plan to actually fund them.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I agree it's a serious issue, but this government has written letters, created petitions and even has a fancy website. Now the party platforms are out, the Dion Liberals want a carbon tax that will hurt hard-working Ontarians. They have no job creation strategy and offer no help for the unemployed. Jack Layton and the NDP will expand EI eligibility and create a southern Ontario economic development agency.

Earlier this week, this minister dismissed the Dion carbon tax as a bad approach in tough economic times. Why won't he now dismiss the entire Dion Liberal platform as not delivering to Ontarians in these tough economic times?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: What we can dismiss is Jack Layton's la-la land, tax-raising, job-killing plan for Ontario. Mr. Layton's \$51-billion plan will raise taxes on the very companies that we need to have investing in Ontario. Mr. Layton is prepared—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for Hamilton East is not in his seat.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Mr. Layton has not laid out a plan. He's laid out a bunch of promises with no idea of how he could ever, ever possibly implement them.

It is incumbent in the debate for the leaders of all the federal parties to respond to Premier McGuinty's very reasoned, very pointed, very specific issues that are affecting the Ontario economy and that they explain it in a way that they can actually afford to pay for it. Mr. Layton's plan reminds me of the Agenda for People. That was something that was here—

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

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Another question to the Minister of Finance. At the same time that Ontario's losing hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs, the world is witnessing one of the biggest financial crises in history. Despite the unprecedented nature of this crisis, your government insists on taking the same hands-off approach to the financial meltdown as it has in the manufacturing crisis. What is this government going to do to protect Ontarians' hard-earned savings?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The member opposite has correctly pointed out that there are enormous challenges in liquidity in world financial markets. These challenges are impacting every western economy.

Ontario has some of the most aggressive legislation for the protection of pensions, for the protection of insurance and a number of other things. We have been in constant communication with the Securities and Exchange Commission, leading economists, to assure ourselves that our financial institutions continue to remain stable and are certainly much more stable than some institutions in the United States.

The member quite correctly points out that these events will impact on all of us. I think it's incumbent on all of us to continue to monitor this. We have been doing that. We've been making investments through our five-point plan and other areas to help address these challenges, and we'll continue to work with all members of this House as we address this world situation.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'd also remind the minister that Ontario has the responsibility for securities regulation and we have oversight over the Ontario Securities Commission. Yesterday, my colleague Nickel Belt MPP France Gélinas did what the government should have done and insisted that the OSC officials appear immediately before the committee to discuss this financial crisis.

At a time when Ontarians' pocketbooks are hurting and they're worried about the security of their savings, why is this government sitting on its hands?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I'd remind the member that the Securities Commission has oversight for the value of the shares and how they trade; it has no regulatory authority over liquidity in the banking markets.

I can tell the member that regular compliance audits in terms of securities disclosures have been done. The head of the Securities Commission tells me that our financial institutions, those for which we have oversight, remain in relatively strong shape compared to others.

So you can talk about that, I say to the member opposite, but it really has nothing to do with it. I would suggest that we take this issue a little more seriously instead of throwing up pieces of legislation that really have nothing to do with it. It's about liquidity in international markets. The Ontario Securities Commission has no ability to influence that, with respect.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Minister, Ontarians have every right to expect that this government will use every tool at its disposal to protect jobs and hard-earned savings. While your government looks on from the sidelines and does nothing, New Democrats at both the federal and the provincial level have laid out effective jobs plans and taken action to ensure that our financial watchdogs explain what they're doing to protect hard-earned savings. When will this government stop engaging in diversions like the fairness for Ontario campaign and take real action to protect the jobs and savings of hard-working Ontarians?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I think Ontarians are looking to us for leadership, and that involves not using pieces of legislation that have no impact on that.

I think people are worried about their savings and their future and I think we shouldn't be exploiting that fear. I think we should be watching these situations carefully, relying on our regulators, who are very competent in their jurisdictions, who assure us and who publish reports annually around the challenges in the areas that they regulate, recognizing that there are roles for the federal government, provincial government, and local authorities in some instances.

These are very, very challenging times. We need a very calm and reasoned approach, and I think all of us should work together to try to reassure Ontarians and Canadians that we will get through these very difficult circumstances.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Yesterday morning, 500 good workers at the Volvo road grading plant in Goderich were told that their jobs were going or gone. After 50 years of success on the shores of Lake Huron, the company is consolidating its North American manufacturing base in a low-tax jurisdiction of Pennsylvania. It's a very sad time for Goderich. The plant was the town's top employer. Its workforce was 7% of the population.

I wonder if it could have been avoided. I wonder, if the government hadn't given away all its money to a select few, whether it might have had something left to offer Volvo before they decided on Pennsylvania. Well, it's too late now. Volvo is gone, and Goderich is decimated—just another 500 names to add to the list.

Minister, your government's economic policies have failed the people of Goderich. If you don't change course now, the bleeding will not stop. How many small towns

in Ontario must suffer like this before you realize that we are living in a—

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

Hon. Dwight Duncan: First of all, this government is very concerned about the families that are affected by this unfortunate decision. Our discussions with the company are based on a range of considerations that go beyond simply what you were talking about. We are making investments to help attract new investments. In fact, the Premier was at the expansion of the Honda plant just late last week. There's no doubt there are challenges in the manufacturing sector. I remind the member opposite that those challenges are being experienced in many jurisdictions, including most of our leading competitors. In fact, Ontario's manufacturing job loss has been substantially lower than that of some of our competitive jurisdictions. I would submit to the member opposite that, through the investments that we are making, we wish to continue to try to prevent this type of situation. We believe it requires a multi-pronged approach. We disagree with you, sir, that tax cuts in and of themselves will solve—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: The minister has been giving the same answer so often, he is starting to believe it. The answer is simple; it's Economics 101. Businesses who are interested in long-term growth and stability will locate in low-cost jurisdictions. Don't take my word for it; take a former Minister of Finance's word for it: "People pay attention to the level of taxation in Ontario to make investment decisions as to whether they're going to invest in the province, and thereby create jobs and more economic prosperity. So the principle of a competitive tax system is right at the foundation of the work we do." That was Greg Sorbara on October 27, 2004.

Minister, it's time to listen to your colleagues. It's time to listen to the experts. It's time to listen to the business community. Will you give Ontario the competitive edge that it needs? Will you move towards making Ontario an attractive, low-cost jurisdiction?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We have been reducing the corporate tax burden—a \$3-billion cut over four years.

Interjection.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The member opposite says \$3 billion is a pittance. It's too bad you didn't have that much money for our schools and universities when you were here. We are going to continue to make the investments we've made, including targeted tax cuts to businesses. It's questionable whether a cut in general corporate taxes would even benefit these companies who aren't making money. Our approach is the right approach. It's an approach that is endorsed by economists. It says that you have to have a range of policies that respond to all of the challenges in an economy. With that, the people of Ontario can be assured that their government is working in their interest, and that is one of the reasons why we continue to attract new jobs, in spite of challenges in some companies in some sectors.

SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT

Mr. Peter Kormos: A question to the Attorney General: Provincial Ombudsman André Marin finds the province's special investigations unit to be toothless, timid, biased and ineffectual. When will the minister commit to implementing Marin's recommendations?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I would like to thank the member for the question. I recognize—we all recognize—as Ombudsman Marin did, that the SIU plays a very important function in our society. It is the only independent civilian oversight of police activities in Canada. Ombudsman Marin made some excellent recommendations as a result of his report, and we've already started work from the ministry perspective on those recommendations. I look forward to speaking in more detail on the supplementary, but let's be clear: The Ombudsman's recommendations that the investigative capacity be enhanced is the direction that we are going to go. The Ombudsman's recommendation that there be increased transparency—absolutely. The Ombudsman's recommendation that there be increased and enhanced accountability—absolutely. We look forward to working with the new director of the SIU and all community partners and police agencies to strengthen this very important institution.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Kormos: When the people don't have confidence in the SIU, they don't have confidence in the police. If they don't have confidence in the police, police officers and the public are all at risk. Ombudsman Marin made some very specific recommendations after some startling and shocking revelations. He said, "The SIU has become so timid and fearful in its watchdog role that police oversight has hit rock bottom in Ontario." Why won't this minister commit to implementing the Marin recommendations?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: We are very thankful for the recommendations made by the Ombudsman and we are working very hard to make sure that his goal—all of our goal—of a strengthened SIU is achieved.

The community has received the report that was made public just yesterday. It's important in strengthening the SIU that we get good input from the community—from community agencies, from the police, from the honourable member, from all those who recognize, as the Ombudsman did, as we do, that this SIU, which is the only independent civilian agency for oversight in Canada, needs to be strengthened because it performs such an important function. We want to get it right, so we are going to take whatever time is required to make sure that we get it right.

PAN AMERICAN GAMES

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: My question is for the Minister of Health Promotion. Since April of last year we've heard much about the 2015 Pan American bid for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Held once every four years,

the games last came to Canada in 1999. Ontario is not the only player in the game. Caracas, Lima and Bogota may also put bids forward. The Pan American Sports Organization will choose the host city later this year and time is of the essence if Ontario is going to win these games.

I know we sat on pins and needles waiting for a consensus with the federal government, but in early August the federal government made a commitment to support the province of Ontario's 2015 Pan American bid for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Since that time, many municipalities, including those in Durham region, have shown keen interest in the bid. Would the minister give us an update on our bid?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: I want to take this opportunity, first of all, to thank the member for Pickering-Scarborough East for his question. As many of you already know, the Pan American Games present a great opportunity for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and for all Ontarians to be part of what will be a historic achievement for the province of Ontario. As a great mind once said, "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm."

I urge all members of the Legislature and the people of Ontario to throw their support behind the Premier, and the chair, David Peterson, who was appointed by the Premier on September 10, 2008. Just yesterday, Mr. Peterson nominated a key individual as the president and chief operating officer to oversee the bid—Ms. Jagoda Pike.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary? The member for Hamilton Mountain.

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis: Hamiltonians are showing a keen interest in the games and are excited about the bid. Hamilton proudly hosted the first Commonwealth Games back in 1930. People in my community are hopeful that they will have the chance to showcase Hamilton to the world again in 2015. Mayor Eisenberger and others in Hamilton are ready to help Ontario any way they can. David Peterson has indicated that Hamilton will play a key role if Ontario wins the Pan Am Games.

Would the Minister of Health Promotion tell us how the 2015 Pan American bid will benefit Hamilton and the Greater Golden Horseshoe should we be successful? What would be the next steps in regard to the bid and when should we expect to know if we've won the bid?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: I want to thank the member for Hamilton Mountain, who I must say is a great advocate for her community.

If the Toronto-Greater Golden Horseshoe bid is successful, it is projected to inject almost \$2 billion into the economy of Ontario, creating 17,000 jobs and attracting approximately 250,000 tourists. The 2015 Pan American Games would potentially inject a billion-dollar capital investment into sport and recreation, providing world-class facilities where our amateur athletes could train and compete, and would also leave a legacy of new and improved community facilities, permitting all Ontarians to lead healthy and active lives.

I congratulate the minister's staff for all the work they have done on this file.

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PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: A question to the Minister of Finance: Minister, before the last election Dalton McGuinty cynically froze property assessments until after, conveniently, the election. Homeowners across Ontario are now opening their mailboxes and seeing a triple whammy of assessment increases. According to CAPTR, through a study by the Cushman and Wakefield LePage real estate firm, in areas like Toronto, Muskoka and Haliburton these increases could be up to 102% for a young family in Toronto or 154% for a widow living in Muskoka or Haliburton.

Minister, under your new scheme of assessments, exactly how many Ontario homeowners will be whacked with double- or triple-digit annual assessment increases?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I need to remind the people of Ontario that an assessment increase does not mean a tax increase, as much as the member may try to portray that. The average assessment increase across the province is 20%, and the member is aware of that. The member will be aware that within communities some assessments will go up and some will go down to reflect current value assessment. The phase-in of this is over four years, and we believe, contrary to the member's view, that that is the appropriate way to implement these assessment increases which do not necessarily lead to a tax increase.

The assessment announcements are being rolled out across the province.

I also remind the member that we responded in the affirmative to all the recommendations of the provincial Ombudsman on this issue.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: The minister knows darn well that somebody facing annual double- or triple-digit assessment increases is going to get whacked badly by Dalton McGuinty's new assessment scheme. Think of that widow living in Binbrook, think of that young family living in Windsor, already dealing with Dalton McGuinty's new health tax, already dealing with higher hydro rates, already dealing with higher home heating costs and the cost of groceries. Now, under Dalton McGuinty's new assessment scheme, if you're one of those people who gets a triple-digit or high double-digit assessment increase—zap, you're frozen; you get no relief from higher property taxes until 2012. How can the minister stand in this place and say that they should be frozen until 2012 with higher property taxes?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The only thing that's whacked in this debate is the Tory policy on capping of assessments. I remind the member that, according to the Ottawa Citizen, "The Conservative plan is not intellectually sound.... The problem is that it doesn't meet the basic test of fairness." What it does, just so Ontarians understand—Mr. Hudak and John Tory want to raise property taxes for

modest-income people and lower them in the wealthiest neighbourhoods in the province. That's inconsistent. I'll remind the member opposite of what he himself said in the St. Catharines Standard on March 1, 2006: "Hudak acknowledged the problem is the unexpected result of the legislation he and his fellow Conservatives pushed through...."

We're fixing their problem, we're dealing with a whacked system—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. The member from Hamilton Centre.

LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Acting Premier. Two days ago, our local health integration network rubber-stamped a controversial plan to close a hospital emergency department completely to adults in Hamilton without proper consultation and without any evidence to support the decision.

Stephen Birch, a respected LHIN board member, resigned in disgust over the board's flawed process that led to unwarranted approval of a Hamilton Health Sciences centre restructuring plan. He said that the LHIN's conduct highlights "the extreme lack of critical appraisal skills necessary to evaluate plans for major reallocations of health care service delivery and does not bode well for the future of health care in the HNHB LHIN." What is the McGuinty government going to do now to ensure that the LHIN holds a full and proper community consultation before the plan becomes a done deal?

Hon. George Smitherman: I want to say on behalf of my colleague the Minister of Health that this is a process in the Hamilton community that, unlike many that have been involved in health care decisions before, has taken place in full public viewing and has been ongoing for a very long time. The member talks about flaws in process and the like, but I think we can all agree when there are alterations in health care delivery it's very hard to reach a consensus that everybody supports. But I think the member misunderstands that in the circumstances for Hamilton, pediatrics are called upon, that hospital at McMaster is called upon to support 600,000 children, and Hamilton will emerge with a children-only emergency room that I think many people in this country would see as a tremendous increase and improvement in the quality of health services in that community. And there are alternate services for emergency room purposes for those people in Hamilton. This is a tremendous advance for health care, particularly as it relates to vulnerable—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This government can try to dismiss the problem, but the reality is the city council, our paramedics, doctors, other health care professionals at the hospital and citizens who crammed into a protest rally last Thursday—of all of these people, virtually no

one wants the restructuring plan as it's been presented. But the LHIN, with the help of the McGuinty Liberals, is determined to ram it through against everyone's wishes. The LHIN has failed in its mandate to consult with the public and has approved a restructuring scheme without any evidence to support the proposed changes. There is no evidence that these changes are supportable and everyone is saying so. Will the McGuinty government come out of the shadows, quit hiding behind the LHIN, and give our Hamilton constituents the input, the consideration and the accountability that they deserve?

Hon. George Smitherman: It's too bad that the honourable member wasn't around in the day when hospitals were taking direct hits to their budget and there were actual cuts each and every year, because that is what her colleagues who sit beside her and around her could tell about from their long experience. The people of Hamilton have benefited from extraordinary investment in health care services and, Mr. Speaker, you will note—

Interjections.

Hon. George Smitherman: Mr Speaker, you will note that the member refuses to address on point the significant improvement associated with the opportunities for health care for children in the Hamilton community. She says that everybody is opposed to it, which she knows is not true. It's difficult to form a consensus when there's change in the delivery of health care, but this is health care change that's been widely consulted and is of absolute benefit, especially to the children of the Hamilton community.

AGGRESSIVE DRIVING

Mr. Pat Hoy: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. We have heard from police that aggressive driving is a major cause of injuries and deaths on our highways. In fact, earlier this year OPP Commissioner Julian Fantino was quoted as saying, "Crashes are often caused by motorists who drive aggressively, speed or make unsafe lane changes...." Commissioner Fantino also spoke about this serious issue during a visit to Chatham, where he received recognition from the Italian community about a year ago. I have also heard from the constituents of Chatham-Kent-Essex on this matter, as the once infamous stretch of Highway 401 known as Carnage Alley runs through my riding. I'm hoping that the Minister of Transportation can share with this House what he and his ministry are doing to combat this dangerous form of driving.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Thank you for an excellent question. You will remember that in 2007, our government passed, along with the Legislature, Bill 203, the Safer Roads for a Safer Ontario Act. What it did was it provided police officers with additional tools needed to stop unsafe drivers. These are people speeding, cutting people off and involved in some kinds of stunts on public roads causing fatalities, serious injury and property damage.

As a result, the OPP has noted that the number of deaths since the passage of that on OPP-patrolled high-

ways is a 43.5% reduction, which is very substantial. This is a clear indication that the additional tough measures which were contained in that bill are working, such things as roadside suspensions, substantial fines and suspension of licences.

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The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Pat Hoy: Minister, I realize that our police officers are working hard every single day to patrol this province's roads in order to enforce the laws in place and to remind those on our roads of the importance of following those very rules. Although Bill 203 has introduced tougher penalties, and although we have seen decreases in fatalities on our roads, I'm still hearing from my constituents that aggressive driving is a problem.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, would the Minister of Transportation share with this House information on any further changes or initiatives that his ministry supports?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'd be happy to do that. All of us in this Legislature, and all of us as citizens of Ontario, can play a role in this regard.

I attended an event with the Association of Chiefs of Police and the Ontario Trucking Association and others. There's a new initiative that's being sponsored by the widow and the brother of a truck driver who was killed in such an accident. What they are advocating is that people identify dangerous drivers when they see them on the highway. If there's a passenger in the car, get them to make that 911 call; if you are a driver alone, pull over to the side safely, make that call and report them. There are decals that are out there on those trucks now, suggesting the numbers that can be called in that regard.

You'd be surprised what a difference it can make when we take the time, effort and energy to identify dangerous drivers and report them appropriately to the police. I think we'll see even further reductions in deaths and—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you, Minister. The member for Nepean-Carleton.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is for the Deputy Premier.

As the finance minister pointed out earlier today, the Premier's office has launched a PR campaign in Toronto at the subway stations, and right here at Queen's Park on the steps of the Legislature.

If I may, Mr. Speaker, this campaign literature was passed out earlier today. It's not on recycled paper, and nowhere on it does it indicate that it is paid for by the Ontario taxpayer.

Out of fairness to the opposition and to the taxpayers of Ontario, could the Deputy Premier provide this House with the public relations plan for the Premier's fairness campaign and its cost to the taxpayers, and have they registered this campaign with Elections Canada, as Premier Danny Williams did for Newfoundland?

Hon. George Smitherman: I want to thank the honourable member for her support for the campaign. The content of the very brochure which she has is aligned with the content of the resolution that was unanimously supported in this Legislature, and as such I think it's fair to say that it reflects the views of all members of the Legislature. It's certainly not an exercise in partisanship, and I think anyone reading the piece would conclude that as well.

The eventual cost of this, of course, can be publicly known, but first we want to give all members the opportunity to take advantage of these flyers, to have as many as they want in their communities, and to participate in distributing these across the breadth of the province of Ontario, along with lawn signs, which will help to focus this important issue of fairness in the context of the election soon to come.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's an opportunity, I guess, for all of us to show our pride in Ontario, but in fairness, Ontarians deserve to know how much the Premier is spending on his PR campaign with his website and this glossy pamphlet, this election-style flyer. Ontarians want fairness, not their tax dollars going to more spin doctors. Deputy Premier, is Bensimon Byrne, the infamous Liberal spinners who tinkered with our beloved trillium, responsible for this PR campaign?

Again I ask, how much money is it costing Ontario's taxpayers, and will the Deputy Premier share the PR plan with this Legislature for our taxpayers? And again I ask—you didn't answer this the first time—did you register this campaign with Elections Canada, as Premier Danny Williams did?

Hon. George Smitherman: There are quite a few questions there. Let's say, first off, on the issue with Danny Williams, you want to draw an apple-to-apple comparison, but he has said he's directed people how they should vote or not vote. That's a very substantial difference, and that brings in responsibilities for federal law.

Secondly, in-house resources are used to produce these materials, as mentioned to the honourable member. Of course, these very, very modest costs can be known once the total number of flyers etc. is known.

At the heart of it, what we encourage all members to do is participate in the opportunity to seek out the billions of dollars in disadvantage that Ontario is currently facing. I think everybody would agree that initiatives like this, which are a scant fraction of a penny on the dollar, are very, very good investments as we seek to gain, as the resolution unanimously supported in this Legislature the other day indicated, to receive the fairness that all Ontarians want to see in their relationship with the government of Canada.

LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is also to the Deputy Premier. A few weeks ago, at a meeting in my office in

Hamilton, two board members of the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant LHIN assured me that there would be full and open community consultations on all Hamilton health care issues that come before the board. Why did the LHIN make a decision on Monday afternoon in Grimsby to close the McMaster hospital emergency room before hearing from the affected greater Hamilton community members in Hamilton?

Hon. George Smitherman: I'm a little bit puzzled that a matter that was before the public in Hamilton for a year was not a satisfactory opportunity for the honourable member doing his job to feel like he sought the necessary engagement and voice of the people in his community. He says today there has been inadequate consultation on a matter that has been before the community for a year and has been the subject, I'm certain, of meetings in an extraordinary variety of forms.

Hamilton Health Sciences responded to some of the criticisms brought forward, and the urgent care clinic, which is going to substantially aid the people in west Hamilton and in the communities to the north, is one of the changes that we made in response to the criticisms of the community. I say to the honourable member, why is he opposed to Hamilton emergency with a stand-alone emergency room to benefit the children of Hamilton?

Mr. Paul Miller: An interesting reply from the minister, considering that 90% of his so-called meetings were behind closed doors and weren't for the public.

The Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant LHIN board is made up of members except for one now. That is Mr. Birch, who resigned yesterday and who lives in Hamilton, the largest community served by the LHIN—one member from Hamilton. LHINs were established to make decisions based on community needs. The LHIN has proven its inability to conduct even the most basic level of consultation with the community it is supposed to serve. In fact, the LHIN has proven itself so dysfunctional that its only Hamilton west board member resigned. When will this minister intervene, reverse the ill-advised decision to close the McMaster hospital emergency room, require a full community consultation on the question and review the overall functioning of the Hamilton LHIN?

Hon. George Smitherman: Difficult decisions have been made by people in important roles based on the advice and information from clinical leaders in the Hamilton community. It has been done only at the conclusion of an extensive process of consultations, and the member's characterization that those have been closed door is absurd. It's beyond the pale.

I'll quote from Dr. Salim Yusuf, professor of medicine at McMaster University: "In the end, it's the health of the people of Hamilton that matters. We can't hold that hostage to a gut reaction."

We recognize that these are emotional matters, but the member should not stand by while 1,800 children each year are shipped down the highway from Hamilton to Sick Children's. Instead, we're repatriating, to the benefit of the children of Hamilton, the services they need in

their community with a stand-alone emergency room at McMaster, which will stand—

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd just remind the member from Hamilton East to watch his language.

INVASIVE SPECIES

Mr. David Oraziotti: My question is for Minister of Natural Resources. Last week, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency confirmed the discovery of the emerald ash borer in Sault Ste. Marie. This is of great concern to my community as ash is the tree species planted all across our downtown and in many other parts of the city.

I know our government committed \$15 million toward the construction of a new invasive species research centre in my riding, and Sault Ste. Marie is home to the largest concentration of forest researchers in the country, making it a natural fit for this centre. However, my community is concerned that the project may never come to fruition because the federal government is not stepping up to the plate to take part in this important project. Have you contacted your counterparts in the federal government, and can you give us an update on the progress of this initiative?

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield: I thank the member from Sault Ste. Marie for the question. Without doubt, we're very concerned about the emerald ash borer and any other invasive species. We are totally committed to following through with our commitment to the establishment of this centre, but there's no question that we can't do it alone. We need to work with the federal government. I have, in fact, written to both federal members. I have to say I'm very disappointed. I received a letter from the federal Minister of Agriculture, and I am going to quote. He has indicated here: "Issues of mutual concern, ranging from agricultural pests such as plum pox virus to forest concerns such as the emerald ash borer and Asian long-horned beetle have all been addressed." Obviously, he's on some other planet. So there's no question that we need to be able to pursue, significantly, an opportunity to work with the invasive species agency—

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

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Mr. David Oraziotti: The destruction of ash trees caused by this pest have been quite significant in southern Ontario and through the northern United States. We know that invasive species are exacting a toll not only on our environment, but on our economy as well. Our forestry sector is already under pressure, and we can't afford to deal with any potential destruction of our forests. We already have witnessed the devastating effects the pine beetles had on the BC forestry sector. I realize that the federal government has the lead responsibility for addressing invasive species, but if they are not prepared to follow through on this important initiative,

we cannot sit idly by and allow our invasive species to continue taking a toll on our resources. Can you tell us what steps we're taking to address the challenges posed by the emerald ash borer?

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield: I'd like to reiterate that one of the major challenges is that when an invasive species comes into this province or any province, the federal agency, which is governed by the federal government, has the responsibility. But once that particular species becomes a resident, they go like this and say, "It's yours." It's not the way to do business. We must change. We've made some investments. It's the same with the gypsy moth and with the dandelion, quite frankly, which is also an invasive species. We have given \$50,000 through a grant to an innovative company for a new product. We've put in \$650,000 with the Essex conservation authority to replant ash trees in that area and we've committed the \$15 million to support the establishment. But every year we have one new invasive species come in this province, and it's time we start working together to make a difference to stop this invasion.

C. DIFFICILE

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Between November 2004 and April 2005, the Public Health Agency of Canada conducted a national study of *C. difficile* that included 11 Ontario hospitals. The study revealed that Ontario had the second-highest rate of *C. difficile* deaths in Canada. By May 2006, you had the results of a surveillance study that showed that *C. difficile* was killing more Ontario patients than any other province except Quebec. In March 2004, you said, while discussing another important health concern, "Ontarians are smart people and deserve to know the facts." So I ask you today: Did you provide the facts? Did you make the results of the Public Health Agency of Canada study of *C. difficile* available to Ontario hospitals or the public?

Hon. George Smitherman: I want to thank the honourable member for her question. I think it actually confirms something that runs in extraordinary contrast to the questions of the critic for health from that party, where she pretends that no one has known about *C. difficile*, including in our hospitals, until just a few weeks or months ago. In fact, all the honourable member is doing is offering further evidence about the extent to which *C. difficile* is a recognized threat in hospital environments. That's why hospital leaders, administrative and front-line, have been working and taking steps to grapple with what undoubtedly is a very, very substantial challenge. This is part and parcel of a pattern that has been identified from our work with PIDAC, and the installation of infectious disease offers in our hospitals has been taken seriously. And a newer step has been added, which is public reporting of *C. difficile* rates in Ontario's hospitals.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Ms. Laurie Scott: It is clearly further evidence that your government did nothing while hundreds, if not thou-

sands, of people died. You didn't bring in the mandatory reporting at the time, in 2006, of either infection or death rates. You folded your arms. You left it for the hospitals to tackle the problem, despite the fact that there was evidence staring you, the government, in the face that screamed for mandatory reporting and surveillance. You ignored the evidence. You ignored the advice of the experts. As a result, I say again that hundreds, and possibly thousands, of people have died. Why was the public health agency's report buried by your government?

Hon. George Smitherman: The honourable member, in using language like that, offers no evidence of the case. Again, she's pretending that people have only in the last few months been alerted to the challenges associated with *C. difficile*, when this is a well-known health risk in hospital environments and that leaders in hospitals have been working on for years. They have been working on it with extraordinarily able guidance from the Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee, armed with a greater degree of resources because of the investments that the government made in the installation of infectious disease professionals in hospitals and the doubling of funding for public health. It is suspicious that an honourable member, part of a party that has a legacy of literally having turned its back on public health, stands in the House today, only having recently been alerted to *C. difficile*, to run down the efforts of those on the front lines of health care who have been grappling with his challenge for years.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines. Today, ONTC's major bus service cuts go into effect. The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities passed a resolution calling on Ontario Northland to cancel these scheduled cuts and ask that the government intervene. Will the minister intervene and put the brakes on these service cuts?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thank you very much to the member for the question. Certainly, the services of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission are very, very important. We know how significant they are in northern Ontario and we're very committed to that—last year, \$46 million in support from provincial government, from our ministry, to do that. But as the member knows, the bus service is a commercial enterprise, not part of a subsidy that is provided by the province. We are certainly conscious of the challenges that are being faced with increased fuel costs and other increases that have resulted in some really tough decisions that have to be made by the ONTC.

I don't think it's appropriate for me to be interfering with the decisions being made on a commercial service such as the ONTC. I'm pleased that indeed they are maintaining service to all of the communities; although clearly it is going to be an inconvenience to reduce those

services, it's very important that we maintain the services to those communities.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Well, we agree on one thing, that the service of the ONTC is very important to the people of the north. When we talk about service cuts, we're not talking about subways that come every four minutes or 15 minutes; we're talking about buses that used to come three times a week to a community that will now not come at all or come once a week to these communities. Those are drastic cuts. It also makes it hard because the rest of the system doesn't function. You can't have your transfer to go from Timmins to Thunder Bay anymore; you're going to have to come down south. The west transfer on Highway 11 is not working anymore with those cuts.

The cuts will also bring down ridership, because as those services are less appropriate, the ridership will go down. Environmentally, it will make more pollution in the north. We ask the ministry—I've written a letter; the municipality has written to you. You can act and stop the service cuts from going ahead. Will you do it?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thank you again for the question. Certainly, we are very conscious of the important services that the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission provides, and we're very proud of the fact there are 1,000 people who are working for the ONTC in northern Ontario. Again, we are very conscious of the importance of the bus service, but as a commercial enterprise, one where there are real challenges in terms of costs—certainly, the board made some very difficult decisions. Again, I'm certainly conscious of the inconveniences that will happen as a result of some of these adjustments, but importantly, no community will be without service; that will continue. There will be no layoffs as a result of that. I am conscious of how important the ONTC is to all people in northern Ontario, and it certainly is to our government as well.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just want to take this opportunity to welcome in the east members' gallery my good friend Madam Zhu Taoying, the consul general from China. I welcome her to Queen's Park along with her spouse, Huo Mingwu; also three deputy consul generals, Hao Guangfeng, Lu Kun and Li Zhengming, all deputy consul generals from China. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

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PETITIONS

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I have a petition from the good people at Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital.

"Whereas the current Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital is fully utilized; and

“Whereas Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital was sized to serve a town of Oakville population of 130,000, and the current population is now well over 170,000; and

“Whereas the population of Oakville continues to grow as mandated by ‘Places to Grow,’ an act of the Ontario Legislature, and is projected to be 187,500 in 2012, the completion date for a new facility in the original time frame; and

“Whereas residents of the town of Oakville are entitled to the same quality of health care as all Ontarians; and

“Whereas hospital facilities in the surrounding area do not have capacity to absorb Oakville’s overflow needs;

“Therefore, be it resolved that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure take the necessary steps to ensure the new Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital be completed under its original timelines without further delay.”

I am pleased to add my name to the signatures and pass it to page Scarlett.

TAXATION

Mr. Michael Prue: I have a petition which was sent to me by Bob Callahan, city councillor for wards 3 and 4, city of Brampton, and John Sanderson, regional councillor for wards 3 and 4, city of Brampton. The petition reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas many seniors are on a fixed income; and

“Whereas they have paid school taxes for the years before they become seniors; and

“Whereas tax increases are made up of regional, city and school board levies;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature to pass legislation reducing the liability of seniors for school taxes by the percentage of increase in the municipal tax levy in each year.”

I would affix my signature thereto.

INTERNET ACCESS

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: J’ai une pétition ici que j’ai reçue de Denise Régimbal portant 150 signatures du secteur rural de la municipalité.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas we request high-speed Internet for rural connection for Alfred-Plantagenet and the surrounding rural region of Glengarry-Prescott-Russell;

“Whereas broadband capability will allow rural businesses to grow and compete in markets across the country and around the world, which will benefit the entire community;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and request high-speed Internet for rural connections for Alfred-Plantagenet.”

I gladly add my signature to it.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Mr. Robert Bailey: I have a petition from my residents.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the current Liberal government has ruled against performing a more intense ‘bumped-up’ environmental assessment for their planned expansion of westbound Highway 402 lanes from two to four to accommodate more trucks;

“Whereas the trucks will be concentrated into an area that is totally within the city limits and in close proximity to many homes, high-density apartments...;

“Whereas recent air quality studies suggesting Sarnia has lower than average air quality on many days of the year...;

“We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reconsider its decision in this matter and perform the bumped-up assessment, which will provide a more detailed risk analysis, as well as updated traffic counts, which we believe will place the viability of the lane expansion in doubt.”

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Bob Delaney: I am pleased to acknowledge a submission from some of the doctors at Credit Valley Hospital with this petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. 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 am pleased to sign and support this petition and to ask page Karlie to carry it for me.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: “Whereas the Milton District Hospital was designed to serve a population of 30,000

people and the town of Milton is now home to more than 69,000 people and is still growing rapidly; and

“Whereas the town of Milton is the fastest-growing town in Canada and was forced into that rate of growth by an act of the Ontario Legislature called ‘Places to Grow’; and

“Whereas the town of Milton is projected to have a population of 101,600 people in 2014, which is the earliest date an expansion could be completed; and

“Whereas the current Milton facility is too small to accommodate Milton’s explosive growth and parts of the hospital prohibit the integration of new outpatient clinics and diagnostic technologies;

“Therefore, be it resolved that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure take the necessary steps to ensure timely approval and construction of the expansion to the Milton District Hospital.”

I agree with this petition. I sign my name and I pass it to page Michael R.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. Jeff Leal: I have a petition today on behalf of the member for Scarborough Southwest.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas access to guns is a major cause behind an increase in violent crime;

“Whereas such crime has been steadily increasing over a number of years;

“Whereas current preventative initiatives have been put in place to stem the tide of violent crime but a direct approach targeting gun usage has not been undertaken;

“Whereas signs specifically stating a zero tolerance attitude toward gun use in the commission of gun violence need to be created and erected to demonstrate our collective disdain for this type of activity;

“We, the undersigned, therefore petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Public Safety to implement an initiative to construct a zero tolerance gun usage sign and have these signs placed on all province of Ontario property, such as major roads and buildings.”

I will attach my signature to this petition and give it to page Marissa.

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Provincial Animal Welfare Act calls for the Ontario SPCA, a private charity, whose objective is to facilitate and provide for the prevention of cruelty to animals and their protection and relief therefrom;

“Whereas every inspector and agent hired and trained by this private charity has and may exercise any of the powers of a police officer; and

“Whereas this private charity does not answer to the Ombudsman or the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, the Ontario SPCA is not subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and no external mechanism of accountability exists; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government refused to investigate the desperate plea of 29 resigned directors demanding that the Ontario SPCA be stripped of its police powers” in May 2006;

“Whereas the McGuinty government proposed sweeping reforms to the Provincial Animal Welfare Act granting further extraordinary powers to the Ontario SPCA, including the power of warrantless entry;

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

“(1) that the Legislative Assembly direct the provincial government to investigate allegations of abuse of police powers and charter violations by the Ontario SPCA investigators; and

“(2) that the Legislative Assembly direct the provincial government to explore the need for an external mechanism of accountability for the Ontario SPCA; and

“(3) that the Legislative Assembly direct the provincial government to ensure that proposed changes to the Provincial Animal Welfare Act do not violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.”

Thank you, and I’ve signed this.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Joe Dickson: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Rouge Valley Health board reversed the 2006 announcement closing the maternity and pediatric services at the Ajax-Pickering hospital due to an overwhelming public outcry; and

“Whereas the Rouge Valley Health board of directors has recently approved closing the 20-bed mental health patient unit at the Ajax-Pickering hospital; and

“Whereas there remains further concern by residents for future maternity/pediatric closings, particularly with the new birthing unit at Centenary hospital, which will see 16 new labour, delivery, recovery and postpartum (LDRP) birthing rooms and an additional 21 postpartum rooms opening this fall in 2008, even with the Ontario Ministry of Health’s largest-ever expansion of the Ajax-Pickering hospital ever; and

“Whereas there is a natural boundary, the Rouge Valley, that clearly separates the two distinct areas of Scarborough and Durham region;

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

“That the Central East Local Health Integration Network (CE-LHIN) and the Rouge Valley Health System (RVHS) board of directors review the Rouge Valley Health System makeup and group Scarborough Centenary hospital with the three other Scarborough hospitals; and

“Further, that we position Ajax-Pickering hospital within Lakeridge Health, thus combining all of our hospitals in Durham region under one Durham region administration.”

I attach my signature to it and pass it to Matthew.

STROKE THERAPY

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas there is a complete lack of government-funded outpatient therapy for stroke victims upon discharge from hospital in the city of Cambridge; and

“Whereas, on October 29, 2004, a state-of-the-art, government-funded outpatient day hospital program, which included therapy programs for stroke survivors discharged from hospital, was cut by the Cambridge Memorial Hospital due to the lack of provincial funds;

“We, the undersigned stroke victims, caregivers, family members and friends of stroke survivors in Cambridge draw your attention to the following:

“That the absence of a government-funded outpatient therapy program leaves many stroke survivors who are unable to pay for private therapy with a gap in services. As a result of this lack of therapy, many survivors despair and regress;

“That therapy is critical to restoring a survivor’s ability to function and become rehabilitated and reintegrated into the community as opposed to being forced to enter a long-term-care facility, thus saving the system money while greatly improving the quality of life of stroke survivors and their families;

“That outpatient therapy is relatively inexpensive. A full-time physiotherapist, occupational therapist and a half-time speech pathologist and social worker required to deliver the service cost less per day than one bed in the hospital;

“Therefore we request that the Ontario government give priority to restoring a government-funded outpatient therapy program in Cambridge to provide desperately needed rehabilitation for stroke survivors and others with similar needs after discharge from hospital.”

As I agree with the contents of this petition, I affix my name thereto.

POPE JOHN PAUL II

Mr. Bob Delaney: I may actually get the last word in today. I’m pleased to join with my colleague from Newmarket–Aurora in this particular petition to the Parliament of Ontario. 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 dur-

ing 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 entitled An Act to proclaim Pope John Paul II Day.”

I’m pleased to sign this petition and send it with page Tamika.

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I hate to give the last word to Mississauga. I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the skyrocketing price of gasoline is causing hardship to families across Ontario; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberal government charges a gasoline tax of 14.7 cents per litre to drivers in all parts of Ontario; and

“Whereas gasoline tax revenues now go exclusively to big cities with transit systems, while roads and bridges crumble in other communities across Ontario; and

“Whereas residents of Bruce-Grey have been shut out of provincial gasoline tax revenues to which they have contributed; and

“Whereas whatever one-time money that has flowed to municipalities from the McGuinty Liberal government has been neither stable nor predictable, and has been insufficient to meet our infrastructure needs;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to redistribute provincial gasoline tax revenues fairly to all communities across the province.”

I agree with this and have signed it.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): It appearing that there be no further petitions, this House stands recessed until 3 o’clock this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1203 to 1500.

MEMBERS’ STATEMENTS

DAY OF GERMAN UNITY

Mr. Frank Klees: As a proud German Canadian, I rise to pay tribute to the Day of German Unity or Tag der Deutschen Einheit, which commemorates the reunion of East and West Germany on October 3, 1990.

German reunification became a reality after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the very symbol of the Iron Curtain, in November 1989.

On August 23, 1990, the new Parliament of East Germany voted to approve a session with West Germany and, on October 3, 1990, the two countries officially became the unified Federal Republic of Germany. That evening, the unity flag was raised over the Platz der Republik. The six-by-10 metre flag is the largest official

flag in Germany and has flown day and night since it was first raised.

I'm proud to say that Canadians of German origin have been an integral part of the establishment and ongoing development of the province of Ontario since the 18th century. More than 70% of the population of our province at that time was comprised of citizens of German background. This is especially reflected in the fact that on July 24, 1788, King George III, by royal proclamation, named the early districts of Ontario after Lunenburg, Mecklenburgh, Nassau and Hesse. Canadians of German origin are truly among the first founders of Ontario.

On behalf of the Ontario PC caucus, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Holger Raasch, and Mrs. Jacqueline Raasch and our entire German Canadian community on Germany's national unity day.

CITY OF BRAMPTON

Mrs. Linda Jeffrey: I rise today to congratulate Brampton on becoming not only Canada's Flower City but also the world's Flower City 2008.

Recently, Brampton learned it had won the Communities in Bloom International Competition. It's the second year Brampton has competed internationally, after winning the national title in 2006. The award recognizes civic pride, environmental responsibility and community beautification.

Judges use eight criteria in evaluating municipalities from the United States, Ireland, England, Scotland and Japan. They looked at tidiness, environmental awareness, community involvement, heritage conservation, urban forest management, landscaped areas, and turf and ground covers. The judges made special mention of the extent of the urban forest coverage as seen from a helicopter that flew the judges over the city. Brampton won in the largest population category, while Stratford, Ontario, won in the medium category.

"Communities in Bloom is not just about flowers and beauty, it is about community spirit and civic pride," said Carole Spraggett, community chair of the Brampton Communities in Bloom committee. "There was special mention for the front garden recognition program, which is particularly gratifying as this is volunteer-driven. The citizens in Brampton play a very important role in making our city a great place through their involvement in projects that not only beautify our surroundings but also add to our quality of life."

EID-UL-FITR

Mr. Ted Arnott: Mr. Speaker, Salaam Alekum. Today is the Muslim holy day of Eid-UI-Fitr, the breaking of the fast of the month of Ramadan.

Earlier today, thousands of Muslims gathered at the Rogers Centre to mark this auspicious day, and my col-

league the member for Newmarket–Aurora was present on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus.

This is a day of joyful feasting and family togetherness for all Muslims, who gather at their mosques for special prayers of thanksgiving, extolling God as the greatest for allowing them to complete the Ramadan fast to His Glory.

Muslim families also visit cemeteries today, for on this day not even death can separate family members from one another.

On behalf of John Tory and all the members of the Ontario PC caucus, I want to extend my warmest best wishes to our Muslim Canadian community at this special and holy time for them and for the worldwide Muslim family.

Eid Mubarak.

GLOBAL EDUCATION INITIATIVE

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I want to share a project that has been sent to me by Rashin Alizadeh. It reads as follows:

"The Global Education Initiative"—which is the project that I was talking about—"is a series of related projects which aim to bring ... awareness to high school students, and to encourage them to develop an interest in the globe and humanity during the critical teenage years when their core identity is being shaped. The project has been endorsed by Global Aware, a non-governmental organization whose sole purpose is 'raising awareness of social and environmental justice issues.' The first phase of the project is on its way but current tasks include meeting with education officials to raise publicity and raising funds to support the project.

"Global Education Initiative is going to start phase one of four within high schools, initially those belonging to the Toronto District School Board. The organization's goal is to bring awareness about the world we live in to youth through presentations by students with international experience. The second part of the project is to use the aid of movies to help the audience relate to the stories and realities outside their own world. The third phase is to allow the students to have an impact. The students will be given opportunities to raise funds and contribute to such things as building a library, establishing a women's shelter, supporting a family business or a student through university. The last phase of the initiative is to change the school curriculum in a way that would allow students to learn more about the world in which we live in."

I'm going to meet with her. It's a wonderful project. Anyone who is hearing about this and would like to support me and her, please let me know.

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: On October 1, 59 years ago, an important event took place in the history of mankind: the founding of the People's Republic of China. The national

day is celebrated throughout mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau with a variety of government-organized festivities, including fireworks and concerts. Public places such as Tiananmen Square in Beijing are decorated in a festive theme and portraits of revered leaders such as Sun Yat-sen are publicly displayed.

Today, we in Canada, too, show our deep respect for the people of China by raising its national colours right here in front of this Legislature in the presence of Madam Zhu Taoying, consul general; Mr. Huo Mingwu, consul and spouse of the consul general; Mr. Hao Guangfeng, deputy consul general; Mr. Lu Kun, deputy consul general; Mr. Li Zhengming, deputy consul general; Mr. Ping Tan, president of the National Congress of Chinese Canadians; and Mr. Hughes Eng, vice-chair of the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto.

We are mindful of the contributions that Chinese-Canadians have made in the development of Canada and the many sacrifices they have endured. But Canadians, too, made sacrifices for China.

When I was in China, I was surprised to find that every Chinese school kid knew about a Canadian named Norman Bethune, who, of course, was our famous physician. He ultimately sacrificed his life in the service of others in the very tumultuous time of China's civil war.

May the cordial relationship between the People's Republic of China and Canada prosper and grow in the years to come.

I want to thank each member who participated today in the flag-raising ceremony because, for the People's Republic of China's representatives at this event—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you to the honourable member.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: During the summer recess, I had the opportunity to visit a number of long-term-care facilities where many issues relating to a shocking lack of provincial funding came to my attention. There were two common themes that were glaringly apparent: First, Dalton McGuinty has ignored the funding needs of these homes and, therefore, the well-being of the staff and residents; and second, these homes are staffed by hard-working, caring and committed professionals who are grossly underpaid and unrecognized when compared with their peers who work in acute care facilities.

The underfunding of this province's long-term-care facilities is often not something the loved ones of the residents are aware of. This leads to unrealistic and unreasonable expectations placed on the staff of the long-term-care facilities, who are working as hard as possible to keep up with the demands of their jobs.

We constantly hear of the need for more funding and the problems experienced by those who live in long-term-care facilities. What does not make the headlines is the fact that underfunding is leading to the physical and verbal abuse of the dedicated men and women who work on the front lines of our long-term-care facilities. For

many of them, whose stories go untold, a lack of funding from Dalton McGuinty and unreasonable expectations are leading to physical, emotional and psychological abuse.

My observations are reinforced by a York University study that found that a staggering number of long-term-care workers suffer violence on the job.

1510

It is time for Dalton McGuinty to stop turning a blind eye and take care of the needs of the men and women working in our long-term-care facilities. The time to invest in our long-term-care facilities is now. Give these facilities the resources they so desperately need—

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

WINTER COATS FOR CHILDREN PROJECT

Mr. Vic Dhillon: Today I rise before this House to recognize the community efforts of Winter Coats for Children. This community organization consists of volunteers whose goal is to ensure that each child has a winter coat and winter boots.

In particular, I would like to congratulate Jo-Ann Studholme, Mary Tobin, Lise Wiseman, Joe Long, Stephanie Gemmell and Bill Studholme. These six volunteers spend countless hours finding winter coats and winter boots for needy children. Last year, this community group helped hundreds of coats find good homes. They have assured me that they will continue to work tirelessly to continue this effort.

This is not a group that receives a lot of funding. They manage to keep going with the bare minimum of funds. This is a community effort, where the people of Brampton West have opened their hearts and closets to make this commitment to needy children. This community group does not have permanent space; they rely on the kindness of local churches which lend them space to continue this worthy cause. More recently, Winter Coats for Children lost their space and were lent temporary space through Ontario Works.

Regardless of how small the space they have to work in, they continue to volunteer with a smile on their face because they can see the positive difference a winter coat has on a child. I was told the story of a young girl who outgrew her coat and, instead of throwing it away, wanted to make sure it was passed on to someone who needed it.

Once again, I want to congratulate these great folks and this organization, and I would encourage them to keep up the good work.

KOFFLER SCIENTIFIC RESERVE

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I rise to speak of an extremely valuable resource in my riding of Oak Ridges–Markham which I had the pleasure of visiting this summer. The Koffler Scientific Reserve at Jokers Hill is a biological

field station which is owned and operated by the University of Toronto and directed by Dr. Arthur Weis.

Generously donated by the Koffler family to the university in 1995, the reserve is situated on 880 acres of fields, wetlands, grasslands and forest in the township of King, on the Oak Ridges moraine. It provides facilities and services for ecological, evolutionary and environmental research. Since field research started in 1997, more than 35 studies done at the site have been published in the most respected journals of ecology and evolutionary biology. Thirteen Ph.D. and 22 master of science students have completed all or part of their thesis research at the site, which also hosts three residential undergraduate field courses: experimental ecology, field botany, and small-mammal ecology.

This year saw the beginnings of a significant expansion of community outreach and public education, including guided nature walks, initiatives to support elementary and secondary school teachers, and the development of two interpretive trails featuring forest health.

I applaud all those who have made the University of Toronto's Koffler Scientific Reserve at Jokers Hill an important hub for ecological and scientific research in Ontario.

EID-UL-FITR

Mr. Reza Moridi: Today is Eid-Ul-Fitr, and it is with great honour that I speak about a Muslim holiday that marks the end of Ramadan, the Islamic holy month of fasting.

"Eid" is an Arabic word meaning "festivity," while "Fitr" means "to break the fast." The common greeting during Eid-Ul-Fitr are the Arabic words "Eid Mubarak," which mean "Blessed be." However, many Muslim countries have their own greetings, based on local languages and traditions.

On the Eid day, typically, Muslims will wake up early in the morning and are encouraged to dress in their best clothes and attend a special Eid prayer that is performed in congregation at mosques or in open areas like fields or squares.

This morning I had the honour to participate in the Eid prayer with the Premier, held at the Rogers Centre, along with thousands of Canadian Muslims.

On the Eid day, Muslims show their appreciation for the health, strength and opportunities of life which God has given to them to fulfill their obligation of fasting and other good deeds during the blessed month of Ramadan.

Thank you, and Eid Mubarak.

USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN HOUSE

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Just to remind the members with BlackBerries, which you often carry with you: If you know you are going to be speaking, put the BlackBerry under your desk or someplace else. The

vibrations from your BlackBerry wreak havoc on our interpreters' ears. You can actually hear it. Many of you will be up speaking and your BlackBerries will be going off, and you can hear that hum going around. So I just remind members, from a perspective of the health and safety of our interpreters, to please refrain from having your BlackBerries on your desks when you are speaking.

The member from Welland.

Mr. Peter Kormos: It would be a simple enough matter for you to merely ban BlackBerries from the chamber, and then we wouldn't have that problem.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Regarding the issue of BlackBerries, I would welcome the honourable member, who is the House leader for the third party, that this may very well be a topic of discussion for a House leaders' meeting, and I would welcome the consensus that has developed among all three parties to help guide the Speaker on the future use of BlackBerries.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Nepean-Carleton has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Deputy Premier concerning the government's fairness campaign. This matter will be debated today at 5:45 p.m.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 97(c), changes have been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. McNeely assumes ballot item number 43, Mr. Mauro assumes ballot item number 56, Mr. Sergio assumes ballot item number 46 and Mr. Berardinetti assumes ballot item number 70.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

SMALL BUSINESS

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: I rise in the House today to talk about the economic contributions of small and medium enterprises in Ontario. As most of you know, October is Salute to Small Business Month in Ontario, a chance for us to celebrate the significant contributions Ontario's entrepreneurs make to our economy and society.

Small and medium-sized businesses are the cornerstone of our economy, accounting for 99% of all businesses in this province. That means that 99% of Ontario's firms that employ 500 or fewer employees account for some 360,000 businesses in Ontario. Collectively they contribute over \$250 billion annually to our economy. Their importance to Ontario's economy cannot be overstated.

Their hard work, resiliency and strength contribute to the prosperity of all Ontarians through economic growth and job creation. Small businesses also play an essential role in the health of the global economy, the creation of jobs and the next generation of new ideas. That is why the government of Ontario pays tribute to the outstanding contributions made by our small businesses during Salute to Small Business Month; yet their efforts are felt year-round.

I would like to share with the House some examples of success stories. You have all heard about the Nano, the world's cheapest car. Did you know that there is a local Ontario connection with the Nano? Samco Machinery, based in Scarborough, Ontario, won a contract to produce machinery that makes parts for the Nano. I had the privilege of touring Samco's facility, and it reminded me once again of the importance of going global.

1520

Cervélo Cycle is another great example. Founded in Toronto in 1995, Cervélo has grown to be the largest time-trial bike manufacturer in the world. Simon Whitfield won a silver medal for Canada in the men's triathlon at the Beijing Olympics on a Cervélo bike. We should all be very proud of their contribution to this as well.

Right in Mississauga, 2Source Manufacturing Inc., a growing leading supplier of high-precision bushings to the aircraft industry around the world, is another home-grown success story. Ontario has invested \$5.13 million through our advanced manufacturing investment strategy program to help Mississauga-based 2Source Manufacturing Inc. to continue improving its manufacturing technologies, carry out innovative product development and create new jobs.

We recognize that small businesses need support so they can grow and adapt to the changing business climate and help our economy prosper, particularly in these challenging times.

My ministry is taking steps to ensure that Ontario's entrepreneurial spirit continues to drive our economy forward on the world stage. With the help of our partners, we have done some exciting things to aid small business. We must ensure that we continue to support our small and medium enterprises, and we did exactly that in the 2008 budget by providing funding for a program that will greatly benefit our SMEs in taking their business global. Earlier this year we announced \$5 million to fund export market access, a program designed to help our small and medium enterprises to take their businesses global.

Our government continues to support and stand up for Ontario manufacturers as they face economic challenges. To further advance the benefits leveraged through the advanced manufacturing investment strategy, which we call AMIS, we have lowered the investment project size threshold for loan applications to a minimum of \$10 million and 50 jobs created or retained. These investments will increase access to more projects from small and medium-sized manufacturers in Ontario and this is already happening.

We are also moving aggressively to reduce the regulatory burden on our businesses. The Ontario government has listened to the business community and we have been working hard to reduce the paper burden on businesses. After phase 1 of the paper burden reduction initiative, we were able to remove 24% of the business forms across seven key ministries that we worked on. After phase 2, we were able to eliminate another 25% of business forms in another eight ministries. Moving forward, phase 3 is currently underway with the remaining ministries so that the businesses can focus on growing their businesses rather than filling out forms for the government.

We also eliminated the capital tax retroactive to January 1, 2007, for businesses primarily engaged in manufacturing and resource activities, which would entitle them to about \$190 million in rebates, and some of those cheques have already gone out.

We have also accelerated the capital cost allowance rate for manufacturing and processing machinery and equipment investments made before 2012. These measures are being paralleled to the measures that were announced in the 2008 federal budget. In addition, we also have accelerated business education tax rate cuts for northern businesses, resulting in total savings of more than \$70 million over the next three years. All these millions will help businesses become more competitive.

As a part of our support system for small businesses, we operate 56 small business enterprise centre locations across the province. For our medium-sized businesses in southern Ontario, our business advisors in 12 regional offices are staffed with qualified experts that can help Ontario businesses compete and grow both domestically and internationally.

We also have a number of programs designed to foster entrepreneurship for our youth. We believe that how we encourage and support our young people will determine the future success of our economy. Our website is designed to serve as a one-stop shop for anyone interested in starting or growing businesses in Ontario. The website brings together resources from a variety of sources, allowing visitors to learn not only about government of Ontario support and programs but link to resources available from federal and municipal governments as well. Our website address is www.ontario.ca/sbcs.

As a part of this month's celebration of small businesses, I was at the Ontario Investment and Trade Centre this morning to kick off Salute to Small Business Month at the launch of Silver Lining's North American Tour to Inspire Entrepreneurs. Silver Lining is a success in its own right. This company started not long ago with one person, and they have grown to 10 persons and are helping small businesses to succeed. This event reinforces the theme of our government's effort to provide learning and networking opportunities to encourage small businesses' growth. I will be visiting businesses throughout the month to celebrate what small business does for this province.

Also, all of our MPPs will receive a package containing a template, news release and other support materials

so they can also visit companies and talk about the success of our small business community for the economy of our province. We ask them to do whatever they can in their communities to celebrate our small businesses and all that they do for us. By working together, we can identify more opportunities that will increase small business success and make sure that our small business community grows even stronger.

I really want to congratulate all those entrepreneurs out there who are in the small and medium-sized enterprises for the contributions they make to Ontario's economy.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Statements by ministries? Responses?

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to respond to the statement by the Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services on Salute to Small Business Month. I think we are seeing increasing numbers of small businesses in the province of Ontario, but unfortunately they used to be large- and medium-sized businesses that are now becoming small businesses under the McGuinty Liberals.

My colleagues tell me we should be calling small business the survivor club in this province. It's time this government recognized the contribution of small business. They are the wealth creators, the job creators, in this province and it's time that the government demonstrated its support for small business with actions, not just words.

The Minister of Small Business had an opportunity last Thursday in private members' business to demonstrate that he supports small business. As has been pointed out, 98% of all businesses are small businesses, and 43% of qualified labour shortages in Ontario are in jobs that require apprenticeship training or a college education. So what did the Minister of Small Business do last Thursday? He voted against a private member's resolution that would change the ratio of apprenticeship from three journeymen to one apprentice, to what most of the rest of the provinces in this country do, which is one journeyman to one apprentice. Basically, the minister sided with the union-controlled committees against the interests of small business. So instead of advocating and standing up for small business, he showed his true colours and did not represent the interests of small business.

This is a very simple change that could be made that would provide all kinds of opportunities for training for our young people who are looking forward to acquiring a trade and earning good money as electricians or plumbers or other trades in the small businesses that need those positions filled.

Just recently I met with a company up in Parry Sound that's looking at expanding, but their problem is that they just can't get the qualified people to be able to expand. So this minister and this government have demonstrated that they're not supporting small business with actions.

One of the biggest complaints of small business in the meetings I've held at round tables in my riding—and of course we, the PC Party, had an economic summit recently here in Toronto—is the cost of regulation. Currently, regulation costs business some \$13 billion every year. During the election campaign, Mr. McGuinty promised to remove one regulation for every new regulation that was introduced. I'm still waiting for that promise to be fulfilled, because it has not been fulfilled to this point. You ask any small business group you sit down with what their big issue is, and pretty much the number one issue is the red tape burden that they face.

1530

I point to surveys by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, and the recent survey they brought forward at our economic summit, where they asked a question on the increasing red tape burden: "How has the overall burden of provincial regulations on your business changed during the past three years?" That's totally within the mandate of the McGuinty government. How has it changed? The answer is that it has increased by 66%, as the businesses surveyed by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business pointed out.

If they had cost savings to do with reduced regulations, what would they spend the money on? They would invest in their equipment and business; they would pay down debt; they would hire additional employees. So this government is making it more difficult for them to survive; hence, the survivors' club.

I've seen and heard from constituents who say that we really need to make a difference in reducing regulations and making them simpler. Just last week, we had the labour critic ask a question of the McGuinty government and bring Stephanie Watt, who had a company that made cash rolls, here to the Legislature. That was an instance where Stephanie Watt, with her company, moved to the States because of the actions of the McGuinty government, the out-of-control regulations coming out of the Ministry of Labour that caused her to shut down her company and move it to the States. That's just one example.

So there's lots this government can do. They are very good about talking about it, but their actions so far have not supported small business in this province—small business that is so important to the economy, and the small businesses that are the job creators and wealth creators in this province.

SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a pleasure to respond on behalf of small business. Certainly the reality in the province of Ontario is that small business is suffering. I have had numerous consultations with the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas, and I can tell you that they presented a brief to the Liberal caucus two years ago and are still waiting for a response to some of their demands. Their demands are fourfold, and I'm going to go over them.

First of all, the major burden on small business is unfair taxation. The Toronto Board of Trade in fact has pointed this out. I brought in a resolution to reform business education tax across the province; it's still not reformed. Toronto's commercial property taxpayers are paying a rate that is 44% higher than the lowest urban rate in the region, Halton's 1.37%, and 30% higher than the GTA average. Toronto's business taxpayers do not receive a higher level of service than those outside the city, nor do Toronto's publicly funded schools benefit from businesses paying a higher rate of education tax. We in the New Democratic Party have been calling for a reform of business education tax in light of TABIA's concerns, and we've yet to see this government act.

The second way that they could help small business is to get rid of the outrageous red tape that is the plague of small business owners. We had a classic example of this in my own riding, where Karl's butcher shop shut after over 40 years in business. Why did it shut? It shut because of this government's red-tape regulation that would have cost Karl \$200,000 to meet their health regulations, instead of the fact that the Toronto health regulations said they were fine, and said they were fine for 40 years.

We saw it again with the smoking regulation, where this government brought in something that arguably could be necessary, but did it on the backs of small business and did not give small business the help it needed to meet the regulations that this government brought in.

Again, the minister talked about helping small manufacturers. A classic case of a small manufacturer we should be helping in the province of Ontario is ZENN cars. Here we have an excellent company that isn't allowed to sell their product in Ontario. They can sell their product in the States or in other provinces, but not in Ontario: an electric car. This is a government that claims it's green, that claims it's in favour of small business, but won't allow members in this House to drive a ZENN car from their house to this place.

Number three, this government does not protect those individuals in small business who are preyed upon by big business. I'll give you a case in point: franchisees who are constantly manipulated and taken advantage of by franchisors, some of them outright fraud artists. We've had examples with the CBC, and others have done stories on this. These perpetrators of fraud are still in action in the province of Ontario, still stealing—I can't use a stronger word than that—from mainly new immigrants who don't know their rights, who don't have worthy legal representation. I had one constituent who lost \$154,000 to a man who had already been convicted of fraud. There is no oversight of franchising, of franchisors; there's no oversight of that, and that needs to happen with this government.

Number four: Although we're still fighting for real rent control for residences, I can tell you there's no rent control of any sort for commercial leases. So what tends to happen in the retail sector is that if a retailer does well, their rent goes up and then they're forced to move.

Again, there's no insight here about the trials of small business; there's no help for small business against those who would exploit them who are big business owners.

Just to sum up, it's all well and good to laud small business and small business month, but what small business has pointedly asked the Liberal caucus for, and has yet to receive a response, is action. This government needs to act on behalf of small business. We don't need any more platitudes, we don't need any more statements; what TABIA and what business improvement areas across this province want is action. So I would ask the Minister of Small Business to stand up and act, and we can dispense with the platitudes.

DEFERRED VOTES

COLLEGES COLLECTIVE BARGAINING ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR LA NÉGOCIATION COLLECTIVE DANS LES COLLÈGES

Deferred vote on the motion for third 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): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1537 to 1542.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Moridi has moved third 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.

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

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Gerretsen, John	Murdoch, Bill
Albanese, Laura	Gélinas, France	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Arnott, Ted	Gravelle, Michael	Pendergast, Leeanna
Arthurs, Wayne	Hardeman, Ernie	Phillips, Gerry
Balkissoon, Bas	Horwath, Andrea	Qaadri, Shafiq
Barrett, Toby	Hoy, Pat	Ramali, Khalil
Bentley, Christopher	Jaczek, Helena	Ramsay, David
Bisson, Gilles	Jeffrey, Linda	Rinaldi, Lou
Bradley, James J.	Klees, Frank	Runciman, Robert W.
Brown, Michael A.	Kular, Kuldip	Ruprecht, Tony
Brownell, Jim	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sandals, Liz
Carroll, Aileen	Leal, Jeff	Savoline, Joyce
Chan, Michael	Mangat, Amrit	Scott, Laurie
Chudleigh, Ted	Marchese, Rosario	Sergio, Mario
Colle, Mike	Martiniuk, Gerry	Sousa, Charles
Crozier, Bruce	Mauro, Bill	Tabuns, Peter
Delaney, Bob	McMeekin, Ted	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dhillon, Vic	McNeely, Phil	Van Bommel, Maria
Dickson, Joe	Miller, Norm	Wilkinson, John
Duguid, Brad	Milloy, John	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duncan, Dwight	Moridi, Reza	Zimmer, David
Elliott, Christine	Munro, Julia	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 65; the nays are zero.

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

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

OPPOSITION DAY

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I move that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario calls on the Premier of Ontario to support much-needed changes to the Youth Criminal Justice Act, including:

—expanding publication of names of young offenders convicted of violent crimes;

—ensuring that persons aged 14 and older convicted of violent crimes face sentences proportionate to the severity of the crime, including life for first- or second-degree murder; and

—making it easier to detain young offenders prior to trial who are charged with violent offences or a pattern of offences.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Runciman has moved opposition day number 1. Mr. Runciman.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I'm pleased to begin debate on a subject of importance for the people of our province, namely public safety improvements focused around reforms to the youth justice system. Our party, through our leader John Tory's white paper *Time for Action* published a few years ago, proposed a range of suggestions in dealing not only with crime but also the root causes of criminal behaviour by young people and how we can address those challenges, including such things as mentoring and tutoring, scholarships and internships, parental education and a fatherhood program. To date, none of the recommendations have been adopted by the Liberal government. That report is available for anyone who wishes to call our office at 416-325-0445.

Time for Action dealt with the rehabilitative issues in a significant way, and today's debate deals with the issue of instituting more effective ways of coping with the more violent repeat young offenders in our midst. That's an issue the Liberal government says it wants to deal with, but the vote today will tell the tale.

As members know, while we have the constitutional authority over the administration of criminal justice in our province, the responsibility for the creation and reform of the criminal laws that we enforce rests with the federal Parliament. Because of recent events around us, including school shootings, the issue of reform of our youth justice system is now under at least some discussion. I say "some" because all too often political and self-interested rhetoric drowns out the need for real debate. The resolution before the House is an attempt on

our part, the official opposition, to frame that debate on a specific feature of the youth justice system, namely its dealing with repeat and the most serious offenders.

I want to be clear from the outset: This focus is not meant to suggest removing the primary rehabilitative focus and purpose of the Youth Criminal Justice Act, and some will try to suggest that. The object of our justice system, including the youth justice system, is to protect the public, and that is best achieved when people of all ages decide either not to commit crimes in the first place or, having done so, to discontinue that antisocial conduct.

The justice systems, in many ways, especially youth justice, are public systems designed to serve the public interest. They are not the private preserves of lawyers, judges and criminologists. The public, including us as elected representatives, have the right and, I would suggest, duty to ask the tough questions about how those systems are performing and offer constructive suggestions for improvements.

1550

The resolution before this House specifically addresses the challenge of how the Youth Criminal Justice Act deals with young people who, because of the serious nature of the crimes they commit or their continuing criminality in spite of our best efforts, require action beyond the normal, purely rehabilitative intent of the act.

The resolution before the House speaks to expanding publication of names of young offenders convicted of violent crimes, ensuring that persons aged 14 and older convicted of violent crimes face sentences proportionate to the severity of the crime—that includes life sentences for first- or second-degree murder—and making it easier to detain young offenders prior to trial who are charged with violent offences or a pattern of offences. That has been a serious problem in Toronto.

We selected three specific areas of reform currently under debate because they permit discussion of the broader issue that I mentioned earlier: Can we improve the way the act deals with the most serious and repeat offenders, keeping in mind the overarching public interest and public safety priorities? We in the Progressive Conservative Party believe the answer to that question is a resounding yes, but that we will only get there by informed and honest debate.

So let's start with a real picture about violent and repeat youth crime itself. I urge members and the public at large to look carefully at the crime statistics themselves, because they reveal a truth not captured in self-serving bureaucratic claims and misleading media releases.

We all know the mantra, "Crime is down, so who needs justice reform?" We need to look closer, because as people on the front lines in the communities of this province know all too well, crimes of violence, drugs and weapons are not down. Equally, there is a disproportionately large volume of crime committed by a disproportionately small number of offenders—repeat offenders. These two facts—and that's what they are, facts—are the

nasty little secrets of the failure of the Youth Criminal Justice Act and what this resolution is aimed at.

To start with, it's important to understand the way the act diverts what are crimes out of the system. Speaker, you want to hear this; you won't believe it. More than 50% of what are actual crimes are no longer prosecuted as such. This also leads to significant under-reporting by the police, and we now keep no records of who has been diverted. Because we don't treat criminal conduct as a crime doesn't mean a crime hasn't been committed. Also, as the stats analysis shows, what is down is less serious crime, which people increasingly don't report, perhaps because increasingly nothing happens. But it's all mixed in with violent crime, which creates this comforting but inaccurate claim that crime is down.

The federal crime stats survey also explained an increasing failure to report crimes resulting from persons fearful of retribution, which is a very dangerous sign, and again this has been a significant problem in Toronto. Past reports have specifically raised this about youth crime and identified repeat youth offenders committing increasingly serious crime as the greatest challenge facing the youth justice system. I urge members to take the time and read the details of these crime stats, because you'll see what is the truth and what questions we should be asking. From last year alone, sexual assault, aggravated assault, robbery and assault with a weapon all increased, while homicides and attempted murder rates are about the same.

When comparisons are made, as they should be, over longer periods of time, the increases are even more significant and more concerning. Ontario's Office for Victims of Crime used to keep track of these statistical trends and provide that information to government, although given the neutering of that office by the current government, I doubt this is still occurring.

The problem that this resolution seeks to address lies at the core of the biggest challenge in youth justice; namely, the repeat and most serious offenders, where the balance of sentencing principles is different than, for example, with a first-time offender, where the focus is more properly on rehabilitation.

By permitting a discretionary publication of the names of young persons convicted of the most violent crimes, for example, we will restore a measure of balance to the system. Shielding young offenders from public attention is a legitimate tool for most persons, but does anyone here really think it should apply equally to all offenders, including repeat drug dealers, sex offenders, bank robbers, break-and-enter artists or gun-toting gangsters?

Treating young people differently and with an intended focus on changing behaviour through rehabilitation has always been the focus of youth justice in Canada, albeit in different ways and through different statutes. Notwithstanding this, Speaker, from the days of the Juvenile Delinquents Act—and you and I will remember that, not that we were juvenile delinquents—our youth criminal justice system had also previously allowed judges to consider the full spectrum of principles

at sentencing, including hope of rehabilitation, specific and general deterrence and denunciation. This was deliberately changed with the introduction of the Youth Criminal Justice Act by the former federal Liberal government. The new bill specifically excluded deterrence and denunciation as considerations by a court.

Our resolution proposes ensuring that courts are not artificially restricted in considering the full range of sentencing principles for what would be defined as serious and repeat offences.

Personally, I think the public expects their justice system to consider and prioritize public safety when it comes to sentencing a repeat bail-and-probation-violating armed robber, drug dealer, sex offender or gangster, irrespective of their age. The public deserves a system that is capable of something better than a revolving door.

This approach also includes what is already the law in the Criminal Code regarding persons convicted of murder who are sentenced to life, but with parole ineligibility terms set between five and 10 years.

The point of the resolution is to expand the application of the sentence over convicted murderers and not, as some might regrettably and inaccurately suggest today, locking 14-year-olds up for life.

Let me also add that by not dealing differently with these serious and repeat offenders, we are not doing them any favours, as the revolving door is a graduation ticket into adult criminality.

We should be clear that when these repeat and most serious young offenders are detained, this is the time to deliver the education and job-training skills in the necessary structured environment which is all too often missing in their lives.

While we clearly need deterrence as a principle in the youth justice system, we must always remember that it's hard to deter someone who feels they have nothing to lose. In that sense, custody for repeat and serious young offenders is not simply a punishment, but a realistic understanding that increased, effective and assured structure is a precondition for progress.

Finally, our resolution aims to remove the needless artificiality against pre-trial detention that courts face when dealing with older repeat and the most serious violent young offenders. This built-in defect results in the wrong people being released on bail, which results in more crime—and boy, have we seen that happening in the last few years. This is a complaint all too frequently heard from police and victims in our province. Once again, Ontarians deserve better than a revolving-door justice system.

Overall, this resolution is trying to bring this government, this assembly, into the process to fine-tune the youth justice system by keeping the properly rehabilitative focus for young people, but giving greater ability to courts to deal appropriately with repeat and the most serious offenders. It's a subject of immense importance and one that merits substantive participation rather than partisan defensiveness. We can make the youth justice

system work better if we have the will to do so. I hope members will join me by supporting this resolution.

1600

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: There's no question that everyone in this House and frankly everyone in this society finds crime, victimization and violence distasteful, something that we reject and something that action needs to be taken on. So, to the goal of reducing or eliminating crime amongst youth and amongst older people, everyone in this House would agree. The question we face is whether or not the solutions that are put forward today by the Conservative Party are in fact solutions that would deal with the problem. Do they correctly understand the problem? Will they exacerbate the problem?

When we've looked at this issue, when we've looked at authorities, at resources like the John Howard Society, we don't see an evidence base for the approach that's being taken by the Conservative Party in this particular matter, and given that there's a lack of evidence both to the effectiveness of their approach and their understanding of what causes this difficulty, this profound social problem, in the first place, you have to say that one can't support the motion that's been put forward by this party.

There seems to be an assumption that there's an epidemic of youth violence, and I have no doubt in my mind that there is youth violence. I was in a riding last night, York West, talking to people who live there who are extraordinarily disturbed by shootings that have happened in their community. But I have to say to you, Speaker, that I don't see that this resolution would in fact deal with that issue. It would not get at the roots of the issues. It would not deal with those dynamics that continually replenish the ranks of those who are engaged in criminal activity.

It isn't that I have any sympathy for anyone who shoots people; I have none. I have no sympathy for someone who engages in violence—none. But when I look at this problem and think about where we have to go as a society to actually protect ourselves, I ask myself, how do we prevent these issues? How do we prevent this circumstance from taking place?

Let's go first to some of the realities about the state of criminal activity in this society. Crime rates are at their lowest point in 25 years in Canada. I'll just note as an aside that capital punishment was abolished about 30 years ago. I know that one can have fun with statistics. There are ways of reshaping numbers so that things look worse, so that they look better. The speaker for the Conservative Party set out his analysis of how those numbers were different and how in fact they should be reinterpreted. In the end, we have an ongoing problem with youth violence. We have had it for decades. We need to get at the roots of it if we're going to talk about it seriously.

I note homicide rates have fallen by 36% between 1991 and 2004. That doesn't mean an elimination of violence, but it also says to us when we're dealing with

this problem that we're not talking to something that's exploding on the scene. It's something that's horrible, that we want ended, but it is not an issue that's taking over our society.

Violent youth crimes have increased 12% over the last 10 years, so, in fact, if we see an overall decline in crime, we've seen an increase in youth crime. But overall, violent crime is a small proportion of all youth crimes. We have to keep in mind that Ontario has the second-lowest youth crime rate in Canada after Quebec. It doesn't say that there's not a problem. It doesn't say that doesn't have to be addressed, but keep in mind that we are already in a jurisdiction with one of the lowest youth crime rates in this country.

How do we prevent violent crime? How do we best protect the public? How do we rehabilitate young people who do engage in crimes? As I said earlier, one of the most respected sources on these issues is the John Howard Society. They have 65 offices across Canada and work with thousands of youth in Ontario alone. They made a very substantive, thoroughly researched presentation to the government of Canada on the Youth Criminal Justice Act in August. They made a number of points in their presentation, based on evidence drawn from statistics and reality rather than simply from emotion or political interest. In my comments I'm going to draw extensively from what they had to say.

First, punishment does not prevent or reduce crime. I think that for the most part, people see punishment as something distant, something far away and not of immediate concern when they are driven emotionally, through addiction, through mental illness, to act in a way that's destructive. Interestingly, about a month or two ago, I had a chance to talk with two criminal lawyers in downtown Toronto about their practice and about what they encountered in the courts dealing with young people dealing with the police.

In the course of our discussion, it became very apparent that if you dealt with drug addiction and with mental illness issues, they would have very little business. They, in fact, would be very happy to move on to different areas of law, because for the most part they felt that if you didn't have substantial problems with drug addiction and mental illness, you would not have people acting in ways that are destructive. Yet at the same time I know, and many others of us know, that when people want assistance dealing with drug addiction, there are long waiting periods for treatment programs.

If we're serious about dealing with violent crime, if we're serious about dealing with people who engage in activity that disturbs our society, disturbs our homes, disturbs our sense of us as a people, then we have to talk first about going after those roots and dealing with that drug addiction. That is not part of today's motion. That has not been part of the debate. But if you're serious, if you really want to make a difference, if you want to prevent people from being harmed in the first place, then you go to the source and reduce the problem as much as you possibly can.

The John Howard Society, in their brief, said that the bulk of research shows that punishment tends to increase the likelihood that people will commit crimes. I know from growing up in Hamilton, dealing with some of the kids who came out of reform school, that reform school was like going to high school for crime. You went in, maybe tough and stupid; you came out tough, stupid and trained. I have real, substantial questions to ask about an approach that puts people in a situation where they will be hardened and further developed in their skill in engaging in criminal activity.

The John Howard Society argues that punishment is inherently destructive and expensive, and should only be used with utmost restraint. The assumption in this resolution, that heftier punishment will actually make a substantial difference in this society, is off the mark. There's no question that it plays to us emotionally. When we read a horrendous story of someone being shot, stabbed or beaten, we have a strong emotional response. We want it to be addressed. We want something to happen to the person who has acted violently. I understand that, because I feel it. But that doesn't necessarily mean that that course of action is going to prevent such activity from happening in the future.

The John Howard Society outlines in detail the argument that sentencing severity has no meaningful general deterrent value for young people, or anyone, for that matter. People who commit crimes simply do not consider the length of sentence they might face when making this often split-second decision.

1610

I think that's true. People act impulsively. They act, driven emotionally, driven by addiction, driven by mental health problems, and they do things or they act in ways that have no consideration at all for what the ultimate consequences may be to their victim or to themselves.

They noted that in particular for youth who commit serious crimes, rates of reoffence are the same regardless of the severity of sentencing. So, yes, you could have extraordinarily severe sentences, but would that actually result in a reduction in reoffences? Apparently not. They note that the youth who commit crimes are people who have high impulsivity, low self-control and also, often, mental health concerns and addiction. So, again, if you want to be serious about crime, where is the resolution talking about putting money into youth mental health, addiction prevention and addiction rehabilitation? Because if we really want to protect society, if we really want to reduce the potential damage to ourselves, our families and our community, we have to focus our resources there.

I note that American states with the death penalty have higher rates of homicide than those that do not. People are not thinking about the consequences. When I talk to people in Canada about stronger sentences—the death penalty—I say, “If you want those things, look at the American experience and tell me, generally, do you feel safer in Canada or do you feel safer in the United States, in jurisdictions that have those severe penalties?”

California: The California counties that enforce their famous three-strikes law did not show any decline in crime compared to other states. So I have to ask you and I have to ask those who have put forward this resolution: Show the evidence that determines that this is much safer.

South Africa and the United States are two countries that have some of the highest capital punishment rates in the world, and South Africa is a very dangerous place. Punishment is not enough to deal with desperation, drug addiction and mental health problems; it does not get at them. I don't have a problem with separating the dangerous from the rest of us, but I don't think this resolution is going to actually give us what we want. I don't think it's going to protect us, our families or our communities. Look at the empirical evidence, look at the jurisdictions that are very harsh on crime, and tell me that those are dramatically safer jurisdictions. I don't think that information is there. I just don't see it.

When this kind of approach is taken, you have to ask, is this consistent with other international norms? The UN has a Convention on the Rights of the Child that requires youth justice courts to impose sentences that ensure the care and protection of youthful offenders and that avoid the detrimental effects of detention as much as possible. Other UN rules mandate that youth sentences be minimal, proportional and in the child's best interests.

One would say, then, given international thinking on this issue, that again, this motion is outside those norms. And, frankly, if we subscribe to the protection of youth, children, in a system that we know is at best imperfect—Guy Paul Morin was falsely convicted of a crime he did not commit. Others have been falsely convicted of crimes they did not commit. Make no mistake: If this resolution were ever to be implemented, there would be many young people who would go to jail for extended periods of time at the age of 14 who would have been falsely convicted, because we are simply an imperfect society. We have the best judicial system that we have been able to evolve, but we have not evolved a perfect judicial system. We will never have that.

So again, if we want to substantially reduce the amount of crime we encounter in our society, we have to go to the roots of that crime, deal with those roots, and then, where we haven't been able to correct the problem, figure out where we go from there.

There's a suggestion as well that there be a public reporting and denunciation of offenders, that there be pre-trial detention and adult sentencing for youth. The motion seeks to expand the publication of perpetrators of youth crime, and I assume this is to denounce and shame young people as a deterrent. Well, we've already gone through the fact that, in general, sentencing doesn't deter them. Shaming and publication is probably not going to deter them, either. And I know that, emotionally, it is extraordinarily appealing—no question—but it is not going to give us what we want.

In my discussion that I had with those criminal lawyers a few months ago, we talked about pre-trial

detention, and they said the number-one determinant as to whether or not someone would plead guilty was whether or not they were in detention. If they were being held and they could plead guilty, make a deal and get out of jail, they would do that, because to not plead guilty and to stay on in jail awaiting trial was a very grim prospect, an extraordinarily grim prospect.

So if in fact in this resolution you're proposing more pre-trial detention, you're going to get a lot more people pleading guilty simply to get out of that pre-trial detention. There will be innocent people—because we know we've done it before, as a society—who will be in jail, who will be pled out, guilty, and have a criminal record, not because they did something but because things did not work well and they were stuck in prison, stuck in jail.

We've had young people die in custody in Ontario. Again, I say we have to use great care when we use custody because of the risks of wrongfully convicting people or wrongfully having them plead guilty, and also because for young people, jail can be an extraordinarily risky place.

We know that younger people do not have the grasp of reality that we have as adults. We set a variety of limits in this society around voting, drinking and contracts because we recognize there is a difference in the ability between an adult and an adolescent to make decisions and understand what's going on in the world. In fact, if we want to start changing these rules, then we have to understand that the rules still have to reflect the very different mentality that exists in those younger people.

There is an idea that youth who commit serious crimes should be tried as adults. That came up in the 1990s and it was found to be unconstitutional.

I should note that youth in Florida—and again, this is from the John Howard Society—who were transferred to the adult system were more likely to reoffend than those who remained in the youth justice system.

I'd like to say that we concur with the John Howard Society in saying that crime prevention is the best approach, addressed by taking on the underlying causes of youth crime. Criminal proceedings should be grounded in rehabilitation, not denunciation and deterrence. Amendments to the youth justice system should be based on evidence, not emotion and fear-mongering.

The John Howard Society says that the primary obstacle to evidence-based justice policy, where youth are concerned, is the predilection of legislators to yield to ill-informed preferences, namely, the mistaken belief that punishment and deterrence are the solution to youth crime.

Young offenders need to acknowledge and take responsibility for their crime, to the extent that that's possible, and they should be required, as much as possible, to repair the harm that they have done, but our approach, as a society, should be one of prevention, rehabilitation and public safety.

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When you talk to Canadians and go through the logic, most people support that approach. If we want to take on

the issue, let's reduce child poverty, provide high-quality daycare and high-quality early learning experiences, invest in strong public schools and expand community-based social and recreational programs for families. Those things will go much further in dealing with crime. When I was a city councillor here in downtown Toronto in the 1990s, one of the things that I found substantially reduced graffiti and vandalism in neighbourhoods was opening up the school gyms for basketball games in the evening. That substantially reduced the number of broken windows, broken bottles found on sidewalks and graffiti on walls. For a whole bunch of people, providing them with opportunities for outlets of their energy that are not destructive is a far more effective course of action than having a lot of police on the street and a lot of jail guards looking after kids who are too young. In the United States, simple community support programs such as home visits from nurses to low-income teen mothers, in areas where this is done, have led to reductions in crime rates in children of up to 80%.

It takes a while for a program like that to pay off. It is not immediate. But if we're actually going to have the safe streets that we want and the safe communities that we want, that's the direction we have to take.

I will leave the remaining time to my colleague, but I want to say that we cannot support this resolution that's come forward. We don't think it's practical. We don't think it is one that will stand the test of time, and it's one ultimately that logically is not defensible.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. David Zimmer: I want to address this motion, and I want to lay out an argument for my colleagues here in the Legislature why I am not able to support this motion. I've read the motion over carefully, and it speaks of violent crimes. It speaks of what we should be doing with persons who commit first-degree or second-degree murder, and it goes on and references violent offences and so on.

What that's code for here in Canada, "first- and second-degree murder," "violent offences," is gun crime, because the fact of the matter is that these first- and second-degree murder cases are by and large all committed by guns, in particular handguns. Here in the GTA we open up the paper every couple of days, and what is it? There's another handgun shooting. Someone's been shot by a handgun. The principal problem here is handguns. So the member's motion, in my view, rings hollow. In my view, it's disingenuous. He's put a motion forward and he said, "I know if we do these things in my motion, this is going to get a grip on youth crime. It's going to fix violent crime." But one of the principal ways to fix violent crime, to help eliminate those first- and second-degree murder charges, is to get rid of handguns in Canada.

It's a federal responsibility. We want to work with our federal partner in Ottawa. We want to work for a ban on handguns in Canada, in Ontario. Again, to my colleagues in the Legislature, it strikes me as disingenuous. If the

members opposite were really serious, in my view, about eliminating violent crime, one of the things they could step right to the fore on is joining us in putting pressure on the federal government and asking the federal government to put a ban on handguns.

In another manner, the motion just rings hollow. Again, it's disingenuous, because to fight violent crime, in addition to the handgun ban, there are a whole lot of things we can do to shore up the budgets of those agencies that are fighting violent crime.

The way the federal government can be a partner with us in that is to be fair to Ontario, to heed our requests for financial fairness in Ontario. We send all of that money up to Ottawa—we send \$20 billion extra a year up to Ottawa, and we don't get any of that back. If we got some additional monies back, if we got a fair shake from the federal government here in Ontario, we could use a portion of that money to further shore up the good work that we're already doing to provide an environment that combats violent crime, that changes the context of people's lives so that they don't get involved in violent crime.

On the monies available to us, we've already kicked in \$33 million to fight youth crime. We have hired more JPs, crown attorneys, judges, police, patrol officers. We've got \$28 million that we have put into the at-risk communities. We've got another \$15 million for the youth challenge fund. All of that effort is going to combat violent crime, to change the circumstances in which violent crime often arises.

So on those two things, we could get a lot of help from the members opposite here who have brought this motion forward: if they would join us in the handgun ban, and if they would join us in a fair financial deal for Ontario so that we had more money to fight crime and add to what we're already doing.

I want to say a couple of words about the facts of handguns, because one of the Conservative members from the Oshawa area, on June 12, 2008, said this: "For all intents and purposes, there is a handgun ban in Canada right now." I'm not sure just what she means by that, but, as a matter of logic, if the position is that for all intents and purposes there's already a handgun ban in Ontario, then let's take it to the next logical step. Why don't we formalize it by a legislative ban on handguns? It seems to me the logic is just not working there.

You should join us. You should join us in urging the federal government to have a formal ban on handguns, join us in our fight with the federal government for more financial resources to augment the good work we are already doing by changing the context in which violent crime already develops.

We have heard from the authorities that front-line responsibility for violent crime, for investigating the murders that see these tragic shootings throughout Canada and particularly here in the GTA—this is Chief Bill Blair, who is the president of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police and the chief of the Toronto police department. He says, "Handguns are being used to kill

innocent people in our communities. We need to do everything within our power to keep guns out of the hands of violent criminals. We must stop them at our borders, limit criminal access to guns in our communities, and prosecute vigorously everyone who chooses to break our laws."

This is what Wendy Southall, chief of the Niagara Regional Police Service, says: "Handguns are a significant threat to public safety for all Canadians. The three anti-gun-smuggling measures proposed by Ministers Bentley and Bartolucci will help the Niagara Regional Police Service and our law enforcement partners to stem the flow" of illegal handguns.

Wendy Cukier, president of the Coalition for Gun Control: "We are grateful that Ontario is calling on the federal government to fulfill its international obligations to combat the illegal arms trade and to implement gun [marking] regulations...."

Finally, on this idea that we need the federal government to step up to the plate and share some of that money, that \$20 billion that we ship off to Ottawa, send it back so we can change the context in which violent crime often develops: Tony Cannavino, Canadian Police Association, says, "Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day has fumbled the ball and has failed to deliver on a key government commitment.... We have been waiting two years for this minister to deliver on the Prime Minister's promise, and we are disappointed by the short-sighted and inadequate response." That's a reference to the federal government's commitment to supply some 2,500 extra police officers throughout Canada, 1,000 of which would be earmarked for Ontario.

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You see, that's a part of the federal government's stinginess. We are sending them tons and tons of extra money, to the tune of \$20 billion, and we don't get it back. If we had our fair share, we could do a whole lot of things here in Ontario throughout the economy. One of the things that we could do is invest in communities and at-risk youth groups and various strategies to change the context in which gun crime occurs.

I am unable to support this motion. I urge my colleagues to vote against it. The motion is disingenuous, it's short-sighted, and it doesn't get at the problem. Ban handguns. Help us get more money from Ottawa.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Thank you for the opportunity to add my comments in support of this resolution to support changes to the Youth Criminal Justice Act. I'd like to approach it from a slightly different angle, by responding to some of the criticisms that we've heard and, quite frankly, we expected to hear from the other members, the government members in particular, because we've been hearing those same tired old lines for months and years on end.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Crime keeps going up

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Crime keeps going up, that's right.

One of the things we're hearing, and we heard this from the member from Willowdale, is, "Ban handguns. Work with the federal government, get the handguns banned, and all will be well." Is there anyone in Ontario who honestly believes that's going to be the answer to this problem, except perhaps the government members and maybe a few others? People understand this. People know that this is a multi-faceted problem and a simple handgun ban is not going to be the answer that we need, because criminals are not going to respect handgun bans. They don't respect anything else; what makes anyone believe they would respond to a handgun ban? That's simply not an answer to the problem.

The other thing that we're going to hear, if we haven't heard some of it already, is that there really isn't a problem with youth crime, violent crime, that we're making this up, and that the federal Conservatives are only bringing this forward at election time because it serves their purposes to do so. Well, I would say that if you take a look at the statistics, they tell the true story. What we have is a situation where it is true that some types of youth crimes are going down, particularly property crimes, but violent youth crimes are on the rise. The statistics say that the violent crime rate among young people, ages 12 to 17, climbed 3% between 2005 and 2006. That in itself might not be too alarming, because there are variances that occur from year to year, but if you look at the rest of the data—and this was provided, incidentally, by the Canadian police services—you have a 12% increase in violent youth crime in the last 10 years and a 30% increase since 1991.

Why the increase? Most youth criminal justice experts cite the increase in the number of gangs in Canada and gang violence being on the rise, and certainly we are seeing that in our communities, when you look particularly at the recent spate of stabbings and shootings of youth in the streets of Toronto. Let's take a couple of examples, though. Peel, for example, in 2003, had 39 known gangs. As of 2007, that number jumped to 108 gangs. And in terms of the gang members, they almost doubled from about 800 to about 1,500 during that same time period. In Toronto, currently, there are about 130 gangs, with 3,500 gang members.

What's the correlation between the crime and the involvement in gangs? First of all, you have youth-on-youth crime, and that's probably the most troubling of all of the statistics. You have situations where youth gang members are disrespecting each other and having retribution killings and so on. It's leading to an upward spiral in that kind of violence. Secondly, there's no question that senior gang members are using youth to insulate themselves from police suppression activities and criminal charges. We're not making this up. This comes from one of the foremost authorities on youth gangs in Canada, Michael Chettleburgh, who has written an excellent book called *Young Thugs*. For those members who haven't read it, it gives a startling perspective on what's going on inside youth gangs in Canada. He indicates what's happening is that the older gang mem-

bers, the ones who are over the age of 18, are getting the younger ones to do their dirty work for them, to be the ones to pull the trigger and commit these serious crimes, knowing that the youth will not have any significant consequences. So they use them as shields to protect themselves from criminal charges. The federal Conservatives realize this, and that's why they're trying to ensure that there are significant consequences for this specific type of behaviour.

The other criticism I know we're going to hear from the members opposite is the old "Conservatives want to jail teenagers." Nothing could be further from the truth. I think anyone who has any kind of experience in youth crime, in youth criminal behaviour, knows that one of the key things you have to have in place is rehabilitation programs. The member from Leeds-Grenville aptly put this forward, and certainly there is not a general wish on anyone's part to jail teenagers. But there is a need to recognize that there are some situations where rehabilitation programs in and of themselves are not going to work. Granted, it is a very small percentage of the youth that are involved in these very serious crimes, but all the rehabilitation programs in the world are not going to make any difference to some of these young people, and it is a very small, targeted group.

What we're talking about are the kinds of offences where young people are cold-bloodedly shooting other youth on the streets in broad daylight. That's something that the public has expressed its outrage about. The public is outraged that this kind of behaviour is happening on our streets, and they're demanding that something be done about it in order to protect our youth and protect society in general from this kind of activity.

I'd just like to quote from something the Prime Minister said, just to make it clear that rehabilitation is the primary goal here; it's not about punishment. I quote from the Prime Minister: "We are concerned about young people falling into a life of crime. We are developing and implementing prevention and rehabilitation programs to meet that challenge more effectively." He announced that a re-elected Conservative government would extend the youth gang prevention fund and increase its budget to \$10 million per year. They support a number of projects in communities to help at-risk youth—and that by no means is the only program that's out there to rehabilitate youth. But we have to come to grips with the fact that there are some young people out there who are committing crimes who need to be dealt with, and the public needs to be reassured that our young people are going to be protected.

I would ask all members of this Legislature to think about that, in terms of their vote on this resolution, and consider supporting what's going to protect our young people and protect our society in general. I thank you for the time.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I have to say I'm pleased to speak to this motion and pleased to say that I disagree

with it completely. I'll make some arguments in that regard.

The member from Leeds–Grenville said in his remarks that he is not interested in removing rehabilitation from the act. He further adds that he wants an informed and honest debate. He continues by attacking bureaucrats, where he describes them as self-serving, suggesting that somehow they're protecting either themselves or these young criminals, and I find that a very serious charge.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: We can.

He also talks about wanting to talk about the facts. The member from Whitby–Oshawa talked about the government members, and presumably the third party as well, using the same old, tired lines and tired stories. You expected that, you said.

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If you listen to the arguments, it suggests that when Tories talk about the facts, their facts must be right because they're talking about the facts, and when the member from Whitby–Oshawa says, "We expected these arguments and the same tired old stories," that their lines are not tired or old, that only the arguments from the other parties are tired and old, and that they are privy to the facts and to the visceral honesty that people have about these issues and that they know better because the public knows better. But more than that, it's not just that the public knows better, but that they have the facts and that we ought to be ruled, they argue, by facts and nothing else.

I want to argue that your facts are a predilection of Conservative ideology. I do understand that it may not even be ideology in your party, it may be beliefs that you fundamentally hold, and that you don't separate an ideology from what you believe strongly to be the case, and that somehow deterrence is the way to get to it, shame is the way to get to it, and longer sentences are the way to get to the problem. You believe that, and I understand that.

I believe you're wrong. I don't believe that you are reading the literature, and if you are, you're dismissing it as simply language put out by academics. As Monsieur Harper would say, "What do these academics know?" That refers to the public as the ones who really have the knowledge and the instincts, they're the ones who know, not people like Harper, who is an academic himself, and dismissing all of the academics as having any real grip on the issue. I find it fascinating that Mr. Harper would dismiss academics, who are presumably self-serving and don't do any research to benefit the public good, but rather they do research to benefit themselves. It's a curious, curious argument made by Mr. Harper and so many of my Conservative colleagues here.

I'm not one who shares their view. I share the view that we need to deal with crime and that it does lead to social consequences and that crime does do harm, whether it's small or big. I'm no expert in this field, but I am a big believer in rehabilitation and I am a big believer

in dealing with the causes of the crime more than the crime itself.

I've got to tell you, from time to time, even my own feelings come into conflict, because rehabilitation versus deterrence, rehabilitation versus humiliation and versus serious, serious attack on those who commit those crimes—I come into conflict with that, too, because if one of my daughters were ever to be violated sexually, I would become a fascist in no time. This is where I am sympathetic to some of the arguments that many political members of the Conservative Party make, including parents who feel strongly about some incidents of crime that involve sexual abuse. I am one who has no tolerance whatsoever for sexual abuse against children, and/or women and/or men, for that matter. So this is where I am often torn, in the feeling that if I or a member of my family were a victim of it, what would I do? I understand that emotion. That's what some of these motions, some of these ideas, take: a lot of our attention in an emotional way that often is wrong and inappropriate. But I do understand the feelings—and sexual violence is one of them, and killing somebody is another. But is our desire to punish and to shame and to put him away for life the answer? That's what the motion focuses on. It focuses on punishment, on shame and longer sentences. It doesn't focus on rehabilitation. You've got the member from Leeds–Grenville saying, "We are not interested in getting rid of rehabilitation," but I don't see it in the motion. When I look at what the academics say on this matter—and I want to read it into the record—I am concerned about what they say on this matter. I take this from the John Howard submission to the government of Canada.

"A fundamentally important reason to keep deterrence out of the YCJA is that the principle is inconsistent and incompatible with rehabilitation, and therefore leads to great and unjust judicial variance. Under the Young Offenders Act ... both deterrence and rehabilitation were included as sentencing principles without prioritization and this led to a confusion and inconsistency across youth criminal court decisions. Professors Doob and Beaulieu concluded that this high variance was due to judges having to give precedence to one of these irreconcilable goals."

In other words, rehabilitation and deterrence are not compatible. They are irreconcilable.

"The YCJA sets out clearly, in its Preamble and Declaration of Principle, that the objective of the legislation is to rehabilitate and reintegrate young people who commit crime. These principles will be contravened if deterrence and denunciation are added as sentencing principles through Bill C-25, recreating the flaws and confusion that underlay the youth criminal justice system prior to 2002."

So when the member from Leeds–Grenville says, "We've got nothing against rehabilitation," as I read into the record these two principles or ideas of rehabilitation and deterrence, they are not compatible. So saying that he is for rehabilitation and in the same breath saying, "We want harsher sentencing as a way to deal with the crime

and as a way to deal with our emotions,” do not jibe. They're inconsistent.

Clearly, we're getting to the politics of the issue, and clearly we're getting to the emotions that people have around crime. Most people, when you talk about crime, if it's serious—no one has any sympathy. Whether they're seven, 10, 12, 14, 16 or 20, it doesn't really matter, and I understand that. That's why I put myself in that position.

But I am telling you that the focus is wrong and that the Conservative Party, generally speaking, never focuses on the roots of problems, never does—not under Mike Harris, not under Harper, not under John Tory, not under anyone, although I hear John Tory from time to time. This is why I find it curious that we have this motion before us, because John Tory seems to understand, when he goes to places like the Toronto Community Housing Corp., that you've to deal with issues of poverty.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Of course we do.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The member from Whitby–Oshawa says, “Of course we do.” Put it in your motion so we can see clearly that you don't just want to deal with the end result of the crimes but want to get to the problems of why they're initiated in the first place. I never hear Tory members say, “Hmm, does crime have anything to do with drug addiction? Does crime have anything to do with kids coming from a family where they're alcoholics and have been for a long, long time? Does crime have anything to do with the fact that sexual abuse by people in a family situation of kids is perpetrated and perpetuated forever and that that leads to instability, emotionally and psychologically, and that, yes, from time to time that too leads to crime?” Does the Conservative Party talk about emotional illness and those kinds of problems that people have? Mental illness: Do they talk about it, and if they talk about it, do they say, “What are we, Conservatives, doing about that?”

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Yes, we do.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: They say yes, and yet I never hear them. I am in this place, I've been here for 18 years, and I don't hear them.

Raymond Corrado, another academic—excuse me—says that he “and his colleagues confirm that their research ‘underscores that seeking deterrence for young offenders is a misguided venture and of little value.’ A classic study on the decision to recidivate found that few violent, incarcerated youth reported that—before committing a crime—they thought about their chances of being caught, the impact on their family or the potential sentence they would receive if caught.”

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Kids who commit crimes don't say, “Oh, my God, Mike Harris had the right idea. The boot camp is going to stop me from committing a crime.” They don't think about that. They don't think about Harper and his desire to incarcerate for a long time, like the Americans, who have two million people in their jails. They don't say, “My God, I'm going to stop my crime-related activity, because I'm going to go to jail for 10 years instead of five.” They don't think about that. So this motion isn't

going to help us, except to appeal to the visceral emotion that people have that if we're tougher on them, it will solve our problems. It just doesn't do it.

I understand the feelings you're trying to reach into as you're speaking to the general public, whom you say understands these issues. I understand what they understand: They feel that they would want retribution and that they would want punishment, because if violence has been done to me, it needs to be corresponded with equal punishment in turn. I understand those feelings. It's just that it isn't borne out by the evidence. The evidence is abundantly clear, and if the Tories review the literature from the academics, they will find that it doesn't work.

The evidence they bring forth speaks to facts about crime increasing. We have the second-lowest crime rate in the country, next to Quebec. But if you just listen to the Tories, all they want to do is show the crime statistics, make sure that people are abundantly frightened and then tell them, “We're going to punish these kids, now more than ever. We, the Tories, are the only ones who can do it. Vote for us and the problem will go away.”

It just will not go away that way. So I appeal to people who are watching this political channel to look at what the research says, to look at what other jurisdictions have done, to look at the statistics from the States, where the California counties that enforced the famous three-strikes law did not show any decline, compared to other states.

We have to look at what we can do as a society; what we can do in the trial system, because we have very few judges to deal with these people; how we can help these kids avoid crime in the first place. That's where the emphasis should be, in my view.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm pleased to be able to speak to this opposition day motion today. I must say I was a little bit surprised when I read it and discovered that it's quite frankly a request that this House endorse Harper's campaign promises. Nevertheless I do want to assure anyone who is listening to this debate today that the McGuinty government does, in fact, take violent crime very seriously. We take youth crime very seriously. We know that these are societal issues and that we have to deal with them. In fact, we have spent over \$73 million fighting gun crime. We have hired more police officers, crown attorneys, judges, justices of the peace, probation officers and parole officers. We have also supported stronger mandatory sentencing for gun crimes. We know this is a serious problem; we know we have to deal with it.

What we don't see in this motion is any attempt to deal with the problem of guns. There seems to be an attitude that we won't worry so much about all the guns that are out there; we'll just wait until some youth commits a crime and then we'll lock them up for 10 or 20 years. We don't think that's the way to deal with it. We think we need to actively ban handguns.

I know that the members of the Conservative Party will say, "That isn't going to solve the problem, and you can't really do that. Lots of people have a right to hold them legally." But if we look at what the Toronto police tell us, 30% to 50% of the gun crimes in the city of Toronto are actually committed with guns that at some point have been legally registered. In other words, they have been stolen from the person who had the right to have them. So there is a huge number of guns out there that were legally registered, and we think we need to deal with that. We think we also need to work with our federal cousins to get tighter control over guns coming across the border. So, yes, there are some things we need to do with the federal government; this isn't it.

Now, I'd like to look a little bit at the whole issue of disclosure, because according to this motion, if you just publish the names of these kids in the Toronto Sun, that's going to solve the problem. I don't happen to agree with this. But there actually is something we could do in terms of the disclosure rules that would have a serious positive impact on dealing with the problem. I'm not sure whether most people understand this or have thought about it, but in fact, the kids who are caught under the Youth Criminal Justice Act are, by definition, school-age children.

What happens with the vast majority of people who are young offenders is that they are essentially sentenced to school; that is, their probation order or their parole order says, "You must attend school if you're not going to be taken into custody." The justice system actually sentences young offenders to school. But interestingly, the federal legislation does not require that the police or the systems disclose to the schools when young offenders are ordered to return to school or attend school. So if we really want to do something around the disclosure rules with the federal government that would be helpful, it would, in fact, be to make it mandatory for the courts and for the police to make it known to the principals, teachers and safe schools superintendents in our school system when they have young offenders in the schools.

That would have two impacts. First of all, we would be able to know when we have dangerous young offenders in our schools, and that would enable the principal to make sure that other students, who are the colleague students, have a greater assurance that the schools can manage those students and keep them more safe. Secondly, there's been a lot of discussion about prevention and rehabilitation. If, in fact, as is the practice of the justice system of Canada, we in essence sentence young offenders to school, it's very important that the people who have the primary care of those kids know about the status of that young offender so they can design programs for them that will help in their rehabilitation. There is something very important that we could work with our federal cousins to amend around disclosure laws, but it's not telling the Toronto Sun; it's bringing the education system into the loop so that we can all work together.

I'd also like to comment briefly on the sentencing provisions because, as you're all aware, I happen to have

a constituent who's very well-known to all of you, Steven Truscott, and we've discussed that here in this House before. When Steven was 14 years old, he was sentenced to hang. That was commuted to a life sentence. Ten years after that original conviction, the criminal justice system and the Parliament of Canada said, "You know, there's really no point in keeping this young man locked up any longer." And they were right. He went on to live in my community and live as normal a life as possible for somebody who has a murder conviction hanging over their head and is living under an assumed name. He brought up a family and was a contributing citizen in our country, in my city, because somebody had the wisdom to say, "Yes, this young man"—and remember, the conviction still stood; it wasn't until almost 50 years later that there was an admission that this was a wrongful conviction. So at the time when he was released from prison, he was still regarded as a violent murderer. The system said, "There's no point keeping this young man locked up any longer."

So I have a huge problem with just saying, "We're going to lock all these kids up forever and throw away the key." Experience shows that's not helpful.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate.

1700

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to be able to join in the debate today. I just want to offer a comment to the member from Willowdale, Mr. Zimmer, who was talking about the use of banning handguns. I think he confuses the instrument of violence with the act itself. I guess I can understand this, as he was the person who led the pit bull legislation, where obviously, by their very existence, they were deemed dangerous. But I really want to talk, in the few moments that I have, on two words that get bandied around in this debate, and they are "rehabilitation," and one that doesn't get as much effort, "responsibility."

I also want to tell you two anecdotes. Several years ago, I had a student who came to me very proudly to show me a very tattered and worn newspaper article that he carried proudly in his wallet, and it was a newspaper article that described an individual who had been charged and convicted of a break and enter. While there's all of this conversation about public disclosure of individuals in that age group, I thought it was interesting to just give you some sense that here was a kid whose claim to fame was this, and the only way he could demonstrate this was to show me the piece of newspaper and say, "This is me."

The other deals more with the question of responsibility. Again, this is a true story. When a teenager was prepared to risk being picked up for drinking underage at a party, but the very next year not willing, and even contemplating, taking the risk of other kids being at the same function when this individual had reached the age of majority, so a sense of responsibility that wasn't there the year before, because the law doesn't require you to be responsible at 18.

I tell you those two things in terms of rehabilitation and responsibility. Obviously, any system of justice must be fair and it must be balanced, and we must deal with both the perpetrator and the victim. Now, when we are able to look at the most recent and advanced research on rehabilitation, today there are many studies on child development and the social, intellectual, physical, as well as health determinants, and this research provides us with the framework for making specific programs to meet the needs of young offenders.

Members have referred to the previous government. I want to talk about Minister David Tsubouchi when he was Solicitor General. He brought into place an opportunity for young offenders to meet and train dogs from the Ontario SPCA. By the way, I must say that this same program still exists, but it demonstrates the efforts that can be made on the rehabilitation side. But on the responsibility side, there are people who must understand that there are many influences, many bad choices, many personal obstacles, but at the end of the day, everyone has to choose between being a victim of their circumstances or taking charge and assuming responsibility for themselves. Feeling sorry for yourself will never turn your life around; blaming others will never give you confidence to be who you want to be. At the end of the day, it's you and the mirror.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I was listening to many speakers who spoke before me, especially the Leader of the Opposition, who brought this motion before this House. It's very important to talk about crime, especially when we live in this day and age, when we see a lot of killing in many different cities, especially in the Toronto area, or the GTA. You don't think about this crime and how we control it, but the member opposite forgot to talk about prevention and the cause of those crimes. When I was listening to him, he said he was not interested in knowing what led to the crime, but he was interested in putting big, huge and harsh punishment on people who commit the crime. I agree, for some families—especially when they lose a loved one or they get hit, they feel bad about it, but it's very important when we talk about dealing with this very important issue to talk about many different reasons, the causes of those crimes.

I was listening to the member from Trinity–Spadina speaking about this issue, and he was passionate about it. I agree with him fully. We have to look at many different issues: poverty, mental illness, smuggling guns from United States to Canada—many different things causing those crimes. I think it's very important that our government came with many different initiatives to stop the smuggling of guns from the United States. I heard the Attorney General this morning responding, his answer to the opposition about how we can tackle crime on the street.

The federal government promised 2,500 police to go on the street, and some of them were supposed to come

to Ontario. As a matter of fact, what we had was a five-year contract for 1,000 police.

What about smuggling guns from the United States? The minister of national security, Stockwell Day, promised a lot, but what have we seen? A lot of smuggling from the United States, a lot of guns coming to our cities to our towns and being used, and many people getting killed as a result of that.

I fully agree also with my colleague from Guelph, who gave an example of a person who lived in her riding, her constituent, who was accused of committing a crime when he was 14 years old. Back then, they thought he should be killed, hanged, because of whatever he supposedly did, but he never did it. He was let go, lived a normal life, got married, had kids, and many different issues came with it. Now it appears to all the people across the province of Ontario that he's innocent.

It's easy and quick: Somebody commits a crime; let's jail them forever, especially if they are youth, and then we'll forget about the problem. We'll create a huge camp for people who have supposedly committed a crime. And as we mentioned many different times, most of the time those people are innocent, because we don't have a perfect system. It doesn't matter what we do. We have a great judicial system, but we can make a mistake as human beings.

I think the most important thing for us in the province of Ontario, as a government, as a society and as a community, is to look at the cause of those crimes. Look at poverty, look at mental illness, look at people unable to integrate, and look at the structure of the families, because most of those people who commit crimes most of the time, especially the youth, are from broken families. Instead of looking at the crime itself, which I think is very important, we want to look at the cause of that crime.

My colleague from Willowdale outlined it very well. As you know, we are talking these days about fairness for Ontario because we send a lot of money to the federal government. We expect some money to come back to give us the ability to invest in communities, supporting youth, supporting young offenders and supporting people who have no supports in life in order to prevent them from committing a crime. When we talk about those issues, it is not about party, not about Conservative or Liberal or NDP. We're talking about fairness for the people who live in this province, who work on a daily basis to send taxes to the federal government. We expect some money back to give us the chance and ability to support our communities, to prevent crime from happening. This is what we talk about, fairness. I support my colleague from Willowdale when he has talked about it eloquently, many different times, and also the member from the NDP, when he was talking about our commitment to community and society.

It's not what the Leader of the Opposition said. He said to create a harsh punishment, create a huge camp and forget about them. We believe in prevention. We believe in rehabilitation. This is the way to support our

community and to maintain our community functioning and vibrant. That's why I'm not supporting this motion. I hope all the people who are hearing us today, our colleagues and even the opposition, will stand up with us and say "no" to the Leader of the Opposition, because his treatment does not solve the problem. It causes more problems.

We have to go back and listen to our chiefs of police across the province of Ontario. The chiefs of police of Toronto, London, Guelph and Ottawa all came together and told us that combating guns is the most important tool to stop crime, to eliminate crime.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Toby Barrett: This is an important motion. We hear of far too many instances of young people involved in violent crime, oftentimes first- and second-degree murder, and we see a government here at Queen's Park that's been missing in action, going on five years now, when it comes to dealing with these kinds of examples of violent crime. It's unacceptable that anybody in this province would feel unsafe in their own home or in their school or feel threatened in their place of work.

1710

We know the bullets are flying in Toronto. Between 2005 and 2006, young people accused of homicide provincially rose by 90%. That's clearly appalling. Here in Toronto, 2005 will forever be known as the year of the gun, with the final victim, 15-year-old Jane Creba. She was caught in the crossfire down by the Eaton Centre in a gang-related turf war. That was on Boxing Day. A number of people eventually were charged—a number of teenagers. One stood trial on charges of second-degree murder.

As I've indicated, 2005 was the year of the gun, yet two years later we saw statistics for 2007, and murder rates were even higher. Party leader John Tory, to his credit, filled what I consider a void of leadership by the Premier by holding his own summit on violence affecting young people, and the opposition does have a plan that's been put forward on crime. I do have a question for the members opposite. I really ask, why does this government have no plan?

We know that the most serious youth offences are basically linked to gangs, someone defending their reputation, defending their territory with respect to selling drugs. Again the question is, how many bullets have to fly and how many deaths does this government have to see before it realizes that it has to strengthen some of the legislation with respect to youth criminal justice?

We know crime by young people is prevalent in the GTA. There are smaller communities across the province of Ontario, and in my own riding—I think of Caledonia—we're not exempt. I think of a home builder named Sam Gualtieri who, regrettably, last fall was left in the unfinished house he was building for his daughter, one blow short of death. Sam Gualtieri was checking this House. He was confronted by a gang of young native people. They beat Sam on the head with a piece of oak

stair rail until he was unconscious. Reports are that his son was there and yelled, "He's dead. He's dead," and the gang of young aboriginal youth ran off. As a result, Sam's Gualtieri's life has been altered forever.

What about the lives of those teenagers, those young people who were involved? Are they barely affected by what they have done? There is obviously to date no justice for Sam Gualtieri as these young people essentially got a slap on the wrist—no worries, no repercussions, not even a worry that their name will be in the papers. I will use the cliché, if you will, that if you're old enough to do the crime, you're old enough to do the time.

Some say, and we hear references, that offenders have rights and we have to be cognizant. Victims have rights as well, and it is high time we did put the rights of victims ahead of offenders. You can rehabilitate people. However, you also have to inculcate them with the knowledge of the seriousness of what they have done.

How many young people are reoffending? We know that serious crimes are being committed by people who are out on bail because conditions are often ignored. Often, criminals don't feel constrained by the conditions of their release. We know that this Ontario government is quick to insist, for example, that honest, hard-working farmers I know down in Haldimand-Norfolk have to report the number of beans they harvest each year, they have to report the number of bales of tobacco that leave their pack barns, yet we have a government here that refuses to track sentencing deals agreed to by crown attorneys. We have a government that does not document the number of people who commit these crimes while they're out on bail, a government that does not document even the number of individuals granted bail or denied bail.

It is time to throttle down this approach of catch and release, which puts dangerous people, in many cases, back out on the street within days of being arrested. In safe communities, people have confidence in the justice system. They're confident that the police have the backing they need to get the job done and that when criminals are caught, they will be punished, while victims will receive the kind of support and help that is required. I maintain this is not happening in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I am pleased to actually be able to rise and speak in opposition to this motion. I know at first glance, and as you go through it, it has a lot of emotional appeal. I think most people certainly understand the need to have justice or to see that justice is done in the sense that young people are as responsible for their actions as anyone should be and that there should be an accountability in the system for them. I think we all understand that. We all understand the need for some justice for everyone.

But I also look at it and I think it doesn't really talk about how to handle this in terms of prevention or rehabilitation afterwards. It simply says, "We want to

lengthen the sentence. We want to make the sentences more severe as a way of acting as a deterrent.”

Myself, I'm not a child psychologist or psychiatrist. I draw on my own experience as a parent when it comes to understanding how children react and how young people react to the concept of time, and certainly the grasp of reality that young people have is not the same as an adult's. They live in the moment. They're not thinking about what might be the consequences of an action. They don't really often think about the fact that they may need to be accountable for those actions. They're simply going to move along and do something. If they are motivated by a gang, by peers, to do these things, there's that element in there as well, and not one of them will stop for a moment and say, “Well, if I do this, that means five to 10 years in jail.” That's not in their minds at all. What we need to do more than anything else is look at prevention and rehabilitation.

There's no doubt that we need to make children and young people accountable for these actions, but, like I said, I don't believe we can do that by lengthening the sentence. I think in a sense all we do at that stage is create the old “out of sight, out of mind” mentality that we lock them up and then we don't have to deal with them any more. That's not appropriate, either, for young people. These young people need the opportunity to rehabilitate themselves. They need the opportunity to make themselves into productive members of society.

We have a number of things—and it's been addressed by other members—in terms of what causes these young people to regress into crime. We need to deal with things such as youth at risk. We certainly have communities where young people are more at risk of these types of things than in other areas. We've seen a number of situations, especially here in Toronto, where we have large communities of youth at risk.

So, as a government, we have moved forward with a number of strategies to help those youth, including things such as the youth challenge fund, which is an opportunity here in Toronto that is targeted strictly to Toronto to help young people who live in communities at risk to find alternatives, to deal with prevention, to deal with rehabilitation.

1720

I don't believe that by lengthening sentences, you will somehow create some kind of deterrent. That is not the case at all. I've seen, in a lot of situations, even in my own communities, where we need to deal with the opportunity for children to have something to do, for young people to have something to do. They do move in groups; they do act in gangs. If we can get those young people off the streets and involved in opportunities and doing activities that teach them responsibility and teach them accountability, then we can do a lot more for these people than by simply locking them up and forgetting about them, letting all of us feel like there's some kind of comfort there, but knowing that these people will grow into adults who will never recover, who will never rehabilitate just because they have a longer sentence.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: Nothing is more important than the safety of our community. Ontarians who live in neighbourhoods plagued by crime not only have their personal safety threatened, but their quality of life is diminished and their hopes for the future are quashed.

It's up to the leaders of this province and this country to ensure that we do everything possible to keep our citizens safe. The first step in doing so is to look at the root of what threatens our safety. The obvious answer is crime, and until we get tougher on those committing crime, nobody's safety is assured.

The people of Ontario have a right to know who is committing serious offences against their fellow citizens. We must stop protecting the identity of those aged 14 or older who are convicted of crimes such as manslaughter, murder or aggravated assault. We have the right to know the perpetrators behind these acts of violence. By making this amendment to the Youth Criminal Justice Act, we are increasing safety for all. While we recognize that criminals have rights, so do the victims of their crimes.

Of course, publishing their names does not go far enough. Young people found guilty of committing a crime as serious as murder must be handed tougher sentences. Ten years for first-degree murder and seven years for second-degree murder is lenient. Taking another life demands a proportionate prison sentence. Young criminals, like their adult counterparts, must be held accountable for the choices they make.

Further, I support amending the Youth Criminal Justice Act to make it easier for the justice system to detain accused young offenders who pose a risk to public safety. Give our judges the power they need to detain offenders who, if released, might cause further harm to the people of their community. We must protect the safety of the good people of our province and country.

I think that anyone who has ever been a victim of crime would agree with these amendments to the Youth Criminal Justice Act. Ask a parent who has lost a child to gang violence. Ask them how they'd feel if a person who murdered their son or daughter was given a slap on the wrist. Question how they'd feel about protecting the identity of a young person who brutally murdered their loved one. Ask an innocent person who was assaulted with a weapon how safe they feel when the young person who robbed them of security is released from custody in hours.

According to press reports, close to 40,000 youths were accused of serious and violent crimes in 2006. These incidents included 160 murders or attempted murders, 2,100 sexual assaults and 4,500 robberies. We cannot sit back and accept this as normal behaviour in our society. Think of the many victims who were impacted by those crimes, who may never feel safe in their homes and their neighbourhoods.

The thousands of convicted youths who threaten our personal safety must understand the seriousness of their actions in the hope that they will not be repeated. It is

reasonable to expect safe homes, safe streets and safe communities. These expectations can be met by getting tough on crime.

Our children and educators have a right to safe schools. It is a sad day when lockdown procedures are taught in our schools. It's even a sadder day when school lockdowns occur frequently because of the safety of students and educators who are threatened by a potential criminal act.

Threats to our safety and well-being should not be accepted, and we must act to make every neighbourhood a place where the fear of physical violence does not exist. I urge Dalton McGuinty to support these much-needed changes to the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I'm pleased to rise on this very important issue, an important issue that all Ontarians are concerned about and interested in, and that is our right to live safely and freely in our communities. It's why we have had, for the entire time that Premier Dalton McGuinty has been the Premier of this province and we have been the government, an approach that is tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime. We have spoken and acted to ensure that those who commit crimes are brought to justice, and that justice is effected as it must be. We have worked to ensure that those who pose the greatest risk to our society, those who are the danger, receive the tough, serious sanctions for the protection of society that they must receive. We've also recognized that ultimately, the greatest protection is that a crime doesn't happen at all. The greatest way to ensure that we have safe communities is to reduce criminal incidents, to prevent them from happening in the first place, and that's tough on the causes of crime.

I just want to talk about a few of the initiatives we have followed over the past five years, to follow the "tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime" approach. With respect to ensuring that those who pose the greatest risk to society receive the serious sanctions that they must, Premier Dalton McGuinty and the government of Ontario pushed for changes to the Criminal Code to bring in more mandatory sentences for those who use guns in crimes. We were successful. We pushed for changes to the Criminal Code for reverse-onus bail to ensure that public safety would be protected when the question of bail was considered. We were successful. We have pushed for more police on the street. My colleague and his predecessor, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, have brought in programs to put more than a thousand police officers on the streets of Ontario. We committed to it. We fulfilled that commitment.

But we've done more than that. For the special issue and the special challenges posed by gun crimes and gangs, we brought in the anti-guns and gangs task force, which is renowned throughout North America as a leading approach to being tough on those who pose the greatest risk. But it didn't stop there. In Toronto, you have the

Toronto anti-violence strategy, TAVIS, and outside we've got its equivalent, PAVIS, which is a way of ensuring that you have police officers where they're needed most. They're to investigate crime, but where they're not needed, in special response situations, they're to make positive community contacts with individuals, with community leaders, with businesses—more police officers on the street to effect the TAVIS and PAVIS strategy.

But we haven't stopped there. We have also worked very hard to invest in our communities. The Minister of Children and Youth Services, for example: investments in our youth and investments in the communities. Communities such as Toronto, for example, have been working hard as well to invest in communities because we recognize, ultimately, that if you can keep a young person out of a life of crime, that not only enables them to fulfill their potential, but that is safety for the lifetime of that young person. But if you get it wrong at that stage you have a lifetime, potentially, of criminal activity from the young person, so that is a very important age.

We've not stopped. We have called on the federal government to take some additional steps, as they can. Unfortunately, although they talk a lot, they're pretty short on action and shorter on fulfilling their promises and commitments. Let me give an example: They talk about youth violence, they talk about violence by adults, they talk about safer communities. We have called for a national ban on handguns. The federal government refuses to follow through on that initiative. I don't know what possible utility a handgun has in the possession of people in 21st-century Ontario or Canada. Of course, the federal government would tell us that handguns are virtually banned. There are over 200,000 handguns in the province of Ontario—virtually banned? Two hundred thousand of anything is a virtual ban? They must live in a virtual world; ours is a world of reality. When the federal government decides to accept its responsibility and impose a national ban on handguns, it won't be the answer to everything, but we will reduce the risk to all law-abiding Ontarians. I hope the federal government will finally pick up its responsibility. I say to my colleagues on the opposite side of the House, have you picked up the phone to ask Prime Minister Harper and the federal Tories to do that? I don't think so.

1730

What about more police officers on the street? You remember the promise during the last federal election. Today is all about the promises being made in this federal election. During the last federal election, you will remember the federal Tories saying, "We're going to put 2,500 more police officers on the street throughout Canada." How many have we got so far? You would think it's a relatively simple promise. They had billions of dollars left to them by the previous Liberal government. Have they put 2,500 police officers on the streets of Canada for life? No, they have put aside money for 1,000 police officers. Now, 40% of a promise is not exactly a promise fulfilled, but wait, it gets better. They have only provided the money for five years. What

happens at the end of five years? If London gets more police officers, does London, Ontario, then have to fire those police officers because the Conservative government in Ottawa won't fulfill their promise?

It doesn't end there. The federal Tories promised to strengthen the youth criminal justice bill, and that's what they're talking about today. Let's see whether they delivered that promise. They tabled and introduced amendments to the Youth Criminal Justice Act which got it all backwards. Their rhetoric didn't match the legislation. Why do I say that? They introduced legislation to amend the Youth Criminal Justice Act to follow their last election's promise, which wasn't tough enough on those youth who pose the greatest risk. They didn't even follow the recommendations of the Nunn commission in Nova Scotia for out-of-control youth who need to be kept in custody pending their trial, who need serious sanctions when they are found to have committed offences. They didn't fulfill the Nunn commission recommendations in their proposed amendments. They didn't fulfill their commitment. And now here we are again being asked to comment on their commitments. I say simply that if you want to parade around, as the federal Tories are, and talk about crime; if you want to parade around on your promises, then we're going to judge you on your promises. You didn't fulfill the police officers on the street commitment. You didn't fulfill the tough measures that you were supposed to take for youth criminal justice. Why should anybody believe that you're going to do what you say you're going to do now when you haven't done it in the past?

Our position is that we'll continue to fight for the safety of Ontarians. We'll continue to ask for tough measures for those who need the tough measures and the positive investments for the others who need it. I call on my colleagues opposite: Pick up the phone, phone your buddy Harper and get him to fulfill his commitments from the last election. We'll all be better off this time. When will you stand up for Ontario? It's time you stood up. We'll stand up for the people of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Brave words spoken by the Liberals, but look at the results: 2005, the year of the gun, the worst crime in Ontario's history. The people of Ontario know what was going on then. In 2007 the crime rate was even worse. The Liberals will give you promises, but in Ontario you want results. The Conservatives—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you.

Mr. Runciman has moved opposition day number 1. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour say "aye."

All those opposed say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1735 to 1745.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): All those in favour, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hillier, Randy	Munro, Julia
Bailey, Robert	Hudak, Tim	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Barrett, Toby	Klees, Frank	Runciman, Robert W.
Chudleigh, Ted	MacLeod, Lisa	Savoline, Joyce
Elliott, Christine	Martiniuk, Gerry	Scott, Laurie
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Norm	Sterling, Norman W.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): All those opposed, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Fonseca, Peter	Moridi, Reza
Albanese, Laura	Gerretsen, John	Pendergast, Leeanna
Arthurs, Wayne	Gélinas, France	Qaadri, Shafiq
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoy, Pat	Ramal, Khalil
Bentley, Christopher	Jaczek, Helena	Ramsay, David
Best, Margaret	Jeffrey, Linda	Rinaldi, Lou
Bradley, James J.	Kular, Kuldeep	Ruprecht, Tony
Brown, Michael A.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sandals, Liz
Brownell, Jim	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Carroll, Aileen	Mangat, Amrit	Smitherman, George
Colle, Mike	Marchese, Rosario	Sousa, Charles
Delaney, Bob	Matthews, Deborah	Van Bommel, Maria
Dhillon, Vic	McMeekin, Ted	Wilkinson, John
Dickson, Joe	McNeely, Phil	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dombrowsky, Leona	Meilleur, Madeleine	Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 18; the nays are 45.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Pursuant to standing order 38, the member for Nepean–Carleton has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Deputy Premier. This matter will be debated now.

If you're leaving, leave quietly, please, except for the member for Nepean–Carleton. The member for Nepean–Carleton, you have five minutes.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I appreciate you at least staying. I see the mass exodus from the Titanic over there. I see that the Deputy Premier will not be responding to me, so I do appreciate the parliamentary assistant to the Premier being here this evening. I also want to thank you, Mr. Speaker.

You will recall that I was among the first to add my voice last week to support Premier McGuinty's fairness resolution, and I did so without hesitation. However, I take issue with the costly PR campaign that has been undertaken at the taxpayers' expense, and I am concerned

that the Liberals could now be in violation of federal law, the Canada Elections Act.

In my question and my supplementary, I raised the following points: The fairness election flyer doesn't state that it is from the province of Ontario or the government of Ontario; the PR plan wasn't shared with the opposition; the cost of the PR plan wasn't shared with the opposition; taxpayers deserve fairness, not their hard-earned tax dollars going to spin doctors; and the Liberals have become a third party in the federal election.

1750

I was disappointed that my question on cost was answered with, "The eventual cost of this, of course, can be publicly known." Surely, the minister could have shared what will be publicly known, unless the Liberals are trying to hide something or they have not budgeted for this PR campaign.

My main concern, however, is whether or not the government has registered its third party spending with Elections Canada, which very clearly has federal laws about these sorts of things.

In fact, let me read what the finance minister said today about the PR campaign that the government has launched into with a website, a petition, leaflets and lawn signs. He said, "A number of our members today were out distributing Vote for Fairness Ontario brochures at subway stations here in Toronto. Signs will be going up in different ridings."

Section 349 of the Canada Elections Act states:

"Definition of a third party

"Other group of persons acting together by mutual consent for a common purpose."

"Registration of a third party

"A third party must register immediately upon spending \$500 or more on election advertising." That's probably why they didn't want to indicate who they were on their brochures, because I'm sure they've spent more than \$500.

"Advertising must name third party

"A third party shall identify itself in any election advertising placed by it and indicate that it has authorized the advertising." Well, they certainly didn't do that on the brochure that I saw. I hope the lawn signs have it.

"Definition of 'election advertising'

"A message that is"—I'm going to paraphrase—"transmitted by any means during an election ...

"Intended to influence how an elector might vote ... including a message that takes a position on an issue..."

I again refer back to my colleague the Deputy Premier, who stated in response to my question, "We want to give all members the opportunity to take advantage of these flyers ... along with lawn signs which will help to focus this important issue of fairness in the context of the election soon to come." That, to me, sounds like a message that takes a position on an issue.

My fear is that the McGuinty Liberals, through their PR campaign, have engaged in this federal election as a third party, have exceeded the \$500 advertising limit with their website and glossy election-style brochures and, of

course, its lawn signs. Without registering as a third party with Elections Canada, the McGuinty Liberals run the risk of breaking federal law. This, of course, is not the first time that they've run that risk of working with other groups, like the Working Families Coalition. Of course, it's not the first time they've ignored the rule of law. I think of Caledonia.

I was disappointed that the Liberal government did not respond to my very legitimate question about whether they had registered with Elections Canada or not. I am disappointed that the Liberals have not, as of 5:30 p.m. today—that's just 15, 20 minutes ago—registered with Elections Canada.

Perhaps the minister was not properly briefed and could not answer yes or no to my questions at the time, but it is clear that the Liberals had not registered their PR campaign, and we do not know the cost, though we do know it far exceeds the \$500 allowable under federal election law.

So, as I conclude, how much is this campaign costing Ontario taxpayers; when is the Liberal government going to register with Elections Canada; and what are we going to do with all the brochures, all of the lawn signs, that have been printed up illegally in this province because of them? I demand answers.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Timiskaming-Cochrane.

Mr. David Ramsay: It's certainly an honour to represent the Premier in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario this evening, to respond to the member from Nepean-Carleton and her request for a second go at it, as we call it here euphemistically, "the late show"—and it's getting earlier and earlier, which is very nice.

First of all, I thank the member for her support of the principle of what the government is trying to do. What the government is trying to do is communicate to its citizens about the importance of Canadians living in Ontario being treated fairly. What we would say is that if you're a Canadian living in British Columbia or Newfoundland or the Northwest Territories or the Yukon, you should be treated the same by your federal government. That's what we're saying. We're pointing out to Ontarians that we think this is a very, very important issue. We're saying that if you're an unemployed worker in Ontario, you should be able to receive the very same benefits from your tax dollars that you pay to the federal government as a Canadian living anywhere else.

It's the same with health care. If we were to receive the \$700 million due to us in health care, think of the MRIs, the CAT scans and the new technology that we could be embracing for Ontarians that other provinces, on a per capita basis, have.

We're falling behind because we are not allowed to keep Ontario taxpayers' money on the percentage that other provinces are.

I would think that you would agree with this, that you would want to be out there with us and everybody else embracing this principle of fairness.

I ask you to join the campaign. Join the crusade, and let's get out there and talk to Ontarians so they understand how we are being ill treated by our federal government.

You have to remember, this is not a partisan issue. Our Premier was battling the Martin Liberal government before the Conservative government came on. You've got to realize that our Premier went after the Liberal government as much as he's going after this government. He's going after the federal government per se. It's the bureaucracy in Ottawa that doesn't want to move on this, and we've got to move on this. We've got to persuade all of the political parties to move the federal bureaucracy to treat Ontarians fairly. That's where we've got to go.

I'm sure you don't agree with what's happening with the election law in Ottawa that says we're not going to get a proportion of our seats in the House of Commons. Why shouldn't Ontario get its fair share of seats? I'm sure you would want to see that also, to make sure that people in your area are fairly represented in the House of Commons. We think that's important.

We want you onside. We want you to join our crusade, our battle. We'll see you out there. Let's make sure this is an issue in this federal campaign.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): This House is adjourned until 9 o'clock Thursday, October 2.

The House adjourned at 1757.

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 (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	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
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Broten, Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
		Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
		Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	Minister of Culture / Ministre de la Culture
		Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Crozier, Bruce (LIB)	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
		Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)	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 (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
		Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
		Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	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 (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldeep (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murdoch, Bill (IND)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of International Trade and Investment / Ministre du Commerce international et de l'Investissement
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Nipissing	Minister of Tourism / Ministre du Tourisme
		Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre
		Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services / Ministre des Petites Entreprises et des Services aux consommateurs
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	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 officielle
		Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Tim Hudak
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Garfield Dunlop
Gilles Bisson, Kim Craitor
Bob Delaney, Garfield Dunlop
Tim Hudak, Amrit Mangat
Phil McNeely, John O'Toole
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jean-Marc Lalonde
Sophia Ageloniitis, Ted Arnott
Wayne Arthurs, Toby Barrett
Pat Hoy, Jean-Marc Lalonde
Leeanna Pendergast, Michael Prue
Charles Sousa
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Présidente: Linda Jeffrey
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: David Oraziatti
Robert Bailey, Jim Brownell
Linda Jeffrey, Kuldip Kular
Rosario Marchese, Bill Mauro
Carol Mitchell, David Oraziatti
Joyce Savoline
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Présidente: Julia Munro
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Michael A. Brown, Kevin Daniel Flynn
France Gélinas, Randy Hillier
Lisa MacLeod, Julia Munro
David Ramsay, Liz Sandals
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la 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
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Kevin Daniel Flynn
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon
Bob Delaney, Joe Dickson
Kevin Daniel Flynn, Sylvia Jones
Norm Miller, Mario Sergio
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jerry J. Ouellette
Laura Albanese, Ernie Hardeman
Andrea Horwath, Phil McNeely
Jerry J. Ouellette, Liz Sandals
Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Michael Prue
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller
Bas Balkissoon, Mike Colle
Kim Craitor, Gerry Martiniuk
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch
Michael Prue, Tony Ruprecht
Mario Sergio
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la 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
Khalil Ramal, Laurie Scott
Peter Shurman
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Select Committee on Elections / Comité spécial des élections

Chair / Président: Greg Sorbara
Howard Hampton, Greg Sorbara
Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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