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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Thursday 30 October 2008**

**Jeudi 30 octobre 2008**

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 30 October 2008

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 30 octobre 2008

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the non-denominational prayer.

*Prayers.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WORKPLACE SAFETY  
AND INSURANCE  
AMENDMENT ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
SUR LA SÉCURITÉ PROFESSIONNELLE  
ET L'ASSURANCE CONTRE  
LES ACCIDENTS DU TRAVAIL

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 29, 2008, on the motion for second reading of Bill 119, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 / Projet de loi 119, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les accidents du travail.

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

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** Good morning; it is a beautiful morning outside.

I'm pleased to be able to get the chance to speak in support of Bill 119, which was introduced a couple days and ago and was debated almost all day yesterday. It's important to talk about a very important issue concerning the people of this province. I have been listening to the debate. I listened to the member from Sarnia-Lambton yesterday speaking against the bill. All he did was recite all the e-mails he got from small contractors in his region and showed their concern about this bill. He never spoke about the workers. He never recited any e-mail from any worker across the province of Ontario.

It's very important to create rules and laws and some kind of standards for people who work on a daily basis to build this province, especially the workers. When we are talking about tough economic times, many people want to find a job, want to work. They are not going to look much at the rules and the regulations; they're concerned first with how they can provide for their families, how they can pay the mortgage, how they can they put food on the table.

What happens is that they go to work with a small construction company, and they go on the assumption, as

I mentioned yesterday, that they will be protected, will be covered if something happens to them. Can you imagine that on a daily basis we lose one worker in the province of Ontario? One worker dies on a daily basis in this province. Can you imagine how many people get injured in this province? Despite all the regulations and rules, and inspectors and safety measures we have been taking since we got elected in 2003, people still get injured and people still die in this province. It's human nature that people make mistakes, and sometimes when you make a mistake, it costs your life or you get injured forever. That is why we have to have some kind of mechanism in place to protect those people. We have to have a law for the people who work in this industry, to create some kind of mechanism for the people who work for them, because those people, as I mentioned, go and work on the assumption that they are protected, and then they are injured and discover they are not protected.

I want to give you an incident that happened in my riding, London-Fanshawe. A gentleman came to my office. He was almost 55 years old. He was working in a construction site, and he was told everything was being looked after. What happened is, he got injured, and he came to our office after he had exhausted all other efforts and places. He came after discovering he was not being covered. He was being paid as a contractor. The construction company he worked for used to pay him on a daily basis. They labelled him as a subcontractor taking a job for them; therefore, he would not be able to be covered under the WSIB.

So this person has nowhere to go. He had a house, and he couldn't pay the mortgage. He has a family to provide for. He needed to find some kind of help and support, and he couldn't. What he did in the end—he's being forced to sell his house. Due to this economic situation, he got divorced from his wife, because when you're in a tough time the fights start within the family and sometimes cause the breaking up of the family. There are so many different stories across the province. I think we, as elected officials in this place, have to work in order to protect the workers in Ontario.

My colleague from Willowdale yesterday spoke about something very important. He was talking about the newcomers to this province. For some reason, those newcomers want to work anywhere just to provide for their families and be able to fit and integrate into this province. The easiest step to start with is working on construction sites. They don't care about the rules and regulations. They are concerned first to make some money and provide for their family, and then the problems happen,

and they discover they are left alone with no support and no protection. That's why this bill is very important for many people across the province. It will cover almost 90,000 individuals. I think it's important to step up to the plate and work hard in order to continue to be able to provide to our communities across the province of Ontario.

I heard the member opposite, also from the NDP, from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek speaking about this bill. I think he was supporting this bill, but he has some kind of concern about the technicalities, which is normal. I remember when we were discussing this in the caucus, my colleagues also had concerns about the bill. Not all of us are in agreement about the whole implementation of the bill, but this is part of our democratic process. We introduce a bill and discuss the bill in this place. The bill goes to the committee, and we listen to many different stakeholders from across the province, whether they are construction companies, small construction companies or stakeholders or workers or people advocating on behalf of both sides. And then, in the end, we modify the bill and make it good for the majority of the people of Ontario.

It's a part of the nature of our job. Whatever we do in this place, whatever we talk about, it would be impossible to please the province as a whole, and it would be difficult to please all the parties from both sides. That's why I think we have to make a choice to be on the side of the people who work on a daily basis to provide for their families and also to continue to build this beautiful province.

I was listening to the Minister of Labour speaking yesterday when he introduced the bill and when he had the leadoff on this bill. He outlined the intent and the focus and the aim of this bill. The aim is clear: to create a safety net for the people who work in this industry. Some people think it's not going to be good for the small construction companies. I don't agree with that. In the long run, those construction companies will be protected. If anyone is injured in their company they don't have to pay from their personal assets or money. The worker can go to the WSIB, because the WSIB protects them and gives them the tools, the financial support and the training they need to put them back in the workforce. It's a very important bill. I know we're going to talk more about this bill. I know this bill is going to committee and we are going to listen to many people. I hope that all the members on both sides of the House will support this bill.

**0910**

Very often we talk about construction—about workers, about construction companies and about the economic situation in Ontario. I think it's important to pay tribute to and thank all the people who work in this industry. This industry is very tough. Can you imagine people working day and night in both cold and hot weather? It's happening every week. I go from Toronto to London and back from London to Toronto, and I choose to drive at night, most of the time, because there is less traffic on the highway. Sometimes I see people working on the high-

way after midnight. They're working 24 hours a day, seven days a week in order to continue to construct the province of Ontario.

Those people work very hard for us. From London to Toronto, you see people working on the highway, 24 hours a day, seven days a week in order to continue that job, despite the cold weather, despite the hot weather, day or night. I think those people go to work with good intentions: They want to work and help build the province of Ontario; they want to work because they believe strongly in their responsibility and duty to provide for their families. And they go to work on the assumption that if something happens to them, they will be protected. This bill will create some kind of balance between workers and construction companies.

Yesterday I heard the member from Sarnia–Lambton speak. He spoke eloquently and represented his party's view, but I don't agree with him. I don't agree with him, but he did a good job presenting his political view and his party's view. He said that his bill will force small companies out of business. I don't believe that. I know that if they don't have protection for their workers, it might cause them more harm, because they will have to provide support for the person if the person gets injured under their watch. Therefore, I think this bill is very good for them if they go, in the first place, to some kind of safety mechanism for the people who work for them and pay their WSIB dues. As you know, the WSIB is a very credible organization in Ontario that provides financial support and training and looks after people if they get sick, if they have that protection.

It's a very important bill, and I hope it will be discussed very well when it goes to committee. We are going to listen to many different people from across the province of Ontario: We are going to listen to the construction people and their views; we're going to listen to the workers; we're going to listen to the unions; we're going to listen to different spectrums, a variety of stakeholders who will give us input that I think will be valuable in order to reshape our bill.

In the tough economic times we are facing in the province of Ontario and across the globe, I think it's a good time to refocus on many different elements that will help us to reshape the province of Ontario. I think this bill is one of those elements, one of the tools that give us the ability to reconstruct our vision and reconstruct our laws and rules.

I was listening to the Minister of Labour yesterday when he spoke about the consultation level. This bill has been under consultation since God knows when—almost 15 years. Many different ministers and many different governments have come to this place and discussed this bill. I think it's about time to pass this bill and implement it. We live in a technological era. We live in a sophisticated society; we don't live in a primitive society and in primitive communities anymore. We should be up to standard. We should be able to protect the people who work in this industry. We should be able to modernize our lives, modernize our industries. I think this bill will

force many different companies to be modern and to provide support and services for the people who work for them.

It's very important also to talk about a balanced approach. As you know, so many different companies in the province of Ontario have to pay WSIB to continue to work in the province of Ontario. Some other companies don't. So when they go bidding on different jobs, the company who does not have all the support and services will be able to make a lower bid and get the contract. I don't think it's fair for many legitimate companies in Ontario that are working around the clock and trying to work under the rules and laws of the province, to be unable to compete because they have extra expenses, and other companies, because they do not provide the services, will be able to get the bid. In the meantime, we are penalizing the big companies that have all the services, laws and rules being applied, because they apply and make sure that the people who work for them are safe, while the others do not. I don't think it's fair.

So we have to create that balanced approach, because I think it's very important to reward the people who are trying their best to protect their employees, to protect their workers. We have to also convince the people who do not have any protection for their workers about the importance of creating some kind of safety mechanism for the people who work for them.

I thought about this bill. I read it many different times—the importance of this bill, the intent and the aim. I think it is a very important approach. It's about time, after the many years that we've been discussing this issue. I remember when the Minister of Labour came to the women's caucus—and the chair of the women's caucus is here with us today. We asked him many different questions: Why this time? Why do you want to do it in the province of Ontario? He said, "We in the province of Ontario are not alone in Canada. Many other provinces came before us and implemented it. They found that it's a lot better, and it also creates some kind of safety mechanism for many workers working for them." Especially when you talk about the number: 90,000 workers will be covered under this bill. It's a huge segment of our society. He also spoke about the implications and importance of this bill and spoke about how we can talk about convincing small companies to come forward and be able to provide services and protection for the people who work for them.

Very often we talk about protection. Very often we talk about health care. Very often we talk about people dying at work and being injured at work. I think it's our responsibility to create those rules and pave the road for the people who work in this industry and make sure that those people are safe and protected.

I have a lot of friends who work in this industry and have small companies. The question has come up and I've been asked many different times, "What if I want to fix my own house?" I think the minister will talk about it: That will be exempt. If you want to help your grandmother, your father, your seniors, your neighbour, or if

you want to do it one time, if you just want to help them and you don't want to use it as a profession on a daily basis, this bill will give you protection. You will be exempt. This bill is talking about many different elements and aspects of the job and the nature of the job. I think it would be a very good approach to exempt certain people who want to do it one time in their lifetime, or if they want to help someone to construct their home.

The member from Thornhill is laughing about this stuff. I think he cares about seniors, because at one time he introduced—

*Interjection.*

**0920**

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** You want to fix the basement? Well, you can fix the basement without being licensed and protect the people who are going to help you. There are some kinds of exemptions from WSIB, some logical exemptions. I think that's fair in order to help your grandmother, or if you want to help your father, or if you want to help your neighbour who is not able to do the job by themselves. I think you'll be exempt. I think it's a very fair approach. But if you want to do it as a career and you want to hire three or four or five people to wake up in the morning on a daily basis to go from point A to point B to perform certain jobs, I think your obligation and duty as a citizen of this province and this nation is to protect the people who are working for you. Because I think that it's not fair if something happens to them.

What are you going to do? Who's going to provide for their families and look after them if they get injured, especially if they lose a hand or leg or break their back—and we see this happening on a daily basis. We see people getting injured on a daily basis in the province of Ontario, despite the rules and mechanisms we put in place in this province. Despite all the rules and regulations, despite all the tools and the safety equipment we use on a daily basis, people still get injured. So I think it is a part of our human nature, our obligation, our responsibility as a government, as elected officials, to create for the people of this province some kind of safety mechanism which protects the workers.

The small company that employs four or five or six, whatever the number, should be able, without harm, to go and register the workers and get them the protection they need. Because who's going to look after them? Very often, if they have no protection, they have to go to Ontario Works or go on disability. They move people from one spot to another. They dump the responsibility, which they make money from, on the government and the taxpayers. I think it's not fair.

This bill will be a great protection for the taxpayers and will also be good protection for the construction companies who hire those people. It will be good protection for the workers who are working on a daily basis on the assumption that they are protected if something happens to them. It will give them some kind of peace of mind, so if something happens, they will be protected: They will be able to get financial support; they will be able to get retraining, if they want to be trained

again; and they will get some kind of relaxation and go back to work in full capacity for the company they have been hired by.

I think this bill creates a balanced approach, and in the end I wish all members of the House will support it. I'm looking forward to going to committee with this bill, with other members, and listening to many stakeholders from across the province of Ontario and seeing how we can fill the gap and fix it, if we want, and also make it approachable and logical, in order to create a balanced approach between the workers and the construction companies, because we need them all.

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

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** In response to the presentation from my friend from London–Fanshawe, I have a couple of questions and a couple of comments. The first comment is, while he hopes that everybody in the House will support the bill, I can tell you that this party won't be—not in its present form, in any event.

My questions are these: I wonder if my friend from London–Fanshawe has ever been in small business. Because some of us have; I certainly speak for myself when I say that. I also wonder if my friend from London–Fanshawe listened really carefully yesterday to the presentation from my colleague the member from Sarnia–Lambton. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business, of which I have been a proud member for many years, and which has helped me over the years and helps all of small business—the engine of this economy, if ever there was one in Ontario—has sent a letter to all members of this House. If you haven't gotten yours yet, ladies and gentlemen, you will over the course of the next day. What it says, in really no uncertain terms, is that this legislation is misguided at best because what it does is it hurts small business. There are a lot of people who work in small business who can't afford to see the business they work for get hurt in times where everybody is already hurting on a individual and a collective level.

This bill indeed does tilt the playing field. It helps the big guys, big labour. It hurts the little guys. If you've been in small business—I've mentioned the term “the 5 o'clock sweats” in this House before. If you are in small business, you get them. You wake up at 5 o'clock in the morning and say, “How am I going to survive when they pile yet another tax on top of me?” And make no mistake, what we are talking about here is nothing more than another cash grab from this Liberal government. This government has never imposed a tax increase in its five years, but my goodness, there are an awful lot more taxes to pay. A rose by any other name is still a rose, and this one stinks.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I too have a question for the member from London–Fanshawe. I really do appreciate your concern for workers, and injured workers in particular. The question I have for you: If you support your bill, as it appears you do, why is it that you are not mak-

ing sure that this bill gets enacted and implemented as soon as it is passed? Why is it that the date of implementation is 2012, after the next election? That puzzles me a little bit, because normally when you put up a strong defence for a particular bill, as you've done today, you and your party, it would seem to me that if you really believe in it and you feel strongly about workers and injured workers and that they're entitled to security and benefits and to coverage, you would argue strongly that as soon as it passed it will be enacted. That's the way it should be, and that's the way I believe it should be, so I don't quite understand how Liberals could make an argument, “Yes, this is the right approach”—even, as Liberals say, “This is a balanced approach”—and then argue that it won't be enacted until 2012. Does that make sense for you, member from London–Fanshawe? Because I don't think you spoke to that particular part of the bill.

I'm looking forward to other Liberals speaking to this, because I know you spoke for 20 minutes—God bless—and it appears that a whole lot of Liberals are going to speak for 20 minutes. This is good, and I hope to have my 20 minutes—maybe not today, but soon—because I am eager to discuss this bill and eager to talk about the implementation date of 2012, because I find it inexcusable of any government, but particularly a Liberal government, that pretends to love injured workers and then says, “But you'll have to wait until 2012.” Maybe if you get re-elected—I just don't understand it. You can explain that, please, for me.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Vic Dhillon:** It's a pleasure to speak on Bill 119. The opposition side has been raising concerns about the fact that business owners, sole proprietors, have private insurance. There is a day-and-night difference between the WSIB and private insurance. First of all, the bottom line is totally different: Insurance companies measure their bottom line in dollars; the WSIB measures their bottom line in the number of injuries. There is a huge, huge difference, and it's not a good reason for them to say, “We already have 24/7 insurance.”

I don't know if anyone in this House has ever had to make an insurance claim, but I have, and I know it's different. It's difficult, very difficult and you often have to get a lawyer—and there's another difference. With the WSIB you don't need a lawyer; it's a simple process. Yesterday I read an Ipsos Reid research report that was commissioned by the WSIB and I can tell you the level of satisfaction of people who have had to have WSIB claims was very high. In most cases the level of satisfaction was at least 70% and in a lot of cases it was 80% and up.

The other point I want to make is that the opposition has said that this is going to put a lot of small business out of business. I don't buy that. If this insurance premium is their make-or-break point, then I have trouble understanding the business practices of these businesses that will go out of business. It's a great bill, it's about safety, and it's a pleasure to support this.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to add some comments to the speech from the member from London–Fanshawe on Bill 119, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997. The member from London–Fanshawe criticizes the member from Sarnia–Lambton for reading e-mails from concerned small business people to do with this bill and their concerns, primarily about having coverage for owners of companies, especially when they, in many cases, have already got their own insurance. I would say to the member: Small business represents some 96% of all the businesses in the province of Ontario. Who do you think the businesses are that are creating the wealth of this province, that this government lives off? It's small business.

The member from Trinity–Spadina raises a very valid point: If they're so concerned about workers' safety, why are they waiting until 2012 to implement this legislation? He provided the answer. The answer is because it happens to be after the next election.

0930

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Do you want us to do it right away?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** To the minister across the way who is heckling me, it's after the next election. This is a payback bill to Liberal friends who supported—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** I just caution the honourable member: You can't imply a quid pro quo. Please modify your language.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I will try to more fully explain the connections of the Liberal Party and organizations that might support the Liberal Party to this legislation in the 20 minutes coming up that I get to speak. I think that is a very direct connection, and I look forward to having time to further talk about that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member from London–Fanshawe has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I want to thank all the members who spoke. The member from Thornhill wondered if I was in business. Yes, I was a small business operator for many years, and my family are still small business operators in the city of London. I worked on construction sites for many years. I know the implications and the dangers of working there, and the protections that are badly needed to protect me or other people who want to work in this industry.

The member from Trinity–Spadina raised a question about 2012. It's a good question. I said in my speech that some people agree with the direction of the minister and some people don't. This bill is going to committee, and we are going to listen to many different stakeholders. You have a right and the chance to say, "We want to implement it tomorrow," and then the committee will decide whether it's tomorrow or after passage or after two years; that's what they're supposed to do.

I want to thank the member from Brampton West, the parliamentary assistant to the Ministry of Labour, for outlining the intent.

The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka mentioned the member from Sarnia–Lambton. I said in my speech that he only recited e-mails from construction companies, which I respect and honour. I believe too that those small businesses provide good support for our economy; they are, as a matter of fact, the engine of the economy in the province of Ontario. But our aim and our goal is to protect them too; not just to protect the workers but to protect them too. In order to be protected, you have to follow the rules and regulations. The rules and regulations are not just to protect the workers but also to protect the companies. If somebody in a company is injured, they have the ability to protect them through the WSIB. Private insurance, as the member for Brampton West mentioned, is not enough. WSIB cares only about protecting people, without any conditions.

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

**Mr. Norm Miller:** It's my pleasure to enter the debate today on Bill 119, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997. To the member from London–Fanshawe: I too will be reading some e-mails. I'm amazed at how many businesses and individuals are e-mailing me with grave concerns and making some excellent points about this bill, and I want to get their points on the record. This bill was just introduced a day or so ago and we've had only one day of debate, and there has been very little notification to the people of Ontario that it's even happening. So I'm just amazed at how quickly I'm receiving input to it. I'd like to point out that discussions for these amendments began in October 2004, in much better economic times, with then-Labour Minister Steve Peters.

The McGuinty government wants to persuade the public that this bill will increase worker safety, as well as reduce the number of unsavoury companies out there that have an unfair advantage, thereby levelling the playing field. Let's take a closer look at those claims.

Minister Fonseca says that mandatory coverage will fight the underground economy. That statement seems to suggest that the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board is incompetent and unable to enforce the laws and regulations already in place to deal with lawbreakers. The government and its legion of inspectors have considerable resources, so it's hard to believe that a few simple amendments will rid us of these cheaters.

Minister Fonseca says that mandatory coverage will make workers safer. This claim defies logic. Legislation by itself doesn't protect workers; inspection and compliance to workplace safety rules do that. In fact, if this amendment is really about worker safety, then why did you wait to bring forward the amendments, when you first started looking at this in 2004? Why wait until 2012 to fully enact the legislation? I think the member from Trinity–Spadina just pointed out that happens to be after the next election, so that very well might be why. The minister says the WSIB needs this time to make the necessary technical and administrative changes and to speak with stakeholders about how to implement the

changes. Perhaps he meant that the WSIB would need time to staff up to fully implement the amendments, and those new revenues they'll be raking in will make that possible.

The minister also claims that since everyone in the sector will be paying premiums, the playing field will be more level. But really, the impact on independents and small businesses will be both disproportionate and devastating. It will amount to little more than a tax on the smallest units of business, a tax whose proceeds will flow to the larger players in the sector. The estimate of this burden is about \$11,000 per year for each affected small business.

Yesterday, Minister Fonseca mentioned that he was sure his colleagues had heard stories in their constituency offices "of some independent operators in construction who unfortunately have been injured on the job and did not have insurance coverage and now find themselves without assistance. If they could turn back the clock, many would gladly have paid the WSIB coverage in order to be eligible for compensation and provide support for themselves and their families. Insurance costs money but it provides peace of mind." That's what the minister said yesterday.

Well, Minister, I have had many calls to my constituency office about the WSIB but not one describing the situation that you outlined. Usually, the calls are from business owners, frustrated that the WSIB doesn't properly investigate fraudulent claims—I've had that many times—or from injured workers who are frustrated with WSIB doctors who contradict specialists, or from injured workers who can't get a return phone call from the WSIB, or from injured workers who are ordered to attend retraining programs despite being in pain. Those are the stories that I hear in my constituency office. In fact, a CFIB survey—that's the Canadian Federation of Independent Business—found that Ontario members rated the WSIB the worst agency to deal with. That's quite a claim.

The minister claims that WSIB coverage includes a sophisticated prevention component, return-to-work training and other services provided by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board and that private insurance has no place in Ontario. It sounds like a huge government job creation program to me. Of course, another reason to pursue extra revenue for the WSIB is to cover unfunded liability.

So what does the other side of the argument look like? I want to take a minute to review what business organizations have to say about these amendments. First of all, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business says that the consultation process was poorly publicized, with nothing but a news release, an Internet posting and interested groups like theirs spreading the word.

The problem with that is that the vast majority of businesses don't belong to business associations, so in fact thousands of businesses had no idea about the so-called consultations, and many are only now aware of what the government is proposing. In fact, my own press

releases are making businesses aware of the amendments, and I'm hearing from owners who had absolutely no idea about your proposed changes. With the cost of business being so high, I would have hoped that the government would have made more of an effort to reach out and to listen to those small businesses affected.

By the way, the CFIB isn't buying your claim about eliminating the underground economy. Quite the opposite: They say your amendments will serve to push rule-breakers further underground while punishing legitimate small businesses. Worse yet, they say many small businesses won't be able to withstand the additional costs, causing them to shut their doors and take jobs out of Ontario's failing economy.

In a letter to Minister Fonseca dated October 28, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business describes your legislation as "seriously misguided." They say your amendments won't make "one iota of difference on health and safety." The Canadian Federation of Independent Business vice-president, Judith Andrew, writes: "What is unprecedented about your actions today is the level of betrayal of small and medium-size business.... Your seemingly cocky, uncaring attitude to 25,000 action alerts ... from our members was distressing...."

"Most politicians we know are genuinely interested in doing their best for Ontarians. There may be disagreement on what the best is, but at least their motives are pure. We believe that your motivation, on behalf of your government, has far more to do with political opportunism than it does with the policy at hand."

I think we only need to take a look at the implementation date of 2012 to see the politics of this legislation.

**0940**

No doubt the government will argue that the Canadian Federation of Independent Business's comments are sour grapes about the lack of consultation. Well, let me share some of the e-mails and letters I have been receiving, both as the representative of Parry Sound–Muskoka and as small business critic.

A construction business writes:

"Dear Mr. Miller,

"It is my understanding that there is a proposed change to the workplace safety act that would make it mandatory for all owners to be covered with workplace safety insurance. Presently owners are exempt from this coverage unless they opt in to be covered with this insurance.

"We are very much opposed to this change and hope that you will not support the proposal. We do not know any employer who is in favour of this change and we have talked to at least 20."

I will just break from this letter to add my own opinion and ask the government, what is the logic for including owners in this coverage? Because I can't see any logical reason. The owners in many cases have their own insurance or don't want coverage. The only possible reason is that they are looking at getting more money—as I say, a tax grab—to cover unfunded liability.

I will go back to the letter:



"Everyone that I have talked to agrees that workplace safety insurance for employees is a good idea. It is our understanding from conversations with WSIB employees that all workers are automatically covered whether or not their employer pays the premiums. The problem then is not that workers are not covered; it is that many employers do not pay the required premiums. Requiring employers to pay the premium will not then solve the problem of the underground economy; it will only amount to a cash grab for those employers already playing by the existing rules.

"There are many people calling themselves contractors or subcontractors who work for themselves and then hire out to other contractors as subs and who are really employees. These workers are clearly breaking the existing rules, working without WSIB coverage, probably then also not paying employment insurance, Canada pension, GST and the rest. These are the underground workers who undercut the rest of us who play by the rules and who steal from the rest of the tax-paying public by not paying their share.

"We have often reported these illegal workers to the WSIB, but to little or no avail. We have been told by WSIB employees that they are short-staffed and only have time to keep track of the registered employers. It seems then that an easy way to collect more money is to increase premiums for those of us who are already paying too much, instead of making the effort to enforce the existing rules.

"The rules already require that either one works for an employer and the employer pays the premium or the worker register with the WSIB and obtain either an independent worker status or register and get a clearance certificate. The problem from our point of view is that WSIB do not enforce that rule and that fact puts everyone who plays by the rules at an unfair disadvantage. They are at [an] unfair disadvantage because the WSIB premiums alone, without the other taxes, amount to almost 10%. That is 10% less than the unregistered worker can charge less than the registered contractor and still break even.

"We believe that if the WSIB hired more workplace inspectors and tracked down unregistered employers that they could likely double the number of registered companies within one year. You can check it out yourself. Simply pick up the phone book and start calling advertised service providers and ask them if you hire them can they provide a clearance certificate from the WSIB. Do not call just the large companies, because they probably are already registered. Try the smaller companies who employ 15 or less. You will be surprised what you learn. Keep in mind there are dozens of employers in Bracebridge alone that are not even listed in the phone book, and now you know why.

"Please do what you can to encourage our government to enforce the rules and regulations that we already have as compared to taking the easy road to more unfair premiums on employers who are already paying more than their share because only half of the employers are playing by the game.

"In our opinion it is totally fair and reasonable that all employers be given the option of opting in or out of WSIB coverage for themselves. It is totally reasonable and fair that all workers are covered and that their employers be responsible for making sure that this happens. However, in our opinion it is totally unfair and unreasonable to mandate that any employer be required to opt into this coverage with no choice."

Further, from another small business owner:

"The purpose of this letter is to inform you that we vehemently oppose the government's proposed legislation which would make WSIB coverage for owner-operators of small business mandatory.

"Having read Mr. Fonseca's proposed amendments it would appear that he is trying to make two points: Number one, the passing of this legislation will be a step forward in fighting the 'underground economy'; number two, the passing of this legislation will make Ontario a 'safer place to work'.

"I do agree that WSIB coverage should be mandatory for all employees. This would ensure that all construction companies are playing by the same rules.

"We are very happy to provide both a liability insurance certificate and WSIB clearance for work performed when asked for by a general contractor or homeowner. If all contractors employing sub-trades and individual homeowners requested WSIB clearances when having work completed, this would greatly diminish the underground economy the government keeps going on about.

"Mr. Fonseca states that individuals who exclusively perform home renovation work and are retained directly by the homeowner, family member, or occupant of the home will be exempted from this mandatory coverage. Yes. An individual should be exempt as the owner-operator of a small business. However, often this is the guy who may have one or two helpers who does not pay WSIB, EI, or other payroll taxes, and probably does not have any liability insurance. This is the underground economy. I would imagine that often it is the individual homeowner, trying to get the lowest price, who does not think about how a particular company is cutting corners to provide that lower price, who contributes to the underground economy. Until the individual homeowner is willing to pay for a reputable company to perform work, you will always have companies that do not play by the rules.

"Passing of this legislation will not be a step forward in fighting the underground economy. It is a blatant money grab from legitimate businesses. Rather than fighting the underground economy, this legislation will make it more desirable for legitimate businesses to go underground.

"It is my understanding that if an employee is injured on the job, they are eligible to receive WSIB whether or not the company they work for pays WSIB. Therefore, passing of this legislation will not make any difference in how safe a place Ontario is to work."

A Parry Sound–Muskoka–Haliburton franchise holder writes:

"I wish to advise you that the pending proposal to make WSIB coverage mandatory for business owners will most certainly affect my business negatively. We operate three businesses that contribute to the WSIB, employing nine people, with the other two firms supporting three more people. The impact of course will be financial ... not to mention the clerical impact. It is difficult enough to keep the bottom line in the black without the pending changes. Our rate is in the 10% range, which applied to what I take as a salary will be the best part of \$10,000. Removing that much from the bottom line would make me rethink the viability of these businesses. Please do your best to let the government know the dire impact a move such as this would have on many businesses in this area."

From another business owner:

"Unbelievable ... we work so hard to provide jobs for people as well as a living for ourselves and to be hit with this. We have completed a work-well audit, address any health and safety concerns that are brought to us by the staff, are commented on regularly what a safe place this is to work from outsiders and yet now ... we will have to pay additionally to the monopoly of WSIB, something which we cannot elect out of, for coverage of ourselves. We make sure not to take risks that would affect our health and safety and choose not to have ourselves covered with the WSIB. In addition, the secondary accident insurance is far less expensive than WSIB. I cannot stress enough how difficult times are amidst fuel increases and more stress on workplace safety and regulations and lost markets."

**0950**

Yet another business owner writes:

"This is unbelievable. We will never make it through an increase in cost like this. This is government so out of touch, the increase in red tape is breaking us. I just returned from a trade show in the United States; you really get the feeling that the people and the government support business owners there. This Ontario government is going to break us. This is not a case of levelling the playing field—it is a case of ruining it—if they keep this up there will be no players left. That should lower accidents—nobody works—nobody gets hurt."

It really is unbelievable that the McGuinty government would move ahead with this legislation when small business is already straining under the weight of red tape and the global economic crisis.

I just received a couple of more e-mails that I wanted to get on the record. One I just received:

"Dear Norm,

"You may not remember me but I have met you from time to time at our Rotary Club in Gravenhurst. I'm writing to respond to the current legislation that has been tabled regarding mandatory legislation for construction-related owner-operators and officers. My brother and I own and operate our company"—I won't name the company—"and we do so from our office. We are in the construction business but rarely set foot on our sites because we have site managers for that. Forcing us to pay a very

high rate to WSIB is like forcing the owner of a factory or any other type of business to pay WSIB when truly they are office workers. We see this legislation as unfair and cost-prohibitive as it appears that the construction industry has been singled out over all other industries in this regard.

"Please do your best to intervene in this unfair legislation."

I would just warn this owner that probably other businesses will be expanded upon, based on this government's track record.

Another e-mail: "I'm sure you are already aware of this legislation but from my point of view, I think it is imperative that owner-operators of pretty much any business have the option to opt in or out of WSIB at their choosing. This gives them the freedom to have private coverage, or no coverage or the standard WSIB coverage at their choice, and I think they should be allowed to make this choice, not have it made for them."

Still another letter: "Still, it is clear that this minister doesn't care about small business, being so much in the pocket of the construction unions and their big business buddies. The bill received first reading on October 28, second reading started October 29, and it appears the Liberals intend to ram it through third and final reading...."

"Members outside of construction should note that their exempt status could change with the stroke of a legislative pen. The briefing package says, 'Independent operators, sole proprietors, partners in a partnership and executive officers of corporations that carry on business in an industry other than construction, under the WSIA, would retain the option of applying to the WSIB for voluntary coverage.' WSIB has long wanted to enlarge its public monopoly to currently-uncovered sectors and individuals, and if they get their way in construction, who knows what's next." A very good point.

I have a lot more I'd like to say, but I'm running out of time. I think the most obvious thing is that this government is just bringing forward what is, in effect, an \$11,000 tax grab on small business, at a time when the economy is struggling and business can least afford it. Small business—96% of the businesses in this province of Ontario, the wealth creators, the businesses that this government lives off and collects their taxes from—are going to be very badly hurt by this legislation. I hope the government listens to the many e-mails we've received so far, and that's just the beginning.

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

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I want to start out by saying that I totally disagree with what has been said. And I also want to totally disagree with what the government's said, and I'll explain that in my speech a little bit later. This is not going to cost the business sector a dime. Why? Because this legislation is not going to be enacted until 2012. I make the point that Mr. Marchese, the member from—

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Trinity-Spadina.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** —Trinity-Spadina, makes, which is, if the government is in support of extending workers'

compensation rights to workers, why are you waiting until 2012 to do it? It'll be after the next election. You won't even be the government, possibly, at that point. So don't tell me that Liberals care about workers and that Liberals are going to extend rights to workers to be covered by compensation in areas that are presently not covered. You're saying, "Oh, we're going to do it, but we're going to put it off until after the next election," knowing full well you may not be the government and that this whole thing could be for naught.

Then you've got the false debate on the side of the Conservatives, who say, "Oh, God, this is going to bankrupt the business sector." Hang on a second: 2012. It won't cost anybody a dime. This legislation will not have cost a dime to anybody because it's not enacted. As I make the point, if after 2012 the Liberals aren't elected and—by God, let's hope not—the Conservatives are, we know it's not going to cost anybody a dime. That's why I would argue that the right response is the position that we put forward as a party. We understand and we agree with the intent of the legislation, that workers who are not covered by workers' compensation should be covered. A worker is a worker is a worker. If you're earning a wage, you should be covered by workers' compensation. I have argued that for years, along with my party leader and other members within the New Democratic Party, and from the perspective of business it's only fair. It levels the playing field.

The problem we currently have in the construction trades is that you have people who are utilizing the existing exemptions as a way of basically undercutting other contractors who are law-abiding businesses, who are paying their taxes, who understand they have a responsibility to do so and are saying, at the very least, level the playing field so that we all play by the same rules.

So I say to this government, I say to this minister, if you were really serious about this legislation, you should have put an enactment date after third reading. You didn't do that, so you ain't serious about this whatsoever.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I listened very carefully to the speech made by the member opposite and I've got to tell you, the fact is that there are workers across this province on construction sites who currently aren't receiving the coverage they should get and there are employers getting away with not paying the premiums to support and protect those workers.

Somebody in this Legislature has to stand up for those injured workers, those construction workers who should be receiving these benefits. It's obvious that the member opposite's party never stood up for injured workers when they were in office. In fact, they presided over a pullback of benefits for injured workers, to the point where we've had to play catch-up for the last number of years in increasing benefits for those injured workers. The NDP didn't help either when they were in power, because they brought in the Friedland formula that the Tories made even worse. That's the reality. So maybe we shouldn't be

too surprised when the Tories are not standing up for workers across this province. They never did when they were in government and they never did when they had the chance to do it. But now I find it hard to believe that the member opposite would advocate a policy not to stand up for these workers, not to ensure that these workers have coverage, not to ensure that employers are paying the premiums that they should be paying for these workers.

This party, this government, is also standing up for those employers that are paying the benefits. They are legitimately paying benefits to ensure that their workers are protected. But they are not only paying the benefits for their own workers; they are also subsidizing those employers that are not paying their fair share.

It's time to level the playing field. The NDP member who spoke earlier was absolutely right. This does not take money out of the economy. It makes sure that those who are paying premiums pay their fair share, and those who are not will now have to pay their fair share. It shifts it. It takes no dollars—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I just heard the comment from the former labour minister that this takes no money out of the economy. Where does \$11,000 for small business come from? That's the economy. Where does it go? Basically, into the tax coffers. That's how it works, and he knows it.

I've heard a couple of comments in response to the speech by my colleague from Parry Sound–Muskoka that I agree with. First of all, on the part of the member from Timmins–James Bay, I absolutely agree with you on one thing that you said: that it's unlikely there will be a Liberal government in 2012, and thank God for that. And as far as standing up for workers, standing up for workers means you stand up for workers now, not in four years, so I'll give him that.

However, what I want to point out and underline is that this is nothing more than a new tax, and the Liberal Party has perfected the ability to bring in new taxes under any other name. I said that before and I'll say it again. This amounts to approximately \$11,000 per small business in the province of Ontario. As my colleagues on the other side know and as my friend from Parry Sound–Muskoka has said, small business drives the economy here, an economy that even on the part of the Premier of this province and the finance minister of this province right now is sputtering, for whatever reasons. We can debate those on some other level. But at this point you have to ask yourself, what does \$11,000 represent to a small business? It represents oftentimes, and I speak as a former small business owner-operator—I would like to think my former employees would say a good one—\$11,000 is often the difference between making a payroll and not making a payroll.

**1000**

You can't say this is levelling the playing field; it's not. It's tilting the playing field at an obtuse angle. "Ob-

tuse” is an appropriate word, I must say. You’re looking at things like unfunded liabilities on the part of the WSIB. You’re looking at things like shifting the burden from yourselves as the government onto the backs of people whose backs are already bending under the strain.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We have time for one more question and comment.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I want to commend the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka for his rendition of the fallacies, shall we say, in this bill, and they are many.

The comments from the former Minister of Labour suggested that this is just going after money that people should be paying and aren’t paying, so it isn’t going to cost anybody any money. In costing money, it’s about people paying more money to government, and this, Mr. Minister, is people paying more money to government.

The suggestion is that it’s going after people who should be paying anyway. It would seem to me, and I’ve been involved with a lot of issues with compensation, that the Workers’ Compensation Board actually goes after employers who don’t pay on all their employees. That’s an obligation. Not only are all workers in Ontario covered under the act, but all employers must pay for those workers, so we don’t need a new bill for them to go after situations where people are not paying the appropriate compensation for workers in the construction industry.

The bill is really about making people who are presently exempt from compensation payments now have to pay compensation payments. In fact, that is a new tax on those small businesses. This wasn’t about me as an employer paying for the people that I was paying for. This is supposed to be about collecting it from people who haven’t been paying it, but that’s not who you’re going after. You’re going after legitimate business owners who were exempt from it before and are not going to be exempt anymore. It’s a new tax on small business. I don’t know how the government, at this time in our economy, could be doing such a thing.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member from Parry Sound–Muskoka has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** It’s my pleasure to respond. First of all, to the aboriginal affairs minister: I don’t think he was listening to my speech, because if he was, he would have heard me say that we have to apply the existing rules, and that would deal with many of the things that this bill purports to deal with. To the member from Timmins–James Bay: Yes, I think he makes a good point that the 2012 implementation date makes you question the politics behind this move—and I hope he’s right that the PC Party is elected when the next election rolls around in October 2011.

I think the group I’m hearing most from to do with this bill are the owner-operators, the owners of businesses that don’t want to be covered and aren’t currently covered by WSIB legislation. I have a difficult time seeing any logical reason why the owner of a business should be covered. In fact, I see a conflict: an owner-

operator of a small business working, getting into the fall, business doesn’t look that great, and all of a sudden their back starts hurting, so they decide that they’re injured and should take the winter off until business picks up in the spring. There’s absolutely a conflict there. But more than that, those owner-operators, the owners of the businesses, don’t want coverage. They’re quite happy with the scenario they have right now.

What this is more about is a tax grab, an \$11,000 tax for the average business. The McGuinty government said they weren’t going to bring more taxes in; this is an \$11,000 annual tax for the average business in the province of Ontario.

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

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I’m absolutely delighted to have an opportunity to speak to this bill. First of all, I just want to say again that I disagree entirely with what the Progressive Conservative—I don’t know why they put the word “Progressive” in that—caucus has to say on this, and that is, “It’s a tax grab.” Let’s be clear: There are no taxes being grabbed here because this bill is not going to become law until 2012.

Now, I’m not saying that’s a good thing; I’m saying it’s a bad thing. But the argument that all of a sudden businesses in Ontario over the next couple of years are going to flee because all of a sudden there are going to be workers’ compensation rights applied to workers who are currently exempt is totally off base, because this law is not a law until 2012.

I come back to the point that the member from Trinity–Spadina made, and I think he’s perfectly right. I ask the Liberal government this: Do you agree with this legislation, yes or no? If you say, “Yes, I agree with the legislation,” then enact the law after third reading. Workers are going to continue to be injured, they’re going to continue to not be protected under workers’ compensation, and the travesty will continue. So either you support your bill or you don’t—and I would argue you don’t.

Here’s the politics of this—and this is the point: This is all about politics. The Liberals want to be seen in Ontario by the labour movement, and specifically the construction trades, as, “We Liberals, we love you workers and we want to be nice to you. We understand your pain. Oh, yes, we do. We understand that you work hard every day and that you’re going to be injured in the workplace, and we want to protect you and we want to give you the rights that, oh, you so deserve.”

So they have a law, they bring this law forward: “Here it is. We have a law, we’re going to pass it, and it’s going to give the workers of this province,” say Dalton McGuinty, Mr. Fonseca and others, “the rights to workers’ compensation that they deserve,” and workers stand in the street and they applaud. Then all of a sudden, they have an accident in the workplace, they go lining up at the Workers’ Compensation Board and they say, “Mr. Workers’ Compensation, I hurt my back, I broke my leg, I hurt an arm,” or maybe somebody was killed and the family is trying to get benefits from those workers. The

Workers' Compensation Board is going to go, "Denied," and the worker is going to say, "Why? What do you mean, 'denied'? I heard Mr. Fonseca. I heard the Premier. He says he loves his workers, he wants to help workers in the residential trades, he wants to help workers in the construction trades—and that I'm going to be covered by compensation. I saw the debate. I saw the Premier stand and say he was going to pass this legislation. In fact, I know there was a vote. I was watching on TV or I went to the Legislature and I saw the Hansard. Yes, there was a vote in favour of the law, not only at second reading but third." Then you'll have to read the fine print, because the bill's going to say, "This is not a law." It is not worth the piece of paper that it's written on. It's not enacted until 2012.

Why is that significant? First of all, workers will continue to be denied their rights under compensation for another four years. Tell me how that's protecting workers. It doesn't do nothing to protect workers. It continues the status quo for four years.

But then the worst part of it is, they say, "Until 2012? Oh, isn't that after the election of 2011? We have fixed election dates. We know there's going to be an election in October 2011." They're basically passing the ball to whoever the next government's going to be, and it might not even be them. I would argue it probably won't be. So they're thinking now, "If we lose government in 2011, we'll be able to stand there and say, 'Protect those workers. We passed the legislation. Oh, bad NDP or Conservative government.'" They'll be able to stand there and be holier than thou, and all the time they would have done absolutely nothing to protect an injured worker.

I say, shame on Dalton McGuinty, shame on the Minister of Labour and shame on the Liberal caucus for trying to dupe workers when it comes to their rights—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I withdraw, Speaker. "Dupe" is unparliamentary, and before I'm told I'm out of order, I want to withdraw the words "duping the workers." I apologize. But I want to say that the workers are not being served by this Liberal government.

Now, let me tell you how it goes from the perspective of the worker. Some of us in this Legislature, on all sides of the House, had to work for a living before we came to this Legislature. I worked in the construction trades; I'm an electrician by trade. The first job I had was working as a labourer on construction sites, so I understand what it is. I've lived it, I've walked it, I've breathed it, and I've seen the injuries and I've seen the death, as many workers in this Legislature probably have as well. I don't have a monopoly on that. Here's the problem—and you see it also as members in your constituency office—the worker goes to work one day for a contractor who's not covered by workers' compensation, who doesn't cover him under workers' compensation. The worker has a slip at work and all of a sudden—I've got a good example. I'll use his name: Monsieur Boulanger, a guy I'm dealing with right now on a compensation claim in my riding.

**1010**

He hurt his foot as a result of an accident on a construction site where the ground was uneven. He tripped and twisted his ankle, and he has been having problems ever since. His problem was that he worked for a contractor who didn't have compensation because he was part of a subcontractor group. So this worker who had a problem as of 10 years ago with his ankle has been trying to get workers' compensation to cover his medical expenses, cover the brace he needs and the other things that he needs in order to continue working. This gentleman has not lost a day of work as a result of the injury, but has had to work with pain ever since. He came into my office about three years ago and said he had filed a compensation claim and had been denied. Since the original injury, he has been reinjured, and as a result of that, the original injury was compounded. So now you know where I'm going.

That worker now has a second compensation claim for a reinjury of the same pre-existing condition. The Workers' Compensation Board is having a problem determining which injury caused the compensable accident and whether it's compensable at all, so we're having to go to the Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal on this one. The Workers' Compensation Board has taken the position, "No, because there was a pre-existing condition, we at the Workers' Compensation Board will not grant rights to the worker for medical aid." He's not even asking for lost time. All he's saying is, "I want my medical aid, as far as braces and other things that I have to take, painkillers and others, and that my day be paid when I need to go see the specialist." That's all he wants. This man wants to continue working. He's a proud, hard-working Ontarian, as we all are, but the Workers' Compensation Board says, "No, no, no. You have a pre-existing condition; therefore, we deny you." So I'm going to waste all kinds of my time, my staff's time, this gentleman's time, the Workers' Compensation Board's time, to go to the Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal, WCAT, in order to make the argument that his condition, although it is related to the first part of the injury that was not covered by the Workers' Compensation Board—he still, nonetheless, has been reinjured and should be compensated. That is why you have to insure all workers. I don't care where you were injured the first time or the second time; the fact is you were injured, and we need to recognize that under the act.

Here's what's worse. Is this bill going to give workers any rights to retroactivity on these injuries? If this bill was to say, in the case of my constituent, that it will recognize pre-existing injuries, when he was injured at work with the injury that came from the time he worked for a contractor who was not covered by WCB—it won't even do that. So I'm still going to have this problem. If this bill should pass and we were to change the date to enact it now, I'm still going to have the darned argument that the injury had happened on a work site where compensation wasn't applied the first time.

So I say to the members across the way, this is not a service to workers whatsoever. Clearly, you're saying the

right thing, and I give the government credit for saying the right thing. Clearly, you're doing the right thing: You've drafted a bill. Again, you did the right thing: You introduced it in the House and we're debating it. I presume we're going to vote for it. But clearly this bill will do nothing for workers, because there will be no protection until 2012 for any workers on any of these sites.

The other thing I want to say is, the Liberal government is not treating all workers the same. They say they are and that this is about levelling the playing field, as Brian Mulroney used to say, so that workers, no matter where they work, can be covered by workers' compensation. Well, that's not the case. We're still going to have the problem on a residential construction site. Do you think that residential construction is not a big business in Ontario? There are thousands and tens of thousands of people who work on residential construction sites, and we're still going to allow contractors to basically sub off the work to a one-person shop or a two-person shop where workers' compensation will not be paid and the right to a workers' compensation claim won't be granted. So we're not really doing anything here that's going to help people in a residential trade.

So I say again to the members across the way, the Liberal government, my God, why didn't you just call this what this is? We should retitile this bill, "A bill for the Liberals to say to workers that we really love you, but we're not going to do anything bill." Because that's with this is really all about; let's not kid ourselves.

Let me just say this other thing. Part of the difficulty I have when we get in these debates around workers' compensation is that it's all about incrementalism. I got into politics as a result of my work with diseased miners who worked underground in the gold mines of northern Ontario. People—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Sorry to interrupt the honourable member. You will have the floor again when this order is next called.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** It is 10:15 of the clock. This House stands recessed until 10:30.

*The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Mr. Speaker, I don't have any guests in the chamber at the moment, but certainly this afternoon I will have a number of guests in the chamber who will be here to listen to my private member's ballot item, which I'm looking forward to discussing. I'll be introducing them at that time. So thank you very much.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** To follow up on the precedent of my friend for Wellington—Halton Hills, I can say that our page Cole Maranger from the great riding of Perth—Wellington today is being joined by—and they've arrived—his parents, Peter and Beverley Maranger of Stratford, and a Brazilian Rotary exchange student,

Thomas Almeida. We welcome them here today to the Legislature.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### VIOLENT CRIME

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** My question is to the Attorney General. It was very surprising to learn that the Attorney General was unfamiliar with the judge's decision to release Nathaniel O'Brien back into the community, where he allegedly went on to kill his two neighbours, both women. So I ask you again today, Attorney General: Have you now read the decision, and what instructions have you given to your crown lawyers in response to that decision?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Actually, my answer to the question was that, for reasons the member knows full well, I can't speak to the facts of that case. My speaking to it would not change that terribly sad tragedy, it wouldn't bring people back, but it might undermine the prosecution, and that would undermine public safety. Let's be clear: We're all saddened by the terrible tragedy. We're angry at those responsible and we are determined to make sure that we do whatever we can to prevent these tragedies from happening in the future.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Regrettably, you continue to hide behind the excuse of, "The issue is before the courts" etc., but as you know, this whole issue of Mr. O'Brien's bail, which is what I'm asking you about, is not going before the courts again. The only things going before the courts are the actual charges that he's facing.

The judge's decision to release Mr. O'Brien—who, as you know, may well be a serial rapist and a murderer—is extremely disturbing. His alleged victims were all females and apparently all strangers to him.

I would like to ask you again, Attorney General: What message does your failure to appeal this decision send to female victims of sexual assault?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I don't have the luxury of addressing facts when accused persons are before the court; I wish I did. A lot of people would like answers, and I wish I could speak to those issues directly, but that would undermine the prosecution; that would undermine the very public safety we are all trying very hard to protect.

Be clear on our determination: We are going to prosecute to the full extent of the law, as we do. We are working with our chiefs. My colleague and I will be meeting with Chief Blair and Chief Davidson I expect next week. We're going to do whatever it takes to protect the public interest.

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

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Again to the Attorney General: Yesterday, your Minister for Children and Youth

Services acknowledged November as Woman Abuse Prevention Month. She stood in this House and she said, "We will continue to work toward ending women abuse in Ontario." My question to you is, when will you personally demonstrate through action as opposed to empty words to do that? When are you going to stand up for the hundreds of women who every year in this province are sexually assaulted, and appeal the judge's bail decision? Do you know how hard it is for a woman to come forward? When are you going to show victims of violence that you personally are going to do what you can?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Personally, I would stand up for my wife and my children every minute of the day; personally, we all have.

For the protection of women, we brought in the domestic violence action plan. For the protection of women, we've made sure that there are additional police investigative services, that there are additional victim/witness services, that there are quick responses, that there are additional funds for more shelter supports and more shelters so women can get out of a place of danger and make sure that they are safe.

This government has demonstrated its commitment to the assistance of those who are victims of violence and will continue to demonstrate its commitment by building on those supports.

#### VIOLENT CRIME

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** My question is to the Attorney General as well, and it relates to comments that he's made in the wake of Bailey Zaveda's murder last weekend and the information that her accused killer was on the street due to a plea-bargain deal his crown made and a break on sentencing due to pretrial custody credits awarded by the court.

The accused killer of Ms. Zaveda, Kyle Weese, had his sentence reduced by almost two years as a result of custody credits. Minister, you've said that you oppose such credits. Can you advise us if your crown opposed the pretrial credits given to Mr. Weese, the accused shooter, and if not, why not?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** For the reasons my friend knows, I won't address the details of the case—he knows that. But he addresses a very important point, a point that we've spoken to as a government at federal-provincial-territorial conferences. There is virtually unanimous agreement among the provinces and territories across Canada that when an accused is sentenced, the sentence should be reflective of the facts and should not be automatically reduced by two-for-one or sometimes more-for-one credits.

For decades, the law has suggested that there should be an acknowledgment of pretrial custody, but it has increasingly become embedded in the law that it's virtually automatic. We oppose it wherever the law allows. We take the very tough position. We believe a legislative change is going to be—

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

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** You know, the families, the victims, have to be terribly, terribly upset by this Attorney General and his lack of responses. I asked him a specific question—did they oppose the custody credits given to Mr. Weese, the accused killer?—and he gets up with bafflegab after bafflegab. That's not interfering in any court case, not at all.

We're talking about his crown. Did they oppose those pretrial custody credits being awarded? You have said you oppose the credits, but a check of the record indicates that you support a reduction and not a removal.

If the minister is sincere about his opposition, he must have issued a policy directive to his crowns asking them to oppose credits, especially for violent crimes or crimes involving a weapon. If he did issue such a directive, can he indicate when, and will he table a copy with this House? If he didn't, will he explain why?

1040

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** We've spoken often at federal-provincial-territorial conferences and other places about the need to change the law with respect to the virtually automatic reflection of two-for-one and more-for-one credits. We try, on the front lines, to reduce the acknowledgment of those credits in sentencing. We ask for longer sentences to make sure that the sentences reflect the facts of the offence. We are bound by the law in court, and that's why, when we can't change it on the front lines, we ask for a legislative change, not just in Ontario but across the country. Federal, provincial and territorial ministers have asked the federal government unanimously to change it and we look forward to continuing that discussion, while continuing to ask for the tough sentences that are necessary—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** I guess that non-response answers the question about the minister's sincerity in terms of wanting to address this situation.

We know the Liberal opposition in both the federal Parliament and the Senate significantly delayed—and, in some respects, weakened—much-needed justice reforms that were before the federal House in the last session. Minister, the official opposition is prepared to join you in co-signing a letter to all members of Parliament and senators asking for a prohibition on pretrial custody credits for individuals found guilty of violent crimes, crimes with a weapon or breaches of bail. Will you today join with us in this constructive, non-partisan effort to improve public safety?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** We're ahead of you. All the provinces and territories have joined together in calling for the end to the two-for-one. Let us be very clear: We stand and will speak for the people of Ontario. We did that pushing for reverse onus bail; we did that pushing for mandatory minimums. We spoke to all federal members, including Liberal members, and told them we wanted them passed. We want further legislative changes, and we'll continue to do so, but that will not change our determination, right here within our juris-

diction, working with the police and other justice partners, making sure that we prosecute to the fullest extent of the law and making sure that we do whatever we can to protect public safety and the public interest.

### VIOLENT CRIME

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** My question is for the Attorney General. As we've already heard, the McGuinty government seems to have a lot to say on crime issues; the issue is, they don't seem to "do."

I want to quote the former Attorney General from just two years ago, where he said, "We absolutely fully prosecute gun crimes to the fullest extent and oppose bail on gun crimes. We already do that." Then he said, "There is going to be zero tolerance for gun violence." Two years later, in the wake of the senseless shooting death of Bailey Zaveda by a repeat gun offender, these words from the McGuinty government sound awfully hollow.

My question is this: When will the McGuinty government stop merely talking about its commitment to the safety of Ontarians and actually demonstrate something?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** In fact, that's exactly what we have been doing and what we continue to do. We prosecute to the fullest extent of the law—a law that we do not write. We cannot dictate how the judges apply the law that exists to the cases. So we take the tough position on gun crimes, and when our front-line experience says, "The law's not tough enough," we move to toughen bail laws and toughen mandatory minimums for gun crimes. That's done. We take the tough positions, both at trial and sentencing, on pretrial custody, and when the law is not tough enough, we say, "The law needs to be changed."

We will always act to protect the public interest. We're tough on gun crimes, have been since my predecessor was the Attorney General, and continue to be.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Once again, we hear these fine words, but some of us have actually had the opportunity to review some of the transcripts, and in fact what we often see is plea bargaining on gun offences and gun crimes.

I want to again quote the former Attorney General, from less than a few years ago, who said that confidence in our justice system "plummets when someone accused of a gun crime is back out on the streets the next day."

The gun violence we witness in Ontario under the McGuinty government's watch, where innocent lives are being lost by people who have already been convicted of a gun offence, destroys people's confidence in the justice system.

So my question is this: When will the McGuinty government stop trying to pass the buck, stop trying to blame someone else and live up to your own words?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** We're all angered by the tragedy, saddened for the families and determined to do whatever we can to prevent tragedies in the future; determined to prosecute to the full extent the law allows;

determined to take what is the next step that will prevent tragedies. That's why we're going to be meeting with the chiefs to discuss what the next steps are. That's why we've got 72 more crowns to target gun crimes: six new anti-gun-smuggling crowns; eight new high-risk-offender crowns; 13 additional OPP weapons unit enforcement officers; 12 new victim services staff to support the victims and the witnesses.

We build on what we've done. We're not satisfied with where we've gone, and we're determined to do whatever it takes to make sure that serious crimes are prosecuted to the extent that they must—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Well, I would say the people of Ontario have heard all this from the McGuinty government before.

Let me quote the Premier from just a couple of years ago: "Should they make the wrong choice—should they choose to become a criminal with a gun—then we will work as hard as we can, together with our police, our prosecutors and our courts, to arrest them, to prosecute them and to jail them for a long time."

Let me tell you, I've looked at some of the transcripts. Your crown attorneys are not only doing plea bargains on the offence, but they're doing deals on the sentencing. That is the reality of what is happening under the McGuinty government.

Once again, the McGuinty government says something to the public—says it over and over again—but does something altogether different. When is the McGuinty government finally going to move on to the "do" rather than just the "promise" and the "say"?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I would say that some of those comments are unfortunate in light of the fact that he actually was an Attorney General and should know.

We take gun crimes very seriously—all serious crime. We have taken the steps, but we're not stopping there. We're working with the chiefs to find out what we do next to prevent these tragedies from happening—an answer that we all want and are determined to get. Where our front-line experience says the law needs to be changed, we're going to push to change it, no matter who's in power anywhere. We won't rest until we are confident that we have dealt with issues which will prevent tragedies from happening in the future.

### MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** My question is for the Acting Premier. About a week and a half ago, the McGuinty Liberals found the money to give to Abitibi-Bowater of Thunder Bay \$1.16 million. At the same time, Abitibi was reducing work hours at its Thunder Bay sawmill and laying off some of those workers. This has now been followed with a shutdown of that operation, and an additional 150 logging workers are now out of work, not to mention that people at both the pulp mill and the paper mill at AbitibiBowater in Thunder Bay are taking downtime.



We saw how the McGuinty government had a lot of money for General Motors as General Motors was laying off thousands of workers. How could you do the same thing in Thunder Bay without getting job guarantees for the workers there? How could you hand out the money and not get job guarantees for the workers?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** To the Minister of Natural Resources.

1050

**Hon. Donna H. Cansfield:** I would like to thank the member for his question. Obviously, all of us are really disappointed that this in fact has occurred. Having said that, our responsibility is to work with AbitibiBowater, wherever possible, to ensure that there's some viability to their situation, not just in the short term but in the medium and long term as well.

We have been working very closely with them, as you know, and the member will know that we have supported their cogeneration plant in Fort Frances–Rainy River. Hopefully, that will be up and going in the next couple of weeks. We put a significant amount of money into it, along with AbitibiBowater themselves, investing in Ontario. When we gave them the \$1.6 million for the kraft pulp mill, they themselves put in an additional \$10 million. There's no question that there are market conditions that are difficult, but having said that, our responsibility again is to work with—

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

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** What is obvious is that the McGuinty government continues to hand out money without getting any job guarantees. And the story continues elsewhere. Sterling Trucks in St. Thomas is closing its truck plant early, throwing another 2,000 workers out of work, and the McGuinty government has no plan; it sits there. The auto parts sector says that tens of thousands of workers may lose their jobs in the next few months because they can't get short-term loan financing, and the McGuinty government sits there and says it's not going to provide short-term loan financing.

My question again—we are losing jobs by the tens of thousands. When are we going to see a jobs plan? When are we going to see some job guarantees? When is the McGuinty government going to do something useful on this front before we lose tens of thousands more jobs?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister.

**Hon. Donna H. Cansfield:** Since that question is not directed to natural resources, may I refer to the Minister of Economic Trade and Development, please.

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** I just say to the member that he's described a set of facts that are inaccurate. He may not know, but he should know, that obviously all the economic ministers in this government are speaking every day, and several times a day, to the very businesses and the very manufacturing leaders—in the case of manufacturing that you mentioned—and the various industry leaders to see ways in which we can use our existing programs, which I'll happily talk about in the supplementary. I'm talking about billion-dollar, multi-hundred-

million-dollar programs there to assist businesses and workers and ensure that they're being used in a way to help those businesses and help this economy during this troubling time. We are, I assure the member—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I'm not mistaken about the facts at all. It is part of the public record that tens of thousands have been laid off in the forestry sector in northern Ontario, tens of thousands have been laid off in the auto sector in southern Ontario, and the McGuinty government trots out the same old line. Well, everything you've talked about is not going to help the auto parts sector with their short-term financing.

The other part of your line, that your so-called Second Career program is a wonderful solution, is also not working. In fact that program is so ill-conceived that it forces laid-off workers to pound the pavement to get rejection letter after rejection letter from employers who say, "We don't have a job for you," before the McGuinty government will do anything to help them.

When are we going to see a meaningful job strategy from the McGuinty government? Only after we lose tens of thousands more jobs in this province? Is that what it's going to take?

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** In fact, the McGuinty government has had in place a job strategy to grow our economy, to build on our strengths, and to create new clusters for years—for years. The automobile strategy brought, in fact, thousands of new jobs to Ontario. The Next Generation of Jobs Fund has brought, and will bring, thousands of jobs to the province of Ontario. It is investments in productivity with other companies, leveraging new businesses and growth of businesses to create new jobs; it is \$90 million already spent by the advanced manufacturing fund to, again, leverage and grow businesses that otherwise wouldn't have that money. That's why Buzz Hargrove said that Premier Dalton McGuinty's government has been active and supportive, recognizing the importance to the whole provincial economy—

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

## VIOLENT CRIME

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** Back to the Attorney General again, and dealing with the actions of his crown on a sentencing matter two years ago—not something that's before the courts today—and that's the sentencing of Kyle Weese, the accused killer of Bailey Zaveda.

Mr. Weese was granted an almost-two-year break in terms of pretrial custody credits. If that hadn't been awarded to Mr. Weese, he would still be in prison and in all likelihood Bailey would still be alive.

I asked you a specific question, nothing to do with matters before the court, trying to match the actions of your crown with the words that we've heard from you over the past number of days.

I ask you again: Did your crown oppose the pretrial custody credits awarded to Mr. Weese?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I know the member knows that I can't, and won't, speak to it. I don't have that luxury, because what he wants to ask me about is a matter that we expect may well end up before the courts. So I won't endanger the public safety, which it is our duty and responsibility to uphold.

We have spoken long about the end of the automatic two-for-one remission credit, an automatic credit that is firmly embedded in the law, which is why all of the provincial and territorial ministers have unanimously called upon the federal government to change it; we have for years. The resolutions will continue. We apply the law as it exists. Where it's not tough enough, we seek to change it. That's what we're doing.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** I suggest that people have to really question the credibility of this minister. He can't, or won't, explain whether or not his crown opposed custody credits for Mr. Weese two years ago in a sentencing. He won't answer questions about whether he issued a policy directive to his crowns with respect to opposing pretrial custody credits.

These are not matters before the courts, respectfully. If this minister can't answer very basic questions, it suggests he's trying to hide something from the public, he's not fulfilling his responsibilities to victims of crime and to the public at large, who are very concerned about public safety.

Why will you not answer those basic questions? And if you can't, or won't, you should step down.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I say to everybody who wants the answers to prevent these tragedies from happening in the future that I would like to speak to some of the facts that I've been asked about. It would be wonderful to do that, but that would endanger your safety, and I won't do that. That would endanger the prosecution and the investigation, and I won't do that. But be clear on our determination to do whatever it takes to make sure these tragedies do not happen in the future.

We are going to work with the police and our crowns to do what we can. That action has started immediately and will continue, and we will prosecute those responsible to the full extent of the law.

## MUNICIPAL FINANCES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** This is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Municipalities are only beginning to see the impact of the economic downturn on their budgets. Increasing unemployment and harder times are driving up the costs of provincially mandated programs. For example, higher costs for social assistance in Waterloo region are taking hundreds of thousands of dollars away from other priorities.

Why won't the minister assure municipalities tomorrow, Friday, in his report, that his government will commit absolutely to take back full responsibility for Ontario Works at the very least by the fall of 2011?

**Hon. Jim Watson:** I know that the honourable member is anxious and is probably having difficulty sleeping at night in anticipation of the provincial fiscal and service delivery review. But, as I indicated yesterday, we have an agreement with our partners—we respect our partners—that tomorrow we will release the document together.

This is a partnership that Premier McGuinty is proud of, that started in 2003 when, in fact, we started turning the page on the downloading of the Harris government and brought in initiatives such as the gas tax, which has brought hundreds of millions of dollars to the municipal sector; uploading the Ontario drug plan; uploading the Ontario disability support program; uploading costs of land ambulance; as well as public health. So it's a track record we're very proud of, and we will build on that when the report is released tomorrow.

1100

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, I've certainly been having trouble sleeping myself, as well as most of the CFOs and the treasurers of municipalities across the province, because of the nightmares we're having in terms of what this economic downturn has been doing to municipal budgets.

Waterloo Regional Councillor Tom Galloway told the Waterloo Record that high social service costs from recent job losses "may result in councillors considering drastic measures, such as cutting programs and freezing hiring."

Provincially mandated social services cost municipalities over \$3 billion. The economic downturn will force these costs even higher, and the minister knows it. These costs simply should not be on the property tax base.

The fall economic statement failed, and we all know it did. It failed municipalities by signalling even less transfer payment dollars. Will tomorrow's announcement make municipalities true partners by providing immediate and significant down—

**Hon. Jim Watson:** The fact of the matter is, since the McGuinty government had the honour of forming government in 2003, we went from \$1.1 billion in operating dollars, net dollars, to \$2.8 billion in 2011.

The fact of the matter remains that the municipal sector is very pleased with the work that we have done. That will come to fruition when the entire panel, which has been working diligently with the Minister of Finance and I over the last two years, appears at the press conference and releases the document, which we're particularly proud of.

We've said from the very beginning, the report has to be affordable, it has to be a consensus report and it has to move the markers forward. I'm very confident that when the report is released tomorrow, it meets those objectives, and we look forward to partnering and working with the municipal sector, not downloading and not taking cheap shots at them, like the NDP do every time we bring forward a measure.

## MUNICIPAL FINANCES

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** My question is also for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. As a former mayor, I understand the importance of a strong relationship between Queen's Park and municipalities. As a mayor, I witnessed the deterioration of that relationship during the Harris-Eves years. The problems were passed down to municipal governments and the dollars stayed at the provincial level. The Tories tried, unsuccessfully, to balance budgets on the backs of municipalities.

The city of Pickering and Durham region, as a result of these downloaded programs, had great difficulty during the Tory years and were forced to pass these costs on directly in the form of increased municipal taxes. Can this minister stand up and tell us how Durham is better off now than it was five years ago?

**Hon. Jim Watson:** I'm delighted, because we are so well-represented on the government side by the dynamic Durham duo of Joe Dickson and Wayne Arthurs, standing up for the people of Durham after years of neglect by the Conservatives and the New Democrats.

We've uploaded 50% of land ambulance; 75% of public health; 100% of the Ontario drug plan.

Let me quote Roger Anderson, the regional chair: "What they announced this morning is far better than I anticipated," because we delivered, literally, \$53 million in infrastructure funding to support projects and priorities of the people of Durham.

I'm very proud to have people like Wayne Arthurs and Joe Dickson, both with great municipal backgrounds, standing up for their communities and delivering for the people of Durham region.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I want to thank the minister for his response and for acknowledging my colleague from Ajax-Pickering. This funding is, no doubt, helping Durham with its infrastructure needs. It's more help than I ever received from a provincial government when I ended my time as the mayor.

This government is not the only player in this Legislature that talks about funding for municipalities. We hear from my colleagues on the other side of the House all the time. The opposition parties like to talk about improving municipalities, and they like to question this government's motives and priorities. So, Minister, what's the difference between our government and what the opposition parties offer?

**Hon. Jim Watson:** The difference is really quite stark. When you look at the track record of the two opposition parties and the damage they did to the municipal relationship, it's really quite remarkable. You look at the downloading of public health, transit, roads, Ontario Works, land ambulance, and many other different services.

The fact of the matter is that our government has taken a completely different approach. We respect the municipal partnership that we've developed with the city of Toronto and AMO through the MOU process. The other

fact is that we have worked collaboratively with the municipal sector to come forward with a landmark report that I'm particularly proud of that will be released tomorrow.

The fact is that when you look back on the track record of those two parties, every single time we brought forward an initiative to help the municipal sector, whether it's infrastructure funding or uploading services, they have voted against it. Shame on the NDP and the Conservatives for turning their backs on the municipal—

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

## FUNDRAISING

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, I'm hoping you can explain to this House why you're hosting a \$350-per-ticket fundraiser with the Minister of Labour for the Liberal Party on November 18 at the Ontario Sheet Metal Workers Training Centre in Toronto.

For those who don't know, in June 2007, this particular union training centre received almost \$270,000 through a program run by the minister's ministry. Also in June 2007, the unions' Oakville training centre received over \$615,000 from the very same ministry program.

Minister, is this now the "in" place to hold Liberal fundraisers: in swanky union halls built with money doled out by the taxpayer through your ministry? Isn't this a disgraceful conflict of interest?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister of—  
*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Sorry. It was to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

**Hon. John Milloy:** I apologize, Speaker. I thought you were consulting the table.

I am very happy to answer the honourable member's question. I think members on all sides of the House are involved with fundraising for their parties and they follow the laws that are put forward by Elections Canada and by the Integrity Commissioner. What I am not pleased with, however, is the insinuation that the money that was given to union training centres under a program, the STIP program, was not done in a transparent way.

The program was introduced by my predecessor. There was a request for proposals and there was a fair and transparent process put in place. All approvals under this program were delegated to the deputy minister, who had the final say. It was done under a transparent program. To suggest otherwise is wrong, and I invite him to say it outside the House. That kind of insinuation is beneath him.

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

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Minister, I'm not accusing you of anything. I'm just pointing out some facts and asking about your better judgment. This is equivalent to holding a partisan political fundraiser in the cafeteria of Toronto General Hospital. It's the same thing. This training centre is a certified training delivery agent for your ministry,

which means it qualifies for and receives government funding. And while Mr. Bentley, the Attorney General, held your portfolio, his riding association received \$1,000 from this union, and his 2007 campaign got over \$1,100.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I would just remind the member of standing order 23(i) regarding imputing motive.

I'm going to go to a new question.

### POVERTY

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Thousands of Ontarians are born with developmental disabilities. These Ontarians struggle to live with dignity and to participate as best they can in their communities, but they do so always from a position of poverty because they receive an inadequate disability benefit of less than \$1,000 per month—that's the maximum. If they succeed in the difficult challenge of finding a paying job to supplement their meagre income, the government chooses to claw back half of their earnings.

My question to the minister: How much money is the government making on the backs of these struggling community members born with a developmental disability?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think the question that the member opposite is asking is actually appropriate for the Minister of Community and Social Services, but let me talk about supports for people with disabilities. I think you are talking about adults, not children, but you can correct me in the supplementary if I've misheard the question.

1110

People with disabilities have enormous abilities, and too often we focus on the disability and not often enough on the ability. That's why we've changed the rules so that people with disabilities, people collecting the Ontario disability support program, actually not only keep more of what they earn, but they also get \$100 a month, any month they have earnings, to help them with the costs of work—transportation, clothing etc. We are absolutely committed to allowing and encouraging people with disabilities to actually use their enormous abilities.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I listened intently to the minister and she never denied that half of the money that a person on disability earns is clawed back by her government.

The minister said on Monday how impressed she was with the enormous strength and potential of people living in poverty. She said, "All they want is the opportunity to put that potential to work." On that point, she was absolutely right: People in poverty, including people with developmental disabilities, want the opportunity to work and to be fairly recognized and compensated for that work.

So what kind of a policy is it that the minister has adopted that takes away half of what these people earn,

just when they might finally pull themselves out of poverty? Why is this government continuing with the clawback on ODSP earnings of our most vulnerable citizens?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Again, this question is really appropriate for the Minister of Community and Social Services, but I will do my best to answer today.

As I said in the initial question, we are absolutely committed to giving people with disabilities the opportunity to increase their income through employment. We're working with employers to improve the opportunities for people with disabilities. There are some great champions, employers who understand that hiring people with disabilities is a good business decision. It's not just a good thing to do from a moral standpoint, but it's a good business decision. So getting more people with disabilities working and putting their abilities to work is a focus of our government work, and it is something in our poverty reduction strategy that we will be addressing.

### SCHOOL FACILITIES

**Mr. Mike Colle:** To the Minister of Education: The worldwide economic meltdown is impacting all Ontarians and impacting all areas of government. As the Minister of Finance maintained last week, just like families and businesses across Ontario, we are looking for ways to curb our expenses and defer non-urgent costs.

My constituents in Eglinton–Lawrence know that publicly funded education remains a key priority for our government. However, some of my constituents are concerned that deferring maintenance for schools may negatively impact on our students and their future success. Minister, is it not better to defer investments in other areas rather than in maintenance?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I certainly agree with the member for Eglinton–Lawrence that governments across the world are taking a hard look at their expenditures, and our government's no different.

For the Ministry of Education, what that's meant is that we have had to revise our plans, and we've done that in a way to minimize the impact on students and classroom learning. So we've reduced the school renewal grant line for the 2008-09 school year, but boards will retain 80% of that grant line. What that means is that they'll be able to continue to fund urgent school capital projects, but we're asking them to make those a priority ahead of some of the minor and less urgent projects. So it means that a non-urgent window repair might have to wait, but a new roof or boiler would be able to go ahead.

It's true that some people have claimed that we should have done something else, that we should have increased primary class size, for example. We disagree. That suggestion would have meant widespread disruption across the province in all our elementary—

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

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Certainly, I agree: We shouldn't be increasing class sizes to where there were 35 students in

my schools. As you know, Minister, I have some of the finest schools in Canada: John Wanless, Allenby, Blessed Sacrament.

What I really want to know from you is, is there a list of various investments that we are making, despite the paring back of these maintenance projects? Are there ongoing investments we are making in our schools to ensure that our children are in the best facilities possible? Could you give us a list of some of these investments we're making, certainly in the Toronto schools, but also schools all across Ontario?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** When we came into office in 2003, one of the things we did very quickly was begin to invest in capital renewal, because there had been neglect for years. There was a huge backlog, and we knew that our school buildings needed to be upgraded. In fact, one of the reasons that we're able to defer some of the non-urgent repairs at this point is because there has been such a substantial investment. We increased student renewal by 31% since we came into office, and our Good Places to Learn grant, a \$4-billion strategy, has funded almost 11,000 school repairs, renovations and new construction projects.

We've also allocated funding to replace 147 schools that are in the poorest shape. For example, the Toronto District School Board has had \$371 million in Good Places to Learn investment funding—1,635 construction projects. The Toronto Catholic board has had \$74.5 million in—

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

#### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** A question to the Minister of Finance: Minister, your economic statement of last week contained no new initiatives to stimulate job creation or to help Ontario families and seniors struggling to make ends meet in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario. In response to similar economic challenges, BC's Premier Campbell brought forward a 10-point plan to stimulate their economy and to assist families. Saskatchewan did much of the same and we expect a similar plan in Quebec on Tuesday.

All we got from Dalton McGuinty was the same old high-tax, high-spending, no-jobs policy that is causing Ontario to fall further and further behind and back into deficit. Minister, we've now seen your made-in-Ontario deficit; where is your made-in-Ontario jobs plan?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** On March 23 of this year, I laid out a budget that had a five-point plan. In that plan, we budgeted \$3.9 billion in infrastructure. In addition, we provided an additional \$1.1 billion, creating 100,000 jobs, and that member and his party voted against it. We committed \$1.5 billion for retraining to help workers who have lost their jobs fill some of the 100,000 jobs in Ontario that are unfilled due to the fact that the skill sets didn't match, and that member and his party voted against it. We have hired nurses and teachers. We have

invested in health care and education in record ways, because those jobs are important. That member and his party voted against it.

This government has laid out a plan. The plan is working in the context of a global—

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The only thing that seems to be working with your so-called plan is that some 200,000-plus well-paying manufacturing jobs have now fled our province. Ontario is now last or next to last in economic growth and job creation.

Minister, another major omission in your economic statement are the medium-term economic outlooks that typically show if we expect surpluses or deficits for future years. That page is simply missing altogether from your 2008 economic statement. When I open my 2007 statement, it's right there on page 81; 2004, 2005 and 2006 all contain this vital table. Clearly, this is your attempt to hide your projected massive deficit for the next fiscal year.

The TD report is predicting that Dalton McGuinty will run a \$4-billion to \$5-billion deficit next year. Minister, is TD correct?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The member opposite would certainly know a lot about hiding deficits. When we came to office, his party had left a deficit of \$5.5 billion, having presented a balanced budget.

As I said in the fall statement, we are faced with dramatic times. We are responding with the best information available to us. Somebody yesterday said, "Long-term damage ... can result from misguided attempts to balance the books during an historic global downturn." Jim Flaherty said that. You are out of touch with your own federal cousins, and I would recommend—you had supported him against Mr. Tory in the leadership, I know. I would suggest that you have a long chat with Mr. Flaherty about the challenges that governments are having. I've been doing that. I'll be meeting with him—

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

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#### SEWAGE SLUDGE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** My question is for the Deputy Premier: Why is this government continuing to allow the use of sewage sludge on Ontario farmlands, despite the fact that it has no information on the health effects of such a practice?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** To the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** This is a very important issue, indeed. What is under way right now, actually, is that our government, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the Ministry of the Environment have worked very closely to review the practice of spreading biosolids on farmland. This is a practice that has been in place in the province of Ontario for 30 years. We are committed to a science-based approach to dealing

with this. As a result of our work, we have posted on the Environmental Bill of Rights registry draft regulations that will regulate the spreading of this product in the province of Ontario. We are absolutely committed to ensuring the health, safety and well-being of people in our communities. That is why we are now, in our process, out consulting the public on the draft regulations that are—

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

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** How can this government say that it's protecting the health of the people of Ontario when we don't know the health effects of sewage sludge on the health of Ontarians? Each and every day across Ontario, sewage sludge is spread on our farmland, yet there is no systematic monitoring of the impact on our health. It's not in the mandate of the health unit or anybody to look at the health effects.

The minister shouldn't just take my word for it. Farmers, doctors, environmentalists, health care activists—they're all raising the alarm bells. Here's what Grant Robertson from the National Farmers Union, Ontario division, has to say: "We know that there are many toxic residues present in sewage sludge and until we can remove these toxic residues, the National Farmers Union believes the spreading of sewage sludge should be prohibited."

My question is, would the minister commit today to a moratorium on the use of sewage sludge on farmland, or—

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

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I think that we are taking a very balanced approach; we are taking a science-based approach. We have been consulting with our partners right across Ontario.

But I think that it's important to correct some of what has been presented by the honourable member. OMAFRA has participated, conducted and funded a number of environmental studies with respect to this issue, as well as the Ministry of the Environment, and it will be with that body of evidence that we have put forward draft regulations. We are inviting the public to review those draft regulations and offer us their comments on those as well. I would also like to identify that local health units in Ontario have investigated complaints about adverse health effects from land application, and they have—

*Interruption.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I just remind the guests in the gallery that you're welcome to watch the proceedings, but not participate in the proceedings.

Minister.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** This is a very serious issue, and that is why we have taken, in my view, a very responsible, comprehensive and inclusive way to deal with this. We look forward to the input that we will receive as a result of the past posting—

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

#### CHILD PROTECTION

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten:** My question is for Minister of Children and Youth Services. October is Child Abuse Prevention Month, and during this month of October, attention is brought to bear that by working collectively each and every day, we can prevent child abuse.

Preventing child abuse is the goal of my private member's bill to make reporting of child pornography mandatory. From the work that I've done in this area, I know from those involved in child protection that it has a huge emotional impact. It's rewarding when a tragedy is prevented, but just as often, it's incredibly heartbreaking.

Can the minister please tell this Legislature what she's doing to recognize the crucial contributions made by those involved in child protection, and what actions she's taking to support their work?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** First, let me thank the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore for her tireless work in protecting children from abuse, including raising awareness of child abuse in the form of online child pornography.

October is Child Abuse Prevention Month and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the workers who work in this field. It's a very demanding field and they do an extraordinarily fine job.

Yesterday, I joined the four children's aid societies in Toronto here in the Legislature to recognize Child Abuse Prevention Month and to honour the extraordinary contributions made by Dr. Jim Wilkes, winner of this year's Stand Up for Kids Award. Dr. Wilkes is a child psychologist. His work includes advocacy for children's rights, counselling and mentorship. His work has helped thousands of children across this province overcome the trauma of abuse and neglect.

Child protection is currently undergoing—

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

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten:** I too would like to echo the minister's thanks to our child protection workers. There's an organization in my community called The Gatehouse, with which I've worked for more than 10 years. They continue to work with youth who are survivors of child abuse to heal and to better their lives.

Because those individuals haven't had the same opportunity as other kids early in life, research shows that youth formerly in the care of children's aid societies are up to three times more likely to be unemployed and up to three times more likely to drop out of high school, and that's simply unacceptable.

What is our government doing to better support these kids and give them a better chance at a successful future?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Giving crown wards the opportunity to be the very best they can be is a goal not only for my ministry, but of the whole government. We have been working together to improve opportunities for kids in care. I'd like to talk about a couple of those.

This past spring, we announced the extension of the Ontario child benefit, the equivalent amount to kids in care. This funding will help them participate in learning and recreational programs to support their healthy development. The Ministries of Training, Colleges and Universities, Education, and Children and Youth Services have been working together to develop crown ward education championship teams that bring together government, CASs, school boards, colleges and universities, and community members to help crown wards complete high school and pursue post-secondary education.

And our government has announced Ontario access grants for crown wards and crown ward post-secondary fee application reimbursement—

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

#### DISASTER RELIEF

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. The provinces of Prince Edward Island, Manitoba, Alberta, BC and Saskatchewan have all partnered with the federal government to provide direct disaster relief funding to farmers through the AgriRecovery program. Why isn't the same program available to farmers in Ontario?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** We are committed to implementing a disaster relief program for farmers in Ontario. We do want to ensure, though, that when we sign a deal it's good for our farmers and the people of Ontario. We want to be sure that the people of Ontario are not going to pay proportionately more than might be paid in other provinces. This is a very important deal for us. The honourable member would know, from other programs we've signed with the federal government, when we sign them, we have them for a number of years. So we do want to make sure that going forward we have the very best, most effective, most fair and equitable program that we can.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Minister, as I pointed out in the first part of my question, there are at least five provinces that have signed. In the Parry Sound–Muskoka area, small producers are struggling. This summer saw record rainfall in the Magnetawan region. As a result, many smaller cattle and livestock operations through east Parry Sound district don't have enough feed for their livestock. One farmer is looking at spending some \$24,000 for feed, and that's money he just doesn't have. The federal government has partnered with other provinces and has been providing assistance through the disaster relief program, AgriRecovery, that is part of the new suite of business risk management programs, yet farmers in my region can't get a straight answer about this program from OMAFRA staff. I have inquired with your office and have not had an answer as well.

Why aren't you providing this help to small farmers that could be provided through the AgriRecovery program?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I think it's important to clarify the difference between a disaster and some of the challenges that are faced by producers in agriculture on a yearly basis. They are subject to two climates: the economic climate and the natural climate. To address some of the challenges they may experience with the natural climate year over year, we have production insurance. Production insurance does provide that safety net for producers should they have an impact on the crops they have and what the yields are from one year to the next. This is, again, a federal-provincial cost-shared program.

I would suggest—and I certainly do try to be religious about returning calls from my colleagues on all sides of the House. I will look to ensure that the honourable member gets a reply, gets this—

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

#### LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Earlier this week, I asked you the question in regard to the use of ONR staff and equipment crossing the picket line at the Xstrata metallurgical site in Timmins.

You answered, "I can assure you that the determination was made very clearly to me that that was indeed a one-time occurrence ... and it will not be happening again."

Can you tell me why you're allowing crown equipment, Ontario Northland trains, specifically locomotives, to be utilized on the Xstrata property by Xstrata staff?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Of course, the member knows full well, and it's important to say this, that indeed the ONTC is an arm's-length agency of the government of Ontario and, as such, it makes its own day-to-day business decisions. I'm in no position to direct the ONTC, and the member knows that well.

Having said that, they did acknowledge that indeed they did on one occasion basically provide services to the Kidd Creek operation while the strike was going on. Those concerns were expressed to them, that were brought up as a result of your question, I say to the member, and indeed they indicated that that would be a one-time occurrence. Again, I am certainly in no position, and I know the member understands that, to direct the ONTC, but certainly it has been made clear that indeed that was a one-time occurrence.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to file a notice of dissatisfaction on that answer.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I trust the member will file the proper paperwork with the table.

The time for question period has ended. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1132 to 1300.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** It's my pleasure to welcome Ms. Camelia Ionescu and Sir Karim Hakimi to the House.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** In the east gallery, with us today to support a private member's bill that will be introduced a little later on, is Frances Wdowczyk, executive director of the Student Life Education Company, and Mr. Stephen Wdowczyk, director of National Students Against Impaired and Distracted Driving Day. They are here representing Billi Jo Cox, director of BACCHUS Canada, and Shelley Timms, president of the Ontario Community Council on Impaired Driving. We welcome them here this afternoon for the introduction of the bill.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'll take this opportunity, on behalf of the member from Welland and on behalf of page Faye Campbell, to welcome her mother, Kim Meade, and her aunt Minerva Prudy today in the galleries. Welcome to Queen's Park.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome in the west members' gallery Shernette Wolffe, Clerk of the House of Bermuda, and her husband, Gary, to Queen's Park today. Welcome.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Last week, people across Ontario watched the Minister of Finance read the economic statement, hoping that the McGuinty government would admit that they have a problem and their plan isn't working.

Farmers were watching, hoping that this government would finally take action to help them by reducing unnecessary red tape and by supporting our struggling young, new farmers. Over and over in this chamber I've told the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs that they gave the money to the wrong people and that their program missed the new and young farmers, who need support the most.

Right now, those struggling farmers are still contributing to the economy. They are employing people, buying feed and producing great Ontario-grown food. But if the government doesn't take action and lets those farmers lose the farm, not only will they join the many unemployed people in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario, but the economy will suffer.

This morning I received an e-mail from one of those farmers. He is losing his farm on December 31. Across Ontario, people are losing their jobs, factories are closing and farmers are losing their farms.

Instead of announcing changes to help farmers and businesses, the McGuinty government used the economic statement to tell us that they are staying the course. They don't seem to realize that you should only stick to your plan if the plan is working, and the McGuinty government plan is clearly not working.

This is not the time for budget reannouncements. It's a time for real action to help Ontarians get back to work and make this province the strongest in the country once again.

### COMMUNITY SAFETY

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I'm rising in the House to remind all members that this afternoon we will be debating my private member's bill, Bill 106, An Act to provide for safer communities and neighbourhoods.

This bill is a result of a shared vision, a vision we all share in this House: to create safe, healthy and strong communities in our respective cities and neighbourhoods.

The purpose of the act is simple: to ensure that we rehabilitate properties that are used for illegal activities, to make sure that those properties are used for their intended use, for people to live in or conduct business.

I am very proud to say that this bill has received widespread support across the province from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the city of Ottawa, the city of Hamilton, the county of Peterborough, the city of Kawartha Lakes and the city of Kingston; in addition, the Federation of Urban Neighbourhoods of Ontario, the Ontario Real Estate Association, Crime Prevention Ottawa, Ottawa Neighbourhood Watch executive committee, Concerned Citizens for Safer Neighbourhoods, Friends and Tenants of Ottawa Community Housing and many others.

I urge all members to please participate in the debate later this afternoon. I sincerely hope that you will support Bill 106 because it is our collective responsibility to ensure that we continue to live in safer, stronger and healthier neighbourhoods and communities.

### GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** I rise today to address a very turbulent issue. These days, the Canadian dollar and the TSX are a lot like the weather: It's hot, then it's cold, and then, just as soon as the sun comes out, you get dumped on.

Certainly, this unpredictable climate has many Ontarians worried. They worry about their jobs, they worry about their investments, they worry about their retirement funds, and they worry about the future of their children. But Ontarians are bright and resourceful. They are hunkering down and taking the necessary steps to avoid catastrophe. They are tightening spending, sacrificing luxuries and planning ahead.

This Liberal government, on the other hand, is not so ready for the harsh winter. The storm clouds are swirling overhead, but they don't seem to notice. They stick to their five-point plan despite its failed record; they continue to spend on often inefficient programs and positions, now to the point of deficit; they make decisions based on publicity and short-term political gain instead of offering a long-term vision; and they treat themselves to lavish parties—read Windsor casino—with taxpayers'



money, while hospital projects—read Oakville hospital and Milton hospital—stall.

What kind of example is this? When the winds of change are blowing and people look to the government for leadership and security, looking at the McGuinty government, all they see is an economic plan that is frozen in fear and iced up by years of ineptitude.

#### CHLOE BROWN

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** It is with great pleasure that I rise today to speak about the accomplishments of a young lady from the riding of Mississauga South. Chloe Brown competed at the Unión Americana de Natación in the Synchronized Swimming Championship in Calgary this August, and brought home the gold. Teams from Canada, the US, South America and the Caribbean competed in a variety of swimming events. The participants at the Calgary competition were 12 to 18 years of age. Chloe was one of the 10 girls on Canada's team, which was led by head coach Chantal Vallières and assistant coaches Vanessa Bray and Laurel Alexander.

The girls came from all over Canada to compete and managed to defeat the US and Mexico to take the gold. This was an especially important victory for our girls: It was the first time the event was held in Canada, and they worked hard for it. Chloe and her team trained relentlessly leading up to the games in August. They even did two weeks of additional training in Quebec before heading to Calgary.

After her win, Chloe came back home to Mississauga for some well-deserved rest, although it didn't take her long to get back into the pool. For all her hard work and in recognition of her incredible achievements, Chloe was also awarded the Synchro Swim Ontario Athlete of the Year Award. Congratulations, Chloe.

#### ROAD SAFETY

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Over the past number of months, I have brought a number of road safety issues to the attention of the Minister of Transportation, along with recommendations for legislative and regulatory amendments. As we near the end of the legislative session, I appeal to the minister to include the following proposals in the omnibus bill that we anticipate the minister will table shortly:

(1) To mandate zero tolerance for blood alcohol content of any amount in drivers below the age of 21, as advocated by the Mulcahy family and supported by thousands of Ontarians through petitions to this House;

(2) To implement a system of instant vehicle insurance status verification in the province to effectively address, once and for all, the serious issue of uninsured drivers, insurance fraud and the implications to innocent victims;

(3) To allow motorcycles access to high-occupancy vehicle lanes. In this respect, this will ensure safety of motorcycle riders;

(4) To make it illegal for children under the age of 12 to ride as passengers on motorcycles, thereby reducing the risk of serious injury or death; and

(5) To amend legislation to require that pedestrians and crossing guards have fully cleared the entire roadway before vehicles are allowed to proceed. This is a change that will save lives and prevent injury to children, as well as to crossing guards and pedestrians.

I look forward to working with the Minister of Transportation, and we anticipate that in the interest of public safety and road safety, these measures will be included in the next legislation he tables.

#### SEWAGE SLUDGE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Across the province, sewage sludge is being used as a fertilizer on Ontario farms. Sludge is the solid waste left over at the end of the sewage treatment process after water is removed from human, commercial, hospital and industrial waste. But there are simply too many unanswered questions about the human health effects of sludge to allow this practice to continue.

We don't know the health impact, so why take the risk and use sewer sludge on our food crops?

#### 1310

That's why this morning I was joined by environmentalists, farmers and activists who all say it's time to place an immediate moratorium on using sewage sludge as fertilizer on farm fields: Maureen Reilly from Sludge-Watch, an environmental group; Grant Robertson, the Ontario coordinator of the National Farmers Union; and Wendy Deavitt, a Warkworth resident who has experienced first-hand the negative impact of using sewage sludge as a farm fertilizer. They are here in the gallery with us today.

They all agree that for the sake of being cautious about our health and taking the lessons of past public health crises seriously, we must re-evaluate the use of sewage sludge. Ontarians should have confidence that everything they eat is safe. It is hard to see why the McGuinty Liberals would allow this practice to continue.

#### KARIM HAKIMI

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** I rise here today to recognize the extraordinary achievements of Sir Karim Hakimi, founder of Hakim Optical. In recognition of his contribution to the community, the city of Toronto has recently changed the name of a section of Lebovic Avenue in Scarborough to Hakimi Avenue.

Mr. Hakimi is an entrepreneur and philanthropist of Iranian heritage. While a young man, he moved to Europe and later immigrated to Canada. In Toronto, Mr. Hakimi was able to open his first optical lab in 1967 on Elm Street, ultimately building a chain of 140 showrooms, 100 small laboratories and six major factories across Canada.

Mr. Hakimi is a supporter of countless charitable activities. For example, he has donated hundreds of thousands of pairs of eyeglasses, in co-operation with the Rotary Club and Lions International, to those in need around the world. He has also led the Ride for Sight motorcycle charity parade.

In recognition of his generous and humanitarian efforts, Mr. Hakimi was inducted as a knight of the Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem, Knights of Malta, in June 2005 at Queen's Park.

Sir Karim Hakimi is a shining example of the opportunity for success that awaits new Canadians and a role model for people of all cultural backgrounds.

#### MUNRO HONEY AND MEADERY

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** On October 18 I joined local dignitaries and residents of Brooke-Alvinston, as well as former employees from afar, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Bryans family business, Munro Honey and Meadery.

In 1958, Howard and Mavis Bryans purchased the company, which was then known as Munro Apiaries. In order to take advantage of its established reputation, it was decided that they would continue to produce honey under the Munro name. Thirty years later their sons, John and Davis, and their wives, Christine and Mary, took over the business, and now Davis's son and daughter-in-law are the third generation of Bryans to be involved in the business.

In 1999, Munro Honey and Meadery became the first and only meadery in the province of Ontario. I joined Minister Leona Dombrowsky in 2007 as we proudly presented Munro Honey with the Premier's Award for Agri-Food Innovation and Excellence. The Bryans added to their trophy case when they were awarded gold, silver and bronze medals at the 2008 International Mead Festival in Boulder, Colorado, for their traditional-style meads.

Munro Honey and Meadery is a terrific example of a successful Ontario family business founded and flourishing in rural Ontario. I invite everyone to travel to Brooke-Alvinston to attend Munro's Christmas open house on November 22 and take the opportunity to try the award-winning traditional meads and innovative fruit-blended meads.

#### KAWARTHA ETHANOL

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Kawartha Ethanol Inc. is a locally owned company that is in the final stages of constructing a corn-to-ethanol production facility which will initially produce 80 million litres of fuel-grade ethanol. Corn will be purchased directly from farmers and fuel will be marketed through the largest independent petroleum company in Canada. Kawartha Ethanol will be a leader in innovation in Canada's ethanol industry. When completed, the plant will use its thin stillage and an anaerobic digester to produce internal electricity to service the

plant's needs. Surplus electricity will be fed into the grid. By-products from our Quaker Oats factory have been secured to mix with distiller grain to make a unique product more palatable and economical for the dairy industry.

On Friday, October 17, our government committed \$4.9 million in funding to Kawartha Ethanol Inc. I want to congratulate all those who are involved in this unique project. The positive effects it will have on this community and the province as a whole are tremendous and it will be felt for many generations.

### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

#### STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and move its adoption.

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

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):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

*Report adopted.*

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

#### STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I beg leave to present the first report of 2008 from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move the adoption of its recommendations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Mr. Prue presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations. Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Very briefly, I would like to thank and commend the members of the committee. They have worked very hard since the Parliament got back to business. We've met on numerous occasions on Wednesdays and will continue to do so. I thank them all for the support they have given to me, to the committee and to the staff who work there as well.

I would move adjournment of the debate.

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

*Debate adjourned.*

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### RED TAPE REDUCTION POLICY ACT, 2008 LOI DE 2008 SUR LA POLITIQUE DE RÉDUCTION DES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES

Mr. Norm Miller moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 121, An Act to require consideration of a red tape reduction policy as a precondition for enacting bills and making regulations and to require a review of Acts and regulations from the viewpoint of the policy / Projet de loi 121, Loi exigeant de tenir compte d'une politique de réduction des formalités administratives avant d'édicter des projets de loi ou de prendre des règlements et exigeant l'examen des lois et des règlements à la lumière de cette politique.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

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

**Mr. Norm Miller:** As the small-business critic, I hear from many businesses, not just in the riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka but all across the province. They tell me they're suffocating under the weight of regulations and red tape in this province. A recent study by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business says that two out of three businesses say that provincial red tape and regulations have increased in the past three years. Provinces like British Columbia that have taken action have seen an improvement in economic activity, particularly in the small-business area. That's why I've introduced this bill: to take some action.

1320

### STUDENTS AGAINST IMPAIRED AND DISTRACTED DRIVING DAY, 2008

#### LOI DE 2008 SUR LE JOUR DES ÉTUDIANTS CONTRE LA CONDUITE INATTENTIVE ET L'IVRESSE AU VOLANT

Mr. Levac moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 122, An Act to proclaim Students Against Impaired and Distracted Driving Day / Projet de loi 122, Loi visant à proclamer le Jour des étudiants contre la conduite inattentive et l'ivresse au volant.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

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

**Mr. Dave Levac:** This bill, if passed, will proclaim the third Tuesday in October in each year as Students

Against Impaired and Distracted Driving Day. This day of commemoration will help support and promote the work done by student organizations that raise awareness, challenge unhealthy attitudes and educate other students, parents and communities of the dangers and consequences of impaired and distracted driving through peer-to-peer education programs and awareness initiatives that promote behavioural changes to improve safety on our roads.

## PETITIONS

### LOGGING ROUTE

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a petition regarding logging through the village of Restoule. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Nipissing forest management plan proposes to use Hawthorne Drive in Restoule, which features a single-lane bridge and narrow and steep sections; and

“Whereas area residents have grave concerns about community safety, traffic speed, truck noise and general wear and tear of Hawthorne Drive and the bridge in the village of Restoule; and

“Whereas the proposed route travels past the Restoule Canadian Legion and two churches; and

“Whereas alternative routes are possible via Odorizzi Road and Block 09-056;

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

“That the government of Ontario put the safety and concerns of the people of Restoule ahead of logging interests and ensure an alternate route is selected for the Nipissing forest management plan.”

I support this petition.

### HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“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 agree with this petition, I’m pleased to sign my name to it and pass it to page Cole.

#### FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

**Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the federal government gives more support for economic development, health care and infrastructure to other parts of Canada, and unemployed workers in Ontario get less employment insurance support than in other parts of Canada;

“Whereas the federal system of taxes and equalization extracts over \$20 billion from the people of Ontario every year above and beyond what Ottawa invests in Ontario;

“Whereas laid-off workers in Ontario get \$4,630 less in employment insurance than they would get if they lived in another part of Canada;

“Whereas federal health care money is supposed to be divided equally among all Canadians, but right now Ontario residents are shortchanged by \$773 million per year;

“Whereas the federal government provides economic development support for people living in the north, Atlantic Canada, Quebec and the west, but provides no economic development support for southern Ontario;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand that the federal government stop gouging the people of Ontario and treat them fairly.”

I agree with this petition and sign it, and will give it to page Kevin.

#### INNISFIL EARLY YEARS CENTRE

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“The Innisfil, Ontario, early years centre offers an essential service to the Innisfil and south Barrie preschoolers, their parents and caregivers;

“It is a vital resource centre that meets the needs of this growing community;

“Additionally, we fear that the Barrie early years centre will be unable to accommodate the increased traffic due to the addition of the Innisfil families to their centre;”

We urge the government to reconsider the decision to close our greatly used and much-needed Innisfil, Ontario, early years centre satellite.

As I am in agreement, I have affixed my signature and give this to page Willem.

#### DRINKING AND DRIVING

**Mr. Frank Klees:** “Petition to the Parliament of Ontario:

“Whereas Tyler Mulcahy and his friends lost their lives in a tragic accident that could have been avoided; and

“Whereas young people must learn zero tolerance for drinking and driving to protect themselves from enduring tragedy that will severely impact them, their families and their friends; and

“Whereas, toward this end, young people need to acquire safe and responsible driving habits from as early an age as possible; and

“Whereas improved provincial driving laws can effectively contribute to the process of enhanced driver training and responsible habits among youth in this respect;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to call on the Ontario Ministry of Transportation to enact laws to revoke the licence of drivers 21 years of age and younger with alcohol in their bloodstream, and to also revoke their licence for speeding, for a period of from three months to one year, based upon the determined amount of alcohol or the level of speed involved.”

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

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** “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 unit at the Ajax-Pickering hospital; and

“Whereas there remains further concern by residents for future maternity/pediatric closings ... even with the Ontario Ministry of Health’s largest-ever expansion of the Ajax-Pickering hospital; 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” accommodating and “combining all of our hospitals in Durham region under one Durham region administration.”

I affix my signature to this and pass it to Shaukat.

## EMERGENCY DISPATCH SERVICES

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a petition to do with 911 services in the Muskoka and Parry Sound area. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is considering relocating emergency ambulance and fire dispatch services currently provided by Muskoka Ambulance Communications Service to the city of Barrie; and

“Whereas up to 40% of all calls received are from cellphones from people unfamiliar with the area; and

“Whereas Parry Sound–Muskoka residents have grave concerns about the effect on emergency response times if dispatch services are provided by dispatchers who are not familiar with the area; and

“Whereas 16 Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care-funded jobs, held by qualified communication officers from local communities, may be lost as a result of the relocation of dispatch services to the city of Barrie,

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

“That the government of Ontario put the safety, health and economic concerns of the people of Parry Sound–Muskoka ahead of government efficiency interests and ensure that emergency dispatch services continue to be provided locally by Muskoka Ambulance Communications Service.”

I support this petition.

## HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Milton District Hospital was designed to serve a population of 30,000 and the town of Milton is now home to more than 69,000 people,” more than double, “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

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“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 Milton District Hospital.”

I agree with this petition, I’m signing my signature, and I’m passing it to page Emily.

## HOSPICES

**Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas hospices on church or hospital property do not pay taxes;

“Whereas hospices are not-for-profit organizations providing emotional, spiritual and bereavement support and respite care to terminally ill individuals and their family members;

“Whereas a residential hospice (usually an eight-to-10 bed home-like facility) provides around-the-clock care to terminally ill individuals and support to their families;

“Whereas hospice services are provided free of charge;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to allow hospices across the province to be exempt from municipal taxes.”

I sign my signature and give it to page Shaukat.

## BEER RETAILING AND DISTRIBUTION

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the current system, practice and arrangement of retailing and distributing beer in the province of Ontario—and more specifically, the ‘near monopoly’ of The Beer Store—severely restricts the accessibility, convenience and choice for retail consumers of beer in Ontario; and

“Whereas The Beer Store ‘near monopoly’ is controlled by ‘for-profit, foreign-owned companies’ and these companies are not accountable to the people of Ontario, and these companies do not act in the best interests of the people of Ontario;

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

“That legislation be introduced that will permit the retailing and distribution of beer through alternative and additional grocery and supermarket retail channels that will fairly compete with The Beer Store, thereby allowing an accessible, convenient, safe, well-regulated and environmentally responsible retailing environment for beer to become established in the province of Ontario.”

I agree with this petition. I’d like to sign it and pass it to page Kevin.

## SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I have a petition that I’d like to read into the record, delivered to me by Susan Popper, containing some 100-plus signatures.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

#### ASSISTANCE TO THE DISABLED

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should address immediately the crisis facing physically disabled Ontarians who are waiting four to 10 years for attendant services by adding attendant services to the provincial wait times strategy and by instituting individually based funding for all physically disabled persons requiring attendant care.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Mr. Arnott moves private members' resolution number 55. Pursuant to standing order 97, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** For some of us in this House, it's easy to become fixated on the hot issues of the day, as defined by the news media: what we see in the paper or what we hear on the news. Some of us occasionally need to be reminded, however, of the need to go back to basics and do what we must do as members of provincial Parliament: listen to our constituents, whether at the hardware store, the coffee shop, after church, perhaps, and of course in our constituency offices, for our first obligation and our most fundamental responsibility is to respond to their concerns and work to improve their quality of life. That is precisely what I would hope to accomplish in moving this resolution today.

Debbie Black is one of my constituents from the Fergus area. She came to my riding office in August to express a concern that for far too long has been off the radar. I'm delighted that Debbie is here with us today, along with her parents, Gord and Glenna Black.

Eleven years ago, Debbie experienced a tragic accident that changed her life. As an incomplete quadriplegic, Debbie is confined to a wheelchair and requires the assistance of attendant service workers in order to carry out many everyday tasks. Assistance with grooming, bathing, going to the washroom and preparing for work are just a few of the essential services they provide to many Ontarians in Debbie's position. Debbie and her wonderful parents, Gord and Glenna Black, are grateful for the attendant services she receives through the

Ontario March of Dimes. However, they pay out of their pocket for additional services to supplement the generosity of the March of Dimes. Of course, the extent and frequency of these services will depend on the individual needs of each client. In all cases, however, those receiving attendant services must be in charge and capable of giving direction as needed. Attendant service workers act essentially as the arms and legs of their clients. In Debbie Black's case, she has a supportive and loving family, and presently they have the means to obtain the additional services she needs over and above what March of Dimes provides. But like any family in this situation, the Blacks have to make financial sacrifices to make this happen.

When Debbie's father, Gord, left my office after that meeting in August in my riding office, he specifically asked me to do what I could to call attention to this problem, and that's what motivated me to bring forward this resolution. I brought forward this resolution to speak up for Debbie Black, but also for the many other Ontarians even less fortunate than she is. I was shocked and appalled to learn that some in her situation are waiting four to 10 long years for the services they need, according to the Ontario Community Support Association.

I'm told that one man living in southwestern Ontario today, for example, is quadriplegic because of a devastating spinal cord injury. While he would have preferred to live at home for three years, and he would have been able to do so if he had adequate attendant services, he remains stuck in a hospital. We know that this care in a hospital setting comes at a cost of approximately \$1,200 a day. He can't go home because he remains on a waiting list for the self-managed attendant service care that he needs. It's estimated that the services he needs to live with dignity in this own home would cost just \$200 a day, a saving to the taxpayer of \$1,000 per day. Surely this fact demands the attention of the Minister of Health, whose ministry funds attendant services in Ontario.

With the \$1.3 million spent caring for this man in the hospital for the last three years, the government could have provided attendant services to over 12 other disabled Ontarians. In addition, it could have made available a hospital bed to help cope with the overwhelming demand for hospital services. There are many other real-life situations that demand our attention.

Through the Ontario Community Support Association, we are told about a 29-year-old man with multiple sclerosis. For the last three years he has lived in a chronic care facility because his community has no age-appropriate housing for those with physical disabilities. Instead of putting his energy and abilities to productive use, this 29-year-old man is sitting in a nursing home. He has few opportunities to interact with other people his own age, something that all of us take for granted. Who amongst us would want this for ourselves, our friends or our families?

We often hear about the stubbornly long waiting lists for many medical services, but I've never heard of waiting lists ranging from four to 10 years, as is the case

with the attendant services. It should be unacceptable to all of us here. According to Susan Thorning, the CEO of the Ontario Community Support Association, waiting lists are so long that some Ontarians have actually passed away before receiving the services they need. Surely there's a better way, and this House must find it.

The Ontario Community Support Association has examined the issue in great depth and detail. In their report entitled *Unleashing Attendant Services: Enhancing People's Potential, Reducing Wait Times in Acute and Long-Term Health Care*, consultant Cheryl Gorman and the association have provided four recommendations that I have tried to capture with this resolution that I'm moving today.

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Their first recommendation is that the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, along with the local health integration networks, or LHINs, needs to host a special attendant services forum with consumers, providers and relevant provincial associations included. This forum would examine the constraints of the current system and suggest new, more successful and cost-effective ways to meet the needs of disabled Ontarians.

In order to address the unacceptable wait times for attendant services, the Ontario Community Support Association's second recommendation is to add attendant service wait times as a priority within the provincial wait times strategy. It would have the Ontario Health Quality Council report annually on the progress that's being made. Of course, this is a key aspect of the resolution that we're debating today.

Third, Ms. Gorman and the association recommend that the ministry institute individually-based funding for all persons requiring attendant services. This would ensure a secure level of ongoing services to maintain independence and make the services portable, allowing them to follow the client if the client moves. It would secure base stabilization funding for service providers to ensure the ongoing infrastructure and capacity to provide the services needed. Again, this is part of my resolution.

I should note that individually-based funding is not a new concept in Ontario. In fact, developmental services through the Ministry of Community and Social Services are already funded in this way. As compared to most of the funding in the current funding model for attendant services, which provides lump sums to various service agencies regardless of the number of people who actually need the services, individually-based funding just makes sense because it empowers the client.

Their fourth recommendation is for an immediate infusion of additional funding for existing services and clients. Not only are we failing to keep pace with the growing need; we are also failing to keep pace with inflation over the years, for in recent years, attendant service providers have seen their actual spending power decrease by 23%. Today, I'm told that attendant service workers earn between \$14 and \$18 an hour for what is often sensitive and part-time work.

At a time of surging demand for services and limited human resources, this funding challenge is becoming un-

manageable, but, as I mentioned, reallocating our funding to attendant services should lead to a net savings for the taxpayer. In its October 21 editorial endorsement of my resolution, the *Guelph Mercury* called it "a cost-effective, humane solution."

It makes sense to allow people to move out of expensive hospital and long-term-care facilities into less expensive and more appropriate homes that suit their needs and aspirations. In many cases, this would mean entering supportive housing environments under an arrangement that is flexible, efficient and cost-effective. But this is just one possibility that we must explore, and I would hope we could do that through an attendant services forum, which the Ontario Community Support Association has called upon us to convene.

I know that the association would also want me to inform the House of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This convention declares that persons with disabilities must have access to a range of in-home, residential and other community support services, including personal assistance necessary to support living and inclusion in the community and to prevent isolation or segregation from the community. The House of Commons in Ottawa unanimously ratified this convention in April, earlier this year. But I ask: Have we in Ontario done our part? Have we done our best to achieve its spirit, its clarion call for action?

Today there are just under 2,000 Ontarians living in supportive housing. They are already receiving some attendant services, but many require additional care. The funding dedicated to supportive housing is reaching existing clients, but it is not opening new spaces for new clients, and that's a serious problem.

For the people who need them, attendant services are not optional; they are absolutely necessary. They are absolutely necessary for physically disabled Ontarians to lead fulfilling lives. In spite of their disabilities, they have so much to contribute. We need their talents. We need their participation in our economy, our communities and our society.

In addition, the services are absolutely necessary so that clients' families can spend more of their own time as they choose. That is why this is a priority for me. It's a priority that Ontarians must address, even in the face of a financial crisis and even as we face so many other challenges.

I believe that we can deliver individually based attendant services according to individual need. I believe we can do it right across the province, and we can make this funding portable so that families are free to live in the communities they choose.

As I hope I've demonstrated this afternoon, we can do this efficiently and affordably, according to service models that have already been proven effective. There are hundreds of our fellow citizens who deserve better. Debbie Black and her family deserve better. Our great province can do better, it must do better and it will do better.

I look forward to the participation of other members of this House as we continue to debate this matter for the

next just under an hour, Mr. Speaker, and I thank you very much for giving me this opportunity.

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

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It will be an honour to speak to this initiative by the member from Wellington–Halton Hills, and I certainly commend him for his concern. This is an ongoing problem in this province and getting worse, and I think he pointed that out quite beautifully.

In my own riding, I have a group we are working with now called the Summit Group, a group of parents dealing with children who have disabilities. Their problem, in a sense, is that they care too much. Their children have graduated from school, and a lot of the supports that were built in to the school system are dropping off. The question is: What do these young people do now?

There are initiatives across the city but none in our particular riding—we're working to change that—and they are having to drive halfway across the city to take part in Variety Village exercises, for example. Certainly there's very little in the way of work ventures, of involvement—again, all needing special help, but all quite possible. These are children who could be productive members of our community.

The other aspect—and this, of course, is the overriding aspect of life with disabilities in this province—is the ODSP system, which I think is quite horrendous, and the fact that on ODSP an individual makes about \$12,000 a year when the poverty line is \$19,000 a year. What this government is in effect saying to those with disabilities is that they are condemned to live below the poverty line.

We in the New Democratic Party have been talking about this, it seems, month in and month out for the duration of the current government, and quite frankly we demanded an increase of at least 31% to those living on ODSP in our last election platform. It is absolutely immoral, unethical and unconscionable that we would condemn those with disabilities who cannot work—that's the definition—to a life of poverty. Imagine trying to live in the city of Toronto on about \$999 a month; there are many in my riding who do so. That includes shelter, food, everything.

The member quite rightly pointed out that housing is one of the major problems for those on disability. To be able to live a productive life with supports, certain housing is needed—supportive housing. Precious few supportive housing initiatives have happened in the last five years—one can even extend that to the last decades.

Right now in the province of Ontario, we have 125,000 families on the waiting list for affordable housing. So, of course, those with disabilities are caught up in that mix. They are caught up needing housing—needing a particular kind of housing—like everyone else.

My husband and I were in Europe, and one of the countries we visited was Sweden—I've spoken about it often, because it's so much better than here in many ways. One of the things they do in Sweden is pay relatives who are capable and able to take training to look after their family members in need. They pay them a

salary. Quite frankly, as the member pointed out, even that salary is far less expensive than institutionalizing that member of the family, and of course, in many cases it is a great deal more humane. Most people who have disabilities would rather stay at home, and most families would rather have their family member stay at home, as long as the supports are in place—that is the critical factor. Anyone who has tried to look after someone with a disability knows it is a full-time job. Anyone who has tried to look after a senior, for that matter, with a disability at home knows it's a full-time job. And it deserves recompense. That, quite frankly, is a position that we in the New Democratic Party take very seriously: that the recompense and the training be in place; that this not just be any caregiver but a caregiver that's trained, that's unionized, that, of course, is covered by all of the same benefits that any other worker is covered by. It's important work; it should be valued and rewarded as such.

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So certainly, what we have now is a completely substandard response for the problem of those with disabilities and the problems of those living with those with disabilities. It's a very callous government that would try to build an economy on the backs of those with disabilities; in other words, trying to save a penny here, a pound there, because someone who's living with disabilities is living below the poverty line. We would hope that our friends across the aisle are not attempting to do that and are open to doing something for those with the plights that the member from Wellington–Halton Hills described so well.

Here's where a bit of a problem lies for us, however, with this particular motion. We in the New Democratic Party don't think that only those with disabilities should be bumped up in the queue, so to speak, in wait time strategy. We think, quite frankly, that all of those on wait lists should not have to be on wait lists for the health services and the attendant services that they need—not only those with disabilities. We think it's unconscionable that people should be waiting for necessary surgeries. We think it's unconscionable that people should be waiting for any necessary health care response. It clearly costs more in the long run. It makes no sense. It may save, again, a few pennies in the short run, but certainly we know that those who do not get timely medical intervention in a number, a host, of different medical problems will only get worse with time, that the situation becomes more dire month to month. So we feel that it's not a question of just those with disabilities—although of course the situation for those with disabilities is particularly grievous, but so is the situation for those with cancer; so is the situation for those with heart disease; so is the situation for those seniors who are languishing in our emergency wards who are trying to get into long-term care.

These are all situations that need address, and so we think that a comprehensive restructure of what we're looking at when we look at health care in this province in terms of wait times needs to happen. There's absolutely



no reason why anybody should be sitting in emergency rooms waiting for six, seven, eight hours, sometimes longer, for the care that they need, whatever their situation. If they are ill, they need to be seen and they need to be seen in a timely fashion. If they need an operation, they need that operation in a timely fashion. This is clearly life and death for many.

Getting back to those with disabilities: Of course, it's a particular instance and it's a particularly, as I've said, grievous instance. The member brought this home very clearly. Again, I know because I've worked with many in our riding who are particular activists around this. They struggle with just the overhead of trying to keep a child who has a disability at home—it's usually a child—or, even better, as they reach the age of maturity, trying to get them into supportive housing where they can have somebody checking up on them. Supportive housing doesn't exist, the recompense for looking after them at home doesn't exist, and they don't want to be in a position where they are forced to put them in an institution—even if they have to wait for that institution, no matter how long the wait list is—just to get the care they need.

So, clearly, there's a wide range of services that we need to institute as quickly as possible for those with disabilities in our midst. It's clear that wait times—period—are a problem in this province, certainly a problem in this province where we have a million Ontarians without a family doctor; there's an issue that needs to be looked at. This is one piece of that great puzzle, if you will, of the lack of response from the McGuinty Liberal government to those with health problems across the board. Certainly for those who suffer from disabilities or who have family members, this is particularly egregious.

I commend the member from Wellington–Halton Hills for bringing this forward. I commend the inspiration behind the bill. Unfortunately, we will not be supporting it because we don't, in the New Democratic Party, believe in a piecemeal approach to health care. As the father of medicare, Tommy Douglas, said, “You're always going to have to fight the battle of medicare every generation,” and we're fighting it again. We're fighting against increasing privatization and increasing cutbacks. We're fighting against any attempt on any government's part, including the McGuinty government, to build an economic response on the backs of those who need our services the most; that is, the poor, the disabled, seniors and the young. We've seen examples in this government of doing all of the above.

Again, commendations for the member for bringing it forward. Unfortunately, we won't be able to, in its present form, support it, but certainly we support the impulse behind it and support those who are struggling with disabilities across this province.

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

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm very pleased to join in the debate today and commend the member from Wellington–Halton Hills for raising this important issue on the floor of the Legislature today.

As I begin my comments, I want to provide this Legislature with a bit of background and context as to where we are in respect to those who get community service support. There are over 800 community service agencies funded by the government providing service to over 650,000 Ontarians. These agencies enable seniors, the frail elderly and persons with physical disabilities and chronic disease to live independently in the community, as we would hope for each of our family members and friends to have that opportunity to do.

The local health integrated networks fund approximately 170 not-for-profit service providers to provide assisted living services in supportive housing across Ontario to over 10,500 clients, more than 80% of whom are frail, elderly or cognitively impaired. I know that those organizations in my community do incredibly wonderful work.

Acquired brain injury services are provided by approximately 30 agencies in Ontario, and we too in Etobicoke–Lakeshore are blessed to have some really wonderful ABI services available to members in our community.

We've increased funding to community support services by about \$203 million since we took office in 2003. The LHINs are working with the local service providers to find the right mix and balance and quantity of services to meet the needs of people residing within their geographic area. They have a number of tools to be able to do that. They have attendant outreach services and assisted living services in supportive housing which provide personal support, homemaking, attendant service and core components of independent life training services.

We also have self-managed direct funding, which is funding for attendant services to allow people with physical disabilities to hire and supervise their own attendant workers. This includes 24-hour assisted-living support services provided to individuals with physical disability, cognitive impairment, the elderly and those living with the effects of HIV and AIDS.

We've also increased and made significant investments in home care and increased investments in home care by \$573 million since 2003-04 and expanded that service to 220,000 more Ontarians since 2003.

We've launched what I believe is a groundbreaking aging-at-home strategy to meet the needs of our aging population. It is a \$1.1-billion strategy over four years to provide supports and services to seniors to allow them to stay in their own homes.

Another interesting innovation is to have the aging-at-home strategy purchase 100 new Dodge Caravans, made in Windsor, to provide transportation for 135,000 seniors and others needing health care services.

So we have come a long way since 2003, but we know that there is still more to do. I was encouraged to learn more about the issues that we are debating in the Legislature today and to speak to today's resolution as a result of the leadership of one of my constituents. I want to pay tribute to his history of hard work and advocacy in the

Legislature today. My constituent, Ian Parker, sent me extensive information with respect to the issue that we are debating today. I want to acknowledge that in the mid-1990s, he was part of a group of leaders who worked as the Attendant Care Action Coalition with the Centre for Independent Living to develop the direct funding program, this innovative program that has enabled hundreds of Ontario citizens with disabilities to live in the community and manage and self-direct their own support and care. It has saved government thousands of dollars, but most importantly, it has made possible the opportunities for employment, education, citizen involvement and quality lives.

**1400**

I want to acknowledge another one of my constituents, Dr. Diane Clapham, who also sent me a note with respect to this resolution today. I want to acknowledge the good work and advocacy being done by the Ontario Community Support Association, which has been working and mobilizing the community and, most importantly, responding to the needs of those in our community who need assistance and support to live independently.

I'm very proud to be part of a government that has worked hard, constantly and consistently and steadily, to increase services for those who need them, to continue to protect our health care system, to improve our system, not because it's a system, but because it speaks to and meets the needs of those of us who turn to that care. In Ontario, we are very proud of the health care services that we have available. We want to nurture and protect them.

I commend the member for Wellington–Halton Hills for bringing forward an important component of the health care provided in our province. We will continue on this side of the House to work very hard to make sure that we continue to move forward in providing that comprehensive health care service to all Ontarians.

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

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** It's a pleasure to rise today to support the member for Wellington–Halton Hills on this important resolution to add attendant services to the provincial wait time strategy.

For many years, experts in health care have told members of all three parties that our health system is too focused on hospital beds. Hospitals provide wonderful acute care for the citizens of this province, but it is the most expensive setting for health care service delivery and, quite frankly, not the best type of care for stable individuals with a disability.

As the Ontario Community Support Association highlighted in their August 13 press conference, people on the attendant services wait list put pressure on the health care system because they remain inappropriately stuck waiting in long-term-care homes, acute care beds, chronic care hospitals and rehabilitation facilities, all at a much higher cost to taxpayers. It's important that members in this House recognize that a failure to support today's resolution to make attendant services a priority by adding

it to the provincial wait time strategy will result in higher costs to the taxpayer.

At the same news conference in August, the Ontario Community Support Association told us that the wait list for attendant services is four to 10 years. For four to 10 years, individuals with disabilities and their families are not getting the services they need. They remain in hospital or long-term-care beds, or their families, many with aging parents, struggle to continue to provide for their daily care needs. So even though we know that it is more cost-effective and more appropriate to have individuals cared for at home and even though we know attendant services allow people with physical disabilities to actively participate in their communities, go to school, get a job and contribute in other ways, we continue to focus our health care dollars in other areas.

This issue is most important across the province, but it also touches specific families in Dufferin–Caledon. This summer, I met with a constituent from Honeywood who receives the Ministry of Health's direct funding for attendant services. I suppose you could call her one of the lucky ones. The program is administered by the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto. She tells me it took four years for her application to be approved, and this year, when she applied for a slight modification of her level of care because her health had changed, she was told that the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto was not even considering 2008 applications; they were still reviewing 2007 applications. Why is that? The Centre for Independent Living has a huge waiting list, and this Liberal government has not increased their funding since they were elected in 2003. So CILT is trying to serve as many Ontarians as it can with too few resources. In fact, my constituent believes that something needs to happen—long-term care or worse—for an individual with direct funding before the next person on the waiting list can receive funding for attendant services. My constituent wanted me to know that she feels this is a wonderful program that allows her to routinely participate in the community and live in her home. For example, I know that she is an active member of the Dufferin county accessibility advisory committee, and the Honeywood community. She came to see me because she wanted to brief me on this issue, and she believes that other people with a physical disability need to have the same opportunity that she has.

In addition to direct funding not being a priority for the Ministry of Health, my constituents are also having issues with funding from community care access centres. The boundary change introduced by the Liberal government has resulted in my constituents being asked to do with less service. Their disability has not changed, but the level of service being provided has.

An Orangeville resident who is a quadriplegic as a result of a car accident had been receiving home care since 1995. Under the former Waterloo–Wellington–Dufferin CCAC, he received morning and night visits, seven days a week, to assist with personal care. Under Central West CCAC, he was discharged from nursing

and occupational therapy. Respite care was eliminated. His case is under review to determine what other services can be cut. The minister responded to us in correspondence by suggesting that he use the CCAC complaint process and to call the long-term-care action line.

Another constituent who happens to suffer from ALS has been told he was receiving too much care from the Waterloo-Wellington-Dufferin CCAC. He's been told his CCAC hours are being cut and a referral has been made to the March of Dimes to make up the care hour difference. That's right. The CCAC is referring people to a non-profit agency and expects them to provide front-line care, rather than our universal health care system. The March of Dimes also has a waiting list. So now the Central West CCAC has agreed to provide attendant care hours, but only until the March of Dimes can implement its services. He also needs respite care hours, but of course there's no support for his wife.

All three of these examples are alarming. I'm sure that members of all three parties have similar experiences from their own ridings. So what are we going to do about it? Now is the time to look at implementing the change that health care experts have been advocating for more than a decade. Now is the time to provide Ontarians with physical disabilities with the services they deserve. These citizens can either be taken care of at home with the right resources for less money or be forced into long-term care, or a hospital setting, which puts added strain on an already beleaguered health system and doesn't allow individuals with disabilities to fully participate in our communities.

I encourage all members to support the resolution of the member from Wellington-Halton Hills. Let's make attendant care services a priority by adding it to the provincial wait time strategy.

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

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Indeed, it is a delight to have the opportunity to get a few words on record this afternoon for the resolution that's been presented by my colleague from Wellington-Halton Hills.

I really want to just talk about a hometown hero for a moment, in the riding of Peterborough, a lady I know very well. Her name is Lois Harte-Maxwell.

Lois Harte-Maxwell is an individual who contracted polio as a child. Fortunately enough, she made a reasonable recovery from that. Unfortunately, now she suffers from post-polio syndrome, but through her adult life, her marriage to Don, her two children, Laurie and Paul, who are good friends of mine, she became such a strong advocate for opportunities for people with disabilities, and certainly for attendant care and building housing in the Peterborough community.

I got to know Lois very well in about 1982. One of her chief concerns at that time was people with disabilities who couldn't get access to Peterborough city hall to actually see the municipal government in action. So she, along with a group of other people, banded together to force the city council in 1982 to put an elevator in

Peterborough city hall to provide access to municipal government.

And then she took it beyond the next step. In 1985 I joined Lois, and she and I were both elected in the same year to the Peterborough city council. During that time, she became a strong advocate. One of the areas that she spent a lot of time at, and was very successful with, was the area of housing. She joined, together with a number of other individuals, to give credit where credit is due, with the provincial and federal governments of the day and developed Kawartha Participation Projects, which is supportive housing in the city of Peterborough, and indeed put in place a plan with the appropriate support services, particularly for those adults who went through the experience that Lois had with polio, and then eventually suffering from post-polio syndrome, which many people experience in their later years. She was able to put together a very wide range in the team of people to make that a very successful project. Currently it's under the directorship of Catherine Blackwell, and I invite members of this House any time, if they happen to visit the riding of Peterborough, and particularly the city of Peterborough, to take the opportunity to visit this housing complex, which is in many ways unique in Ontario and has been able to pick up a number of individuals that, as my friend from Wellington-Halton Hills has certainly articulated very well, would have been on a wait-list for a considerable period of time.

**1410**

Indeed, I also had the opportunity to work with Danielle Belair, the executive director of Community Care Peterborough, and we are one of the lucky recipients of one of the brand new Dodge Grand Caravans built in Windsor, Ontario. That has been a really great success story and has allowed individuals who have limited mobility to gain access to a whole variety of services within our community.

The other thing is, as the member I've certainly tried to press with the local Central East LHIN, under the directorship of Debbie Hammons—she is relatively new—to look at this issue of wait times for people who need attendant care. It is a serious matter and it's appropriate that the member has brought forward this resolution to discuss it today.

We have, I think with any reasonable objective analysis, certainly made some headway in terms of wait times. I'm fortunate enough to have a brand new hospital in Peterborough, and through investments in there, in terms of hip and knee replacement and MRI/CT scans, we've seen a reduction in those wait times. We should take the opportunity through the public policy process to go beyond what is the logical next step, in terms of wait times, in the province of Ontario. No doubt it will take a significant investment of financial resources to reduce those wait times.

I know on the children's side there were significant wait times. We have the provincially famous Five Counties Children's Centre located in Peterborough. There was a significant wait-list there, and we were able

to free up some resources under the directorship of Diane Pick, the executive director of Five Counties Children's Centre, who does a remarkable job, particularly with children with a wide range of disabilities, in the five counties catchment area. To be honest, there is still a wait time there, but we have been able to really put a dent in that wait-list to allow those parents to get their kids in for the services that are really needed.

I also chat with Alan Vallillee, the executive of Kinark Child and family Services in my riding of Peterborough. Again there was a question of extensive wait times, and we've made the investment in resources to start to reduce that. Frankly, the member from Wellington-Halton Hills brings an important issue in front of us today and, looking down the road, to put a strategy in place to reduce those wait times.

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

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I'm pleased to rise in support of the resolution by the member from Wellington-Halton Hills on this very important topic.

To start with, the member from Wellington-Halton Hills's local paper says it best in the headline of their editorial in support of this resolution. It says that it's "A Cost-Effective, Humane Solution." I think it's very important to recognize in this debate that it's a "solution" that needs solving, and everyone in this House and everyone in attendance here would recognize that this is a problem that needs to be dealt with. I don't think of the word "humane" at first blush—maybe that's not quite the way we wanted to express it, but I don't think it's humane to have someone needing attention, and expecting that the wait-list for that attention in our health care system should be between four and 10 years.

It goes without saying that it seems kind of odd that we would even need to have a resolution that says we want this added to a provincial government's wait-time strategy. One would think it would be automatic that a strategy would be in place to reduce that wait time well below four years, as opposed to from four to 10 years. It seems totally unreasonable to do that.

The other part, of course, is that it is so important to provide individually based funding—I think "fiscally prudent" is what the Minister of Finance would say—because that is the most prudent way to deal with this situation. Not only is it the best way for the individual, but it's the best way to provide services too, so that people can purchase services or provide needed services the way people want them delivered. I think self-directed funding is the only way to go at times like this, and there is a case to be made for that.

I just wanted to very quickly point out that before this debate I had the member from Wellington-Halton Hills give me some information. He gave me the brochure from the Ontario Community Support Association. It has a lot of information in it about self-directed funding, but it also has a number of case studies, and I just wanted to point out one in particular for the record:

"In 2004, 'Don' entered hospital with complications arising from his earlier spinal cord injury that resulted in

quadriplegia. He has been ready for discharge since March 2005, yet living in a hospital for over three years because he is on a lengthy wait-list for self-managed attendant service direct funding in his home. The cost per day for Don to be in the hospital is \$1,200, or \$438,000 per year"—almost half a million dollars a year.

"Don is extremely frustrated because he knows he could be in his own home with the right services he needs at a cost of \$200 per day—six hours of service during the day and an attendant available overnight. The hospital bed could have been freed up to reduce the wait lists for surgeries and Don would have been independent in his own home.

"The additional cost to taxpayers to date as a result of Don not being able to access the right service in the right place at the right time has been over \$1.3 million over three years. The additional inappropriate hospital costs could have provided attendant services to 12 people per year."

It seems rather silly that we're here today debating this resolution, and I very much appreciate its coming forward, but we're debating a resolution on whether the government should be moving ahead to provide more attendant care in the home, because it may be costly. This would tell me that there are a lot more people who could provide savings to provide more attendant care for people in the home, and the brochure refers to that. I think that deals with the money part of the resolution, and I support him for bringing it forward.

As the member from Wellington-Halton Hills pointed out, we all receive people coming into our offices to talk about the problem of insufficient attendant care in the home. I too have had those in, and I have a number of people I want to refer to.

Jean McLeod does have attendant care in the home but wants to have self-directed funding. She has had cerebral palsy for quite a number of years, and she believes and knows she could provide more and better care if she could direct it where and when she wants it, as opposed to the way it is presently being provided. Yet, because of the structure, and no great incentive or initiative on behalf of government to change the system so she can have self-directed, she has waited for over two years for approval to get the same funding—less cost—provided to her in her home.

The Chesney family have a very disabled and needy son, Brock, who lives not too far away from the riding of Wellington-Halton Hills. He is now 21, and they can no longer care for him by themselves within their home without some help. Yet, because of the waiting list for funding, they can't get that help. The end result will be that he will have to find a group home, where he doesn't want to be, and there will be nobody there to look after him.

I want to close—I notice my time is gone. I've got a number of letters from people who made presentations on Bill 77, objecting to spending more money on bureaucracy and less on front-line care. One family member wrote: "Staying in a family environment is very impor-

tant to any handicapped child or adult, and I would not want to resort to putting these children in government-run group homes. My whole life revolves around these handicapped children and I also do relief for three medically involved children.” This is a lady who has seven developmentally challenged children living in her home, and that’s the way she feels about keeping them at home and getting the attendant care that this member is talking about. I wholeheartedly support it.

1420

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate? Seeing none, Mr. Arnott, you have up to two minutes for your response.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I want to thank the members who participated in this important debate this afternoon: the member for Parkdale–High Park, Cheri DiNovo; the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Laurel Broten, who is also, I understand, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health; the member for Dufferin–Caledon, Sylvia Jones; the member for Peterborough, Jeff Leal; and the member for Oxford, Ernie Hardeman.

I listened intently to all of their presentations this afternoon and want to respond especially to the member for Parkdale–High Park. I understand and recognize that she has some questions with respect to this motion, but I also know that the NDP health critic, the member for Nickel Belt, France Gélinas, has in the past expressed strong support for the Ontario Community Support Association and its report; in fact, the member for Nickel Belt helped to organize and participate in a press conference in this building back in the month of August. So I am hoping that the NDP will support this motion. Hopefully, I have addressed the issues that they brought forward.

I also want to express my appreciation to my legislative assistant, Stephen Yantzi, who has worked with me as we’ve developed this idea. He has worked very hard to help me prepare and organize my thoughts and assist me in the drafting of the speech that I gave this afternoon.

I especially want to thank Debbie, Gord and Glenna Black, my constituents who came down—it was quite a significant undertaking for them to come here today and I really appreciate that—as well as the other members of the Ontario Community Support Association who have joined us here this afternoon.

I urge all MPPs to take this issue seriously, to support the motion. My hope is that if we get the unanimous support of the House, then we will be in a position to express that support directly to the government, to the Premier and the Minister of Finance and others, as we work toward developing a provincial budget in the upcoming year. We expect the budget to be read in this House in March, and we’ve got some time to continue to bring this issue forward. I certainly hope to be in a position to do that to make a meaningful difference in the lives of the people we’re speaking about today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** I’ll just remind the people in the galleries and the people who are

watching us at home that Mr. Arnott’s ballot item will be voted on in about 100 minutes.

AUDITOR GENERAL  
AMENDMENT ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
SUR LE VÉRIFICATEUR GÉNÉRAL

Mrs. Munro moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 110, An Act to amend the Auditor General Act /  
Projet de loi 110, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le vérificateur  
général.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Pursuant to standing order 98, Mrs. Munro, you have up to 12 minutes for your presentation.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I want to begin by saying that for many years I have spoken out in this House and outside this House about the chronic underfunding of high-growth areas in Ontario. This is by no means a new problem. I do not expect that the funding of social services, health and infrastructure will ever keep up exactly with growth, but what I do expect is that the government should try, that its goals should be to eliminate disparities as quickly as possible, and that gaps in funding should shrink, not grow.

I would like to outline for this House the reasons for this bill. Let me begin by dealing with the challenges that high-growth areas face and why we would like to bring the Auditor General into the discussion.

Growth is both a source of jobs and prosperity but also challenges. So long as our population grows through immigration and natural increase, we will face issues with growth. Shrinking household size also leads to growth as more single people live in their own homes. For residents in York–Simcoe and similar areas, the issue is not just growth, but rapid growth. For decades, Toronto, from the south, and Barrie, from the north, have been pushing into the communities in my riding.

The United Way of York Region has written a thoughtful document about the challenges of the rapid growth of York region. It is called “...if addressed.” Their introduction says, “In an increasingly urban region with all its rich diversity, strategic investments in the pace, face and place of growth will improve quality of life for all York region residents if addressed.”

Growth can be good if government addresses the needs of areas that grow. In the last 30 years, York region has grown from a little over 200,000 population to almost a million people. To give that some kind of context, let me describe it to you in the way that others have, and that is that the growth in York region is equal to a full busload of people arriving daily.

Popular stereotypes often portray York region as a wealthy area with no social problems or needs, yet the 2006 census has indicated, as reported in a regional council report, that one in eight regional residents “face or are at risk of facing economic hardships due to low

income.” This represents an increase of 55% from the 2001 census. About 29% of the residents living in low-income households are children under the age of 18 years. The United Way reports that the 905 region gets \$346 per capita for child care, while other areas get \$707 per capita. Keep in mind that the 905 is the area in Ontario with the most young families: Vaughan, Markham and Richmond Hill rank second, third and fourth in Canada for the highest proportion of married couples with children. For children’s services, areas outside the 905 get \$693, and inside the 905 get \$287, again in an area full of young children.

I have already raised in this House the threatened closure of the Early Years centre in Innisfil. Barrie and Simcoe county suffer from the same underfunding as the 905. Not only is this centre at risk, but it takes in many of its children from Barrie because the centre in Barrie is full to bursting. In fact, this very afternoon during petitions, I read a petition on the issue of the Early Years centre, and just for the sake of argument, I looked at the signatures on this single page; 19 out of 22 signatures came from Barrie. I think that speaks very strongly for the fact that this is indeed a centre that needs that kind of support.

The York Region Children’s Aid Society wrote to the minister in March, saying that the 8.5% of Ontario children who live in York region receive about 2.5% of child welfare funding. So what this means is that, on the other side of Steeles Avenue, 18% of the province’s total children in care receive 21% of the total funding, while in York region, that 8% receive less than 3% of the funding. They have to provide services in an increasing number of languages to a rapidly growing population.

Similar funding problems exist across the spectrum of children’s services, particularly for mental health and developmental disabilities. York region and Simcoe county are just two of the high-growth areas not receiving an equal share of government funding for social services, health care and infrastructure.

The Growing Communities Healthcare Alliance provided me with a lot of information about the problems that high-growth areas face and the statistics to back their concerns. They provided information to me about the local health integration network which covers the majority of people in my riding. This LHIN receives the fifth-lowest funding of all local health integration networks in Ontario. For every dollar the average Ontario resident is funded, residents of the Central LHIN get 77 cents. Community care access centre funding per resident: a dollar for Ontario, 93 cents for my residents. Community mental health funding: a dollar for Ontario, about 80 cents in my riding. Addiction funding is only 20 cents on the dollar. These types of numbers are repeated all across high-growth areas of Ontario.

**1430**

The Growing Communities Healthcare Alliance recommends three key priorities for high-growth areas. The first one: Speed up implementation of hospital growth funding commitment and provide adequate and

ongoing social services growth funding. Second: Quickly implement the health-based allocation model, population-needs-based funding for provincial health care funding and develop population-needs-based funding for social services. Develop a health care and social services plan for Ontario to complement Places to Grow.

Constituents contact me all the time about health delays, difficulties finding a doctor and their dissatisfaction with their level of service. A doctor in my riding has tried several times to set up a family health team in Georgina. He has been rebuffed at every opportunity by the government’s health officials, all of this in an under-serviced area. Even worse, we learned in your economic statement that you will be delaying the establishment of new family health teams in order to save money. There is a fear that this really means cancelling them by the time you introduce a budget next spring.

Your economic statement also cancelled increases in nursing. High-growth areas will suffer from this cut the most as they are the areas in the direst need. Government cuts to school construction in the economic statement will also hit my area. It is high-growth areas that need new schools.

The problems are clear. Unfortunately, this government is unwilling to provide the funding needed for necessary solutions. My suggestion is to include the Auditor General in the discussion. As an impartial officer of the Legislature, the auditor is trusted by everyone. My bill would give him the opportunity to include issues of equitable funding in his annual reports to the House. Subsection 12(2) of the current Auditor General Act outlines those matters the auditor must put in his annual report. My bill would alter the part of the section which describes matters that the auditor should bring to the attention of the assembly if he believes them to be important. If my bill is passed, it would give the power to the auditor to report on equitable funding; it would not require him to do so. I’m willing to trust the auditor’s judgment on these issues.

I urge other members of this House to support my bill, give the auditor the power and then trust him to use his best judgment. Let him tell us if the needs of high-growth areas are being met. Growth is not a bad or a good thing; it is simply a reflection of the change in our society. David Fleischer of the York Region Media Group, speaking of York region but with a quote that applies to many high-growth areas, said in 2007, “Growth may be the single defining characteristic of York region, but what is often lost in the equation is that suburbia is not endless homes and malls; it is people and families.”

I could not agree more. My constituency is in a high-growth area, but its growth is people and families, and they deserve the same, equal treatment as everyone in Ontario. Giving the Auditor General the power to report on the equitable provision of programs and services means that every year an impartial, unimpeachable authority will tell us if the government is spending its money fairly.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you very much. Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** It's my pleasure to rise to discuss this bill. I'm glad I had the opportunity to hear the member speak about the context within which she's brought forward this piece of legislation. It's interesting to me as an MPP who represents a downtown Toronto riding where we have some social infrastructure, and in particular I'll talk about affordable housing. I have had to deal in the past with the simple reality that people who live in the 905 who find themselves for whatever reason—family misfortune, illness, loss of work—unable to afford their rent, or their mortgage, who need shelter and need affordable housing, so often come into the city of Toronto for that housing. When I've gone to Barrie and talked to people there in the shelter and looked at the very limited amount of social infrastructure that's available, I understand the point that Mrs. Munro is making, that in fact there is a deficit in social infrastructure throughout that region.

I think it is incumbent upon the government—set aside the auditor for the moment—any government that is managing growth, to look not only at the hard infrastructure of roads, sewers, water mains and electricity but also to look at the social infrastructure—the health, educational and housing infrastructure—because it is just as vital to the life of a community as all the others.

No question that in the short run, if you don't have roads, you're going to notice it very fast, but over the long run, in terms of stable families and stable social conditions, you have to have the child care centres, you have to have the parent-child centres, you have to have the family health teams, the community health centres and you have to have the affordable housing. They are part of what makes a society work in this 21st century. I think it was useful that we were given the context.

The bill itself: We in the NDP agree with the member that the Legislature needs objective, appropriate and timely information on government spending and it needs it on programs, including whether or not all regions are receiving a fair and balanced allocation of funds. I think it's a very strong argument, in fact, in this province for increased investment in child care, increased investment in health care. It's my hope that all parties facing the budget that's coming, dealing with the budget statement that we're handling right now, will support the investment in social infrastructure that's needed to make sure that families all across Ontario have reasonably equitable access to those elements of social infrastructure.

To fully appreciate the potential role of the Auditor General in assessing regional fairness, you have to look at the role of the Auditor General. The role of the Auditor General is to assess whether the government is doing a good job managing the public purse and examining government spending. I would say that all of us, on every side in this Legislature, have looked at the reports of the Auditor General over time. Because it's my critic portfolio, I noticed the one on management of hazardous waste. His report there was striking, one that I hope at some point would result in further action from the government in power. So I understand why Mrs. Munro

would come forward and say that the Auditor General's assessment of a situation strengthens the hand that she has to play politically when she is fighting for this social infrastructure investment.

**1440**

Each year, the Auditor General tables an annual report which provides legislators with information that allows them to judge how well public resources are being used. Essentially, the Auditor General does the work for this Legislature of watching over the administration of Ontario's finances and helps elected representatives hold the government of the day accountable for the way it administers the resources that this Legislature allocates to it.

Those of us here in the legislative chamber may have a variety of skills and talents, but the skill and the time and the resources to actually go through and see that money is spent appropriately and in line with the legislation that has been passed has got to be done by a specialized branch, and frankly, the Auditor General has been given those resources, that power, that responsibility. The Auditor General is, overall, to report on spending—whether it's done appropriately, whether there's value for money—and he is to report on instances of misuse or mismanagement of public funds, overexpenditures and other irregularities.

I would take it that in this bill that's being brought forward, in some ways he's being asked to take into account a particular aspect of the way money is allocated in this province, and that's to make sure that it's allocated on an equitable basis across every region of this province.

The Auditor General is also charged with assessing whether public resources are well administered, whether government and broader public sector activities are managed with due regard to economy and efficiency, and whether procedures to measure and report on the effectiveness of programs and organizations have been established and are operating satisfactorily—in fact, the value-for-money assessment that an Auditor General is responsible for.

We don't see any great harm in adding a provision explicitly mandating the auditor to examine how equitable, in regional terms, the government spending program is, in his annual report. It's not completely clear to us that his mandate currently prevents making such assessments. So I leave it to the member. She has brought forward a bill making it explicit, giving direction, and assigning a higher political profile to this particular task. But it may already be the case that, legally, this Legislature could be directing the Auditor General without requirement for legislation.

There are other opportunities that may lie in the role of Auditor General in his various other duties. I'm going to go through some of the main duties of the Auditor General so that we can talk about the opportunities that the Auditor General has to comment on the question of regional fairness, regional equity.

An extremely important part of the Auditor General's mandate is the value-for-money component. Value-for-

money audits are assessments of whether or not money was spent with due regard for economy and efficiency and whether appropriate procedures were in place to measure and report on the effectiveness of government programs. Under the Auditor General Act, the office is required to report to the Legislature significant instances where it is observed that the government is not fulfilling its responsibilities in these areas. To fulfill its value-for-money mandate, the office annually conducts audits of selected ministry or agency programs and activities. Major programs and activities are generally audited every five years or so.

It is important to remember that the value-for-money mandate now includes organizations in the broader public sector that receive government grants, and those are hospitals, colleges, universities, school boards and other organizations meeting the definition of grant recipient.

The expanded mandate also allows the auditor to conduct value-for-money audits of crown-controlled corporations, such as the new hydro corporations that began operating in 1999 after the restructuring of Ontario Hydro.

It may be the case that there is already scope for the Auditor General to do regional impact assessments in these value-for-money audits. He may well find that the way that the money is allocated in the province is not giving us maximum value and is not dealing with greatest need. Frankly, if he finds that, then this government would have the responsibility to address that inequity, address the fact that needs are not being taken care of, address the fact that in fast-growing areas in the 905 the social infrastructure that needs to be there is not being put in place with the speed and with the fullness that real social needs require.

My understanding is that under the Auditor General Act, the Auditor General may also be asked to undertake special assignments to perform value-for-money audits as requested by the Legislature, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts or a minister of the crown. Generally, results of a special assignment are compiled in a report and submitted to the party that requested it. It's usually up to the requesting party to decide whether the Auditor General's special report will be made public. Again, there may very well be scope for regional impact assessments in these special assignments. Clearly, if one was looking at the question of shelter for women fleeing domestic violence, one would want to know that all over Ontario, there was equitable assignment—in fact, more importantly, adequate assignment—of resources so that women and children are not left in positions where their life and their health are in peril.

Every year, the Auditor General reports on the results of his examination of government resources and administration. The Auditor General's report is tabled by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in the assembly, usually in the fall, at which time it becomes available to the public. The main body of the annual report consists of matters arising from individual value-for-money audits of ministries and agencies. It includes the audit's significant

findings, observations and recommendations, as well as ministry and agency response to the recommendations. It includes a chapter of follow-up reviews of all the value-for-money audits from the annual report published two years previously.

We, in the NDP, have no problem with specifically mandating the Auditor General to report on regional disparities in his annual report. The only question we would have is whether such specific provisions are needed or whether the current mandate already allows for such assessments. I look forward to hearing commentary from the member as to whether, in fact, that is the case and whether, in fact, the minister responsible for health could now be saying, "I want the Auditor General to be assessing the allocations and telling me whether or not there is an equitable and adequate assessment of resources to these regions."

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

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I want to speak to an unintended consequence of this bill if it's passed by this Legislature. Here's the unintended consequence, and I think it's a consequence that none of us, on mature reflection, really want to see come about: a fettering of the independence of the Auditor General.

Why do I say that? When you read the Auditor General Act through, you will see that the whole thing—the premise of the whole thing—is to set up the Auditor General. Like any other auditor, whether it's an auditor in the private sector or other government sectors, that auditor has to be able to independently step into a set of business books or government books or whatever and have the independence to look into the organization and choose, on his or her own initiative, what they're going to audit. That's what the independence of the auditor means.

If we, as legislators, get into the position, even from the best of motives, of directing what the auditor should do—"Auditor, we want you to go there and look at that. We want you to look at that. We don't want you to look at that; we want you to do this"—then we are undermining the whole premise of having an Auditor General keeping an eye on what's going on in our books.

Somebody earlier in the debate—I think that was the member from Toronto–Danforth—said that he didn't think that this legislation was such that if it went through, it would, in any, way explicitly direct the Auditor General. Even the member from Toronto–Danforth recognizes that any explicit direction of the Auditor General to do thus and thus or not do thus and thus is an attack on the Auditor General's independence.

**1450**

I want to refer to the 2007 report of the Auditor General. This is at page 460 under some comments about the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario:

"Independence: The Auditor General and staff of the office are independent of government and its administration. This independence is an essential safeguard"—an essential safeguard—"that enables the office to fulfill its



auditing and reporting responsibilities objectively and fairly....

“Consequently, the Auditor General maintains an arm’s-length—arm’s-length—“distance from the government and the political parties in the Legislative Assembly and is thus free to fulfill the office’s legislated mandate without political pressure.”

So we have a party, a member of this Legislature, introducing a piece of legislation that says, “Auditor, my bill says that you’re going to do thus and thus”—an attack on the independence of the auditor. The auditor then goes on to say:

“The office reports on its audits in an annual report to the Legislative Assembly.” That’s this body. “In addition, the office may make a special report to the assembly at any time on any matter that in the opinion of the Auditor General should not be deferred until the annual report.”

Again, what does it stress? The auditor can do whatever he or she likes that, in his opinion, is necessary to do to carry out the function.

“It should be noted that our audit activities include examining the actual administration and execution of the government’s policy decisions as carried out by management. However, the office does not comment on the merits of government policy, since the government is held accountable for policy matters by the Legislative Assembly”—that’s this body—“which continually monitors and challenges government policies through questions during legislative sessions and through reviews of legislation and expenditure....”

I think if the member who has introduced this bill wants to explore what’s going on—or, as she says, what’s not going on in her riding, the place to explore it is in this legislative chamber, but do not—do not—interfere with the independence of the Auditor General. Because, in my opinion, if this bill were to see the light of day, to be passed, it’s the thin edge of the wedge attacking the Auditor General’s independence, and the whole idea that we set this up with was to ensure that independence. This is an attack on that independence.

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

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I’m pleased to join the debate today and support my colleague the member from York–Simcoe on her legislation. I commend the member for bringing forward this legislation, because it’s a bill that deals with fairness for all residents of the province of Ontario.

Fairness when allocating funds for health care and social services is an issue that has real impact for families in Dufferin–Caledon and in all high-growth communities across the province. The population in Dufferin–Caledon has exploded over the last 30 years, yet health and social services funding has not increased to match that growth. As a result, social services and health care providers have become increasingly stretched to accommodate these growing numbers. With each passing year, the situation becomes more critical. Dufferin–Caledon and Peel residents are waiting too long to receive important services.

In the last five years, per capita funding in the GTA, 905 and Dufferin county has increased by 1%, and each year the region grows by 100,000 people, roughly the size of the city of Kingston. Each year, the funding gap grows. For hospitals in the Central West LHIN, the per resident funding cap is \$285 below the provincial average. As a result, the gap in annual operating funding for Headwaters Health Care Centre and William Osler Health Care Centre stands at \$164 million below the provincial average. In fact, the Central West LHIN is the lowest-funded LHIN, per resident, in Ontario. This translates into longer waiting lists in emergency rooms, longer waiting lists for mental health, longer waiting lists for CCAC supports and fewer assisted living resources.

Without a commitment to correct this inequity, the funding gap will only increase: By 2009-10 the per resident funding gap will be \$376 below the provincial average, and the annual operating funding gap for the hospitals will be \$222 million below the provincial average.

For social services, the numbers are even worse: a \$708 per capita funding gap; children waiting six to eight months for mental health services; \$50 per capita for developmental services compared to double that outside the GTA.

My local municipal councils are so alarmed with the current situation that they have passed resolutions calling on the government to act.

During the election the Liberals made a commitment to address the funding gap: \$100 million in growth funding for hospitals in our fastest-growing communities. Minister Smitherman has also promised to fix this situation by allocating funding to the province’s 14 LHINs, based on population.

My colleague’s legislation will hold your government accountable for your promises, and ensure the residents of Dufferin–Caledon get their fair share of funding for health and social services. I commend the member for York–Simcoe for bringing forward legislation to ensure fairness for all in health and social services, and I fully support its passage.

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

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I am really pleased to enter into this debate, as I’m sure all members who represent high-growth areas of the province will be following this conversation that we’re having this afternoon. I’d like to particularly commend the member for York–Simcoe, my neighbour, for bringing this to the attention of not only this Legislature but the public.

Certainly, the growth in York region has been simply amazing—incredible growth. I know that when I started as the medical officer of health for York region in 1988, the population was some 450,000. The previous 20 years had seen the population of York region triple. Since then, of course, it has, as the member for York–Simcoe told us, continued in a very dramatic fashion so that now York region has an estimated population of some one million.

We do know that in the early 1990s we were in a recessionary situation and, clearly, growth funding was simply unavailable. However, we do know that during the previous government, the Conservative government, even high-growth areas did see cuts to, in particular, health care funding. As an example, Southlake Regional Health Centre, in the riding of Newmarket–Aurora, had their budget cut by over a million dollars at one point—very unfortunate.

However, we're here to talk about the situation now. I would like to say to the member for Dufferin–Caledon that she has given a good overview of our commitment to growth funding in the future. I am happy to say that at least we are seeing some redressing of this type of imbalance in terms of funding for these very necessary services.

In particular, I was delighted to see the type of funding that Markham Stouffville Hospital recently received, the general surgery wait-times allocation announced a couple of weeks ago, which saw Markham Stouffville Hospital receive \$879,000 for some 760 additional surgeries—progress there.

When it comes to transit infrastructure, other infrastructure projects, we have been investing very successfully in York region. The member for York–Simcoe will recall the \$6.6-million investment in terms of the repairs necessary along Canal Road and in the Holland Marsh to the township of King, a municipality that we both share within our ridings.

We're making progress. There's a lot more to do. Our government and, I'm sure, all members of this House are bringing these issues forward in every way they can.

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

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I'm pleased to support my colleague on this bill. The reason is very clear why the honourable member believes it's important for the Auditor General to become involved and to have the permissive legislation in place that allows the Auditor General to, in fact, provide his opinion with regard to the equitableness, the fairness of the funding that's taking place. This is permissive legislation, contrary to what the member from Willowdale attempted to articulate about dictating to the Auditor General what he should be doing. That is not the case at all. It is simply providing the framework within which the Auditor General may choose to provide that kind of information to the government.

**1500**

It's interesting; Another officer of this Legislature, the Ombudsman, had this to say about his mandate: "My office is open to all—or at least I would like it to be. Unfortunately, at present, thousands of Ontarians who have serious problems with provincially funded services are barred from bringing their concerns to my office. This is because these critical services are deemed outside of our jurisdiction—I'm referring to services that fall within the so-called MUSH sector: municipalities, universities, school boards, hospitals and long-term-care facilities, as well as police and children's aid societies."

What the Ombudsman is calling for is a broader mandate so that he in fact can investigate, that he in fact has the permissive legislation in place to allow him to report to the Legislature on these important matters.

I'm surprised that the member from Oak Ridges–Markham would stand in this place and talk about investing successfully on the part of her government in York region. This is the same York region that is underfunded to the tune of some \$290 million each year, compared to other regions across Ontario, with regard to hospital funding. When compared to 14 other designated health care regions in the province, we are the fourth-lowest funded for home care services, the fourth-lowest funded for mental health services, the lowest-funded for addiction services, the third-lowest funded for long-term-care residential services for our seniors. If the member from Oak Ridges stands in her place and tells this Legislature and, through her speech today, her constituents that she is satisfied with the fairness of funding for health care services and social services, I suggest that she is not doing her job.

For someone who is the former medical officer of health for the region of York to stand and to defend her colleague, who argued a very technical point about the so-called thin edge—the thin edge that we're talking about is the thin edge of finally getting to the point of equitable funding and fairness in funding and allowing an objective third party officer of this Legislature to bring the government to bear, because certainly the government is not listening to members of this Legislature. Not only are they not listening to members of the opposition who represent people in these regions, these high-growth regions, where there is gross underfunding of these important services, they're not listening to their own members. Worse so, their own members, on the government side, are falling in line with the government's position that propagates this kind of inequity and unfairness.

I believe that at this point in time as our constituents in York region and other high growth areas in the province are watching this debate, they will question what their representatives are doing in this place, if not to defend their right to fair and equitable funding when it comes to health care and to social services.

I commend my colleague for having brought this important legislation forward. We want to know that at some point an officer of this Legislature will be able to do what individual MPPs, elected members, cannot do because of the unwillingness of this government to listen to them.

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

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'm delighted to rise and speak on private member's Bill 110. I'd like to talk a little bit about the substance of the bill.

At the moment, the Auditor General already has the authority, if he wishes—or she, as the case may be in the future—to examine the finances of any particular program. Typically, the piece that the public is most aware

of is his annual report, where he looks at individual programs and says, “Is the government getting value for money? Is money being effectively and efficiently spent on this program?” Having been on public accounts for a number of years and having looked at some of these reports, I can think of a number where the Auditor General already has looked at the regional distribution of money in one way or another.

I think of the auditor’s 2003 report, where he was looking at funding for autism programs and noted that there was a huge difference from region to region in how much it cost per child to deliver this service and actually drew out those regional differences. As a result of the work the auditor did—and quite frankly that the public accounts committee did on follow-up—what we saw happening was that regions that had costs that were out of line brought them in line with the provincial average and a lot more children received services because of that. So already there was that sort of regional difference that the auditor wrote about in that report.

Another example played out a bit differently. We were looking at a review of Ministry of Transportation snowplowing contracts. One of the things in snowplowing contracts is performance standards. The performance standards are in fact quite different as you move from region to region, based on genuine regional differences—the weather isn’t the same all over the province, the style of roads isn’t the same, traffic volumes aren’t the same—so there are different performance standards, quite legitimately. The committee looked at those differences and said, “Yes, we get that. The issue is, is each regional contractor being held to the standard they agreed to achieve?”

The other thing is that the Auditor General’s job is to review programs and look at whether they are delivering the government policy, and quite often it is government policy to legitimately have differences. I think of the two York region school boards—we seem to be talking about York region. They actually get fewer dollars per student than, say, school boards in northern Ontario. But that’s because the government recognizes that, given the dispersion of students, it actually costs more to deliver effective education in Ontario’s north. It’s deliberate government policy and good policy.

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

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** It’s a pleasure to stand and support this bill, brought in by our member, who is also in a very rapidly growing area. Milton, the town in which I live and one of three towns I represent, is the fastest-growing town in Canada, let alone Ontario. From 2001, it has grown by approximately 35,000 people, and by 2016 it will have grown to 121,000 people, a 70% increase over 17 years.

Government funding is so often based on census information. As you realize, a census only takes place once every 10 years, so the funding that a rapidly growing community receives—especially the fastest-growing community in Canada—is quite often out of date before

the census information is even released, and it struggles for the next 10 years trying to catch up, being funded at a very low level. We’re currently going through that difficulty with our hospitals in both Oakville—another extremely fast-growing community, as is Burlington. Burlington is going through problems with their hospitals being overcrowded and underbuilt for the population they are now trying to serve. The Milton hospital is particularly unique in that it was designed for a population of 30,000 people; we currently have about 70,000 people in Milton. It probably takes six years or more to build a hospital. By 2015, if Milton continues its growth as it is, that hospital will be serving a population of well over 100,000 people, and it will be servicing it with a hospital that was built and designed to service 30,000 people. That makes for a very unfair situation.

**1510**

So many provincial programs are funded on a census basis. Milton and Oakville are significantly underfunded by those programs. The system that is in place serves Ontario fairly well in 90% of the cases. We’re talking here about 10% of the cases where it is inherently unfair to the people who are affected by that: those people who are in fast-growing areas. It’s doubly hurtful when those people in rapid-growing areas are being forced into that rate of growth by the government of the day at Queen’s Park, who, through their Places to Grow legislation, passed legislation to force certain communities across Ontario to be designated growth areas; Milton, Oakville and Burlington being three of them. So although we’re being underfunded by the provincial government, it was the provincial government itself that forced us into that level of growth.

I appreciate Julia bringing this forward. It’s a well-needed piece of legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate? Seeing none, the honourable member from York–Simcoe, Mrs. Munro, has up to two minutes for her response.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I appreciate the comments made by the members from Toronto–Danforth, Willowdale, Oak Ridges–Markham, Halton, Guelph and Newmarket–Aurora. I’m going to deal with these comments in a general way, because they are the ones that actually deal with the issue, which is the question of equitable funding—and the ones that want to nitpick on the issue of the Auditor General.

I want to begin with the Auditor General. In my comments, I was very clear. I said that my suggestion is to include the Auditor General in the discussion. Further down in my remarks, I said “clause (12)”; that means there were 11 ahead of it. And those 11 outline a general discussion of areas the auditor may use to conduct his work. So this is merely adding to that, as simply one more. That’s why it’s called clause (12). So there is no suggestion that somehow—as the member from Willowdale talked about, unintended consequences. This would give him a list of 12 items instead of 11 to consider. I also was very clear when I said that it would not require

him to do so. In fact, I suggest that people would be willing to trust his judgment on these issues.

The other members who spoke dealt with a very real issue, the motive behind this private member's bill, and that is the continuing lack of equity. When how much you receive boils down to which side of the street you live on, then it's high time that members of this House begin to recognize the importance of fairness. I used the example of which side of Steeles Avenue you live on, which is true, but you can also use other areas and look at that inequity between one side of the street and the other.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** This ballot item will be voted on in 50 minutes.

Orders of the day.

SAFER COMMUNITIES  
AND NEIGHBOURHOODS ACT, 2008  
LOI DE 2008 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ ACCRUE  
DES COLLECTIVITÉS ET DES QUARTIERS

Mr. Naqvi moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 106, An Act to provide for safer communities and neighbourhoods / Projet de loi 106, Loi visant à accroître la sécurité des collectivités et des quartiers.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Pursuant to standing order 98, Mr. Naqvi, you have up to 12 minutes for your presentation.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak on Bill 106, Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act. This bill is a result of a shared vision, a vision that is shared by all our communities, and my community of Ottawa Centre, and that is to create a safer community, a community that is healthy and vibrant for all of us to live in.

The idea for this legislation very much comes from my community. I am merely acting at their behest to ensure that we create the tools necessary to create vibrant and safer communities. I want to take the time to recognize some of those community members who have worked extremely hard over the years to make sure that this idea gets to the day that it is being debated in this Legislature. They have been a true inspiration to me and a motivation in the advocacy that I learned about SCAN, which is short for this particular bill. I want to mention Cheryl Parrott, Stephanie Strudwick, Pam Connolly, Wayne Rodney, Nancy Worsfold and Michael Justinich. These are just a few people who have worked very hard in advocating and championing the cause of this particular legislation.

I also at this moment would like to thank my staff, Jackie Choquette, Tanya Dubar, Jamie Murphy and Stacey Shaw, for their sage advice and hard work over the year I have worked on this legislation.

I want to recognize some friends from ACTO, Advocacy Centre for Tenants of Ontario, who are with us, who have shown some concerns about this legislation. I welcome the opportunity to speak with them again to make

sure that we can meet the mutual aim of creating safer communities and neighbourhoods, something which we all share as a responsibility toward our communities. And I welcome members of my community at home in Ottawa Centre, who may be watching these deliberations today, for giving me the opportunity to be their voice in this Legislature.

Let me talk first of all about SCAN, the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act, and what this legislation stands for. This legislation literally stands for what it says. It is to create a safe community, it is to create a safe neighbourhood. The idea is simple. The idea behind this legislation is to rehabilitate properties in our communities that are being used for illegal activities. It is to ensure that we shut down illegal operations or illegal activities that may be taking place in our neighbourhoods in residential properties or in business properties, so that those properties are used for their intended use—that is, for people either to live or conduct business in. The purpose of these properties is not for someone to use them as a crack house or a booze can or a marijuana grow op, which has a tremendously negative impact on our communities. It jeopardizes our families; it threatens our children.

This legislation, if passed, gives municipalities the additional tools necessary to stop the illegal use of those properties. There is explicitly embedded in this legislation a very strict legal test that must be met for this legislation to apply. This is not some sort of vigilante-type legislation. There is a very clear and distinct legal test which must be met, and there are two conditions that must be met in order for this act to apply. Number one is that a property is being habitually used for a specified illegal activity, and by “habitually,” we mean that it is being used on a regular or recurring basis. We're not talking about a circumstance of just a one-off instance; but that this property on a regular or routine basis is being used for an illegal activity. Those specified illegal activities are listed in the legislation. We're talking about things like use of a property as a crack house, a brothel, a booze can, a marijuana grow op or storage for firearms. That's not the intended purpose of those properties. So that's test number one, that's question number one that has to be met in order for this legislation to apply.

**1520**

The second aspect of the test is that that particular use is having an adverse effect on the community or neighbourhood. What do I mean by “adverse effect”? That it is negatively impacting the safety, the security or health of the neighbourhood, of the community, or the people who live in that neighbourhood or community.

Both of these strict tests—there has to be explicit evidence presented by the complainant in order for this legislation to be applicable. The best way to achieve that is by creating a partnership, of course. This legislation works in its most optimum form if landlords and owners, tenants if tenants are involved, neighbours, community associations and police are working together to meet the objective of the legislation.

This SCAN legislation has been tabled in this House. This is not the first time that this legislation is being implemented. The legislation has been enforced in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, Alberta and in the territory of Yukon. Over the past year I have done extensive consultation, reviewed that other legislation and verified the case law to see how those pieces of legislation have been implemented. What I wanted to do was to create a piece of legislation, a SCAN legislation, that is made in Ontario and meets the realities of Ontario to ensure that it is actually truly effective.

There are three unique features of Bill 106, as tabled in this Legislature, from other provinces' legislation:

(1) In order to have an effective implementation of this legislation, the enforcement of this legislation, if passed, takes place at the local level, in the community. Hence, there is a clause relating to municipal opting. It is up to our municipalities to decide whether they want SCAN to be implemented in their community. It gives them that additional tool they need to ensure that problem properties can be addressed.

(2) In this legislation, Bill 106, there is a whole informal process which has been codified, written down in this legislation, which means that the best way to resolve any problem if the test is met, the one I mentioned earlier, is by consulting, by using the informal process. We don't want to run to the courts right away. We want to make sure that members of the community—the community associations, law enforcement, the owners, the residents—are all involved to find an informal process. We felt it to be necessary that that process be codified in the legislation, in the bill.

(3) It requires, it mandates, that the director of SCAN, the person responsible to implement this legislation, consult the relevant bodies, and there is mandatory language in that regard.

As I see my time ticking away, I want to talk about some of the criticism that has been raised about this legislation. Let me address one point in an absolute manner. This legislation is not about evicting tenants. That is not the purpose of this legislation. It is about protecting the rights of tenants. This legislation is to ensure that that one single mother I met, who was trying to raise her five-year-old daughter, living next to a crack house, has a voice, that she deserves the right to live in a safe community. A property should not be used for a crack house. A property should be used for people to live in. That is what we are trying to achieve through this legislation.

In addition, there are several provisions in this legislation which ensure due process. Only a court of law, the Superior Court of Justice, in our province can decide if an order can be made through this legislation, not the director of SCAN. That individual or that entity is only responsible to carry out the investigation, and they're accountable to the municipalities as to their responsibilities in the legislation.

There are notice requirements in this legislation that notice shall be given to the residents, that they should have a

say if an order is being sought at the Superior Court of Justice, that any undue hardship that may be caused to them should also be heard. And the idea is simple, that we want to make sure that people's rights are protected. Nobody is interested in tabling legislation which might be held to be unconstitutional, and myself being a lawyer, I'm definitely not interested in that prospect. There are provisions as to the rights of residents, if their rights have been impacted somehow, to bring in motions to vary the order.

But let me go back and share with you the experience I have learned from various community members across the province. The problem is when we are dealing with problem properties—not that anybody lives there—a property which is being used for illegal activity. The purpose behind this legislation is to shut down that illegal operation, that illegal activity so that people who need to live in those vulnerable communities, those at-risk communities, have a place to live safely, in a healthy environment, to make sure that their children are growing in a safer community.

Therefore, I ask all the members of this Legislature to please support this legislation. A package has been provided to all of you in terms of the support I have received for this legislation from across the province, and I look forward to your comments and will do my utmost to respond to the concerns you may have.

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

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm very pleased today to rise and speak on Bill 106, the member from Ottawa Centre's initial private member's bill in this House, the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act, 2008.

There are a couple of things I wanted to mention. I usually stand up when we speak in private members' time, because a lot of good legislation that either the government has passed or is passed by private members' bills comes from this time. We've heard some good debate today on a couple of other resolutions and bills, and I give the member credit for bringing something like this forward.

Just this week, we've seen the government introduce the legislation on not using cellphones in cars, and I give full credit to my colleague the member from Durham, John O'Toole, who brought that bill up a number of times. I give him a lot of credit; in fact, I'll say that John O'Toole is responsible for the cellphone bill. There will be lots of issues around that with committees etc., so we'll have to see where that goes. But we've seen it in a number of cases with private members' time.

I also want to put on the record that I am disappointed that we've had to move private members' time to a Thursday afternoon, because a lot of people do leave the Legislature. They're on their way home or going back to their ridings. I would have liked to see it remain on Thursday mornings, because I think there was a lot more interest in it. I hope that people will all revisit this thing at later dates because I think, as we have seen here today, there has been some absolutely great legislation out there or great thoughts and good debate on it.

I haven't had a lot of time to review this bill, but I will say that the member has provided a lot of background information on it, and it's a fairly detailed bill, and he has got support on it.

First of all, I wanted to put on the record the support that he received from the Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario. And I think many of us know Mike Chopowick, who sent this letter, but I wanted to put it on the record because I think Mike has some good points in it. It says:

"On behalf of the Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario, I am writing to request your support for Bill 106, the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act, as introduced by Mr. Yasir Naqvi, MPP, Ottawa Centre.

"The purpose of the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act is to enhance community safety by targeting properties that are used for illegal activities. SCAN legislation is used successfully in other provinces such as Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia, and is being implemented in Newfoundland and Alberta.

"The provisions contained in Bill 106 provide a mechanism to deal with properties that are habitually used for specified illegal activities that negatively impact the health, safety and security of surrounding neighbourhoods. The proposed law offers an innovative way to protect tenants and homeowners from entrenched illegal drug or alcohol activity, prostitution or illegal gun possession conducted in residential properties.

#### 1530

"This bill fosters a partnership between municipalities, neighbours, tenants, police and ratepayer associations to make our neighbourhoods safe. Importantly, this proposed law provides tools that currently are not available under the current legislative framework overseeing residential tenancies in Ontario.

"When criminal activity gains a foothold in a community, be it a household or apartment building, it is the families and other law-abiding residents and tenants who are the innocent victims. Bill 106, the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act, applies techniques successfully implemented in other Canadian provinces to protect their neighbourhoods from crime.

"In summary, as providers of housing for over 250,000 households across Ontario, our members support the efforts of law enforcement agencies, ratepayer groups, tenants and community safety organizations to address ongoing criminal activity through the implementation of SCAN legislation. We ask for your support when this proposed legislation receives second reading on October 29, and we'd be pleased to meet with you to discuss at a further time."

I wanted to put that on the record because I understand they had some good points on that and I thought it was clear as well. He has received a number of supports from some of the media outlets, and although he has received this support, they are saying that the bill should be a government bill. I'll just read a couple of sentences out of the one in August: "Liberal MPP Yasir Naqvi deserves

support in his efforts to make it easier to get violent, drug-dealing, troublemaking tenants evicted from public and private housing.

"The only sour note is that Naqvi is working alone. The Ottawa Centre MPP plans to introduce SCAN (Safer Community and Neighbourhood) legislation as a private member's bill in the Ontario Legislature this fall.

"But to have any real hope of success, it should be a government bill."

I can read these kinds of things forever, but the reality is that the government may—if this bill becomes popular and it does ever get to committee hearings after second reading, then there would be a real opportunity there for the government to adopt some of this. We do have some concerns and questions with it, though.

I do know that he has support from a number of organizations, but there were a couple that I thought were missing, and maybe in the summary or later on, he could add them. The Association of Municipalities of Ontario, AMO, is of course our big one. I'm curious what added costs there may be to the municipalities when you hire a director and his staff, and you implement this legislation. So I'm curious about AMO's position in support of this and what they in fact would do and how they would see the municipalities paying for this and what the cost would be. In these difficult economic times, we have to be cognizant of the costs associated with governing any of our municipalities. This is another burden on the taxpayer and I'd like to know, as we work through it, what kinds of costs we'd actually see here, and if, in fact, there's any thought that the provincial government would be providing any of the support for the municipalities.

Under law enforcement, which is my critic's portfolio as critic for community safety and correctional services, I know that the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards has supported it, the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, the Ottawa Police Services Board and the city of Kawartha Lakes. What I have seen absent in the letters of support—and maybe he can add this later on, or we can see that support a little later on—is the support of the Police Association of Ontario, the Ontario Provincial Police Association and maybe the Canadian Police Association.

We have over 30,000—I think there are 33,000 officers, and I noticed that they're not supporting this at this point. I'm not saying they're against the bill, but I don't see it as an area of support. I'm curious how they feel about this particular bill and I would really look forward to their endorsement and/or their comments on it. They'll be having a lobby day here. I believe it's coming up on November 18. This would be a good question to ask any of the representatives of the Police Association of Ontario: how they feel about Bill 106 and what their comments would be if, in fact, the member from Ottawa Centre gets to move this bill forward into committee hearings, because I think we definitely do need that support.

There are a couple of other questions I wanted to—we had our researchers work with the legislation, and there

were a number of questions that I think we should put on the record for the member and for our caucus as well. These are the kinds of questions we hope to get answered in the future.

First of all, how does the bill compare with legislation approved in other provinces? For example, how many provinces put the director under municipal jurisdiction?

Second, most of the complaints listed under the definition of “specified purpose” are covered by criminal and tort law. The probability of guilt is much lower pursuant to subsection 10(1) than some of the standards for some of the specified purposes.

Third, is this not a matter that should be, and is, dealt with by police? Is this more bureaucracy in the wrong office? We hope we could utilize the staff we have in these areas; we don't want to create another level of bureaucracy. I think our party would be quite opposed to that part of it.

Fourth, if people are not complaining to police, why will they complain to this new director?

Fifth, does this bill apply to private, single dwellings? If so, does subsection 10(4) mean that a community safety order can force a person to leave their home on the probability of guilt set down in subsection 10(1)?

Sixth, taking into account section 18, if a community safety order forces the evacuation of a property, where will those individuals not involved in the specified purposes go?

Seventh, what justifies forcing a non-participating party to leave their home—for example, in a closed apartment building—and then making a motion pursuant to section 15?

Eighth, it is assumed that a peace officer is a member of the provincial police—section 40 provides for their assistance. Will the government be providing adequate support to ensure that the police have the resources to attend to these new duties?

Finally, will municipalities have to pay for the director and his or her office? This is something I brought up earlier.

I think people will support the bill overall at second reading today; I have no problem with that myself. However, I do think that when we go to committee, if the bill is fortunate enough to go to committee—I wish him well if the bill does get to committee—will these kinds of questions be answered?

In summary, I want to say that obviously we support anything to do with law and order and community safety. We support Block Parent programs; we support all the different programs that are out there—Crime Stoppers in Simcoe county, for example, have their 10th anniversary coming up in the next few weeks. These are all positive things for our communities, but at the same time we have to really recognize, particularly in these difficult economic times, what costs will be associated with it and what the impact will be on municipalities—individual municipalities in particular. I wish him well as we move forward with this.

Just summarizing some of the things I mentioned earlier, it's difficult—I want to say again that I'm opposed to private members' hour being held late on Thursday afternoon. I think it was a bad mistake when the government brought that forward. I'd love to see this thing—even if we started at 9 o'clock on Thursday morning and had private members' hour at that time, I think it would be really positive. It would be good for the members and good for the backbenchers who don't have an opportunity to participate in question period. We have seen over many, many years that there are a lot of good thoughts and good ideas that come from the private members' time we have here at Queen's Park, as we saw just this week, when the government introduced a cellphone bill that was directly a result of Mr. O'Toole's efforts.

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

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** We in the New Democratic Party could not be more opposed to Bill 106. I have to grant the member from Ottawa Centre some moxie, though, for introducing the members of Advocacy Centre for Tenants, because they're here to protest Bill 106, as is virtually every tenants' organization across Ontario. But welcome, Yutaka Dirks, Tracy Heffernan, Katherine Haist and Jill Houlihan.

I'm the housing critic who brought forward the bill on housing as a human right, which is in line with the United Nations call on all of us to make housing a human right. Not only does this bill fly in the face of that sentiment; it flies in the face of due process. It may even fly in the face of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

**1540**

The Advocacy Centre for Tenants—Ontario has listed a few problems. They're not alone. So has the Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations, south Etobicoke tenants, Housing Help, North Peel and Dufferin Community Legal Services, Parkdale legal services; just about every legal clinic you can mention is opposed to this. Eastern Region Housing Study Group, Homelessness and Housing Umbrella Group, PDRC, Cambridge Action on Homelessness Group, Waterloo region—I could go on. Virtually every tenants' group is opposed to this.

I heard that this was supposed to be a bill on behalf of tenants' rights. Well, it's very interesting, then, that tenants are opposed to it and that the bodies in favour of it are landowners. It's interesting that this has kind of a one-way thrust to it. That is to say that, if your landlord happens to be running a crack den and you're living in the basement, it doesn't work for you.

In terms of due process, I'll just go over some of these in a little bit better detail. The member from Simcoe North is absolutely right: There's about a million-dollar price tag to this, not to mention bureaucracy, and it would be a price tag associated with municipalities. So I think maybe AMO hasn't read the fine print of this bill, because I don't know who is going to pay for that and the director. But certainly what it does here, and what it's done in Manitoba, is simply to shift the problem, and

what is the problem, really? Partly it's a problem of poverty, partly it's a problem of addiction; i.e., a health problem—from one place to another place. In fact, in the jurisdictions that have enacted SCAN legislation, you will see very clearly that it has not affected the crime rate whatsoever. All it does is move the crack house from one neighbourhood to another, the house of prostitution from one neighbourhood to another.

The bottom line here, members, is that if it's a crack dealer in the house or if it's a house of prostitution, or if it's a marijuana grow op, it's a criminal activity. We don't want to evict them; we want to put them in prison. We want to lock them up. My friends here to the right are supposed to be law-and-order people. I mean, come on, these are criminal activities. You phone the police. If there's criminal activity going on in your house, in your neighbourhood, anywhere, you should be phoning the police and the police will be there. If that's not enough, I think that's a very sad commentary upon the effectiveness and efficiency of our police force. I wouldn't want to make that comment.

I'm going to tell you what we're doing as an initiative in Parkdale—High Park that works really, really well, and we don't have to go into draconian legislation like Bill 106. We have what's called a problem properties task force. It's very successful. It's the local councillors working with the police force. If there's a problem property, and we've had our share in Parkdale, it's identified. They sit down. You can bring in municipal building inspectors; they're usually the first line of defence. You can look at the property. You can bring in the police. You can order raids on properties. You can do all sorts of things while still coming under the umbrella of the law because, really, at its heart what Bill 106 does is question the efficacy of the criminal justice system such as it is, apart from egregiously overriding the rights of tenants.

What would the NDP do to make our community safer? First of all I've given an example of something that works at the local level and it works extremely well. You could talk to landlords or tenants in our riding, and nobody would have a problem with the problem properties task force.

Otherwise, what do you do about the problem of addiction? There's a question. First of all, what you do is you have more beds for rehabilitation, for detox—something that this government hasn't put money in for a long, long time—that's what you do about the problem of addiction.

What do you do about the problem of poverty? First of all you have a living wage, at least \$10.25 an hour, indexed to inflation. The other thing is you have housing, hence my bill making housing a human right. If you had adequate supportive housing for people with mental health and addiction issues, you probably wouldn't have as many problems as you do now. So guaranteed affordable housing is absolutely essential. We need real rent controls. We don't have them in this province. Instead, what we have is unit rent controls. So really what we hear now, and what we're seeing, with gentrification across the province, are landlords who want to get rid of

people who are paying low rent. This gives them a vehicle for doing that. Then what they do is, they slap on a coat of paint, they tart up the foyer, and they jack up the rents. We've seen this over and over again. This gives them the umbrella under which to do it.

This director that is proposed here is really draconian. You are putting one person, a process instead of the criminal justice system, instead of due process. We would absolutely disagree with not only the level of bureaucracy that this creates, the cost to the municipalities, but the fact that this isn't really fair to both tenants and landlords, I would argue, and could be challenged and I think would be challenged or should be challenged under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The other aspect of this, and we've seen it in my own riding, is that you get children and women caught up in this. We have an epidemic of homelessness in this province. Why aren't we looking at that? Why aren't we looking at 5,000 people who are living on the streets of Toronto, at the deaths that happen and will start to happen every winter in this city? Why aren't we looking at more shelter beds for women fleeing domestic violence and more transitional housing for people? Why don't we look at that? Just because somebody has an addiction issue doesn't necessarily mean they are not married and don't have children. So what you're doing is, you are kicking them out and you are kicking their children out too, and their children end up on the streets and in shelters.

We've seen this time and time again. Either addiction is a health issue or it's not. Either what's going on is a criminal issue or it's not. If it's a health issue, let's put money into the health care system. If it's a criminal issue, let's, for God's sake, phone the police. The member said, well, people would not be protected if they phoned the police. Please. Come on. I've made calls on 911 when I've seen a crime in action. People can make calls on 911. You don't have to give your name. The police have the jurisdiction to go in. If there's crack dealing, if there's prostitution, if there's a marijuana grow-op, they have the jurisdictional right, and they exercise it, to go in and arrest people, which is what should happen.

This is a kind of behind-the-scenes, backdoor approach to what should be a criminal justice issue and what really is—I put this forward—an issue of landlords trying to move tenants out and trying to circumvent tenant rights and the Residential Tenancies Act, which, by the way, has a speeded-up eviction process which landlords could use if they wanted anyway.

So absolutely we're opposed to it. Evidence has shown in the jurisdictions where it has been enforced—and, ultimately, at the end of the day, this is a question about human rights. I would certainly wonder—on a bill like this, Bill 106, which affects tenants so egregiously, I would certainly have expected the member from Ottawa Centre to have consulted with tenants' groups, to have consulted with organized tenants' groups before bringing this forward, because I can tell you, it wouldn't fly.

Let me read an excerpt from Parkdale Community Legal Services. They say, "Bill 106 would create a new



entity within municipalities, operating independently of landlord and tenant law, which could have people evicted by the court and their entire buildings shut down for a period of time because of identified 'community safety' issues. Tenants in the targeted buildings would face the risk of eviction/dislocation and be denied the process of the Residential Tenancies Act. Instead of the summary process of the Landlord and Tenant Board, they would face the daunting and expensive process of the Ontario courts. All at the behest of some appointed municipal director acting on 'community concerns.'"

These are lawyers who actually work with tenants. These are lawyers across the province of Ontario in legal clinics, large and small, that work with tenants day by day.

They also say, "In the broader community, neighbourhood safety is protected and enhanced through proper policing, municipal planning policies, appropriate transportation services and the like. Within an apartment building, the landlord also plays a role to the extent that he/she is in compliance with all municipal safety and maintenance standards and responds quickly to incidents involving tenants that threaten the safety or the enjoyment of the premises by other tenants. The Residential Tenancies Act, for example, provides landlords with the ability"—I mentioned this already—"to 'fast-track' eviction of tenants impairing the safety of others or involved with the production/distribution of illegal drugs."

I know that all MPPs here have dealt with issues like this in their constituency offices. I would certainly hope that we as a Parliament and that you as a government do not move to institute this draconian piece of legislation. I would certainly hope that landlords and tenants—I'm a landlord and I have been a tenant across the province—rise up and speak out for civil rights over this sort of legislation. Certainly, I would hope that any time legislation comes before this House that deals with tenants' rights, the first place any member goes to discuss that piece of legislation that's proposed is to the tenants themselves, to ask them and their organizations—venerable organizations all—about the impact on them. Then we wouldn't have to take up the time of this assembly to do so. Again, how are we voting? Absolutely against. Why are we doing it? Civil rights.

1550

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

**Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis:** I rise today to support my honourable colleague's bill to provide for safer communities and neighbourhoods. It is clear that this bill is the product of care, compassion and concern for one's community. It is founded on the knowledge that safer communities result in safer municipalities, thereby providing the fundamentals upon which Ontario's communities can prosper. As a result, this legislation is about more than ensuring safe communities. It is based on ensuring that those who have resided in their communities and neighbourhoods for generations are able to maintain their way of life and to provide for a safe and prosperous community for generations to come. It's about attracting

individuals, families and businesses to our communities who are committed to the principles and the spirit of this bill—principles that seek to make Ontario's communities stronger, safer and more prosperous to live in.

It is clear that this legislation would be an investment in communities across this great province, especially based on some of the endorsements that it has already received by many municipalities, many law enforcement boards, associations and community groups throughout Ontario.

I am very proud to stand alongside the great city of Hamilton as a supporter of this legislation. In particular, I would like to recognize and thank a great Hamiltonian and Hamilton city councillor, Bob Bratina, who is here with us today. Councillor Bratina had Hamilton's best interests in mind when he worked with my colleague to develop this legislation. His hard work in gaining the endorsement of this bill by Hamilton city council is a clear sign that Councillor Bratina and all other Hamiltonians recognize the benefit that safe communities and neighbourhoods bring to our city.

One of those benefits is that this legislation fits directly in line with Hamilton's vision to be the best place in Canada to raise a child. For all families, safe communities and neighbourhoods are one of the top priorities when choosing where to raise children. Hamiltonians from all walks of life know that community solutions to community challenges are the key to further progress on safer communities and neighbourhoods. This bill represents just that—working with landowners, landlords and tenants in conjunction with community social services to build healthy neighbourhoods and to make Hamilton a city to which families all across this province and country are drawn.

Not only are families attracted to safe communities and neighbourhoods, but businesses, both large and small, will invest in those communities in which they know their employees are out of harm's way. The strides Hamilton has made in attracting businesses—like Stackpole Automotive parts plant, Vicwest Steel and Burlington Stamping, to mention a few—have been taken because businesses know that Hamilton is committed to having safe communities and safe neighbourhoods. For these reasons, I fully support this bill and I would like to thank my colleague from Ottawa Centre for bringing this important legislation to this House.

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

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten:** I want to remind friends across the way what debate we are in right now. This is private members' time. This is a time where members bring new ideas to the floor of this Legislature so we can have a conversation about our role as legislators. Each and every one of us wants to have safe and healthy communities, and each and every one of us wants to examine how we might better be able to provide tools to our communities to make sure those communities are safe.

So I want to acknowledge the work that has been done by my colleague Mr. Naqvi, who has brought forward a

very detailed and thoughtful bill. It's an important debate about how we might reach the best balance to make sure that our communities are safe. We on this side of the House are part of a government that has worked very hard to increase and improve the protections to tenants, and there is no doubt that in the context of this bill moving on to committee and continuing in debate, we would need to find that appropriate balance. I would urge members across the House to take a look at the very detailed language and terminology that is put in the bill to ensure those protections are put in place. If the appropriate balance has not been met, there is certainly an opportunity to continue that debate beyond this forum.

I take the words, for example, of Councillor Paula Fletcher, who represents the Riverdale area, who told the media that any tool that helps the city deal with problem properties is worth a look. Fletcher said she would ask city staff to look at it. That's the approach that I think is imperative as we gather as private members in this House: that we take a good look at legislation, that we see what tools are being used around the country and how we can make sure our communities are safe.

Bill 106 puts in place protections to provide social assistance, social service agencies and community organizations to help those who might be removed from their homes, and provides tenants' relief, ability to vary the order, to appeal the order.

For the thoughtfulness of the bill that has come forward and for his firm commitment to make sure that tenants are protected in the context of making sure our communities are safe for all of us, I congratulate my colleague. I support this bill, and I think we should continue this debate in the months ahead.

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

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I would like to commend the member from Ottawa Centre for widening the debate on an issue that is a cause of concern for many of my constituents, and that is the issue of community safety.

The bill brought forward is a significant step that we can take within the provincial jurisdiction to make our neighbourhoods and communities safer and healthier. Some neighbourhoods are negatively affected by illegal activities all too often, sometimes every day.

This summer, for example, the riding of York South–Weston experienced a series of incidents that have shocked and shaken the community. The residents who live in these pockets of our riding are seriously concerned about witnessing drug deals, prostitution, gang-related violence, even shootings, in their own neighbourhoods. They are frustrated, and they're looking for answers.

Active residents and BIAs are coming forward to reclaim their neighbourhoods. They are asking for a strong community safety approach to be put in place.

Steve Tasses, head of the Eglinton Hill BIA, talking about the area of Eglinton and Keele, where four different shootings have occurred in the last few months, two of them fatal, still has faith in his community: "We look at Keele and Eglinton as a community where we work, where we live." This is still our community.

People like Steve understand what it means to be a good neighbour, and residents such as he are ready to contribute to building stronger and safer communities. Residents often have a local community knowledge which can prove to be a vital resource in combatting criminal activity. SCAN legislation responds to this and engages community involvement.

City councillor Frances Nunziata, who represents part of my riding of York South–Weston and is one of the six councillors who founded the West Toronto Crime Task Force in response to the recent string of criminal activities that have plagued our part of the city, welcomes this kind of engagement and describes it as "a wonderful opportunity to empower citizens to help clean up their communities so that they can be healthy and peaceful places to live in."

**1600**

This bill would complement the work of the police, the city, the province and the residents, helping them to get rid of crack houses, gang-related violence, helping law-abiding citizens, regardless of the type of households they live in, to have a healthier, strong and prosperous community. SCAN legislation can be a big part of this. By building a network of related measures that complement one another, we can work together to resolve the problem at multiple levels.

I will be supporting this bill.

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

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** Members who represent tenant organizations should know that Bill 106, introduced by the member for Ottawa Centre, will be discussed in committee, and this certainly will not be the end of it. Therefore, any adjustments, abatements, changes, can be made at that level.

As you know, Mr. Speaker—I've mentioned it to you once before, I think—in July, my constituency office received 28 calls about a crack house. My response was, "Did you call the police? Why not? Why don't you call the police on this issue?" They responded to me, "Mr. Ruprecht, the police aren't doing very much." I said, "What do you mean, 'aren't doing very much'? It's against the law, isn't it? Have you seen crack dealings in front of the house, in the house?" "Yes, we witness it all the time. My kids are walking by." Sometimes it takes more than a year to do anything about this and to create peace in the community.

I see this bill and these recommendations that the member for Ottawa Centre has made in a different light. I see it this way: 85% of those owners who own these places are absentee landlords. I don't like absentee landlords. I don't know how many of you like absentee landlords, but where I am, I see many of these absentee landlords doing nothing about it, taking the money in their pocket and not looking after the property. I am upset about this. And what do we do about it? What's the quickest and—maybe not the best; we'll have to look. I listened to the member from Parkdale–High Park very carefully and I agree with some of the stuff she has said. In fact, she makes sense many times in this House. I like

you, personally, for that matter. But the point is, people want action. How do we handle these absentee landlords? One way to do it—and I think my time is almost running out—is to support this bill so that we get into the committee and then we might make some of the changes.

We simply cannot allow that absentee landlords are running these neighbourhoods down, because that is essentially what they are doing. They don't live there. Do they live in the basement? No. Absentee landlords live in some of the big houses, and some of them, I personally know, are multi-millionaires, and they're using tenants and using these houses to make more money. Somehow we've got to stop that. We don't know how necessarily, in the best way, but the member for Ottawa Centre made a good start in terms of coming to grips with this issue.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member for Ottawa Centre, Mr. Naqvi, has up to two minutes for his response.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I want to thank the members from Simcoe North, Parkdale–High Park, Hamilton Mountain, Etobicoke–Lakeshore, York South–Weston and Davenport for their insightful comments on Bill 106.

It really saddens me that the NDP's position is that criminals have more rights than law-abiding citizens. It really saddens me that the NDP believes that tenants should have no rights and they should live among crack houses and marijuana grow-ops and brothels. It really saddens me that the NDP's position is contrary to the NDP governments who proposed and legislated this bill in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. It really saddens me that the NDP's position is contrary to my own NDP opponent's in the riding of Ottawa Centre in the past election and the NDP MP Paul Dewar, who fully supports this legislation.

It is our collective responsibility that we make sure that our community is a safe place to live for everyone. We need to ensure—otherwise, we're abrogating our responsibility—that properties in our communities are not being used for illegal activities.

This legislation protects the rights of tenants. If reviewed carefully, you will see that tenants' rights are protected again and again in this legislation. The director of SCAN has no power but to investigate; it's the court which has the power to determine what remedy should be given. That's the gist of this legislation. That is the purpose: that we ensure that our neighbourhoods, our communities, are safe; that our children are roaming around in the streets without any worries, without any concerns, not picking up needles, not picking up condoms or things of their like. I ask all the members to please support Bill 106.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. I ask the members to take their seats. The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

#### ASSISTANCE TO THE DISABLED

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We will first deal with ballot item number 49, standing in the name of

Mr. Arnott. Mr. Arnott has moved private members' notice of motion number 55. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

#### AUDITOR GENERAL AMENDMENT ACT, 2008

#### LOI DE 2008 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE VÉRIFICATEUR GÉNÉRAL

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We will now deal with ballot item number 50, standing in the name of Mrs. Munro. Mrs. Munro has moved second reading of Bill 110, An Act to amend the Auditor General Act. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We will now deal with ballot item number 51—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Oh, I'm sorry. Mrs. Munro, where would you like it to go?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'd like it to go to the finance and economic affairs committee.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Is it agreed that it goes to the finance and economic affairs committee? So ordered.

#### SAFER COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS ACT, 2008

#### LOI DE 2008 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ ACCRUE DES COLLECTIVITÉS ET DES QUARTIERS

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We'll now deal with ballot item number 51, standing in the name of Mr. Naqvi. Mr. Naqvi has moved second reading of Bill 106, An Act to provide for safer communities and neighbourhoods. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? So carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Naqvi?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I ask that Bill 106 be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Is it agreed that the bill be referred to committee? So ordered.

*Orders of the day.*

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until next Monday, November 3, at 10:30 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1607.*

**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	
<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development / Ministre du Développement économique
<b>Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
<b>Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	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
<b>Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. M. Aileen (LIB)</b>	Barrie	Minister of Culture / Ministre de la Culture
		Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	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

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
<b>Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Horwath, Andrea (NDP)</b>	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	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)</b>	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Tourism / Ministre du Tourisme
		Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
<b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	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
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	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**

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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**

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Sophia Ageloni, Ted Arnott  
Wayne Arthurs, Toby Barrett  
Pat Hoy, Jean-Marc Lalonde  
Leeanna Pendergast, Michael Prue  
Charles Sousa  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Robert Bailey, Jim Brownell  
Linda Jeffrey, Kuldip Kular  
Rosario Marchese, Bill Mauro  
Carol Mitchell, David Oraziotti  
Joyce Savoline  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité  
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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod  
Michael A. Brown, Kevin Daniel Flynn  
France Gélinas, Randy Hillier  
Lisa MacLeod, Julia Munro  
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Maria Van Bommel  
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la justice**

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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

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des comptes publics**

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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**

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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**

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Howard Hampton, Greg Sorbara  
Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch







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