



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 39th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 39^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 3 December 2008

Mercredi 3 décembre 2008

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 3 December 2008

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 3 décembre 2008

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CORONERS AMENDMENT ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 MODIFIANT

LA LOI SUR LES CORONERS

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 2, 2008, on the motion for second reading of Bill 115, An Act to amend the Coroners Act/ Projet de loi 115, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les coroners.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: I will be sharing the one-hour lead with Andrea Horwath, the member from Hamilton Centre and NDP leadership candidate. She has a strong interest in this issue because of her relentless advocacy in the community of Hamilton, and certainly in this Legislature, including her introduction of private member's legislation in the matter of the tragic death of a boy, Jared Osidacz. She will, I am sure, be addressing that, particularly in the context of the repeal of section 22 by this legislation.

Look, it's trite, we know. We know what promoted or provoked the vast majority of this bill, and that is the Goudge report. The Goudge report was a lengthy inquiry into primarily, but not solely, the behaviour of a rogue pathologist, one Charles Smith, who New Democrats believe should be held accountable beyond the mere condemnation of his conduct. Countless people suffered unimaginable pain because of Smith's incompetence, his arrogance, his disdain for the truth, his disregard for it—and these people went to jail. You have to understand, we're talking about baby-shaking cases, baby-shaking deaths. And while it's acknowledged that the science has changed, that wasn't the crux of the issue when it came to Dr. Smith. I'm loath to call him a doctor; I have far too much respect for medical practitioners to call him a doctor.

You also know that when you're sent to jail for a baby murder, you do what's called, in the colloquial, in the lexicon of the pen, "hard time," and you are subjected to abuses, some of which I'll not speak about in the presence of the pages, our young assistants here in this cham-

ber. But most of the community knows full well what I'm talking about.

We are cautiously optimistic about the process that has been embarked on in terms of investigating other baby-shaking cases and, as significantly, the processes being embarked upon to determine a means of compensating the people who suffered at the hands of Smith's arrogance, incompetence and dishonesty—although, for the life of me, I know that money is a means of compensating people, and not an inappropriate one, but certainly an incomplete one.

I've often reflected on the fact that there is only one thing worse than a guilty person who goes free, and that is an innocent person who is found guilty, especially of the most heinous crimes that have attached to them this incredible and, again, entirely appropriate stigma. There is certain criminal conduct that is so opprobrious that it does, as it should, attract as close as we come in our society to shunning, to expelling people from the community—and, as I say, it should. Perhaps it doesn't even happen often enough, because there are cases where communities are forced to live with these types of incredibly misshaped people in their own neighbourhoods, with no warning and certainly no protection.

We are eager to see this legislation go to committee. We're confident that it will pass. We will be supporting the legislation on second reading, in principle, notwithstanding some serious, grave concerns, in particular with respect to the sections of the bill that have nothing to do with and are in no way responsive to the Goudge recommendations.

0910

One: New Democrats have long been advocates of systems whereby there are mandatory coroners' inquests in certain classes of deaths. One of them is workplace deaths. My colleague Ms. Horwath, New Democrats in this Legislature and those before us, along with our sisters and brothers in the trade union movement and the labour movement, along with working women and men across this province, have long held the view that workplace deaths—I am more inclined to refer to them as workplace homicides; I'm even more inclined to refer to them as workplace murders—should necessarily become the subject matter of a coroner's inquest. We're therefore very concerned about this legislation, to the extent that it displays a trend away from compulsory inquests. The argument, of course, is that, "Oh, the coroner from region to region or the chief coroner in the province of Ontario is entirely capable of assessing whether or not a par-

ticular death ought to be the subject matter of a coroner's inquest."

Perhaps during committee we'll discover that part of the motivation is cost containment. When one understands that the purpose of a coroner's inquest—not just the legislative purpose but the effect, the net result of a coroner's inquest—is inevitably recommendations by people in the community, based on the evidence they heard during the course of that coroner's inquest, as to how to prevent those types of deaths, one wonders whether cost containment really should be a factor.

We're talking about saving lives. We're not just talking about investigating the cause of death of the deceased; we're talking about saving lives of the living. It reminds me of the mantra we repeat on days of mourning as well as throughout the rest of year: "Mourn for the dead, but fight for the living." The purpose of coroners' inquests is to fight for the living. So we bemoan this movement away from compulsory coroners' inquests.

We, for instance, think that not only should there be coroners' inquests in the event of the murder of working women and men in their workplaces, whether it's by the crane toppling or by the deranged co-worker slaughtering them—we recall the tragedy of the health professional in a hospital slaughtered by a predatory stalker, a doctor in the hospital, in her own workplace, because the existing legislation did not provide the protection that, but for some minor amendments proposed by New Democrats and advocated by all of us, including Ms. Horwath, would have given. So whether it's the toppling of a crane, the explosion in a small firecracker factory in Port Robinson, the failure of adequate supervision of safety devices or the negligence of a company that refuses to shore up the walls of an excavation, or whether it's the outright physical murder of a worker by a co-worker, we believe that coroners' inquests should be mandatory.

Look, the long-standing provision that persons who die while in custody should become the subject matter of a coroner's inquest is an entirely valid one. Whether criminal or orphaned child, whether young offender or disabled teen, surely people—their families, their parents, their children—should be entitled to know that that child, parent, sister or brother is in one of the safest conceivable places when they're in the care of the state.

We believe there should be some significant consideration, some serious debate around coroners' inquests into highway deaths. What better way for there to be recommendations from the grassroots of the community—just folks—about measures that a government can take to safeguard innocent people using our highways? Perhaps we'd have somewhat more effective policy development than the rather silly proposition, in the view of New Democrats, that young drivers shouldn't be entitled to have more than one young passenger with them in a car.

We have concerns about the bill's tendency to create a trend away from compulsory inquests for certain classes of people. The argument that, "Oh, the coroner can make his or her own decision," is a frail one to say the least; frail because there may well be cases where the circum-

stances are so obvious and beyond dispute that the inquest process can be a far briefer one than it would be in other cases. But that is the solution, and certainly not the argument for abandoning compulsory inquests.

Section 22 of the Coroners Act is, entirely appropriately, a rarely used provision. Section 22 allows the Minister of Community Safety to call for an inquest in his or her own right, notwithstanding that the local or regional coroner or the chief coroner may have declined to do so. The member for St. Catharines, the Minister of Transportation, will undoubtedly recall that the most recent time that was invoked was back in 1986, during that two-year period of time when more NDP legislation was passed than ever since here in the province of Ontario. You will recall those two years, 1985 and 1986. The trend for progressive legislation ended abruptly in 1987, but 1985 and 1986 produced some incredibly progressive and enlightened legislation.

But there was the prospect of a person dying in a boating accident. The Solicitor General then was Ken Keyes, who himself had some tragic experience with boating. You'll remember it was on the boat with the OPP where he had a beer. He wasn't drunk, but he drank a beer, and of course the OPP—maybe nothing has really changed, who knows? Who knows what kind of records Julian Fantino keeps? But Ken Keyes was subsequently burned, as they say on the street, in the revelation of this most modest of misdemeanours. It forced him to resign, as I recall—am I correct, Minister of Transportation? Ken Keyes was a very competent cabinet minister, a very competent and responsible Solicitor General.

0920

The argument made in response to questions about why this government feels it's necessary to repeal section 22, the section in the current Coroner's Act that provides for the Solicitor General to unilaterally call for an inquest, is that it has almost never been used. That's precisely the point: It should be rarely—and only very rarely—used. It shouldn't be used as a matter of course. It should be utilized in those exceptional circumstances where a consideration of the public interest prevails over the minutiae of the legislation; perhaps where common sense prevails over the letter of the law.

Ken Keyes exercised that discretion back in 1986, some 22 years ago. No coroner was about to call for an inquest, but in fact the inquest was held. The revelations during the course of the inquest were of great interest. Notwithstanding the finding that the boating accident and the apparent deaths were in fact a hoax, as I understand the history of the matter, the jury was still capable of producing recommendations to enhance boater safety. That's a good thing; that's a positive thing.

You know, the Premier's office is surely not the sole source of policy wisdom; there is many a Liberal backbencher, and indeed cabinet minister, who can confirm that. It was David Zimmer, the member from Willowdale, who by kicking and dragging brought the Premier's office to support his private member's bill that enhanced boating safety by ensuring that boaters who were caught

driving drunk or impaired lost their motor vehicle driver's licence. The Premier's office did not want to do that; they didn't.

Zimmer had to embarrass them into doing it. I remember that he pulled his early-morning CBC Radio stunt—Andy Barrie. The government House leader was, I suspect, a little disgruntled, because Zimmer bypassed channels. He was not about to stand, cap in hand, as a supplicant at the locked door of the Premier's office, waiting for his turn, which he knew was never going to come because the Premier at the time, as now, Mr. McGuinty, and his minions—his high-priced minions, his minions who are insistent that they know better than anybody and are not afraid to tell you so, the intimate advisers of Mr. McGuinty—weren't about to let that legislation pass. Zimmer had to abandon the Marquess of Queensberry Rules and, in the course of doing that, did all of us a good service.

That's why I say we should understand how important coroners' inquests are, because just folks—just folks like the people we represent, just folks like the people next door, just folks like factory labourers, those who are lucky enough to have a job but still despairing over the fact that over the course of the next several months they may lose those jobs too, just folks like retirees, just folks like schoolteachers and nurses and shopkeepers, whose lives revolve around their work, their family, their community, like any jury—are entitled to hear evidence, to draw conclusions, to make findings of fact and to make recommendations, an incredibly important role.

I look forward to this going to committee, because I think it's incredibly important that, with respect to the extent that this bill responds, or purports to respond, to the Goudge report, I dearly look forward to hearing the comments of the Criminal Lawyers' Association, for instance; I look forward to the prospect of hearing, perhaps, from Jim Lockyer, who is just a brilliant legal mind and has led, along with others, the fight for absolving the wrongly convicted.

Let me go back to that again. If there's anything worse than the perpetrator of a heinous crime who somehow is found innocent, it's an innocent person who is found guilty. And we're talking about people who didn't just spend a night in the local lock-up as a result of the findings of guilt. They didn't spend a couple of months in a reformatory; they weren't down there in Orlando, Florida, with that despicable Conrad Black, serving time in a country club and writing columns for—oh, I'm sorry to offend anybody here who remains friends with Conrad Black. I don't mind him getting six and a half years; I wish it was more—it took the Americans to do it—but I do mind his serving his sentence in a veritable country club, because in a class society like especially the United States, the very wealthy, of course, receive very special treatment.

If there is anything worse than a perpetrator of a horrid offence against another person, perhaps a child—well, literally a child, because that's what we're talking about here—if there is anything worse than a guilty person not

being dealt with, it's an innocent person being convicted. We're talking about people who didn't spend just overnight in the hoosegow; they didn't spend a couple of months in a reformatory. They spent years in penitentiaries doing hard time.

I look forward to people like the Criminal Lawyers' Association, like, yes, even the OBA, the Ontario Bar Association, and its criminal branch, people like Jim Lockyer and similarly brilliantly equipped legal minds, telling us the extent to which this bill complies with the Goudge recommendations, whether it's sufficiently responsive to the Goudge recommendations and whether or not it needs fine-tuning, tweaking, tinkering with, amendments—because we're prepared to move amendments to it. We don't see this as a particularly partisan bill but for the repeal of section 22.

The timing is remarkable, isn't it? The member for Hamilton Centre has been on her feet in this chamber on what I'm sure to some seems like a daily basis—it hasn't been, but it has been on a regular basis—calling for the Solicitor General, the Minister of Community Safety, to exercise his jurisdiction pursuant to section 22 so that Jared can have a stand-alone coroner's inquest. My colleague is going to address this, I'm sure, in great detail, but understand what that means. What happened here? You had a father murder a child and then, in the course of a standoff with the police, the police were compelled to shoot him. No misconduct has been found or even alleged on the part of police officers. Understand that a mother lost her son and grandparents lost their grandchild, young Jared. He wasn't committing an offence, he hadn't murdered anybody. He was a kid, a little boy, yet the all-too-frequent failings in the system, yes, that broad system—and we can go through a litany. I can cite Katelynn Sampson—the failings in the system. I can cite other children who, as a result of the under-resourcing of family and children services or the outright incompetence of family and children's services, have been sent to their misery or their death.

0930

But the issue here is two different stories. The issue here is what took the police to the point where they had to use lethal force to protect themselves from Jared's father. Then we have to understand how an innocent child could have been put into a position where he was slaughtered by his own father.

Look, as I said earlier, if there's any place where we should expect our children, our parents, our sisters and brothers to be safe, it should be in the custody of the state, whether it's a psychiatric hospital, whether it's a "hospital" hospital, whether it's a young offender facility, or whether it's a jail. Surely, any child is entitled to expect to be safe when they're with a parent, and we continue to fail so many children in that regard.

I will not comment on the judicial conduct of the judge who handed Katelynn Sampson over to her alleged murderers, because that matter, of course, has been referred to the Ontario Judicial Council for consideration, with the judicial council being asked to determine wheth-

er or not there was misconduct or negligence on the part of that judge.

You see, Jared's inquest, if the coroner continues to have his or her way and if this Solicitor General continues to abdicate his responsibility, will be intertwined with the inquest into the death of his murderer. That's bizarre. It's loathsome. There's something incredibly perverse about it. It's the sort of thing that people out there in the community who don't even have to know all of the details, all of the minutiae, find repugnant. It's just unnatural. It doesn't fit.

Look, I'm prepared to concede that the decision is probably—I'm very careful—consistent with the letter of the law. That's why it's absurd, silly and downright foolish for the Solicitor General, the Minister of Community Safety, to say, "Oh well, in this new regime, where the coroner declines to call an inquest, because I'm like"—he shouldn't be the Minister of Community Safety, he should be Pontius Pilate. Pontius Pilate, 2,000 years ago—a few years less than 2,000—did the same thing: He wanted nothing to do with it.

Look, the minister is the guy or the gal who makes the big bucks. They've got the car, they've got the driver, they've got the key to the executive washroom. They don't have to use public facilities like other folks; they don't have to stand beside anybody else at that urinal. The "Honourable," the prestige, the status, the power—why, then, this flight from power? Why do we have a cabinet? Just cut them an extra paycheque every month and forget all this foolishness of the pomp and the ceremony and, "Here comes the Honourable so-and-so"—honourable, my foot. There's nothing honourable about denying Jared, his grandparents and his mom the dignity of an inquest considering the circumstances around his death that isn't commingled with inquiries into the brutality of a murderous father and a system that doesn't accord that child and his family, that dead child, slaughtered child, murdered child—he was assassinated—that dignity.

That's why Ms. Horwath has been pleading with the minister to exercise his power under section 22—pleading. I've got to be careful, because Ms. Horwath wants to share this hour; I only have an hour and it's probably not enough. I suppose we'll have an opportunity in committee. She has been pleading for this minister to exercise his jurisdiction. He's saying, "Oh, I want nothing to do with it." He explains that in his brave new world of Bill 115—where once and for all the minister is provided with the pat answer to say, "What power? The Coroners Act doesn't give me the power to order an inquest. And besides, who needs that power, when it's only been exercised once in the last 22 years?" Well, again, it's a highly discretionary power. It shouldn't be regularly utilized. But you don't address that by saying, "Oh, please, take the power away." That's like the gambling addict who wants to be barred from casinos. What's the minister suggesting? He wants to be barred from using his ministerial discretion?

There used to be, back in the old days—you don't remember, Ms. Horwath; you're too young—the interdict list down at those dark, dreary LCBO stores where you wrote your code number on a piece of paper and passed it through the—

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Oh, I remember those.

Mr. Peter Kormos: If Ms. Horwath remembers it, she was drinking far too young, I'll tell you that. But there was the interdict list where, again, in small-town Ontario, you went to this dusty LCBO store. You recall, Speaker—I know you do—86B: Wasn't that Four Aces wine? But you filled out the slip on a piece of very cheap, newsprint kind of paper, and I think they only allowed you pencils; they were those little stubby golf pencils, or the pencils you used in bowling alleys. It was inevitably blunt, so you had to chew it to get the lead exposed, and then you slipped it through a grille and then mysteriously—but there used to be an interdict list. Mr. Martiniuk will remember this, because he was practising law. He, like I, probably acted for more than a few people back in those old days where they were placed on the interdict list, where they couldn't purchase alcohol.

Does the Solicitor General have a problem where he has to be restrained because he just can't control himself? He's just going to be ordering coroners' inquests every which way but loose and every day of the week and month? No. He wants the pay, but he doesn't want the responsibility. He wants the status, but he doesn't want the duty.

0940

New Democrats will be bringing amendments in committee to encourage and facilitate the defeat of that section of the bill that repeals section 22. And I say, if anything, New Democrats believe that statutory—not discretionary—coroners' inquests should be expanded and that the minister has to retain the discretion.

The minister says, "Oh, you can go to judicial review." No. Hogwash. Judicial review is to determine the legality of a particular decision. Nobody is suggesting that the Jared decision is illegal. We're just saying it's not in the public interest, and it reveals a total insensitivity to the capacity and a disinterest in the capacity of a coroner's inquest and the capacity of that jury to make recommendations. I say this government is fearful of the recommendations that might flow from a Jared stand-alone inquest because I suspect, based on what I know, that this government has failed children and failed to protect children in this province and failed to protect Jared.

Judicial review? Oh, yeah. Tens of thousands of dollars later in legal fees? Judicial review when you've got a grieving mom or grieving grandparents who are of modest means? They're like most Ontarians. You're going to say, "Oh, go down to Bay Street and hire one of those lawyers with the big gold cufflinks and the Prada shoes and the big fat Mont Blanc pen and the membership in whatever clubs it is that Bay Street lawyers belong to so you can do a judicial review," which probably won't be successful because judicial review

doesn't take into consideration anything but the legality of a decision.

I want to make it clear now, on behalf of New Democrats, that we're prepared to be persuaded otherwise, but I suggest that this bill receive public hearings not during the immediate winter break because the availability of most of those people who are going to be most necessary to discuss the matter is going to be limited during the month of January, the peak of the winter holiday season for a whole lot of folks. We suggest that once this bill gets second reading, and we're confident it will before we rise—we want it to get into committee, and we're voting for it in principle so that it can get into committee.

But I tell you, committee will be very determinative of any ongoing support. We want to hear from people about the Goudge recommendations and the extent to which the bill is reflective. We want to hear from people about the abolition of mandatory inquests among certain classes of people. We want to hear about the elimination of the minister's discretion, flight from power. This whole gang might as well just go home and clip their coupons if they are not prepared to accept the responsibilities that go with the office.

I defer now to my colleague from Hamilton Centre.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The Chair recognizes the member for Hamilton Centre.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's certainly my pleasure to pick up with some comments following the comments made on behalf of New Democrats by my colleague Peter Kormos, from the riding of Welland.

He very clearly set out some of the things that we see in this bill that are positive in response to the Goudge inquiry. I'm not going to focus on that. I think he has done an excellent job of reviewing the pieces of the bill that are long past due, in terms of reform of the system that created the horrible situation in Ontario where people were wrongly accused and convicted of injurious actions against young children.

So I'm going to set that aside and first talk a little bit about the process that happens here when a bill is introduced. A minister introduces a bill, and the people in the Legislature get a quick look, particularly critics and leaders of opposition parties, at what that bill says. The next step, before this step, before the actual second reading debate, is something called the technical briefing.

I took advantage of the technical briefing, because I was shocked, in hearing the minister's comments when he introduced the bill, to find out that in fact section 22 of the Coroners Act will be amended by this bill to, in effect, remove the opportunity of the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services to call an inquest on his own, outside of what's happening in the coroner's office. I attended this technical briefing with research staff from the New Democratic Party. We got walked through what they call an "information deck," which is a package of points that outline the purpose of the bill and what the effects of the changes are. I was extremely taken aback that on page 6 of the technical briefing, the description of the removal of this power in

terms of section 22, the removal of the ability of the minister to call an inquest, was in there. Upon seeing it, of course, we asked the staff who were giving us the technical briefing, "Where does that particular recommendation come from? Why is it that the minister has decided or the ministry has decided to remove the power of the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services to call an inquest, to direct that an inquest be held?" We were told at that technical briefing that it was something that Justice Goudge was fine with. We asked specifically, "Does this come from the Goudge recommendations? Was this a part of what Justice Goudge said needed to be done to reform the system?" We were told, "Yes, he has no problem with it."

We of course were a bit taken aback, because we don't recall having seen that in the recommendations that came out of the Goudge report. So, of course, we did some homework, and lo and behold, when we looked at the Goudge report, specifically around whether there were recommendations on section 22, what did we find? In volume 3 of Justice Goudge's report, under the heading of "Enhancing Oversight and Accountability," it says this: "The governing council should report on an annual basis to the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, and the governing council's annual report should be made available to the public"—a nice oversight type of recommendation. And it goes on to say this: "The ministry should also retain the ability, as it does now, to fulfill certain functions in relation to the" Ontario chief coroner's office, "including directing an inquest, in accordance with s. 22 of the Coroners Act." It goes on to say that the governing council would also be required to approve the budget etc.

So here we are in the province of Ontario, with reforms coming as a result of the work done by Justice Goudge—important, important reforms; absolutely. That's why, as my colleague from Welland indicated, we're definitely going to support this at second reading till we get it into committee. But here we have a technical briefing where we are told exactly the opposite of what's in the Goudge recommendations. In fact, the Goudge recommendations are very clear. Justice Goudge says the minister should be retaining his opportunity, retaining the section 22 right, to order an inquest.

So while this bill purports to create a new system with greater checks and balances, with better oversight, in effect it takes away the most important, the highest, the utmost level of oversight that is available in the province of Ontario; that is, the ultimate ability, responsibility, accountability of the minister responsible to call for an inquest to occur.

0950

The context of my concern around this bill relates specifically to an incident that occurred quite some time ago now; in fact, it occurred in 2006. That incident was the brutal murder, the slaying, of a young boy named Jared Osidacz in the town of Brantford.

I met Jared's mother for the first time when I was sitting on a committee that was reviewing the private

member's bill called initially Jared's Law, and then Kevin and Jared's Law. I have to tell you, it was one of the most difficult committee meetings I have ever had to sit in on. We had woman after woman after woman testifying at this committee about the brutality of domestic violence, the fear that they had for their lives and their children's lives, and how the systems—not one system, but many systems—in this province are not there for women, and they are not there for their vulnerable children.

We heard from Julie Craven, the mother of Jared Osidacz, the mother whose son was stabbed to death by his father, the mother of the son whose father was then killed by police as he went after the mother and tried to kill her. We sat in that room, hearing testimony from this woman, who could barely speak through her pain, through her anguish, through her utter stress at having to recall that horrific night when her child was murdered and her ex-husband came after her.

It became very clear from her testimony, and the testimony of Kevin Latimer's mother as well, that there are problems within the systems of—and certainly not making any accusations about this particular situation with Jared. The systemic issues around domestic violence and our lack of ability to take seriously the risks that women and children are put in constantly in this province is reprehensible. It's reprehensible. We heard that systems like children's aid societies, systems like bail, systems like the bail—what is it when you have the requirements of people who are out on bail? You have the—

Mr. Peter Kormos: The terms.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The deterrents?

Mr. Peter Kormos: The release terms.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The terms of release, that's right—the systems that are supposed to be in place to protect women.

Those include things like counselling for violent men, things like orders so that there can't be any opportunity for perpetrators of violence to come in close contact with women particularly, and there are situations set up where children receive opportunities to visit with the violent partner in a place of safety that is away from the other spouse but is supervised—supervised access. Failings in those systems occur continuously and constantly in this province, and have still not been addressed by this government.

In this situation with Jared Osidacz particularly, there was a history of domestic violence. Jared's father had been convicted four years previously of domestic violence perpetrated against Julie Craven.

Now, here we are, two years since Jared's death. Two—not one, but two—times now, the inquest—not the inquest for Jared but the inquest that is being held specifically because police were involved in the shooting of his father in order to save his mother—the joint inquest, which is not good enough, but that inquest itself has been postponed twice now. The last time it was postponed was, curiously, right around the time that this bill was introduced in the Legislature. But the fact of the matter is that this joint inquest is not going to be looking

at domestic violence. In fact, this inquest is not going to be dealing at all with the estrangement between the two parents, with the fact that Jared used to have to have supervised access, but that that was changed to unsupervised access, with his father. Those facts are not going to come out because the inquest that is going to be held into Jared's death, tied to his father's death, will not include every decision or detail concerning Family Court and criminal proceedings. In fact, we understand that events that may form part of the history of the situation are being considered to be too remote, too far in the past. Four years went by between the serious situation of Julie Craven being beaten mercilessly by her now dead ex-husband, Jared's father, who mercilessly used her body as a battering ram to knock in a door.

The facts are on the record in Hansard from that committee hearing if anybody is interested in reading them. Bill 89, I believe, was the bill. I invite you to read it. It's disturbing—at the utmost, disturbing. And here we are, where the coroner is saying that these domestic violence incidents, this history, this reality, this brutality that this man was capable of and perpetrated against his spouse a couple of years before, have nothing to do with and are irrelevant to the murderous rampage that he went on the night he murdered Jared.

How can that be? We know that child deaths in this province are almost exclusively—not exclusively but almost exclusively—perpetrated by a parent, usually within the context of a broader situation of ongoing family violence. I'm wearing a button today. We were allowed to wear it starting December 1. The button is in acknowledgment of and recognition that very soon, on December 6, we're going to be recognizing and pausing for the national day of mourning in memory of the Montreal massacre, the massacring, the brutal slaying, of a number of women students at École Polytechnique in Montreal, a slaying of women because they are women—because they were women. That's the only reason they were killed. They were killed because they were women, and Marc Lépine killed them because he thought they were feminists and he didn't like feminists, and so they didn't deserve to live.

This culture of violence against women continues in this province. So I ask the government this and I ask the minister this: Why does this minister not believe that there is a public interest in the calling of an independent inquest into Jared's murder? I do believe that there is a public interest. There is a public interest. There is a women's interest, and that makes it a public interest because women are part of the public. There is an interest to determine why system after system failed Julie Craven and failed Jared Osidacz, not for the purposes of blame, but for the purposes of ultimately putting in place the systems that in fact will save the next Jared, will prevent the next Julie from being a victim of a violent partner. If that is not the ultimate responsibility of a government and of a minister, then I don't know what is.

1000

Instead, what do we have? We have a minister who refuses to call that inquest and then turns around and

decides that never again in the province of Ontario will a Solicitor General, a Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, who's responsible—I guess women and their children are not part of the community safety mandate. I don't know why. It seems to me they should be a big part of the community safety mandate. But now, with this bill passing in its current form, removing section 22—and remember, removing it against the recommendations of Justice Goudge—we are going to have in Ontario a complete lack of ability for a minister of the crown, a person in ultimate authority and accountability, to decide whether or not it's in the public interest to hold an inquest.

What is the purpose of an inquest? It's not to lay the blame; it's to be able to make changes that are in the public interest. It's the ability to make changes so that deaths of a similar nature can be prevented in the future. We see this government finally, we hope, we understand—we're waiting in anticipation of this government bringing forward changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act to address, respond to—a long, long past due response, mind you, but perhaps it's coming—recommendations that come from the inquest into the death of Lori Dupont, the nurse who was brutally killed by her ex-love-interest at her workplace, a hospital. We know that the same thing happened to a woman named Gillian Hadley, who was killed at her workplace by a supervisor who was harassing her for many, many months and years.

The government has not moved on either of those issues. We heard recently that the government is going to be bringing forward something. Let's hope that something includes the right to refuse for workers who are being harassed or bullied or face violence in their workplaces, so that they can protect themselves. But that won't be enough, because what needs to happen is the amendment needs to be made to this very bill so that the ultimate responsibility of the minister remains in place to call inquests in the public interest.

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I'm pleased to stand up in my place and comment on the speech by the member from Welland and the member from Hamilton Centre. I have been listening for an hour to both speeches, and I'm glad to see the third party supporting the principle of the bill. I agree that when this bill goes to committee, it's going to see a lot of enhancement. We're going to listen to many people give us their input. Hopefully, we'll come out with a strong bill to serve the people of Ontario.

I want to commend the minister for bringing a bill to strengthen the safety of the people of Ontario. I know the member opposite does not like section 22, which takes the power away from the minister to call inquests. I was listening to the member from Hamilton Centre, and I remember that that hearing for Kevin and Jared's Law was painful, to hear all the people who came on that day to tell us their sad and horrible stories.

I agree we should do something in this province, especially elected officials, to protect innocent people.

It's important to make sure all the pathologists and the coroners in the province of Ontario are qualified when they are dealing with such an important issue, dealing with crime and violence against women, against children, against innocent people wherever they live in the province of Ontario.

We heard the member opposite stand up in her place many different times and ask the minister to call for inquests. I think this is an important issue. When the minister gives the power to the chief coroner, who is an expert in the field, to perform his or her duty on behalf of the province of Ontario, I think that is very important, because you take the political interest away from the minister and put it in experts' hands in order to exercise their power to protect the people of Ontario. And the people and the families have a right to ask for inquests, through a judicial review, in order to make sure that issue is being dealt with.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm always pleased to respond to the member for Welland, Mr. Kormos, and the member for Hamilton Centre, Ms. Horwath, commenting on Bill 115, which is the act to amend the Coroners Act. In fact, it's a very technical bill. I think there are seven sections here—I just had a quick read through it—and in the preamble there's a lot of detail in the first three or four pages to show you the seven specific sections that it covers. This comes from the report presented by Justice Goudge. I think it's important, when you look at the terms of reference. The inquiry was to mandate a systemic review. It's really looking at the rather questionable work done by Charles Smith, at that time the chief forensic pathologist, in pediatric forensic pathology specifically.

Now, the member for Hamilton Centre was commenting more about a domestic violence issue and how it applies to the inquest, and I support that. I think if you look, there's a bill before the House as well that we will be talking about, Bill 133, and that is the Family Statute Law Amendment Act. In that act, we requested, on domestic violence—I have a private member's bill, Bill 10. It's called the Lori Dupont Act and it deals with restraining orders. Restraining orders are part of the problem in domestic violence. What my bill does is something that I believe the government members should pay attention to. It allows access to a restraining order seven days a week, 24 hours a day, using a judge or a JP. That would allow the police to intervene.

There is a provision within that bill that I think is strong. It makes it a criminal offence to violate a restraining order. But how does it apply to this? It's to have the inquest and the inquiry and to make sure there is oversight within that process. That is the bill we're talking about today and we would be supportive of most of the stuff that is in Bill 155.

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

Mr. Dave Levac: I want to thank the members for Welland and Hamilton Centre, obviously, for their pas-

sionate and usual way of expressing their concerns about the bill. What I did hear in that, and I ask the member to confirm that, was that there was at least support for second reading to get this bill to committee and to open it to the public hearings that we anticipate we will be doing in order to get the best.

I have carriage of the bill and my intention is to do in this House as I've always done, and I committed to in the last bill, and that is to be as open and fair as possible, to ensure that the voices of those who need to be heard are heard and to listen carefully to any of the amendments that are put forward for us to make this bill an even better bill.

I believe that the Legislature has been taking that responsibility seriously and we do so in these particular cases. I would remind everyone in this place—and I don't think I need to, but I want to say it—that no one has a monopoly on the passion and the concern that we have for domestic violence, that we have for children who have been killed without answers. That's precisely why this recommendation and this bill are coming forward as a result of the inquiry.

Most importantly, I want to make a comment to ensure that I keep myself focused on this as best as I possibly can—because it cannot be done, to put your feet into the shoes of the people who were affected by Dr. Smith—to ensure that the report that was done, the inquiry, is taken advantage of, that our present legislative amendments and changes make it an even better place for us to protect children and to protect the people of the province of Ontario.

Having said that, I appreciate both members' comments and concerns that are being raised. We'll listen to them very carefully and get to committee where we can make some actual changes that would benefit the province of Ontario.

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

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I'm pleased also to rise today to comment on the remarks made, both by the member for Welland and the member for Hamilton Centre.

I had the experience of testifying at a coroner's inquest some 20 years ago and this was in my capacity as medical officer of health. The case was a very tragic one where a young girl in a group home in York region was one of the first people to have been identified as in fact having died from E. coli 0157, which of course has now become such a well-known very serious illness.

At that time, I remember being very impressed by the depth with which the coroner and the jury investigated this particular situation. Their focus was totally on the potential future prevention of similar occurrences. It was very much as a consequence of that very broad-ranging and thorough investigation that attention was drawn to this particular organism and the potential causes. In this case, it happened to be undercooked hamburger. We were able to start that public health education process to ensure that people understood that.

So when I hear my colleagues from the third party make these remarks regarding their concerns about the

thoroughness of the investigations, I would certainly have to concur, not knowing the full circumstances. We know that in this legislation, the coroner would still be required to conduct a thorough investigation of all cases. I'm hoping, as my colleague from Brant says, that in committee we can explore to the full extent how that will be done.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: The question that remains begged as a result of the observation that the very unworthy Charles Smith had a lengthy career in his office—and it remains begged because the government refuses to acknowledge the issue, never mind attempt to rectify it—is, what kind of culture would nurture and sustain a Charles Smith? Was it a one-man operation? There are all sorts of levels of oversight. There were crown attorneys who clearly relished the evidence of one Charles Smith, because it allowed for and supported convictions. We have to question why this culture was sustained, how it developed in the first place, and why the government refuses to address that now.

There were colleagues of Smith who didn't challenge his remarkable batting record of 1,000. There were crown attorneys who didn't challenge it. There were police officers who didn't challenge it. And, by God, there were judges who didn't challenge it. So let's not make Charles Smith the mere scapegoat. It is all too convenient. He wasn't the only player in the criminal justice system: crown attorneys, police, judges, colleagues, other doctors—all of whom must bear culpability and none of whom are being questioned by this government. This government circles the wagons once again and builds this wall of silence over a despicable state of affairs.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): This House is in recess until 10:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Michael Prue: I rise to commend Zac Baum, the page from the great riding of Beaches–East York. He has family here today in the members' west gallery. I would like to introduce his parents and family: Kathy Hick, Joel Baum, Jackie Hick, David Baum, Marsha Baum and Joi Cole. They're all here to watch Zac do wonderful work in this Legislature.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: The grade 10 students and teachers from St. Augustine Catholic High School in Markham will be joining us very shortly.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to introduce Edith Kernerman, co-director of the Newman Breastfeeding Clinic, Lori Levere from the Ontario Breastfeeding Committee, Joanne Gilmore from the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, and many moms and their toddlers or infants who are here with us today in the west gallery.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would like to introduce some representatives from the Ontario Principals' Council who are with us today: Laura Hodgins, Lisa Vincent, Doug Morrell, Vicki Shannon, Lona Dabouf, Ken Arnott, Rick Clarke and Mike Benson. Thank you very much for joining us.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: A question for the Premier: We know that close to a quarter of a million manufacturing jobs have been lost in the past four years in Ontario. We're looking at plant closure announcements almost every week. The province is running a deficit. Now, for the first time in our history, we're a have-not province.

Your government's response yesterday to our economic challenges was a symbolic restraint announcement. Premier, this isn't tightening your belt in tough economic times and it's not, to use your finance minister's word, a "modest" effort. In effect, it's really a meaningless effort. You're clearly not committed to getting your spending under control.

Premier, I give you one example: Are you aware of the spending practices of your appointee as president of the WSIB, and if not, why not?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, to the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I would remind the Leader of the Opposition that the announcement I made yesterday is in fact the third step in terms of what I would call the various restraint initiatives we have undertaken. It began with our budget last March wherein we clearly signalled that the Ontario economy was challenged, that we thought our revenues would not grow as rapidly as they had, and we laid out a number of undertakings, set up a contingency and built a reserve. That was followed by my fall statement, providing for another \$108 million in savings, and it was followed by yesterday's step that provided for still more that were not, as the Premier and I both indicated, large money issues but were very important in terms of tone.

We continue to work with our partners as we move through the most challenging times the world economy has seen—

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

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Well, we're talking about symbolism here, to use the minister's own words. I asked him a specific question about one of their senior mandarins—and we know that Ontarians are tightening their belts; many facing a very uncertain future in this economic climate. We have a Liberal appointee as president of the WSIB, one Jill Hutcheon, who last year drew a

salary of \$360,000 plus \$123,000 as Deputy Minister of Labour. She spent almost 7,000 taxpayer dollars on a two-day conference in New York in April. Minister, why would you and your seatmate allow your appointees to lead such lavish lifestyles at the expense of taxpayers?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: There is no doubt that within an organization as large as the government of Ontario and the broader public service, there will be expenditures that, frankly, I think all of us would question.

I think all of us in this House need to move beyond what I would call "gotcha" politics and start talking about the real challenges in the economy.

I won't go over the luxury box your government had at the Air Canada Centre. I wouldn't want to do that.

We will continue to work with our partners, both through collective bargaining and in the broader public sector, to move toward restraint and to continue to make the investments that we need to make to stimulate jobs and growth in our—

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

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Moving toward a snail's pace at best.

Back to the minister: When we're looking for symbolism, Ms. Hutcheon can be the poster girl for the extravagances of this Liberal government. They're cutting back in hospitals, they don't have money to fight poverty, but their appointee can luxuriate at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York, one of the most expensive hotels in the United States, and do it on the taxpayers' dime.

Minister, isn't Ms. Hutcheon's disregard for the way tax dollars are spent the real symbol of the hollowness of this government's commitment to restraint?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Beginning in the 2008 budget, we laid out a prudent, very modest rate of growth in expenditures, designed to protect vital public services. Following with that, we have talked in our five-point plan about building partnerships.

We continue to believe in the principles of collective bargaining. We will continue to work toward agreements that, in our view, protect the public interest, recognizing that the men and women on the front lines, whether nurses, doctors, teachers or public servants, continue to earn pay and spend their pay in communities right across Ontario. That's an important principle.

We have outlined more than a billion dollars in savings throughout the course of this year. We enhanced that by an additional \$110 million in the fall statement.

We will continue to take a prudent, balanced, careful approach to managing the affairs of Ontario so that we can protect vital public services and continue to—

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

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: To the Premier—and I trust that viewers and listeners are noting that the minis-

ter is not addressing in any way, shape or form the specifics I'm raising.

I have a little more regarding this government's hollow commitment to restraint and their poster-girl appointee, Ms. Hutcheon.

Premier, Ms. Hutcheon drew almost half a million dollars in salary in 2007. We would hope that she and your other appointees could pay for their own perks without sticking it to taxpayers, but in March of this year, taxpayers paid \$300 to have the folks at Auto Groom detail her car for her high-society stay in New York.

Premier, do you endorse this kind of spending by Liberal appointees?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I thank the member for the question.

As the member knows, anybody working for the public sector should always be mindful of their actions and how they may be perceived by others.

The WSIB has policies in place for travel, for expenditures. The WSIB is audited regularly by the Provincial Auditor. They do have a finance committee, they do have a board, and they do look to make prudent decisions when it comes to their policies, when it comes to their travel.

In the case of Ms. Hutcheon, I can say that she was somebody who was appointed under the Conservative government and worked as a deputy minister at the Ministry of Labour.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I guess it's appropriate that the minister responded to this—he's the guy responsible for kicking business in this province in the knees when they're down.

I want to go back to Ms. Hutcheon again. You appointed her to the WSIB. It's not only detailing her car; taxpayers paid her gas bills for weekends at the cottage, and they paid over \$2,000 in meals for her each year. Minister, is this why you personally passed a law to saddle small businesses in this province with an extra \$11,000 in WSIB premiums? Is this just to cover Ms. Hutcheon's expense account?

1040

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I would like to thank the member for the question and the opportunity to thank all those members in this House who stood up in favour of mandatory coverage for construction workers, a high-risk industry, who stood up for fairness in this House. Thank you very much to all the members who stood up for fairness, for a level playing field, who stood up for 400,000 construction workers so that when they go to work they know that they're safe, they're being taken care of, and if they are hurt or injured, that they do have those benefits that will be brought forward to them by the WSIB. I thank those members. For the other ones who did not stand up for those 400,000 construction workers, shame on you.

Interjection.

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

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Well, someone over here suggested the minister's next dinner will be on Pat Dillon—no doubt.

The Premier is supposed to set an example in this province, and he has done nothing to curb the clear sense of entitlement shared by senior government officials, especially Liberal appointees. We've identified outrageous spending on the taxpayers' tab for over a six-month period.

Two years ago, Jill Hutcheon attended a conference in Boston, again at taxpayer expense, called "Dealing with an Angry Public." Its purpose: "How can you avoid disaster when your organization has triggered a crisis that threatens your reputation and your image?"

Minister, does your WSIB president intend to use the lessons she learned from that conference to curb her outrageous spending?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I say to the member that as public servants, we should all be mindful of expenses, but I also say to Mr. Runciman, leader of the official opposition, who spent hundreds of dollars in fancy Yorkville restaurants, why should taxpayers—I say, sir, why should taxpayers pay \$140 for a Bistro 990 bill of yours?

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Howard Hampton: My question is for the Premier—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. The member from Davenport and the Minister of Transportation.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The Minister of Transportation is defying the Chair.

Leader of the third party.

Mr. Howard Hampton: My question is for the Premier. Yesterday, the McGuinty government unveiled its so-called "restraint" package. My question is this: How can the Premier describe a \$3,000-a-year pay increase for himself as restraint?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Beginning in the March 2008 budget, we laid out a number of restraint measures that were designed to help see Ontario through what we perceived then to be very challenging times. Clearly, things have become even more difficult. I think people around the world recognize that. In the fall statement, we added on a number of other measures up to \$110 million. Yesterday, we took still further measures. We believe these are the appropriate steps to take under the current circumstances. We continue to work with our partners in the broader public sector, with our bargaining agents, to find a way to manage our expenses in a way that protects public services, particularly health care and education.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Howard Hampton: Well, the question was very specific to the Premier. The Premier calls this restraint. A \$3,000 increase in pay amounts to about 10 weeks of work for someone on minimum wage and the Premier

hands himself that pay increase and says he's restraining himself. This is on top of the 40% pay increase the Premier gave to himself over the last 19 months. My question is this: How does the Premier's \$3,000 pay increase, which he calls restraint, help the hundreds of thousands of Ontarians who are now out of work under the McGuinty government?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Broadly, in terms of the challenges before us, we will continue to work with our partners. We will continue to find restraint measures that we feel are balanced and reflect the broad need of the public we serve as well as the taxpayers who must pay the bill. We will continue to build partnerships. We will continue, for instance, unlike previous governments, to bargain freely and collectively to find agreements with the unions both within the public sector and the broader public sector. There's no doubt there are difficulties. There's no doubt that families are facing enormous challenges. The packages we're putting forward, the packages we've laid out since March of last year, are designed to protect vital public services and, yes, keep people in the public service working because those people pay taxes, go shopping and help—

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: The Premier gives himself the equivalent of 10 weeks of full-time work by someone working for minimum wage and he calls it restraint for himself. He's really hurting as a result of this restraint. My question was, how does this help the hundreds of thousands of workers who've lost their jobs under the McGuinty government? For example, 130 workers at Longlac industries have found that they are out of work now—not a temporary shutdown but a permanent shutdown. What does the Premier's \$3,000 pay increase, that he calls restraint, do for those 130 workers who have no paycheque now?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We will continue to take restraint initiatives that we believe protect vital public services. There's no doubt that families are challenged with unemployment, whether in the forestry sector or the manufacturing sector. There's no doubt that the programs we have introduced are helping to alleviate that problem, whether you are talking about AMIS, the Next Generation of Jobs Fund or the forestry sector protection fund. I remind the member opposite: You, sir, voted against every one of those initiatives.

Finally, unlike the member opposite, we will not impose freezes on our public servants. We will not impose freezes on the broader public sector. We don't believe in stripping collective agreements; we don't believe in that approach. As we said, as part of our five-point plan we will continue to work with our partners. Our partners include the unions that represent our employees and the unions that represent employees in the broader public sector and in the education sector. That's the balanced, right, prudent approach in difficult times, with a plan that will do more to help people through the challenging times.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Howard Hampton: Again to the Premier: I'm not surprised that the Premier doesn't want to answer the questions about his own \$3,000 pay increase, which he calls restraint. But my question is this: Premier, we have seen hospital after hospital cutting nurses, cutting hospital services and cutting hospital workers. The latest today is Burlington's Joseph Brant hospital, which is cutting another 25 positions because of chronic underfunding from the McGuinty government. How does the Premier's \$3,000 pay increase, which he calls restraint, help that hospital and those 25 hospital workers who are now out of work?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Thank you very much. I'm pleased to take the opportunity to speak to this issue. I know that the members opposite raised the issue of health care funding. Again, just for purposes of accuracy, which I find is always helpful in this place, we have increased funding overall for health care in the past five years by some 37%. Hospitals have received increases of funding that total over 30%. The fact of the matter is that there have been dramatic new increases in funding for virtually every aspect of our health care sector and new aspects which had not been funded in the past. We have more doctors, we have more nurses and we have shorter wait times as a result of those investments. That's the truth. There is now more money for health care, including hospitals, than ever before.

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Howard Hampton: The Premier says there is more money for hospitals. Under the McGuinty government, more of the health budget is going to profit-driven Bay Street corporations, which are more involved in the health care system under the McGuinty government than ever before in the history of Ontario. That's what's really happening.

But again, the Premier fails to answer the question: How does his \$3,000 pay increase, which he calls restraint, help all those health care workers and hospital workers who are being laid off at hospital after hospital across the province? But more than that, while the Premier says he's restraining himself, we find more children in Ontario living in poverty and we find more children in Ontario being forced to go to food banks. How does the \$3,000 pay increase the Premier gave to himself, which he calls restraint, help those kids who have to go to a food bank and those kids who are more and more forced into poverty?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: A few things—there was so much raised in that particular question. One is, my friend is mired in an old ideological swamp that says that you can't enlist the support of the private sector when it comes to building more hospitals more quickly to meet the needs of Ontario families. I'm not prepared to support that kind of argument.

With respect to help for our children, I know that my honourable colleague is looking very much forward to the announcement that we're going to be making tomor-

row. The fact of the matter is, we're going to move forward. We'll take a decided step. It will be a progressive step when it comes to providing more support for our children growing up in poverty in the province of Ontario. I've said before that it's one thing to lend a hand to poor kids in good times, but it's particularly challenging to do so in challenging times. Notwithstanding our times, we will find a way to move forward.

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: The Premier was so challenged, he gave himself a \$3,000 pay increase on top of the 40% pay increase he's given himself over the last 19 months. Obviously, Premier, you can't be too challenged when you can find that kind of money for those kinds of pay increases for yourself and every other MPP.

Again, I return to the question. How does this so-called restraint package, which is very much a phony restraint package—I think that's obvious to everyone—help the hundreds of thousands who are unemployed in Ontario? How does that help people who are struggling on a minimum wage that is less than a living wage? How does that help kids, more and more of whom are living in poverty? How does that help kids, more and more of whom are being forced to go to food banks? How does any of this so-called restraint package—phony restraint package—do anything—

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I know that my honourable colleague does understand, although he's not prepared to demonstrate that today, that we have been pursuing prudence and responsible management of the people's finances for five years now. In our first mandate, we found over \$800 million in savings. As the Minister of Finance mentioned a moment ago, in our recent fall economic statement we indicated we'll find another \$108 million in savings in there.

Yesterday, there was also another announcement, and we indicated that it would be somewhat modest given the numbers that we are dealing with, but we are not prepared to do what my friend wants us to do. He wants us to impose a wage freeze on our public service and the broader public sector. I'm not prepared to do that. We are at the table; we are engaged in collective bargaining. We will pursue that responsibly both on behalf of those people with whom we are privileged to work and on behalf of taxpayers, the people whom we all work for.

MINISTRY SPENDING

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is for the Minister of Government Services. Why did the minister authorize \$108,000 in hotel spending at Canada's most luxurious hotel, the Fairmont Royal York, during the 2008 recession?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I'd appreciate a few more details from the member with respect to the specific expenditure that she's talking about. We, of course, have

a process—excuse my voice—in government traditionally, where we're looking at facilities or whatever, where we take bids for various services that are available. We do that in a clear and transparent way and we do the best to contain the costs whenever we can.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: So he didn't know the question, but he apparently joins John Cusack, Bill Clinton and Queen Elizabeth II as one of the most famous guests at the Royal York Hotel. Spending \$108,000 at the Royal York Hotel during a recession is a blatant misuse of taxpayer dollars. Still more upsetting, if he would like more details: His hotel and conference budget grew by 78% in the last year over the year previously, during a recession, to half a million dollars. It's outrageous.

Can the minister tell the Ontario public why, at a time when taxpayers are tightening their belts, his department is opening up the purse strings for stays at the Royal York Hotel and other luxury hotels in this province?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: We're absolutely committed, in our ministry, to prudent and responsible fiscal management—I hope Hansard's picking this up. Our annual engagement sessions for staff and managers take place all across Ontario in various places, and they're chosen only after carefully comparing multiple locations based on pricing, facilities, services received and past experience at the venue that's being used.

That's my response to a general question. I still haven't heard any specifics from the honourable member.

BREASTFEEDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: My question is for the Premier. Can the Premier explain to the breastfeeding women in the gallery and to all Ontarians why Ontario is one of only two provinces without a breastfeeding strategy, when research has shown that breastfeeding lowers health care costs, improves health outcomes for both moms and babies, and is recognized worldwide as the perfect food for infants?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health Promotion.

Hon. Margaret R. Best: First of all, I'd like to thank the member opposite for the question. I certainly would like to take this opportunity to welcome all the mothers who are in the Legislature today with all those beautiful babies. Welcome.

I would like to also say that as a mother of three children, I certainly understand the need to support all mothers during this very important step of life. We continue to provide Ontarians with support they need to raise their children to become healthy, active adults. I am a mother who breast-fed my children and certainly appreciate the importance of breastfeeding. I feel privileged to be part of a government that not only understands this issue, but supports it with programs. This government introduced the Motherisk program at the Hospital for Sick Children to support—

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: We want the province to commit to a breastfeeding strategy. It is the first step in meeting the WHO and UNICEF Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative. Did you know that only two hospitals in Ontario, two local health units and one community health centre have achieved this status? Most public health units are only able to provide a limited amount of help to breastfeeding mothers. The stats speak for themselves: 90% of women want to breastfeed; 20% succeed.

This is not enough. Women need more support in order to do what's best for their babies. The mothers and babies who are with us today in the gallery want to know, why is it that Ontario continues to treat women's and children's health as not worthy of investment?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: Again, I want to say that we certainly support all mothers who want to breastfeed their children. We understand the importance of healthy children and how important breastfeeding is to that, and we want to continue to work with our mothers, with communities and also with the member opposite. I certainly am willing to sit down with her to talk about this issue and find ways in which we can continue to support our mothers, our infants and our children—these beautiful children who are here today and all the children in Ontario.

We certainly feel that it is our privilege to be able to help to support breastfeeding. Breastfeeding is such an important step in the life of a mother and her child, and we want to ensure that this important step is supported and continued. We also brought in the Ontario midwifery program, which includes breastfeeding instruction with midwife support. In addition, our Telehealth line links mothers to registered nurses who can answer questions and provide advice regarding this very important stage in a mother's and an infant's life—

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

1100

PEDIATRIC FORENSIC PATHOLOGY INQUIRY

Mr. Bill Mauro: It's now been two months since Justice Stephen Goudge made his recommendations on pediatric forensic pathology in the wake of the terrible tragedies caused by the work of Dr. Charles Smith. At that time, the Attorney General committed to develop a compensation framework for those who suffered injustice and to establish a medical-legal review of convictions involving shaken baby deaths.

My question is for the Attorney General: What steps have been taken to act on these commitments?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I thank the member for the question. I know the members of the House and all parties are very thankful to Justice Goudge for the important work that he did, and determined to make sure that we move forward and remove the shadow of suspicion or right injustices where they've occurred.

Yesterday, I announced the formation of two teams to proceed with two of Justice Goudge's recommendations.

One, he recommended that the province determine if we could set up a viable compensation framework for those who had been affected by Dr. Smith's work.

I'm pleased that former Associate Chief Justice of Ontario Coulter Osborne, Bonnie Tough, who's a civil litigator, and Michele Smith from our ministry have agreed to set up that team. We also set up a medical-legal team to review all of the shaken baby cases, and I will speak about—

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

Mr. Bill Mauro: I thank the Attorney General for that update.

I was wondering if the Attorney General could elaborate further on the steps ahead as he sees them. I would like to know what kind of work the Dr. Smith compensation framework advice committee and the Shaken-Baby death review team will be doing over the coming months. Would the AG be able to tell us what steps are ahead?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: The team with respect to the so-called shaken baby cases—let's be clear. There are 142 cases that are going to be reviewed. Nobody is suggesting that anything at the time of their disposition through the court process was incorrect. The issue that Justice Goudge identified is that the science has evolved. So we want to make sure that we all got it right.

We've got a medical-legal team. Former Associate Chief Justice of the Ontario Court of Justice Donald Ebbs is going to be joined by Marie Henein, a defence council; Mary Nethery of the ministry; Dr. Michael Pollanen, Ontario's chief forensic pathologist; and Dr. Dirk Huyer, regional supervising coroner. What they're going to be doing, similar to what was done in Great Britain several years ago, is be reviewing all of these to see if any require further investigation. We want to make sure that we got it right.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Peter Shurman: My question is for the Premier. Premier, yesterday you announced a hiring freeze on full-time positions in your government and the Ontario public service, claiming that Ontario has to tighten its belt. Apparently, that does not apply to you, as you just recently hired a sixth—yes, a sixth—communications adviser at over \$80,000 a year. Perhaps you feel your image needs improvement or maybe another staffer can find a positive spin on Ontario being a have-not province. Either way, you must be thrilled that you were able to squeeze in yet one more full-time employee before your announcement.

Can you please explain to Ontarians why you need another communications adviser, and why taxpayers are footing the bill for more staff in the Premier's office, when so many around the province have no job at all?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Of course, I have an office budget, and we exercise our discretion in the most responsible fashion possible. I think my friend does not

have the benefit of having been here during the course of the previous government, and he might want to check out—I think it was Gord Haugh. I can't recall the exact figure—

Interjections.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: —\$350,000 comes to mind. I think if we were to make those kinds of comparisons, an objective observer would come to the conclusion that we continue to act responsibly and with prudence, especially given our circumstances.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Shurman: Perhaps the Premier wants to deal in the past. I want to deal in the present. Premier, your answer only shows that you are more interested in spinning your message than leading by example and showing real restraint in your own spending, more interested in spinning your message than helping Ontarians put food on the table. Premier, is this new communications adviser also going to get the 1.5% pay raise announced yesterday or will you finally practise what you preach and trim your bloated office staff?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: In terms of office spending overall, between 2006-07 and 2007-08, on a budget that is about \$2.9 million, I think it went up about \$11,000 year over year. I need to confirm this, but I think the honourable colleague is talking about our replacing someone who is on maternity leave. I think that's what we are talking about but I'll look to confirm that.

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

ENERGY POLICIES

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Premier: Would he please explain why world-renowned scientist David Suzuki quit his voluntary role in the government's powerWISE energy conservation advertising campaign?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

Hon. George Smitherman: I want to say to the honourable member that yesterday was a day when I was privileged to participate with Dr. Suzuki and the alliance around the green energy act to see diaries from his summer events. I spoke with him on the phone yesterday, as did the Premier. I think that all of the people in Ontario can look forward very soon to two new David Suzuki ads on the powerWISE campaign as part of the continuing series.

But the honourable member raises a legitimate point, for sure. We have some work to do to convince Dr. Suzuki to continue to play that role, but I'm pretty confident of it. We demonstrated last night, point on point, our desire to work alongside those at the alliance of the green energy act to enhance further Ontario's adoption of renewable energy, a primary concern of Dr. Suzuki and one that we share.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Last night at a public forum, Dr. Suzuki said to Minister Smitherman: "When ... you said that nuclear is non-negotiable and [you were] building ... two new plants, I quit powerWISE. I said that's it for me. And I regret it because those were really powerful ads. [But] it became clear that the government didn't give a shit about showing that you could actually reduce"—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I remind the honourable member that she cannot say indirectly what you are prohibited from saying directly. I would ask the honourable member to withdraw the comment.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I withdraw, Mr. Speaker, but Dr. Suzuki doesn't. Why won't the Premier listen to Dr. Suzuki and put a hold on building costly non-renewable nuclear plants until the government has fully pursued the untapped potential for conservation and renewable energy in Ontario?

Hon. George Smitherman: Maybe if the honourable member had taken the time to participate in the forum—she didn't; she wasn't there—she also would have laid out any one of the number of quotes that Dr. Suzuki offered which are extraordinarily positive about the efforts we've undertaken. At the heart of the matter we do have an honest difference of opinion. We do believe, in the province of Ontario, that nuclear energy, which has been providing around 50% of our base load energy for decades now, continues to be a necessity in Ontario. We're going to continue to work with Dr. Suzuki, with the alliance and the green energy act to enhance Ontario's opportunities for the adoption of renewable energy. I do recommend to the honourable member that, instead of taking only one comment that suits her needs, she take the opportunity to learn a little about all the things that were discussed last night. I think it was an informative discussion overall.

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

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mrs. Van Bommel: My question is for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. I understand that you recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Anishinabek Nation of Ontario to establish a bilateral round table. Some of the communities that are located in my riding are members of the Anishinabek nation, and I appreciate how significant an agreement like that is to them. Generation after generation, governments have failed to make significant progress in improving opportunities and the quality of life for our First Nations and Metis. Would the minister tell us how memorandums of understanding like the one that he just signed contribute to improving opportunities for aboriginal communities?

1110

Hon. Brad Duguid: I thank the member for the question, and I thank her for her advice and guidance as she works with First Nations communities within her riding as well.

The Anishinabek round table will provide us with an historic opportunity to work together, government to

government, to discuss issues of mutual concern related to health, social services, education, lands, resources and many other issues.

This agreement helps cement the bond between the Anishinabek Nation and the government of Ontario, but there's a personal side to this as well: It cements the bond between me, as Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, and Grand Chief Beaucage. Grand Chief Beaucage is a visionary leader who has shown real leadership on social issues such as substance abuse prevention and enhancing economic development opportunities for First Nations communities.

We are making historic gains in building a strong relationship with the First Nations, Metis and Inuit people of this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I'm confident that you will not let this House lose sight of the importance of the work that we still have to do in conjunction with our Metis and First Nations partners.

The efforts of this government have been making an important relationship with aboriginal people in Ontario and are certainly evident in my riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex.

In addition to the creation of the Anishinabek round table, I know that the transfer of Ipperwash Provincial Park to the Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation is currently being worked on. Minister, could you please tell us more about this initiative?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Absolutely. I'm looking forward to visiting the member's riding soon to meet with the Kettle and Stony Point First Nation and spend some time in beautiful Ipperwash park.

We've established a joint Ipperwash park resolution table with the Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation and the residents of Aazhoodena, the First Nation members who reside at Camp Ipperwash and Ipperwash park. The resolution table is developing an interim plan with the local community to determine how the land will be used and managed until the transfer of the park is completed. This government is acting on the recommendations of the Ipperwash inquiry and we're building stronger relationships.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who worked so hard to make all of this possible, in particular Sam George. His demonstration of courage and perseverance makes him a role model not only for the First Nations communities, but all Ontarians.

I welcome all members to join us this afternoon as we present a member's—

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

MINISTRY SPENDING

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, at a time of fiscal uncertainty, you and your ministry refuse to tighten your belts. You're spending almost \$10,000 a day on hotels, and

there's no sign of stopping. Minister, can you tell Ontarians why you are cutting \$25 million from their school repair budget when you increased your hotel and conference budget by 45.6% in one year?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The reality is that in order to provide professional development opportunities, in order to be able to provide training opportunities, and in order, right now, to deal with labour issues, we need to have space in which those conversations can happen.

We are a government that has worked with people in the sector, with teachers, with education assistants, with principals, to make sure that they have the opportunities to come together, to share their learnings, and to improve the learning opportunities for kids in schools. That takes time, and it takes opportunities for people to come together.

The reality is that there is not always a government room available for that kind of interaction, so those hotel costs are incurred in aid of those kinds of labour and training—

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

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: We've known for two years, Minister, that we have been heading into very turbulent economic times, and restraint should have been part of the plan. The answers that you're giving to the question today don't show any of that priority-setting. Your refusal to rein in your spending during tough times is really an affront to the hard-working taxpayers of Ontario who are losing their jobs and finding themselves in very unfortunate, difficult, challenging times. They're being asked to tighten their belts, but the Premier is telling them to go out and spend, spend more money. Imagine what that accommodation money could do in a classroom.

Minister, will you acknowledge that your financial priorities are not where they should be and address the fiscal mismanagement in your ministry now?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Here's what I'll acknowledge: What we're committed to is improving the learning of our teachers, improving the learning of our students and improving the opportunities for professional development for all of our education workers.

When I look at 2001-02, \$311,000 was spent at just two Toronto hotels by the Ministry of Education under that government's watch. The priority then had nothing to do with professional development for teachers. It had nothing to do with improved conditions for students. It had nothing to do with high-quality, publicly funded education. On this side of the House, we believe in high-quality, publicly funded education. We believe in better conditions for our kids in our schools, better learning opportunities.

The members opposite are on record as believing in private education. They are not champions of publicly funded education, so I wouldn't expect them to understand that we need—

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

CHILD CARE

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. I've raised the issue of temporary care assistance funding in this House many times. The minister's responses have attempted to muddy the issue, wrongly accusing me of calling for means-testing, calling for elimination of the program, calling me a whistle-blower. This minister needs to remember that it was the grandparents who came to speak with her and raise their issues and that I have helped them by bringing their issues to this House.

It's almost Christmas. Will the minister respond to the season and direct that another memorandum be sent out to ensure temporary care assistance eligibility for all at-risk grandchildren? Merry Christmas.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Again, this member is trying to scare grandparents and every other individual who is taking care of grandchildren. This government is supporting these grandparents. We have met with grandparents many, many times, and I'm always open to meet with them.

But they all came to me with information that they received from this member—information that was wrong. Even general manager Joe-Anne Priel from Hamilton is supporting what the government here is doing. She is saying that the way that Hamilton is looking after these cases is on an individual basis. There's no time limit. The rule that she is following now is the rule that she was following last—

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

Mr. Paul Miller: Stay tuned. I'll be calling the minister on those accusations.

When the grandparents of ROCK, Raising Our Children's Kids, met with the minister in June, they asked that those families cut off since 2004 be reinstated and that those whose applications have not been accepted since 2004 be accepted. Rather than address the basic issue, the ministry issued punitive new eligibility criteria, causing huge upset for these at-risk children.

Will the minister turn her attention to the actual request from that June meeting and issue a directive clearly stating that those families cut off from TCA since 2004 be reinstated and those applications not accepted since 2004 now be accepted?

1120

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Again, we have two notes here: one from the Peterborough OW administrator, and this time from the Hamilton administrator, that the rules have not been changed. The rules that they are following are the same rules that they were following before. Again she said here: "It should be noted that province-wide, the city of Hamilton has one of the highest ratios of active temporary care per capita. The number of temporary care cases has remained consistent at approximately 260 cases or 3%"—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I ask the honourable member to withdraw the comment that I believe I heard.

Mr. Paul Miller: What was that, Mr. Speaker? What did you hear? I didn't say anything wrong, Mr. Speaker. What did I say? Would you please tell me what I said?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Would you just withdraw the comment, please?

Mr. Paul Miller: I don't know what I'm supposed to withdraw. What did I—I don't know what I said.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Unparliamentary language that I believe you said under your breath.

Mr. Paul Miller: Mr. Speaker, I think you're picking on me, but I'll withdraw.

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

USE OF TASERS

Mr. Khalil Ramal: My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Many of my constituents of London-Fanshawe have expressed concern over the use of tasers by police services in Ontario. These are concerns that I share. As the number of these types of weapons has increased in police forces across the province and the country, questions have been raised about the procedures surrounding their use, the qualifications needed for an officer to carry one and the training required to use one safely.

I recognize that police officers have a very difficult and challenging job, and I know I speak for all members when I express my appreciation for their commitment to public safety. However, I need to ask the minister, what safeguards are in place to ensure the proper usage of and training for tasers in Ontario?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: There is absolutely no question that we have to ensure that Ontarians feel safe. We have to take every measure possible to ensure that happens. Many of my constituents have expressed concerns with regard to the use of tasers as well.

There are a number of types of weapons that have been included in police forces across Ontario. The taser is an option for the police officer to use. It is an option to lethal use of force, and we understand that police officers have limited usage of tasers; they go to front-line supervisors or they go to critical response teams. In the event that a police officer has to use a taser, there is a requirement for him or her to file a full report.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I want to thank the minister for his response. What I'm wondering is whether or not the minister has plans to evaluate the policies and procedures currently in place for officers to carry these types of devices.

I know that the RCMP public complaints commission just this year completed their study into the use of tasers by the RCMP and made several recommendations with respect to training and policies for police forces. Can the

minister advise the House and tell us if he is putting something in place similar to the RCMP in order to make sure the people of Ontario are safe and the police are using all this equipment in a professional way?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: Speaker, he should feel very comfortable that, yes, indeed, my ministry is undergoing a review of tasers. We're doing that in conjunction with our policing partners, with our police standards experts and with our municipalities. This review began earlier this year. We're hoping that the review will be finished some time in the new year. This review will certainly look at best practices, not only in Ontario and across North America but also in the United Kingdom.

At the end of the day, we want to ensure that Ontario is the model for the way tasers are used. We are proud of the oversight and the accountability that is in place now, and we want to build on that strategy.

ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. Tim Hudak: A question to the Premier: At the end of the day yesterday, your finance minister dribbled out a rather meagre, so-called restraint package. But let's look at your overall record, Premier.

As you know, the McGuinty government has added more jobs to government payroll than all of the other provinces combined. Under the McGuinty government, the sunshine list bloated by some 27% last year, to the point where now the number of government workers on the sunshine list of \$100,000 or over is equal to the size of the city of Welland, and there are currently 154 job postings online worth \$11 million in salaries.

Premier, given that record, shouldn't your minister have done something significant rather than simply symbolic?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: As the Minister of Finance has indicated, this was only the third step in a series of ongoing measures to demonstrate restraint on behalf of Ontario taxpayers. I don't know if my colleague is suggesting that we lay off those nurses, those MRI/CT technologists, the personal support workers, the home care workers, the public health unit inspectors, the water inspectors, the meat inspectors, the labour inspectors, the teachers, the librarians, the guidance counsellors, the youth workers, the autism therapists, the police officers and the many others whom we've now hired. Is he now recommending that we let those people go?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'd actually like to see him go after his new kingdom of spin doctors, to the Premier with the largest entourage in the history of the province of Ontario, that follows him around from place to place. If anybody is laying off the nurses, the MRI technicians, the front-line health care workers, it's his health minister who is laying those people off in the province of Ontario today.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

Please continue.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Thank you, Speaker.

The Premier also knows that today is the one-month anniversary of Ontario becoming a have-not province. For the first time in the history of Confederation, Ontario is on the welfare rolls of Canada. So not only didn't you bring forward any kind of restraint in spending, you have yet to produce any plan to grow us out of have-not status.

Premier, when it comes to finding a way to grow us, you become a have-not Premier. Where is your plan to create jobs in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I guess a few things on this score. Number one, I would really love to get the support of my honourable colleague opposite on this matter. He's adopting a line that comes out of Ottawa and it's something that transcends partisan colour in Ottawa, I must say, as well. The truth is that this year Ontario taxpayers have sent \$23.5 billion to Ottawa for distribution to the rest of the country. The truth is, this year there are only three net contributors to the federation: Ontario, Alberta and BC, and if you add the other two together, we supply 40% more than the other two combined.

With respect to our public service costs, I want to tell you once again that we have reduced the overall cost of government administration from 15% in 2003-04 to 12% in 2007-08. Finally, we have the lowest number of public service employees per capita of any province in Canada.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The question is to the Premier. Why does this government still not have an IBI/ABA pilot program in place being run with regional agencies and school boards almost two years after being told that's exactly what's needed?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Education.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you, Mr. Premier. I think the member opposite knows full well that I have been working very closely with the Minister of Children and Youth Services; that, in fact, we have seven pilots right now in the province where the IBI providers are working with the education system to provide a continuum of service. That's what parents have asked us for. Parents have said, "I want to know when my child is ready to move into the school system and then I want to know that the supports are there for my child." Those pilots are in place. We are working on doubling the pilots for next year and we're learning from what we've done already. In fact, the results look to be very, very promising for kids being able to have that continuum of service that they're looking for.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This minister knows very well that a couple of hours of professional activity for teaching assistants is not enough to help children with ABA or IBI in the classroom. The reality is, parents are very well aware that their children are not getting the supports they need. They're not getting the assistance they need to have an equal opportunity at education as every other child in this province. The minister knows also that tomorrow,

the Supreme Court of Canada is going to be ruling on this government's obligation to provide IBI/ABA to all Ontario children with autism.

My question is this: When is this government going to get serious about its obligation and stop forcing parents to sell their homes to be able to afford the services that are needed for their children, for IBI and ABA?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: What this minister knows is that moral indignation is not going to solve this problem. What's going to solve this problem is investing in training. We have spent \$15 million on training staff to understand what the ABA approach is and how it works. We are creating multidisciplinary teams, because one of the things that parents have said is that all of the service providers need to be wrapped around an individual child, because when one service provider isn't talking to the school system and isn't talking to another service provider, the child doesn't get the integrated service that he or she needs.

What the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and I are doing: We are coordinating services, we are making sure that those community services dovetail with what's being offered in the schools, and the training for our educators is ongoing. It's not a one-time fix. It's something that is ongoing, and we will continue to work to meet those kids' needs.

LAKE SIMCOE

Mr. Mike Colle: I have a question to the Minister of the Environment. Monday was a historic day for the residents of the Lake Simcoe watershed. As you know, that precious lake is very fragile. After 200 years with so many people living around it, so much recreational activity, all the boats, all the lack of attention, finally the government has done something to protect this precious, gorgeous Lake Simcoe. As Annabel Slaight, the co-founder of the Ladies of the Lake, has said, we are getting to the protection of this great lake and beautiful watershed just in the nick of time—just in time, Minister.

The question I have for you is, can you outline to this House and to all the people who care so much about Lake Simcoe what kind of co-operative actions you will continue to undertake in the future to make sure everybody plays a role in protective actions for this wonderful—

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

Hon. John Gerretsen: First of all, I'd like to thank the member for his ongoing support, because he has been concerned about the lake, as has the member from Barrie, as have been members from all sides of the House. I'd first of all like to thank all of the members of the House who actually passed this bill unanimously, which I think is very significant. The bill is all about restoring the health and the ecosystem of the lake; it's all about reducing the phosphorus levels in the lake; it's about re-introducing the cold water fishery that's in the lake; it's about dealing with the climate change issues, and also dealing with the invasive species that are now attacking

the lake. It calls for a plan, and we're currently developing the plan. There has been an awful lot of consultation with an awful lot of people about this. I want to make sure that the health of the lake is absolutely protected. That's what it's all about.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Mike Colle: Minister, as we know, the passage of this bill is a landmark event, but it's only the first step. There has to be a follow-up now, and what will be in the follow-up to protect—

Interjections.

Mr. Mike Colle: They laugh at this lake, but it's not only the lake; it's all the watershed around it. The land is also important because, if you pollute the land around the lake, you pollute the lake. The NDP doesn't understand that. Explain that to them, Mr. Minister.

Hon. John Gerretsen: Yes. It's enabling legislation that will now allow us to develop a plan to protect the lake and the watershed, which includes the 35 different rivers and streams that flow into the lake as well.

We're in the process of doing that, but it couldn't have been done without the tremendous help over the last 20 years or so by LSEMS, the Lake Simcoe environmental management strategy, by the Ladies of the Lake, by Campaign Lake Simcoe, by the stakeholder groups that we had involved. It's all going to be based on science. We certainly thank the science community for making sure we're on the right track, and the stakeholder advisory committee as well.

This plan that we're developing is one that we can all be proud of. Years from now, children and their children will thank us for protecting this lake, which, without the action this government has taken, simply wouldn't have happened.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. The time for question period has expired. This House stands recessed until 3 o'clock this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1134 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Brad Duguid: It's my honour to introduce to the Legislature Sam George, his wife, Veronica, and his friends and family, Murray Klippenstein, Deputy Grand Chief Glen Hare, Bob Goulais, Tammy Jackson, Jeffrey Jackson, Irvin George, Basil Alexander, Laurie Hardwick, Nathan Wright, Elizabeth Smith-VanBeek, Alex Farquhar, and Katherine Hensel. They're here to honour Sam and his good work, and I thank them for coming and joining us today.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: In the gallery are my constituents Brooke and Jade Bordman, six-year-old twins from the riding of Cambridge who suffer from type 1 diabetes, along with their parents, Terry and Beata Borden, and their older sister Fallon.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm very pleased to introduce, in the visitors' gallery, two of my constituents, Jim and Sue Dacosta, who have been big supporters of Bethesda

House, a women's shelter in my riding of Durham. I'm pleased to welcome them here today.

LEGISLATIVE STAFF

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Today, we recognized a number of staff from the Ontario Legislature and I want to take this opportunity to recognize them formally in the chamber.

From the Office of the Clerk: Eileen Rosemond, 35 years of service; Maureen Henry, 25 years; Robert Cowieson, 25 years; Deborah Ceasar, 25 years.

From the legislative services division: Karyn Leonard, 35 years; Kathryn MacGregor, 30 years; Janet McKenzie, 30 years; Rocco Rampino, 30 years; Louise Tomlinson, 30 years; Ambrose Chiu, 30 years; James Floros, 30 years; Dimitrios Jim Petselis, 25 years; Estelita Chan, 25 years; Susan Bercasio, 25 years.

From the Sergeant-at-Arms division: John Fraser, 35 years; Humphrey Lau, 30 years; Joe Alaksa, 25 years.

From the legislative library: Janice Cole Mabee, 25 years; Elaine Campbell, 25 years; Rosie Salvo, 25 years; Philip Kaye, 25 years.

Congratulations to all of these individuals. We thank them for their work and their support of all of us here at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

LONG POINT

Mr. Toby Barrett: I rise today to talk about what could be one of the world's seven wonders of nature, Long Point. It's a sandspit in the rich riding of Haldimand-Norfolk.

Long Point juts over 30 miles into Lake Erie and has already claimed the fame of being Canada's longest sandspit and may well be the world's longest sandspit in fresh water.

Long Point can be seen from outer space and is usually a fixture on television weather maps. Further, Long Point is designated as a world biosphere area by UNESCO.

It's a great place to go in the summer. It has some of the world's longest white, sandy beaches and has become quite a destination for migratory bird lovers. It's also the national headquarters for Bird Studies Canada.

Long Point is truly unique. We feel we're blessed that it's in our area. If you haven't been down to Long Point, I invite you down, and you can see for yourself that it's most deserving of being one of the seven wonders of nature. I ask people to visit www.new7wonders.com before December 31 and cast your vote if you agree. I know that people down in Long Point country would appreciate the support.

COOPER MARSH CONSERVATION AREA

Mr. Jim Brownell: Located on the shores of Lake St. Francis in my riding of Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry, Cooper Marsh Conservation Area is part of the larger Charlottenburgh Marsh. This is one of the most significant wetlands in all of Ontario. Serving as both a wildlife preserve and an education centre under the mandate of the Raisin Region Conservation Authority, Cooper Marsh provides opportunities for visitors, both young and old, to learn more about the great varieties of animals and birds that call the marsh their home.

Walking along the eight kilometres of boardwalks and trails, visitors have an opportunity to see some of the more than 130 species of birds, including the great white egret, the black-crowned heron and the osprey.

Cooper Marsh itself benefits from the support of the Cooper Marsh Conservators, a group of local citizens with a passion for protecting wildlife and wetlands and ensuring this great general public area is open for the public to be informed of the significance of a wildlife refuge. With the support of the St. Lawrence River Institute, the conservators have helped to raise awareness about the flora and fauna of our environment and the responsibilities we have, in terms of protecting the environment.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Cooper Marsh Conservators, the St. Lawrence River Institute and the Raisin Region Conservation Authority for the good work they do all year round to maintain and protect Cooper Marsh. I would also like to encourage all members to come to the riding, visit Cooper Marsh and experience this wonderful wildlife refuge for themselves.

SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: I rise in the House today to recognize the Ontario Principals' Council for their hard work, their dedication, and their commitment to our students and to educators across this province.

Through their efforts, Ontario will continue to graduate the best and the brightest as they prepare our students to enter a competitive global marketplace. Principals set the tone of our schools' learning environment. They create order out of chaos and wear many hats during the course of the day, too many to mention in the time I've been allotted.

I've had the pleasure of meeting with the OPC representatives today, and their interest in overcoming the obstacles to succession planning for principals and teachers struck a real chord with me. We, as legislators, as parents and grandparents, must ensure that our educators are in a strong position that best meets their needs as well as the interests of the schools they work in and the students they serve.

Succession planning is the key to any dynamic organization and our school system is no different. I credit the OPC for raising this issue and I look forward to any opportunity in the near future to assist them with this

objective. Thank you to them for the great work that they do and the legacy that they are leaving us all.

UKRAINIAN GENOCIDE

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I rise in the House today to honour Ukrainian Holodomor survivors. On November 30, people from across London remembered the Ukrainian genocide, better known as the Holodomor, which translates from Ukrainian into “murder by hunger.”

My riding of London–Fanshawe is blessed to have survivors of the Holodomor as citizens. They were the guests of honour at the commemoration held at the London Ukrainian Centre where bread and prayers were offered. Along with representatives from the city, the province and the federal government, we paid our respects to the survivors and those who have moved on to a better place. It was a reminder of the need to be conscious and grateful for being in a peaceful country.

In May of this year, our nation recognized the horrific tragedy as genocide by forced starvation, which killed between seven million and 10 million people, with one third of them being children. Bread was taken from the mouths of the dying and the population was stripped of every possession.

I would like to use this opportunity to encourage my colleagues and fellow Ontarians to read about the Holodomor and participate in any future commemorations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to do it.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr. Ted Arnott: Like all MPPs, my office has received an extraordinary number of e-mails from constituents who want this government to put the brakes on Bill 126. It’s clear the McGuinty government failed to anticipate such a strong public backlash from both young drivers and their parents.

Today, more than 142,000 people are part of the Facebook group to protest this legislation. Many of my constituents share their views, including a 19-year-old who has a standing agreement with his friends to pick them up any time, day or night, if they’ve been drinking. Also concerned is Rein Kao, a father of three who notes that in rural and semi-rural parts of Ontario, this legislation creates far more difficulties than it resolves.

Of course, there is always room for improvement, especially in preventing drinking and driving, but instead of ramming through this hefty 57-page bill that has already ignited such strong opposition, the government must follow the lead of the PC caucus. The government must hold full public hearings on Bill 126.

John Tory has already started the dialogue. Tonight, he will be holding an online discussion about this legislation at ontariopc.com, and I encourage everyone, including the Minister of Health, to log on and participate.

We need a bill that is sensible and enforceable while taking into account the realities of life, especially in rural and small-town Ontario. Let’s take the time to get this right.

1510

UNIVERSITY LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I was just outside, where there is a demonstration of about 300 people who are sessional contract workers at York University. They are worried, because they say, and I say, we are witnessing across Ontario a move away from full-time secure jobs to part-time, sessional, contract teaching jobs. This, they argue, as I do, is a very disturbing trend.

Members of CUPE do more than half of the classroom teaching at York University—more than half—yet their contracts represent just 7.5% of the university’s \$848-million annual budget. This has been appropriately called the Wal-Martification of universities.

Contract sessional workers have no job security. They live on subsistence wages, and many have to apply for their jobs every four months. While university presidents, vice-presidents and administrators earn anywhere from \$200,000 to \$500,000, excluding their car allowance, house allowance and million-dollar payouts, those who do the bulk of the teaching at York University live on subsistence wages. It’s wrong, and it is outrageous.

We want the students to go back to classes that are taught by workers who are treated fairly and compensated adequately. Forcing them to go back to work is not the answer. Fair compensation—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Eglinton–Lawrence.

SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Mr. Mike Colle: It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House to talk about how far the province of Ontario has come in the area of publicly funded education. Today is Principals’ Day here at the Legislature, and we are celebrating their hard work and dedication to student achievement across the province. The McGuinty government commends the work principals and vice-principals do on a daily basis to help students reach their full potential. They play a critical role in fulfilling educational priorities, increasing student achievement and restoring public confidence in our schools.

To recognize and strengthen the role of principals in our schools, the McGuinty Liberals recently launched the Ontario leadership strategy. This is a comprehensive plan designed to attract skilled and passionate school leaders. Through collaboration with various partners and the Ministry of Education, the strategy provides new principals and vice-principals with the supports they need to develop as leaders so they can continue to support student achievement. The strategy signifies the McGuinty government’s commitment to our education system and understanding that principals are critical to students’ academic achievement.

I encourage all members of this House and all Ontarians to recognize the efforts of Ontario’s principals and vice-principals, not just today but throughout the year. There is a saying among all of us who have had children

and grandchildren in the school system and in our great neighbourhood schools: If you've got a good principal, you've got a great school. That is the combination we need to make education go forward.

CHILD ABUSE

Mr. Jeff Leal: Boost Child Abuse Prevention and Intervention opened an office in my riding of Peterborough on Monday, December 1, 2008. Boost is a community-based agency that works very hard to prevent abuse and violence in the lives of children, young people and their families. With the opening of this office, the central region has a child victim/witness support program with offices in Peterborough and Barrie. This program prepares and supports a child going through the criminal justice system.

Testifying in court is an intimidating experience for most adults. Imagine how frightening it would be for a child. Boost prepares these children for this life experience in a way that reduces further trauma. They also work with the community, providing education to better understand the role a child plays in the justice system, and advocate for children, youth and their families or support persons.

As we know, October was Child Abuse Prevention Month. This year marks the fourth year of Boost's Go Purple for Prevention campaign to raise awareness of abuse and violence in the lives of children. Inspired by Boost, close to 70 cities and towns across this great province have proclaimed October as Child Abuse Prevention Month. I'm pleased to stand here today and congratulate Boost for the excellent work they do, and welcome them to my riding of Peterborough.

TED ROGERS

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Yesterday, December 2, 2008, marked the passing of Ted Rogers, one of Canada's most prominent figures and media icons.

I had the opportunity to meet him on several occasions while working at OMNI television, one of the many TV stations, radio stations and print media that he owned across the country.

I remember him as a towering, cordial man, very passionate about his work. The numerous media articles that were published yesterday used many adjectives to describe Ted Rogers: a great businessman, master of the communication universe in Canada, a philanthropist, a visionary, fearless, risk-embracing in business.

Let me share with this House how I witnessed, in my own way, his pioneering vision and his risk-taking. In 1986, he took over a modest multilingual TV station founded by another Canadian ethnic media pioneer, Dan Iannuzzi. It was a time when few believed in the potential and the growth of ethno-cultural media in Canada. Ted Rogers, however, took the risk willingly. Under his leadership and with his investments, the station grew and now encompasses four different TV stations.

I was able to work in broadcasting in my native language for over two decades while living in Canada, thanks to Ted Rogers's intuition and long-term vision.

One of his favourite sayings was, "The best is yet to come," a phrase which encapsulates his philosophy of life. We could all benefit from adopting this point of view.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mr. Michael Prue: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move its adoption.

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

Bill Pr19, An Act to revive Able Insurance Brokers Ltd.

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

Report adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT (PUPILS WITH DIABETES), 2008

LOI DE 2008 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ÉDUCATION (ÉLÈVES DIABÉTIQUES)

Mr. Martiniuk moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 137, An Act to amend the Education Act to allow pupils with diabetes in schools to receive certain monitoring and treatment / Projet de loi 137, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation pour permettre aux élèves diabétiques dans les écoles de recevoir un suivi et un traitement.

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. Gerry Martiniuk: I dedicate this bill to the Bordman family and all the dedicated families meeting the challenge of type 1 diabetes across our great province. My bill will, for the first time, require that public school staff assist young schoolchildren who suffer from type 1 diabetes with ongoing monitoring of their blood sugar levels and necessary medication.

Just as Sabrina's Law requires treatment of children who suffer from life-threatening allergies, my bill

protects the health of children who suffer from the effects of diabetes and assists them in emergency situations. The intent of this bill is also to protect school staff by prohibiting actions against them arising out of any assistance they would provide.

I ask all of you in the Legislature to support my private member's bill and assist young schoolchildren who suffer from diabetes.

JOSEPH AND WOLF LEBOVIC JEWISH COMMUNITY CAMPUS ACT, 2008

Mr. Sorbara moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr20, An Act respecting the Joseph and Wolf Lebovic Jewish Community Campus.

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): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

1520

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

MAYNARD SAM GEORGE

Hon. Brad Duguid: It's my pleasure and honour to rise in the House today to honour Maynard Sam George, a true hero and advocate who has dedicated his life to seeking a better future for First Nations, Inuit and Metis people in Ontario. Sam is the brother of Dudley George, who tragically lost his life in Ipperwash Provincial Park in September 1995.

Mr. Speaker, I'm standing here with you today in this House as Minister of Aboriginal Affairs only because of Sam George. If it had not been for Sam's efforts to pursue justice for his brother and community, there would not have been an inquiry. This inquiry, headed by Justice Linden, led to the report of the Ipperwash Inquiry, which recommended the creation of a stand-alone Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs.

I must pay tribute at this time to a very close friend and ally of Sam, the Honourable Gerry Phillips, who worked tirelessly with Sam in pursuit of justice and reconciliation. I'd also like to pay tribute to the Honourable Michael Bryant, my predecessor, whose work on both the setting up of this inquiry and the implementation of the recommendations was really highly regarded.

Sam continues to promote healing between communities and to support the implementation of the recommendations of the report. He's not only been fearless in his search for the truth, but also more recently, in dealing with some very significant health issues. We are all confident that Sam George's grace and courage will serve him well during this challenging time.

The report, made possible through the efforts of Sam George, sets out the road map for the government and

First Nations working together to prevent such a tragedy from ever happening again. We've taken the report's recommendations to heart. We learned that after generations of setbacks, we can, must and will do better. We're working with aboriginal leadership to identify priorities for implementation. And I'm happy to tell you that we are making progress together on implementing those recommendations.

Sam asked from the beginning that Ipperwash Provincial Park be returned to the Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation, and last December our government committed to transferring the park. We're working in partnership toward that goal.

We're committed to building a new and stronger relationship with the First Nations and Metis communities, based on trust and respect, as we work together on joint initiatives. The new relationship fund, another of Justice Linden's recommendations, which we announced on May 15, 2008, is designed to promote economic development opportunities in aboriginal communities and build the capacity to consult with government and the private sector on resource development and other important initiatives.

Sam George has built an honourable and lasting legacy. In recognition of his efforts, Sam George was invested into the Order of Ontario in November, the province's highest honour. This tribute will serve as a permanent reminder to the people of Ontario of what Sam has achieved.

I had the privilege to further honour Sam by dedicating my ministry's resource library to his name. This Sam George Resource Library will serve as another permanent reminder of Sam's tireless efforts to increase public awareness of aboriginal issues in this province.

There are few heroes in our society. Heroes only come along a few times in a generation. I can say unequivocally that Sam George is a true modern-day hero. His courage, grace and perseverance in the face of tragedy stand as a model to not only First Nation, Metis and Inuit, but all Ontarians.

Sam, your brother Dudley would be so proud of you today. Your efforts have brought change that can only be described as historic when it comes to improving the relationship between the province of Ontario and First Nation, Metis and Inuit communities.

Sam, on behalf of the government of Ontario, my colleagues throughout this Legislature and the people of Ontario, we honour you today. We honour your wife, Veronica, and your family. I say on behalf of the people of Ontario, meegwetch.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

JOURNÉE INTERNATIONALE DES PERSONNES HANDICAPÉES

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I rise today in the House to honour the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Around the world, people are celebrating

this day and promoting the theme of dignity and justice for everyone.

Cette année est tout à fait spéciale. En mai dernier, les Nations Unies ont introduit la Convention relative aux droits des personnes handicapées. Cette convention prend position en faveur de la protection des droits des personnes handicapées dans le monde entier, y compris au Canada.

Pour les personnes handicapées, l'accessibilité est la clé de l'égalité des droits et la voie qui mène à l'inclusion.

Here in Ontario, we have come a long way in the journey to help improve accessibility and increase equality for people with disabilities. At the turn of the last century, people with disabilities, especially those with developmental disabilities, were treated more as patients rather than citizens, as burdens instead of people. People with disabilities did not have the same access to schools, to employment or to other opportunities. We have overcome many obstacles that prevented people from disabilities from having equal opportunities.

Grâce à la réorganisation des services aux personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle, les personnes handicapées vivent de façon plus autonome, disposent d'un plus grand choix et ont plus de potentiel que jamais. Notre province est aujourd'hui un endroit plus inclusif pour les personnes de toutes compétences, et l'Ontario en bénéficie.

Cependant, tous les obstacles à la pleine participation des personnes handicapées à la vie de la province n'ont pas été éliminés.

That's why, through the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, we are striving to break down these barriers and reshape our province for people with disabilities. Just this week, we took another step forward to help Ontarians with disabilities. People receiving social assistance can now take advantage of registered disability savings plans. We are making sure that people can put money in an RSP without it affecting their eligibility for disability support. This will make it easier for families to save for their children with disabilities.

Our vision is a province where, by 2025, everyone has equal opportunities and an equal place in society. This vision is shared globally.

Alors que la population du monde entier se mobilise pour commémorer cette journée spéciale, j'encourage tous les députés de l'Assemblée à réfléchir à la façon dont nous pourrions rendre notre province plus universelle pour les personnes handicapées.

Assurons-nous que l'esprit qui anime cette Journée internationale des personnes handicapées caractérise toutes les journées de l'année.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: On a point of order: The opposition recognizes these are two very important statements, and we would ask equal time for the opposition bench that the government got for their statements.

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

That unanimous consent that was granted would allocate approximately nine minutes to each of the opposition parties for their responses.

1530

MAYNARD SAM GEORGE

Mr. Norm Miller: On behalf of our caucus, I'm pleased to congratulate Mr. Sam George on receiving the Order of Ontario. Sam George's pursuit of an inquiry on behalf of his brother Dudley George showed dogged determination. Through Mr. George's efforts, the Ontario government returned control of Ipperwash Provincial Park to the Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation. He is proof that one person can make a difference. He has also highlighted the need for the public to understand treaty issues in order to bring peace and put an end to future blockades.

His message is important. Only through understanding and mutual respect can we resolve differences and build a better understanding of one another and the needs of our respective communities. Failure to resolve disputes peacefully is a failure for all of us. Mr. George is proof that we can build our future on a foundation of respect and understanding. I would like to thank him for his advocacy for all First Peoples, for his family and, indeed, for all Ontarians, and I wish him and his family the very best in the future. Meegwetch.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased to speak on behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party to commemorate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Today we also recognize the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. "Dignity and justice for all of us" is the theme of this year's International Day of Persons with Disabilities. All members of the Legislature should acknowledge that much has been achieved over the last number of years by the broader public sector and businesses, but there is still much more we can achieve to make Ontario accessible to all Ontarians who fully wish to participate in their communities.

The minister is quick to take credit for the hard work being done in communities by municipalities, hospitals, schools and businesses but, before she pats herself on the back too quickly, we all know that actions speak louder than words. Dignity and justice for all of us means that we should truly support persons with disabilities so that they can live full and rewarding lives in communities across our province.

I question the minister's commitment to dignity and justice for all. Over the past year, we have learned that only 10% of those who applied for Passport funding—

Interjections.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I afforded them the dignity. Over the past year, we have learned that only 10% of those who have applied for Passport funding received support from this ministry. The rest remain on waiting lists, a concept that the Liberal government actually entrenched in legislation with Bill 77. Is waiting with no support allowing dignity? Is that justice?

At age 21, many disabled young adults who have been thriving in the education system do not have access to programs or support from your government. Earlier this year, the public gallery was filled with families that had been turned down for Passport funding. They clearly told us that their children, who previously had been enjoying co-op placements and learning in the education system, are now at home sitting on the couch. Should we accept a generation of school leavers languishing in our homes? Is that dignity? Is that justice for all?

There are real consequences for these young adults and their families. I recently heard from a family in Peterborough whose daughter has turned 21. The family has been unable to receive Passport funding and has used up all their special services-at-home funding. Now that mother is being forced to quit her job so that she can stay at home to care for her daughter. I ask you, how does your reluctance to properly fund the Passport program lead to dignity and justice for all? Contrast your inaction with the positive changes the federal Conservative government has been making. They are leading the way.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. The honourable members of the opposition were respectful when the two statements were made. I would ask that the honourable members respect that as well.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: The federal government is leading the way by establishing the registered disability savings plan. The—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): That took all of about five seconds. Please have some respect for the Chair, the honourable member from Etobicoke North.

Please continue.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: The RDSP will allow families to set aside resources for those who do not have the financial means. The federal government will provide disability savings bonds to support disability, to support disabled persons who set up RDSPs. This is such an important change for families. It will allow individuals with disabilities to live with dignity in our community. Yet your government did not embrace this change. You dragged your feet on this issue for almost a year and only this week agreed to allow Ontario residents to tap into the RDSP program—after hundreds of families had lobbied you to support my private member's bill.

Minister, actions do speak louder than words. I think it's time for your government to support the Passport funding program. Individuals and families need our support so that there is truly justice and dignity for all.

MAYNARD SAM GEORGE

Mr. Gilles Bisson: September 6, 1995 is a date that will be etched in the memories of the consciousness of not only Ontario, but all aboriginal people in the province of Ontario. It's a sad date, a date where people gathered lawfully in order to be able to protect what is rightfully theirs, which is the memories of their ancestors and a sacred burial site within Ipperwash.

They were doing what all of us would have done. Can you imagine, in our society, if your grandmother, your grandfather, your father, your brother, or sister had been buried, and all of a sudden somebody wanted to dig up the remains of those people? What would we do? Would we not do the same? Would we not gather to try to protect those people who came before us, who gave us our very existence? Would you not try to protect the memory of your forefathers? Dudley and the rest who were there from the Ipperwash First Nation, and others, were doing what we all would have done. Unfortunately, something went very wrong. This place today is not where to lay blame, but to remember where we come from and where we need to go.

Clearly, what was happening in that community is what we would have all done in the same circumstance. Unfortunately, an incident happened where Dudley died. And since that day, Sam and his community have gathered and tried to get justice for his community, to get justice for the aboriginal people of this province—and I would argue for all citizens of this province—because an injustice done to one, my friends, is an injustice done to all. What Sam understood, and his community understood—and others who have supported him along the way, such as Gerry Phillips, Bud Wildman, Howard Hampton, the labour movement and the communities and others who laid before him in order to try to get justice—is that when one member of our society is disregarded when it comes to their lawful right, and the decency of being able to be treated as citizens, it's an injustice to all of us.

Sam, I say to you and I say to your community, and to those that came with you: This has been a very long journey. It has not been without difficulty. You've had situations, quite frankly, where it's been pretty hurtful; where people in our community of Ontario said hurtful things to you and your family and to your people. I say, on behalf of all Ontarians, that we're sorry, that should have never happened, and that we as citizens of this province need to understand that we are all citizens of this province and we must all, together, strive to make a better Ontario for all.

Sam, you've been given this order, and I know you are not one who likes to be seen as somebody who is getting an Order of Ontario. That is not why you did this. This was all about getting justice, not only to your brother, but to all people in this province, and specifically aboriginal people for what is rightfully yours—and that is to be able to protect the cherished memory of your forefathers. There's much that we need to do.

Still, within Ontario many injustices happen both within and outside the aboriginal community. Our job as legislators is to combat that and is to, at every opportunity, make right the wrongs that face us in our society. It is wrong that in aboriginal communities across this province we are seeing dropout rates of 70% of children by the time of grade 8. It is wrong when we see within First Nations across this province, and specifically in my own communities, in my own riding, along with Howard

and Mr. Gravelle and others, where 25 people are living in a home. It is wrong when we see infrastructure that fails the children and people get sick, such as we've seen in the communities of Kashechewan and many others.

1540

This is not about laying blame. This is not the fault of one party; this is the fault of our society. We as a society need to recognize that we don't have a lot to be proud of in the way that we've treated our First Nations brothers and sisters. We really need to be saying at this time and in this place today that we engage ourselves in a process that will be more than just an Order of Ontario, but will be about bringing justice to the people of the First Nations across this province. It's about, yes, settling land claims that have been lingering for far too long; yes, about stopping to point fingers at each other—white communities, aboriginal communities, federal government, provincial governments—saying, "It's your fault," "No, it's your fault," "No, it's your fault," and instead saying, "It is our responsibility to find solutions to these problems."

I say to all of us here today, yes, let's celebrate that Sam was given the Order of Ontario, but let us not forget that there are many other injustices in our society, and we, as citizens of the province, owe it to all to overcome those injustices.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

JOURNÉE INTERNATIONALE DES PERSONNES HANDICAPÉES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm pleased to rise today to recognize December 3, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, la Journée Internationale des personnes handicapées. This is an important day to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities. It is a day to recognize the valuable contributions and participation in society of persons with disabilities. It is also a day to reflect on the barriers that are still persistent in the achievement of full equity and human rights for people with disabilities.

The theme of this year, as has been mentioned, is dignity and justice for all—a theme that New Democrats echo and wish to see implemented for persons with disabilities everywhere, but especially here in Ontario. However, there is no dignity or justice in the unfortunate truth that individuals with disabilities in this province are being resigned to a life sentence of poverty, a sentence that government inaction is forcing them to fulfill.

Talking about developmental disabilities, according to the Provincial Network on Developmental Services, approximately 13,400 people with a developmental disability are waiting for residential services, day support and other supports and services. Many families are waiting five years or more for residential services. This situation is tied up with many other obstacles people with disabilities face just in trying to make ends meet.

Not only are there waiting lists, income supports for people with disabilities are woefully inadequate. A single person on ODSP receives a maximum of \$999 a month. That's a little bit shy of \$12,000 a year. That must cover all of their expenses, including shelter, food, clothing, transportation and medical appointments. Currently, ODSP rates fall far below the poverty line. For a single person living in an urban setting in Ontario, that line is at \$19,000 a year—a \$7,000 gap. Ontarians with disabilities need a substantial increase in the income support provided through ODSP to have justice and dignity.

Attendant services wait times for individuals with physical disabilities are up to four years. This is an injustice to those who can and want to participate meaningfully in their communities, but simply cannot because they cannot get the attendant supports they need. Where is the action from the government on that front?

During the poverty consultations, submissions were overwhelmingly dominated with concern about the ODSP rate and the social, physical and particularly economic barriers which exist in breaking the cycle of poverty for people with disabilities.

We look forward to a firm commitment in the poverty plan set to be unveiled by this government tomorrow, I take it, which prioritizes access for people with disabilities so that they can truly live with justice and dignity in this province, with the support and the resources they need. On this international day of recognition, let us ensure that our attention to this issue is not simply on this day, but that every day we are working proactively to ensure that disability is not a poverty sentence in this province. Lorsque les personnes vivant avec un handicap n'auront plus à vivre dans la pauvreté, nous aurons la dignité et la justice pour tous.

NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Hon. Monique M. Smith: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allotted to each party to speak on the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: On December 6, Ontario will join all other provinces in Canada in recognizing the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. We will pause to remember the tragic act that was committed against 14 young women.

On December 6, 1989, a gunman entered a classroom at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal and killed 14 female engineering students, shouting, "I hate feminists." He then turned the gun on himself, ending his own life. These young women died simply because they were women. They were bright young women with hopes and with dreams, hopes and dreams never to be realized because of a hateful act of violence. People across the

country were horrified that this terrible act happened right here in Canada.

To honour the memory of these women, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women was established in 1991. It is a day to ensure that we collectively take action to put a stop to violence against women. We are all called to do our part.

Today in our gallery, we have leaders of organizations who work tirelessly every day to effect change in their communities: leaders of provincial networks, members of my domestic violence advisory council and other passionate activists. Please join me in acknowledging them and thanking them for the work they do every day.

Applause.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Our government is reliant on their advocacy and advice. In this spirit of partnership, we have moved forward with our government's domestic violence action plan since 2004. Every day we are working for change. We now have more help for women. Just last week, my colleague the Attorney General brought forward proposed changes to family law to enhance protection for women and children fleeing domestic violence. This is in addition to many changes that have been enacted in recent years to improve the justice sector's response to violence against women.

While there certainly are positive changes, as a society we have not achieved the ultimate goal: fundamental equality for women. Despite the many glass ceilings we have broken and the barriers we have eliminated, women remain vulnerable to violence. More than half of Canadian women report that they have experienced at least one incidence of violence since they were 16 years old. These numbers tell a terrible tale, but we continue with resolve. We continue in partnership with the leaders present with us today and community groups throughout the province.

Yesterday, the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses released its report called *Survivor Voices: Welcoming Women to Make Change*. We must listen to the women who have experienced violence on how we can improve support services. We all have a role to play in putting a stop to violence. We can all help with this change by wearing a rose button or a white ribbon to show our support.

Ending violence against women starts in our communities. We urge all Ontarians to join us in our efforts and the efforts of our guests in the House today.

We mourn together for what could have been for the 14 young women killed in 1989. We grieve for their families and the women who are victims of violence, especially those who have gone unnoticed and unreported. Let's take a moment of silence for these women and then end the silence with a commitment to work for change together.

1550

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'm pleased to rise on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus to recognize the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. Declared by Parliament in 1991,

December 6 was selected because it was the day on which the terrible events occurred at the Université de Montréal's École Polytechnique.

Since the beginning of the Quiet Revolution in Quebec in the 1960s, women have been making great advances in non-traditional education and professional aspirations. In the 1970s and 1980s, many young women were attracted to l'École Polytechnique, the school of engineering at the University of Montreal. On December 6, 19 years ago, 14 young, intelligent women full of life and promise for the future were hunted down, separated from their male colleagues and murdered just because they were women. They were murdered by a young man who said he was fighting feminism and who blamed feminists for ruining his life. This is a day that will be remembered forever across Canada, a day that a man, in his pure hatred of women, stole the lives of 14 innocent women and, worse, felt justified in doing so—a man who felt that a lower class of person took away from him something that he deserved.

It's important to take this time today for serious reflection to remember the young women who died and the families they left behind. So many hopes and dreams were crushed on that terrible day. We owe it to the memory of those young women and to the families who have had to struggle on without them to continue to work diligently to put an end to violence against women.

This is a day to consider what we can do as a province, as a society, as communities and as people to discourage violence against women. Many communities have worked long and hard with organizations to advance anti-violence programs.

I would like to mention some of the work that has been done by my community over the past month to raise awareness of violence against women.

In a series of events, Durham College and the University of Ontario Institute of Technology have shone the spotlight on the reduction of violence against women. They held a Jeans for Justice campaign where students wrote messages on pairs of jeans to confirm their commitment to the reduction of and intolerance toward violence against women. This was held to condemn a 1999 court ruling in Italy, wherein a court decided that a rapist could not have removed his victim's jeans without her assistance, as they were so tight she must therefore have been a willing participant in her own assault. Durham College also hosted a Jackson Katz speaking engagement in November. Mr. Katz is an internationally renowned advocate for the prevention of violence against women. Finally, a fraternity in the school organized Walk a Mile in Her Shoes, a day when male students walked the campus in women's shoes to raise awareness of the crime of violence against women.

In addition, to raise awareness of resources for abused women, Durham Region Transit donated free advertising on their buses for the Denise House, a shelter that abused women in my riding can access.

This is a day to remember the tragedy now known as the Montreal massacre, a day to remember all women

who senselessly died because someone thought that their lives or rights weren't important, and finally, a day to reconfirm our commitment as public servants to defeating violence against women, both by our own efforts and by supporting the many individual groups and individuals and organizations in our communities that are doing important work on ending violence against women.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: As the women's critic for the New Democratic Party, it's an honour to rise on behalf of the victims of Marc Lépine and on behalf of women everywhere.

When Marc Lépine broke into l'École Polytechnique and started firing at women, as you heard the minister say, he was not just firing at them, he was firing at all feminists.

I want to say that I proudly stand as a feminist here in this House, and I hope that every member of this House considers themselves a feminist.

What is a feminist? What was he trying to murder?

Feminism is what gave us the vote.

Feminism is what construed women as persons and not as property. I'm the first woman born into my family as a person. My mother was born as property. My grandmother was born as property. So we are persons today because of feminism.

What else did feminism do?

Feminism is that incredible struggle that gained us equal opportunity in universities. Did you know that in the 1960s, there was a quota system for women in engineering and there was a quota system for women in medicine, considered male fields? That's what feminism did. When I was a kid, we as feminists struggled against male and female help wanted ads in the newspapers—anyone over a certain age remembers "Help Wanted, Male" and "Help Wanted, Female." That's what feminism has gained for us.

What does feminism want from us now? Here's what feminists want now. They don't want just commemoration. They want—we want—action. What do we want? Well, let's go through the list.

First and foremost, we need action on the poverty file, because poverty is a women's issue. Unless women have economic independence, they cannot flee domestic violence. What does that mean? That means a minimum wage that's a living wage, at least \$10.25 an hour.

What else does it mean? It means women need housing: transition housing—beds to escape to—and affordable housing, instead of 130,000 families waiting for affordable housing in Ontario. That is what feminists call for now.

Feminists call for daycare. We don't have daycare in this province. Only one in 10 families has daycare. We need a daycare right here at Queen's Park. We don't have one. That's what feminists want.

Feminists want the Miss G Project to get what they have been asking for ever since they were formed, and that's women's studies in the high schools, because if we don't know our herstory, then we won't learn how to take

feminism forward. So we need women's studies in the high school.

Today I was speaking to the OFL, and guess what? The Ontario Federation of Labour is saying that Ontario working women should not have to choose between their safety or their jobs. Right now, women have to choose between their safety and their job. We need to have time off for women who are escaping abuse, because we know—Lori Dupont showed us—that the abusers will follow them right into their workplaces and attack them there. We need to have provisions made in the workplace for women fleeing abuse. This means health and safety regulations; it means changes in employment standards.

As a proud feminist, I stand amid, I hope, a collection of feminists saying, "Please, enough commemoration; it's time for action." If not for us, then certainly for our daughters and certainly for their daughters, so that they proudly stand up, the same women that Marc Lépine tried to eradicate on that day at L'École polytechnique, and say, "I am a feminist. We are feminists. We're proud to be feminists. Here is what feminists have done, here is what feminists demand and here is what feminists will do."

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I ask all members and our guests in the Legislature today to join us in a moment of silence in remembrance of the tragic events at the University of Montreal on December 6, 1989, and to reconfirm our commitment to end violence against women.

The House observed a moment's silence.

1600

PETITIONS

CHILD CARE

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services, Madeleine Meilleur, has decided that grandparents caring for their grandchildren no longer qualify for temporary care assistance; and

"Whereas the removal of the temporary care assistance could mean that children will be forced into foster care; and

"Whereas the temporary care assistance amounted to \$231 per month, much less than a foster family would receive to look after the same children if they were forced into foster care;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately reverse the decision to remove temporary care assistance for grandparents looking after their grandchildren."

I support this petition and will pass it to page Zac.

FIREARMS CONTROL

Mr. Mike Colle: I have a petition to stop the unlawful use of firearms in vehicles.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas innocent people are being victimized by the growing number of unlawful firearms in our communities; and

"Whereas police officers, military personnel and lawfully licensed persons are the only people allowed to possess firearms; and

"Whereas a growing number of unlawful firearms are transported, smuggled and found in motor vehicles; and

"Whereas impounding motor vehicles and suspending driver's licences of persons possessing unlawful firearms in motor vehicles would aid the police in their efforts to make our streets safer;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 56, entitled the Unlawful Firearms in Vehicles Act, 2008, into law, so that we can reduce the number of crimes involving firearms in our communities."

I support this petition and affix my name to it.

DIABETES TREATMENT

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I have a petition given to me by K. Booker of Pickering, Ontario:

"Whereas elementary school-aged children in the province of Ontario suffering from diabetes require regular blood sugar monitoring and may also require insulin and glucagon to manage their disease; and

"Whereas there is no medical or nursing assistance readily available in schools as there was in the past; and

"Whereas the parents/guardians of these children must currently visit their children's school several times throughout the day in order to test their child's blood sugar levels; and

"Whereas the absence of medical support in our elementary schools results in substantial stress and disruption to the lives of children and their working parents;

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

"(1) That elementary schools in the province of Ontario have on-site staff trained in the daily monitoring of blood sugar levels of children who suffer from diabetes; and

"(2) That the trained staff also administer insulin and glucagon when required, with the consent of the child's parent/guardian."

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

BATHURST HEIGHTS ADULT LEARNING CENTRE

Mr. Mike Colle: I have a petition to save the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there are over 2,000 adult ESL students being served by the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre, operated by the Toronto District School Board, in partnership with the province of Ontario; and

"Whereas this is the only English as a second language (ESL) learning centre in this area of the city located directly on the Spadina subway line, making it accessible for students across the city; and

"Whereas newcomers in Toronto, and in the Lawrence Heights area, need the Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre so they can succeed in their career opportunities; and

"Whereas the proposed revitalization of Lawrence Heights threatens the existence of the centre;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that any revitalization of Lawrence Heights include a newcomer centre and ensure that the Bathurst Heights centre continues to exist in the present location."

I support this petition and affix my name to it.

FIREARMS CONTROL

Mr. Mike Colle: This is part of the thousands of petitions I have had in support of taking guns out of cars.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas innocent people are being victimized by the growing number of unlawful firearms in our communities; and

"Whereas police officers, military personnel and lawfully licensed persons are the only people allowed to possess firearms; and

"Whereas a growing number of unlawful firearms are transported, smuggled and found in motor vehicles; and

"Whereas impounding motor vehicles and suspending driver's licences of persons possessing unlawful firearms in motor vehicles would aid the police in their efforts to make our streets safer;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 56, entitled the Unlawful Firearms in Vehicles Act, 2008, into law, so that we can reduce the number of crimes involving firearms in our communities."

I support taking guns off our streets, and I affix my name to this petition.

LUPUS

Mr. Charles Sousa: This petition reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas systemic lupus erythematosus is under-recognized as a global health problem by the public, health professionals and governments, driving the need for greater awareness; and

"Whereas medical research on lupus and efforts to develop safer and more effective therapies for the disease are underfunded in comparison with diseases of comparable magnitude and severity; and

"Whereas no safe and effective drugs for lupus have been introduced in more than 40 years. Current drugs for lupus are very toxic and can cause other life-threatening health problems that can be worse than the primary disease;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to assist financially with media campaigns to bring about knowledge of systemic lupus erythematosus and the signs and symptoms of this disease to all citizens of Ontario.

"We further petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to provide funding for research currently being undertaken in lupus clinics throughout Ontario."

I sign the petition and submit it to Zac.

CHILD CUSTODY

Mr. Jim Brownell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the people of Ontario, deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents;

"Whereas subsection 20(2.1) requires parents and others with custody of children to refrain from unreasonably placing obstacles to personal relations between the children and their grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2) contains a list of matters that a court must consider when determining the best interests of a child. The bill amends that subsection to include a specific reference to the importance of maintaining emotional ties between children and grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.1) requires a court that is considering custody of or access to a child to give effect to the principle that a child should have as much contact with each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.2) requires a court that is considering custody of a child to take into consideration each applicant's willingness to facilitate as much contact between the child and each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children's Law Reform Act as above to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents."

As I agree with this petition, I shall sign it and send it to the Clerks' table.

DIABETES TREATMENT

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I have a petition provided to me by Andrew Webster of Rockwood, Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas elementary school-aged children in the province of Ontario suffering from diabetes require regular blood sugar monitoring and may also require insulin and glucagon to manage their disease; and

"Whereas there is no medical or nursing assistance readily available in schools as there was in the past; and

"Whereas the parents/guardians of these children must currently visit their child's school several times throughout the day in order to test their child's blood sugar levels; and

"Whereas the absence of medical support in our elementary schools results in substantial stress and disruption to the lives of children and their working parents;

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

"(1) That elementary schools in the province of Ontario have on-site staff trained in the daily monitoring of blood sugar levels of children who suffer from diabetes; and

"(2) That the trained staff also administer insulin and glucagon when required, with the consent of the child's parent/guardian."

As I agree with the content of these petitions, I affix my name thereto.

DRINKING AND DRIVING

Mr. Frank Klees: I have a petition signed by more than 300 students of Loretto Abbey secondary school in Toronto, and forwarded to me by Lina Naccarato, the school's child and youth worker. It reads as follows:

"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, towards 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."

And I will pass on this petition to the table.

1610

DIABETES TREATMENT

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to present a petition that was presented to my good friend from Cambridge by Hobart Food Equipment Group Canada, North York, Ontario. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas elementary school-aged children in the province of Ontario suffering from diabetes require regular blood sugar monitoring and may also require insulin and glucagon to manage their disease; and

“Whereas there is no medical or nursing assistance readily available in schools as there was in the past; and

“Whereas the parents/guardians of these children must currently visit their child’s school several times throughout the day in order to test their child’s blood sugar levels; and

“Whereas the absence of medical support in our elementary schools results in substantial stress and disruption to the lives of children and their working parents;

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

“(1) That elementary schools in the province of Ontario have on-site staff trained in the daily monitoring of blood sugar levels of children who suffer from diabetes; and

“(2) That the trained staff also administer insulin and glucagon when required, with the consent of the child’s parent/guardian.”

I am pleased to present this petition to page Bradyn and sign it in support.

CHILD CUSTODY

Mr. Jim Brownell: I have a petition signed by a number of constituents in Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“We, the people of Ontario, deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children’s Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children’s relationships with their parents and grandparents;

“Whereas subsection 20(2.1) requires parents and others with custody of children to refrain from unreasonably placing obstacles to personal” relationships “between the children and their grandparents; and

“Whereas subsection 24(2) contains a list of matters that a court must consider when determining the best interests of a child. The bill amends that subsection to include a specific reference to the importance of maintaining emotional ties between children and grandparents; and

“Whereas subsection 24(2.1) requires a court that is considering custody of or access to a child to give effect to the principle that a child should have as much contact with each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child; and

“Whereas subsection 24(2.2) requires a court that is considering custody of a child to take into consideration each applicant’s willingness to facilitate as much contact between the child and each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child;

“We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children’s Law Reform Act as above to emphasize the importance of

children’s relationships with their parents and grandparents.”

As I agree with this petition, I shall sign it and send it to the Clerks’ table.

DIABETES TREATMENT

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I have a petition provided to me by Nadine Ahrens of Kitchener, Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas elementary school-aged children in the province of Ontario suffering from diabetes require regular blood sugar monitoring and may also require insulin and glucagon to manage their disease; and

“Whereas there is no medical or nursing assistance readily available in schools as there” has been “in the past; and

“Whereas the parents/guardians of these children must currently visit their child’s school several times” during “the day in order to test their child’s blood sugar levels; and

“Whereas the absence of medical support in our elementary schools results in substantial stress and disruption to the lives of children and their working parents;

“We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly ... as follows:

“(1) That elementary schools in the province of Ontario have on-site staff trained in the daily monitoring of blood sugar levels of children who suffer from diabetes; and

“(2) That the trained staff also administer insulin and glucagon when required, with the consent of the child’s parent/guardian.”

And as I agree with this petition, I affix my name thereto.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I want to inform the House that pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care concerning hospital deficits. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

Orders of the day.

Hon. David Caplan: I just want to say I was very dissatisfied with the question. However, Speaker, G126.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ROAD SAFETY ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ ROUTIÈRE

Mr. Bradley moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 126, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act and to make consequential amendments to two amending

acts / Projet de loi 126, Loi modifiant le Code de la route et apportant des modifications corrélatives à deux lois modificatives.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I rise in the House today to begin debate on legislation that, if the Legislature deems to pass it, would make Ontario's roads safer for drivers and everyone who shares the roads. I will share this time with my parliamentary assistant for transportation, Mike Brown, who will resume the debate in the Legislature when I have concluded my remarks.

I want to say at the beginning that I have consulted widely on the bill, previous to its construction as a bill and subsequent to its introduction in the Legislature, to determine, from members of the Legislature in particular, what views they have on this bill. I want to thank the two opposition critics, Mr. Klees and Mr. Bisson, for the comments they have offered in this House. Subsequent to that, Mr. O'Toole as well has had some comments that he has made, and other members of the Legislature, both on the government side and the opposition side, have commented on specific provisions of the bill. I must say that I'm all ears whenever my colleagues in the Legislature and the general public are commenting on legislation of this kind. So I thank them for providing that service, and all members of Legislature.

As I have said on many occasions, and we have seen some examples of it, particularly in traffic safety, I don't think there's any member of the House or any side of the House that has a monopoly on the concern for these matters nor on the good ideas. My predecessors as Ministers of Transportation have brought in legislation and regulations which have ensured that Ontario has, over the years, maintained a record as among the safest jurisdictions in all of North America in terms of road safety and we hope that to continue.

When we bring forward legislation to this House, our desire is, first and foremost, road safety. I know that some members of the opposition have worked with members of the government. I think of the bill on—for want of a better word—stunt driving and street racing; Mr. Klees worked on that, I think, with Ms. Cansfield at the time, who was bringing forward the bill, and was very helpful in bringing forward amendments and suggestions in that regard. I have noted that members of the Legislature have brought forward legislation as independent members—in other words, as private members—in the field of traffic safety that have been very helpful, and in other fields of transportation. I noted in another bill, that we don't have before us today, Mr. Bisson brought forward legislation to deal with carpooling, which I thought was helpful, and found its way into a previous bill. So I think that has been extremely helpful.

But I want to indicate to the House, first of all, that I have done some consulting. What happens with a bill of this kind is that, first of all, we sit down with ministry staff and often with those who enforce the laws of the province, and that is our police services. We try to determine what the concerns are out there, what are the statistics that are showing up, what are the trends that are

taking place. Ministry staff who are familiar with this on a daily basis bring forward their best advice and then we consult with others. For instance, in this legislation we had consultations on various aspects of it with the following groups: the Ontario Provincial Police, the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canada Safety Council, Ontario Students Against Impaired Driving, Ontario Community Council on Impaired Driving, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Canada's Smartrisk, Ontario Safety League, Insurance Bureau of Canada, Driving School Association of Ontario, the city of Toronto; the Association of Municipalities of Ontario; the Canadian Automobile Association; the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators; and Ontario driving schools, such as Young Drivers of Canada, Allstate driving school, and ABC Driving School.

As well, ministry staff also held consultation meetings with the Ontario Trucking Association, the Ontario School Bus Association, the Ontario Motor Coach Association, the Canadian Courier and Logistics Association, and the rental car industry on specific aspects of Bill 126.

So these don't simply emerge out of one person's mind as a favourite pet project. They happen after wide consultation with organizations that bring forward their proposals. Not all of those proposals make their way into this legislation. I know there were some who wanted the legislation to be more extensive, more comprehensive, more sweeping, than as it exists at the present time.

That is the kind of consultation which has taken place with this particular bill, and I want to thank each of those groups for helping.

In addition to that, letters have come in over the years to Ministers of Transportation with recommendations from people.

There are three different sets of people who are directly impacted by this.

Of course, one was Mr. Mulcahy, whose son died in a car accident. Mr. Mulcahy, you'll remember, had full-page ads in the newspapers. Meetings took place. I know that he met with the Premier. He met with the Leader of the Opposition, John Tory, who quickly endorsed what Mr. Mulcahy had to say and urged the Premier to take action based on that. I think he was in communication with the Conservative critic Mr. Klees, as well, on this matter. He may have been in consultation with the New Democratic Party as well. As a result of that, we have some personal experience that takes place.

There are others—Jan and Rob Perry of Clarksburg, Ontario, who lost a son in an accident. He phoned home to get a ride, was unable to get a ride, hopped in a vehicle with others, and they were all killed in a car accident, unfortunately.

Eleanor McMahan was also consulted on this and was there the day we announced it at the police headquarters in Toronto. In that particular case, it was a driver whose licence had been suspended. Her husband was an OPP officer—and a very tragic day for her. She was glad to see some of the provisions that are contained in this bill.

It's a pretty comprehensive bill. There has probably been a focus of attention on some of the issues within the bill more than others. I don't want to call it an omnibus bill, because when I was in opposition, I never liked omnibus bills. So I'll call it a comprehensive bill, which is extensive in its coverage of issues related to public safety as it relates to highways.

Here are some of the people who have commented on the bill.

Carolyn Swinson, a spokesperson for MADD Canada, stated:

"We've been advocating this for a long time.

"Manitoba has already brought that in—it's already zero blood alcohol for drivers up to the age of 21 and for the first five years for new drivers.

"We've been asking Ontario to follow suit for a while."

She went on to say, "Every time you get a whole group of teenagers in a car, the dynamic of that car changes. They get involved in risk behaviour that they wouldn't do normally—one of the major ones being not wearing seat belts."

Tim Mulcahy, the father of the youth who was tragically killed in a car accident, stated:

"Mr. McGuinty called me this morning and told me that both laws are being introduced into the Legislature on Tuesday.

"I could not believe my ears and wept with Mr. McGuinty on the phone. If these bills are passed, Ontario will be the safest jurisdiction for young drivers in the world."

Rob Solomon, a director for Mothers Against Drunk Driving, said, "Graduated licensing works to reduce death among beginning drivers, but the problem is, they're then exposed to alcohol and unsupervised driving—and skyrocketing rates of crashes, deaths and injuries."

Jan Perry, whom I made reference to, said the following when the bill was introduced: "I'm absolutely thrilled that they are recognizing that the risk of fatal crashes is partly because of the number of teenagers in a car. It's going to give new drivers a year of experience and maturity to recognize that driving is a responsibility and a privilege before they fill their car with friends and head down the highway."

Andrew Murie, the CEO of Mothers Against Drunk Driving Canada, said, "It's a good package of measures and it extends well beyond new drivers. It will save hundreds of lives."

Peter Christianson, the president of Young Drivers of Canada, said, "Since graduated licensing, there's been a huge reduction in accidents. They've been able to cut the number of fatalities by 30%. With these (new) changes they should be able to obtain another 30%."

Don Forgeron, vice-president, Insurance Bureau of Canada, said, "Often we get into debates about convenience and inconvenience. We seem to have forgotten that graduated licensing is a good "program designed to help our new drivers become good, safe drivers. If I had to choose, I'd go for keeping kids alive."

Those were some of the comments that I initially received on this legislation. Subsequent to any bill being introduced in the House, further comments come in, and I have been impressed with the quality of many of the arguments that have been advanced, with the information that does come in, and indeed, I must say that there are some who have commented favourably and wanted us to go further. There are some who feel that the bill itself goes too far, in their view. I think that's a very healthy debate that takes place in our society.

I know that motor vehicle collisions cost our province dearly. Almost every day in Ontario, someone loses a loved one on our roads—someone's friend, a parent, a son or a daughter. There's nothing more tragic than the loss of a young person behind the wheel. The statistics tell us that teen drivers are, on average, about three and a half times more likely to be in a fatal collision than drivers aged, for instance, from 30 to 34. The evidence speaks for itself. We need to do more to keep our young and novice drivers safe.

Fourteen years ago, Ontario was the first jurisdiction in North America to introduce a comprehensive graduated licensing system. This program has been tremendously successful in preventing collisions among teen drivers. I want to say at this point that I commend a previous government of a different political stripe. It was the New Democratic Party that was in power at that time when it was introduced. I know it was controversial at the time and I know that there was significant opposition at that time. I voted in favour of it, but there were views that had been expressed to me and others at that time that they asked to have reflected in the House.

As a result of the debate, because I've been going through the debate, there were alterations and changes made to that legislation. That just goes back to the fact that the legislation best emerges when it's had considerable debate and discussion. I've indicated my great desire to see public hearings on all aspects of this bill and as much discussion as possible amongst the public, who will have views that are to be considered seriously.

Today, the number of fatalities and injuries among teen drivers is nearly 35% lower than before our graduated licensing program in this province was introduced. We are building on that safety success with improvements that deal with the realities of today's drivers. We plan to improve Ontario's graduated licensing system as we've been asked to do so. We want to give young and novice drivers more time to get the experience and skills they need for a lifetime of safe driving.

First, the proposal is that we would extend the time it takes to get a full licence from 24 months to 36 months. They're still entitled to a lot of privileges during that period of time, but a full licence would be 36 months. That gives them a lot of time to be able to acquire, I happen to think, very frankly, better habits than perhaps generations before have had, in terms of their driving.

We will still offer a possible time discount of six months for those who pass a ministry-approved beginner driving education course. Each year in Ontario, unfortunately, about 22 teenagers are killed and 139 severely

injured in crashes where teen drivers have teen passengers. Research shows that the risk of an at-fault collision for a teen driver increases with the number of young passengers in the vehicle. In fact, teen drivers with two teen passengers are more than twice as likely to be involved in a serious collision, according to compiled statistics, and collision statistics tell us that with three teen passengers in the car the likelihood of an at-fault collision increases nearly threefold.

1630

This is why we have proposed a new law that would extend our current teens-driving-teens passenger restriction to any time, day or night, for the first year of a G2 licence. That is the proposal we have made, although it is not contained in the legislation—proposed for a regulatory change. That is where we're likely getting the most comment and arguments for and against.

We know that tougher passenger restrictions can help save lives. Of course, this restriction does not apply to family members or to teen drivers who are accompanied by a driver who has been licensed for four years or more. Very often we find that when teens are somewhat young, they have an adult with them. By the second year of their G2, a teen driver will no longer be subject to this rule. So it would be one year in the proposal that is before the House.

For novice drivers who choose to ignore the rules of the road, we will introduce escalating sanctions for repeat violations of any of the conditions of the graduated licensing program. These escalating sanctions would apply to any novice driver convicted of any other offence under the Highway Traffic Act where the driver receives demerit points. This means that drivers would face penalties that get tougher with each serious violation of the province's traffic laws. As an example, for a first violation, the young driver would receive a 30-day licence suspension. A second violation would result in a 90-day suspension. Upon a third conviction, the driver would return to the start of the graduated licensing program.

As I've noted on many occasions, and I think when those of us who are adults chit-chat about these matters, invariably we will say that our younger drivers are probably more responsible than younger drivers were in previous generations, partly due to the graduated licensing program, but also due to the education programs we have and some of the legislative and regulatory changes that have been made.

One example I found—and we're still going to have to deal with this problem—is a better attitude than generations gone by about drinking and driving. When you ask parents, grandparents and great-grandparents what the attitude was many years ago, it certainly wasn't as responsible as it is today. But as all members are aware, drinking and driving continues to be a major problem on our roads, accounting for about one quarter of all fatal accidents.

Research shows that the peak ages for drinking and driving collisions are 19, 20 and 21. That is why the

proposed legislation, if passed, would create a new law requiring all drivers aged 21 and under to have a zero blood alcohol concentration whenever they are behind the wheel of a car. I know that's in the United States; I think it's in all states now. Young drivers who continue to drink and drive would face a 30-day driver's licence suspension and fines of up to \$500. If passed, Ontario would join several countries around the world with similar restrictions in place, such as the United States, Australia and Switzerland. In the United States alone, this law has been cited as one of the single most important reasons for a drop in young driver collisions.

Ontario has an outstanding road safety record. As I have said on many occasions, it's not something that began with this government. We've tried to contribute to it, but previous governments have worked hard as well to establish that record of safety. We're fortunate to live in a province where the latest statistics show we have the safest roads of any province or state in North America.

The proposed legislation will, if passed, keep Ontario at the forefront of road safety by helping to protect the lives of our young novice drivers and indeed others, because there are other provisions. I think my parliamentary assistant, Mike Brown, will be dealing with some of those other provisions as well.

I'd like to take this opportunity to share with members the words of OPP commander Bill Grodzinski. The reason I do this is, you think of police officers; you think of people from the fire department, firefighters; and you think of those who operate our ambulances, ambulance attendants. They're the ones who arrive at the accidents; they're the ones who have in their arms the person who has been killed or badly mangled. That is etched in their minds for a lifetime, particularly when it's a young person who is starting out in life. I know I've met with others out there, with firefighters, for instance—I remember a good friend of mine who was a baseball coach and he recounted going to an accident with young people in the car and one of the kids who was killed was a kid he had coached. So it had a very profound effect as he was extracting that young man from a vehicle, and the person was unfortunately killed on that occasion. Police officers will tell you this and ambulance attendants will tell you this, but here's what OPP commander Bill Grodzinski had to say: "This legislation is extremely positive and it should go a long way to reducing the toll of tragedies we see on our highways and our roadways on a daily basis. Those of us who have had to knock on the door in the middle of the night know that it is one of the most difficult, terrible jobs a police officer has to do. If this legislation saves even one door knock in the middle of the night, then it's valuable legislation." Commander Grodzinski, it is my sincere hope that this legislation will save you many knocks on parents' doors.

We want our young drivers to have the skills and experience they need to drive safely. We want to get for them the best start possible. I know that this legislation and many provisions within it can help to do that, and I encourage members to support the parts of the bill they

feel are going to be beneficial. I don't expect from members of the opposition, or indeed from members of the House or the public, unanimity. I would never be in a position—you know how you often hear the exchange in the House, if someone doesn't agree with a part of legislation, "Well, they don't care about traffic safety." Let's dismiss that from the beginning.

Any and every bill that comes before this House deserves significant analysis. So if someone disagrees with a provision in this bill, that doesn't mean that person has any less concern about the safety of young people or other people in vehicles than we have on the government side or I happen to have as Minister of Transportation. I think that's a very bogus and unfair argument when that takes place. I want to assure members when they comment on the bill that I believe what they're doing is coming from a sense of sincerity and a sense of their judgment on what is found to work best in this field.

There are many provisions, and as I say, I think my colleague is going to deal with some of the other provisions, because I'm going to touch on some of the ones that exist. There are drinking and driving initiatives that I've described, particularly for young people, but others.

There's requiring a second breath test for drivers who have blown in the "warn" range—that's 0.05—to be performed in a more timely manner. That is another roadside device. The purpose of that is to save the police hauling them back to the police station. I guess it might change if you're going back to the police station, as well, if you took enough time. It's also a terrible use of officers' time. We think it can be done at roadside.

Again, requiring a seven-day roadside impoundment of vehicles: This will occur when the vehicle has been driven by a person whose blood alcohol content is over the legal limit of 0.08, or who fails or refuses to provide a breath sample. These drivers are now subject to a 90-day roadside driver's licence suspension. What we have there is an impoundment of that vehicle.

When the vehicle they are driving is not equipped with an ignition interlock device when driven by someone who specifically is driving only under the condition of having an interlock device, that will show up on their driver's licence. If they are driving in contravention of that, they're going to get the kinds of impoundments that are necessary.

1640

Suspended licence initiatives: My friend the Conservative critic and I have discussed this on many occasions. He's raised it in the House, the nuisance—it's more than a nuisance—the offence of people driving when their licences are suspended, particularly suspended for violations of the Highway Traffic Act. There we are expanding the circumstances to which vehicle impoundment applies to include drivers who continue to drive while their licence is under suspension under the Highway Traffic Act. Currently, the vehicle impoundment program applies to drivers who have been suspended for convictions under the Criminal Code. Our proposal is to add a seven-day impoundment for suspensions under the

Highway Traffic Act, including drivers suspended for non-payment of family support but not including suspensions for non-payment of fines or medical suspensions. So there is a provision in there; we're not trying to be oppressive but we are trying to expand the conditions under which there can be impoundment.

Other improvements: fines being considered for increase. I won't go through them all other than to say careless driving, failure to stop at a red light or a portable red light, failure to stop for emergency vehicles—a number of these. Failure to remain, render assistance, give required information, failure to wear a seat belt or secure a child—all of these violations contribute to injury and sometimes death in the province.

Faster clearance after highway incidents: the proposal to extend liability protection to service providers such as heavy tow truck operators who are directed by the police to clear the highway after an accident.

Clarity of the use of a slow-moving vehicle sign: People in the farm area are particularly interested in that.

All in all, there are many changes; some of them are listed as housekeeping.

On the bicycle one: I think Mr. Klees was asking me about that, and a note came in. It says that anyone riding an e-bike, an electronic bike, must be 16 years of age or older and wear a helmet. It's not for regular bikes; it is for e-bikes, I am informed by my officials. The member will perhaps elaborate on that, and if there's a need for a change, he and I will work together on that.

What we have before us is a very comprehensive piece of legislation. The parliamentary assistant will elaborate on the bill. I will look forward to reading the Hansard, perhaps even watching the replay of the critics for the Conservatives and the NDP, because I will not be able to be here in person, and you can't really capture the emotion of the day when you're not here in person. So I ask their forgiveness in this and I will make sure that I read the Hansard and, if I get a chance, I'll watch the late-night replay of it because I'm genuinely interested in what both these gentlemen and others in this House who have a particular interest in highway safety have to say about this legislation. You may make suggestions to me as to how the legislation can be improved, altered or amended. You may suggest additions that might be there or what you may like to see in a future piece of legislation that may not be contained in this legislation.

I look forward to all of that. This House works best, as my colleagues know, when there's a sense of collegiality on the issues that take place; when there's not a constant hammering and division. I was watching the federal House this week, and I think there's a contrast between this House and the federal House. I want to attribute that in no small part to the personalities who are contained in this House and their very responsible approach to legislative initiatives and subsequent regulatory initiatives.

The last thing I wanted to say is, as I have mentioned, that some of what we have talked about that could flow from this bill would be in regulation. So not only do I want a full discussion of the bill itself, the legislation, but

I also want to undertake to consult my colleagues when we are preparing the final regulations to go with it, and also to give some undertakings, perhaps before the bill goes out to committee or after it's completed with committee, to say what we won't do or what we will do with regulation and give a firm commitment on that, as opposed to simply consultation. The consultation is important, but I think members will be looking for firm commitments in that regard.

Thank you to the members of the House for indulging me, and I will now pass along to my good friend the member for Algoma-Manitoulin the opportunity to elaborate on this comprehensive piece of legislation, but not an omnibus bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The Chair recognizes the member for Algoma-Manitoulin.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I'm delighted to have the opportunity to follow my friend and colleague the minister in the discussion of this important piece of legislation. I want to assure members of the House that I and the minister will be here to hear all the comments that are made on this bill. We will be taking into consideration all the views that are put before us not only in this House but that we hear across the province on this particular piece of legislation. It is a comprehensive piece of legislation. It is a piece of legislation that will affect most Ontarians directly and all Ontarians indirectly.

I'm pleased to report that past legislation in this House has been effective. This province has earned one of the best road safety records in North America. This is an achievement we have maintained for more than a decade. Our laws and our regulatory measures have toughened the province's seat belt, child car seat and booster seat rules. We introduced new legislation a few weeks ago that will, if passed, make it illegal to use hand-held wireless communications and electronic entertainment devices while driving. We have targeted street racers and other aggressive drivers. For over a year now, drivers who continue to race, speed excessively or perform other driving stunts will have their licences and vehicles taken away from them immediately at roadside.

We, as the government, have delivered needed changes to Ontario's drinking and driving laws. In Ontario, drinking drivers face some of the toughest penalties in North America. Convicted drunk drivers face stiff fines, licence suspensions, mandatory alcohol education or treatment, and an ignition interlock program. New measures are now in place to seize and forfeit vehicles belonging to repeat drunk drivers.

Along with the police and our road safety partners in communities across the province, we are raising awareness about the dangers of drinking and driving. In 2005, Ontario had the lowest alcohol-related road fatality rate in North America. This is part of a long-term trend that has seen drinking and driving fatalities drop by more than 60% in our province since 1988.

We will be putting in place new sanctions for drivers with a blood alcohol concentration from 0.05 to 0.08, what is now referred to as the warn range. Yet despite all

our ongoing efforts, about one quarter of all fatal collisions in Ontario are alcohol-related. Drinking and driving is just one example of why we can never stop looking for new ways to improve our laws to make our roads safe.

On average, about two people are killed and 10 are seriously injured on Ontario's roads every day. Many of those collisions are preventable. To combat some of the most dangerous driver behaviours on our roads today, the proposed legislation would mean tougher fines and penalties for some of the most serious highway traffic offences and give police more effective enforcement tools that they need to help keep our roads safe. The legislation, if passed, will take a tougher approach to dealing with drivers who continue to get behind the wheel of a car when their licence is suspended or when they are impaired.

To help police get drunk drivers off our roads, the bill would give police the authority to impound for seven days the vehicles of drivers who blow over the legal limit or refuse a breath test. Police would also be able to impound vehicles that are being driven without an ignition interlock device when driven by a motorist who is required to have one of those devices.

Research suggests that up to three quarters of suspended drivers continue to drive despite having a suspended licence. Drivers suspended for driver-related reasons, such as drunk driving or speeding are about four times as likely to crash as drivers suspended for non-driving-related reasons, such as not paying fines. That is why the proposed legislation would also give police the ability to impound vehicles driven by suspended drivers at roadside. These are the drivers who put our lives and the lives of our loved ones at risk. These are the drivers that we do not want on our roads.

1650

Safer roads is a McGuinty government priority. Our proposed legislation would make Ontario roads even safer by getting dangerous drivers off our roads immediately. This is a comprehensive bill. It is a bill that moves road safety forward in Ontario. I urge all members to support this legislation. I will be listening carefully to all suggestions from all members.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, I look forward to, possibly on another day, getting an opportunity to respond to this bill more fully, but I just want to say upfront that we as New Democrats, along with most members of this House, support two of the provisions of this bill, either strongly or loosely. The first one, the zero blood alcohol limit for a young person, is not a bad idea. I think the debate we need to get into is: Should we extend that to all drivers? Does it have to be zero? I think zero is problematic for all kinds of reasons, which we can talk about a little bit later, but maybe we need to have a debate in this Legislature about reducing the blood alcohol limit for all drivers so that we're not seen as being discriminatory to young people.

The issue of zero tolerance when it comes to speed—I understand that, and I know why the government is doing

it, and I guess there is a certain appetite to do that within the society of Ontario. However, it's certainly impractical. I know in talking to police officers across the province, since I've had a chance to engage in dialogue with people on this bill, it's going to be pretty difficult for police officers to actually charge people if they're doing five or 10 kilometres over, because no police officer wants to be the one when it results in a young person losing their driver's licence, which is so essential to everyday life in many parts of this province. They tell me there are already mechanisms in law now that allow them to withdraw licences if they think the young person is being very unsafe.

The bigger issue, and that is the one of limiting the number of passengers in the car, is the real flashpoint in this bill. We need to get into a discussion in this Legislature, and more importantly, later, a discussion with citizens, as to, how can we achieve our goal, if our goal is to really try to make people safer behind the wheel? I agree with that, and I think it comes down to two things: driver responsibility—driving is not a right, but a responsibility—and the issue of training. I'll get a chance to speak to that a little bit later, but this has certainly caught the attention of many young people across this province.

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

Mr. Pat Hoy: I'm pleased to join and make comment on what was just stated by our Minister of Transportation, Mr. Bradley, and his parliamentary assistant, Mr. Brown.

Bill 126 has a lot of component parts, all driven by the issue of bringing safety to our highways for those drivers and all others who are on the highway with them. I did take note that the minister took a great bit of time to talk about his willingness to listen to the ongoing debate that will flow today and into other afternoons and mornings around Bill 126. He talked about wanting to hear of any good ideas, other consultation, additions and perhaps amendments that could go into this bill to strengthen it and make it more reliable in its future use.

There is a large component of this bill that is addressing our younger drivers, our beginning drivers. There is a part on zero blood alcohol content for those under 21. Drinking and driving is still a factor in about a quarter of all road fatalities. In the 10 years up to 2005, inclusive, 233 drivers aged under 22 were killed in drinking and driving collisions. That's a number that is simply too large; one would be a tragedy.

Drinking drivers aged 19, 20 and 21 have the highest rates of involvement in both fatal collisions and collisions overall. I found it interesting to note that their involvement rate in fatal-injury collisions is 28% higher than drivers who are in a category three years older than them. So we have these statistics and they are—

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I did listen intently to the magnanimous tone of the Minister of Transportation, Mr. Bradley, and his parliamentary assistant, Mr. Brown, from Algoma-Manitoulin.

I really am quite interested in the remarks that will soon be made by our critic, Frank Klees. He's been on top of this file, some would say, from the conceptualization stage, so a lot of what we expect to hear from our critic is on the record.

I think the minister missed an opportunity here. I agree—I have spoken with him on it and followed this very closely as the parent of five young people. I'm just saying that there's an oversimplification here and it sort of targets all young people a bit unfairly; at least the language does, or at least that's the intent. They feel threatened. I think some consultation has to occur there.

I'm interested in our critic's response to this because I think the minister would be wise to follow some of the advice that may show up as recommendations or amendments on how to implement this successfully.

We don't want to characterize all young people as being careless and irresponsible; that is simply the wrong message. And just realizing that—even as early as a couple of months ago, right after the tragic events that precipitated this legislation, Mr. Klees and Mr. Tory were in touch with the families, and indeed, too, Dalton McGuinty, the Premier. So there was some pressure.

Respectfully, there is some consensus here that the alcohol provision is something that I think you will find unanimous support for here—unconditionally, really.

There are some other provisions—some of the fines, and some of the suspensions and fines and administrative costs for young people could be somewhat prohibitive.

I think that there would be a lot accomplished here by looking at driver education, improving and enhancing that so young people are familiar with the statistics of risk.

Again, I submit to Mr. Brown from Algoma-Manitoulin—but I'm also looking forward to the member from Newmarket-Aurora, who has a great history on this file.

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

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I appreciate the comments from the members from Timmins-James Bay and Chatham-Kent-Essex and the member for Durham.

I would like to reflect upon the member from Durham and his interest in what the next speaker is about to say. The next speaker, as a former Minister of Transportation, knows this file well and has worked on various road safety issues in his capacity as the minister and in his capacity here in the House. I am also interested in hearing what our friend Mr. Klees has to say.

To our friend from Timmins-James Bay: You're right; driving is a privilege, not a right. It does have age discrimination at both ends of the spectrum, not just with young drivers but with seniors. There is age discrimination, and I think we have to recognize that.

We also have to recognize that insurance companies do exactly the same thing. One of the things that young drivers might be interested in knowing and reflecting upon is if we can reduce the number of collisions that are amongst that particular subset of drivers—those younger

than 25—we would no doubt see a reflection of decreased insurance rates amongst that particular class of folks.

I think the government understands the issue around passengers in vehicles—young passengers in vehicles, that is. That is something that we are hearing much about. As we clarify what it actually means, I think that might be helpful to the debate. I think there's some confusion about that. We look forward to all of those issues being raised in the next few days.

1700

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate? The member for Newmarket–Aurora.

Mr. Frank Klees: I'm pleased that you got the riding right. We're almost at the end of this session of the Legislature, and you got it. I'm impressed.

In the time I have available, I'll attempt to set out the official opposition's position on Bill 126 at this stage of the legislative process. I say "at this stage," because while we're engaged in second reading debate, this is really our first opportunity as members of this House to debate this bill following its tabling on November 18.

We did not have an opportunity to provide input to the legislation as currently drafted. The minister made reference earlier to the fact that he consulted broadly in the drafting of the legislation. Unfortunately, the way this place works—perhaps the public would have a difficult time understanding it; I've been here for some 13 years now, and I have a difficult time understanding it—is that while the government is in the process of drafting legislation, they do consult with stakeholders, but the last people to hear about it are the people in this place. It's often not until the day the legislation is tabled that we, even as critics, see the legislation for the first time. Then, of course, as you know, Speaker, we're expected to respond to the minister's announcement that day within minutes, and in some cases we have had no more than five minutes to actually review the statement and the legislation.

Perhaps at some point along the way, when we really do agree, as members of this place, that we should have a more co-operative way of working here, and members of the opposition are included in the process of developing legislation much earlier—I'm sure backbenchers feel the same way—then the government won't feel they need to defend the first draft of legislation. I too often find that governments of all stripes—I was there; I know what it's like. You've done the best you can, you draft legislation and you bring it forward for first reading, and then you feel from that point on that you have to defend everything that's there notwithstanding the fact that perhaps members of the opposition and the public may well have some input that would enhance and improve the legislation.

While there are aspects of this legislation that we support and indeed welcome—I have expressed that to the minister—we do have serious concerns about other aspects, and we'll be calling on the government to amend the legislation and give its undertaking not to proceed

with certain regulatory changes related to this legislation that the minister announced he intends to implement before we would give our support to the bill.

Since the tabling of the proposed legislation, there has been a great deal of public interest and a lot of reaction, a considerable amount of it quite negative and a lot of that reaction coming from young people who will be directly affected by this proposed legislation. Much of that public response—in fact, I would say probably all the public response—has been focused on three specific aspects of the bill. I want to address those three areas and then deal with the other legislative changes contained in the bill.

The first is zero tolerance for any level of blood alcohol concentration in drivers 21 years of age and younger. The second involves escalated sanctions for novice drivers, which include a 30-day licence suspension for the first speeding conviction—and that is any speeding conviction. The third is a proposal to restrict G2 drivers from carrying more than one passenger aged 19 and under at any time during the first year of G2.

First I want to address the provision to extend the zero blood alcohol concentration requirement to all drivers who are 21 years of age or younger. I think it's important to clarify that under the existing graduated licensing program it's already the law that G1 and G2 drivers must have zero blood alcohol concentration. A lot of people in the province don't understand that and feel that somehow this legislation catapults into the zero-tolerance area. That's simply not the case. The G1 category of licence has a duration of one year, and that's reduced to eight months if the driver completes an approved driver education course. It also carries certain restrictions, such as that the driver must be accompanied by a fully licensed driver who's been licensed for four years, and that accompanying driver must also have a blood alcohol concentration of less than .05 in case that person needs to drive while with the novice driver.

The additional restrictions that the G1 driver has are that, first, he or she cannot drive on Ontario's 400-series highways or on high-speed expressways unless accompanied by a qualified instructor. He cannot drive between midnight and 5 a.m. I think, again, the minister made reference to the improvements in safety amongst young drivers ever since this graduated driver's licensing system was implemented in the province of Ontario. It was the right thing to do. We now have very firm statistics that demonstrate that these restrictions have, without question, saved lives and reduced injuries. It was the right thing to do, and I think all members on all sides of the House would agree with that.

The G2 category of licence also has very specific restrictions. It lasts a minimum of 12 months and has the followings restrictions: A teen G2 driver can carry passengers from midnight to 5 a.m. as follows: For the first six months, G2 drivers 19 or under can carry only one passenger aged 19 or under; after the first six months, and until the G2 driver earns the full G licence or turns 20, three passengers aged 19 or under, and there are exemptions for family members or an accompanying

driver who meets the requirements of the accompanying driver in G1.

It's important to note that for each conviction for violating any one of the G1 or G2 restrictions, a novice driver currently receives a 30-day licence suspension. So the concept of this 30-day licence suspension is not new. I think that, again, it's important for the public who are watching this debate and who are interested in this debate to understand the context of where the government started on this legislation and where it has come to. Young drivers, novice drivers who up to this point, under the current existing law, violate any one of those G1 or G2 restrictions that I have mentioned are subject to a 30-day licence suspension as it exists.

The proposed change in Bill 126 as it relates to blood alcohol would be to extend that zero blood alcohol concentration requirement beyond the G1 and G2 licence categories to include all young drivers who are 21 years of age or younger. This is where, of course, the controversy comes in and where some have concerns as to whether this legislation has gone too far.

1710

I believe I'm correct in saying that the impetus for this change was driven, really, by two factors. The first is the overwhelming statistical evidence that drivers aged 19 to 21 are overrepresented in drinking and driving collisions and teen drivers are three and a half times more likely to be involved in a fatal collision than drivers aged 30 to 34. Those are hard statistics. They are statistics that are readily available to us. It's in the context of those statistics that I know the government wants to ensure that we do whatever is possible to improve road safety and the safety of not only young drivers, but all drivers on our roads.

In Canada as a whole, alcohol use by drivers is a factor in almost 30% of deaths from vehicle crashes. The proportion of fatalities caused by drinking and driving has decreased only marginally between 1996 and 2001 and, again, 2003 to 2005. More than 36% of drinking drivers involved in all fatal crashes were aged 16 to 24. This is according to the federal fact sheet on these issues. A Quick Look at Alcohol-Related Crashes in Canada is the name of the study. It goes on to articulate that single-vehicle fatal drinking-and-driving crashes had a higher percentage of young adult drivers than multi-vehicle crashes and about 35% of drinking drivers in fatal single-vehicle crashes were aged 16 to 24. That's compared to about 27% of those in fatal multi-vehicle crashes.

I'm not convinced that this statistic tells the whole story. I don't believe that this is so much a function of the age of the driver as the level of experience and, for that reason, I would ask the government to consider amending this part of the legislation to place the focus on experience rather than age. Essentially, we have done that with the graduated licensing program that we have in place. It does not target specifically the age of the driver, but it talks about the incidence of when you make an application for a new driver's licence: for the first year, for 18 months or 24 months. It targets, specifically, the issue of

experience. The more inexperienced the driver is, the more restrictions there should be on that licence.

I know the parliamentary assistant made reference to the fact—and it was in response to the third party's critic, when he made reference to the possibility of discrimination and that that was his concern with regard to focusing on age 21, for example. The parliamentary assistant made reference to the fact that we already have discrimination because we have certain restrictions for older drivers. Once you get to a certain age, you have to go back in and do your regular tests and so on. There are discriminatory issues, of course, relating to the insurance industry as well. But I would point out that I think a lot of that has to do, again, with the issue of ability. One has to assume responsibility as a government—as a Legislature, we do—to ensure that our roads are safe, for example, and that people who have the privilege of a licence indeed qualify, not only in terms of experience, but also medical conditions. There are issues such as sight; there are medical issues that come into play, and for that reason we have to be much more focused in terms of qualifications, at both ends of the age spectrum as well as, really, people of all ages.

However, I want to make this point—and I'm going to ask the minister to give consideration to rethinking this issue of the age 21 limit. I'm going to ask that he consider our proposal to have this section amended, to replace the wording “21 years of age or younger” with “novice driver,” and that we work with the ministry to arrive at the appropriate definition of “novice,” such that it reflects a specific number of years that the driver has been licensed. That will help us get to the issue of experience and competence, in terms of being able to drive more safely on our roads. We believe that would achieve the intent of the legislation but would avoid what could well be claimed as age discrimination by this section of the bill.

The second impetus for this zero-tolerance provision, I can safely say, came from the efforts of the Mulcahy family. The minister made reference to this again today, as he did when he introduced the bill. That initiative was launched by Tim Mulcahy, following the death of his son Tyler in a tragic crash that resulted not only in Tyler's death, but also the death of two friends. Tyler Mulcahy's grieving father, Tim, began a campaign with full-page newspaper ads addressed to the Premier that basically called on the Premier to give consideration to changing legislation that would ensure that other young drivers would have the benefit of the protection of the law of Ontario, that would, hopefully, protect them from the same tragedy.

Tim Mulcahy's personal website collected more than 6,500 names on his law change petition. Many more have been sent and have been tabled in the Legislature. I had the opportunity to present a number of those petitions here as well.

I met with Mr. Mulcahy in my office. He spoke of his passion to be able to have a positive influence on future lives.

On behalf of our caucus—and I know that I speak on behalf of all members of this Legislature—I extend our sincerest condolences to the Mulcahys and the other families who are grieving and their friends. I want to encourage them, because while their loss is unimaginable, they have turned that loss into a lasting legacy reflected in this legislation. Their purpose was to do what they could to save the lives of other young people and prevent other families from feeling the loss that they've had to endure and, frankly, will continue to endure.

This legislation, when passed, will do what the Mulcahy family intended in their efforts, so I want to acknowledge their efforts and thank them for their perseverance in bringing this about.

The second proposed change that has received considerable public attention is the escalated sanctions for novice drivers for speeding convictions.

Again, I think it's important to understand what the existing penalties are for novice drivers to fully appreciate the proposed changes. Currently, for each conviction for violating a G1 or a G2 restriction, a novice driver receives a 30-day licence suspension. What this legislation will do is extend that 30-day suspension to Highway Traffic Act violations such as a speeding ticket.

Essentially, the way the legislation is written now, with the first speeding violation that any novice driver has, there would be an automatic 30-day licence suspension. The second speeding conviction would carry a 90-day suspension, and the third conviction would result in a return to the start of the G1 category of licence, together with all of the restrictions inherent in that G1 category.

I've advised the minister that we will not be supporting this proposed change, and we've asked him to reconsider making the regulatory changes that would in fact implement these proposals relating to the speeding convictions.

1720

I fully understand, and I'm sure all of us in this House understand, the intent and support the objective that the minister is trying to achieve. The idea of suspending a young driver's licence for 30 days for a speeding infraction is clearly to cause young people to think twice, to be more responsible behind the wheel. All of us here drive. I don't know that there would be a member of this House who on occasion hasn't glanced down to see that they were five miles, 10 miles or 15 miles over the speed limit; that happens unintentionally.

Interjection.

Mr. Frank Klees: Even though the honourable member tells me, with a straight face, that it never happens to him—

Hon. John Wilkinson: It's kilometres.

Mr. Frank Klees: Okay, kilometres. That's what it was; 5 kilometres.

Interjection.

Mr. Frank Klees: Well, it dates me. Speaker, the fact that I referred to miles per hour puts me into about the same age category as you, I think.

So the point, very simply, that I'm making is that we all find ourselves from time to time with that needle just a little bit beyond the speed limit. I don't think any of us in this place would want to be in a situation where, because of a five-mile or a 10-mile infraction, we lose our licence for 30 days. I think all of us here would argue that the penalty is not at all related to the infraction. There's no correlation there. If we can argue that on our behalf, then we should be arguing that on behalf of young drivers in our province as well.

The unintended consequence of this well-intended measure proposed by the Ministry of Transportation is that there would be hardships experienced by young people across this province. Many young people rely on their licence to get to and from school or work, and in many parts of this province the car is the only way of transportation. Many areas of our province just don't have alternative modes of transportation. Many families count on their son or their daughter to be able to make their own way to community activities, and in many circumstances young people involved in sporting teams, Scouts, cadets and other community groups rely on each other for carpooling to get to and from those locations. The unintended consequence of this proposed measure can be far-reaching and seriously impact young people and their families.

We would support more stringent penalties, perhaps even suspensions for more serious violations, but those, I would submit, should be equal across the board. Whether someone is a novice driver or not, I think that the signal from the government that there are serious penalties for speeding is something that we will all accept. But I do think that we have to be careful and not overreact, which I believe this provision of the legislation—or, actually, it will be incorporated into regulation. We would hope that the minister would do as he committed that he would, and that is to listen to the debate, and that he would have further public consultation as well, and that he would rethink this aspect of his proposal.

A starting point for input for the minister could well be the Facebook site that has been launched, specifically in his honour, I think. There are thousands of submissions to the minister, trying to get his attention on that issue and on the next issue, which I'm going to speak to now, and that is the third proposal announced by the minister when he tabled Bill 126. It has proven, without question, to be the most controversial. It's attracted the most universal opposition, not only from young people but also from parents right across this province. The irony is that it's a proposal that actually is found nowhere in the legislation, it's found nowhere in Bill 126, but it would be implemented, again, through regulation in the context of this bill. That regulation would restrict teenage G2 drivers from carrying more than one young passenger aged 19 and under at any time during the first year of G2.

I say that it's the most controversial, and I also believe that this is something the minister, in the short time that he's had an opportunity to hear the reaction, not only from myself and other members of the Legislature, I'm

sure, but also from the public—and as I mentioned before, there are Facebook sites. He no doubt has received many more e-mails. I have a number here that I'm going to take the time to read into the record for the minister's benefit and for the benefit of all members of the House. I have received e-mails from across the province, and I believe that's because of my role as official opposition critic for transportation. I'm going to concentrate on the e-mails that I've received from my own riding of Newmarket–Aurora. The points that are made are practical. In many cases the writers of these e-mails have asked me to bring their concerns to the attention of the government, and by reading them into the record I am doing that.

The first e-mail I received comes from Robert Kennedy in Aurora and it reads as follows:

"I am concerned about the provincial government's proposed changes to drivers' regulations in Ontario.

"My understanding of these proposed changes is such that it will affect my volunteer work with Royal Canadian Army Cadets and Scouts Canada.

"Also, it will affect my life as a parent of a 17-year-old.

"In the first case, our 18-year-old senior cadets, our over-18-year-old members of regular and militia units in the Canadian Forces, will not be able to drive cadets to activities, camping, courses etc. because of the new regulations. Also, our younger officer cadets: Officers or adult volunteers will not be able to drive to events because of the regulations.

"In Scouts Canada, there are also some leaders between the ages of 18 and 21 who will not be able to drive older Scouts and Venturers to events because of the proposed regulations.

"Personally, myself and other parents will be affected by our children's work. No longer will they be able to carpool after work because of their ages and the regulations. This will require more cars to go to their work spot so that our children can come home in twos or parents will have to go to workplaces late at night (i.e., my son Haig regularly works at Metro from 3:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.)

"At school, Haig is manager of the snowboard team for Aurora High School. These regulations would mean parents would have to drive to drop the students off for early morning snowboard team practices and races.

"Honourable sir, please make my views known to the appropriate minister.

"Very sincerely yours,

"Robert S. Kennedy" of Aurora.

By reading this into the record, I have done as requested. I know that the minister will take this view into consideration.

The next e-mail I have is from Sarah Stewart, who writes as follows:

"I am very concerned about some of the proposed new laws for teenage drivers. I do think that it is a good idea to have a zero-tolerance policy for teenagers driving with any alcohol in their blood; however, the limit on one

teenaged passenger when another teenager is driving is very impractical.

1730

"As a member of my church youth group who can drive, there are often some that need a ride home from the group. If I am no longer able to drive them, they may not be able to attend.

"This law may also increase the number of teenage drivers on the road, as a group of six teenagers wanting to go somewhere would no longer be able to take one car but three, creating a worse situation for the environment as well as increased road congestion.

"As a teenage driver, I've been using my driving privileges responsibly. I feel that I, as well as all of the other teenage drivers who are driving safely, should not be penalized.

"Sincerely,

"Sarah Stewart," from Aurora.

It's interesting. Sarah makes the point in her e-mail that she supports the zero-tolerance policy for alcohol concentration. I don't know if other members have found the same, but consistently the submissions I've had from young people state precisely that. The vast majority of young people say that they have no objection to and agree with zero tolerance for alcohol concentration, but they strenuously oppose particularly this restriction on the number of passengers in vehicles.

The next e-mail comes from, again, a high school student. Her name is Lorena Camargo. It reads as follows:

"I am a high school student presently in grade 11 at Sacred Heart Catholic High School in Newmarket who would be immediately affected by this law if it were to pass. It concerns me on certain points that I believe to be too severe.

"With the zero tolerance, I completely agree. There should be not one ounce of alcohol on anyone that gets in front of a wheel.

"What concerns me, and many students I have recently discussed this topic with, is the fact that we will only be able to ride with one passenger between the ages of 16 and 19 while we are young drivers. This is such a huge inconvenience for everyone, I don't even know where to begin.

"Firstly, a topic that is always being promoted is being environmentally friendly. I am sorry, but by reducing the amount of people in a car just because of their age, that will reduce people's abilities to carpool. Teenagers who drive to school together and aren't offered bus service would now have to find another way. Teenagers' lives, who have to work until 12 or 1 in the morning on weekends, would become more stressful because they can't carpool to work or back.

"In cases of emergencies, such as someone is sick, or your parents can't pick you up and you found out last minute, you would be so disabled if there were more than just one person who is the same age as you and also needed a ride. How is that just or fair?

"Over time, the world has stressed on equality and letting young people of today grow to be responsible and

independent people. I am very aware of the tragedies that have occurred, but I see no reason to punish to such an extreme the many responsible teenage drivers who would never do such things.

"I believe that together we can find a way, a better solution, something not so absolute."

I agree with Lorena and that's why we're proposing to the minister to hear us on behalf of young drivers, on behalf of parents across the province, and to make a commitment to us that he will not proceed with that part of the bill's intention, that he will not in fact move to draft regulations that would impose those restrictions.

I have an e-mail here from Haig Kennedy, again from Aurora. I'd like to read his letter to the minister.

"I am a 17-year-old student from Aurora. I am writing this e-mail to voice my concerns about the amendments to driving regulations trying to be passed.

"Firstly, the one-passenger rule is simply not going to work. It takes away the right to freedom of teens to go and see a movie or go to the mall, or whatever, with their friends because they would not be able to all take one vehicle. This will mean that a lot will either not go, or the parking lots" will be jammed, traffic jams, and we'll lose friends.

"Secondly, the punishments for speeding are far too severe. A lot of people would not be able to get around to work or school, because they would either have lost their licence from going a little too fast or just being ... afraid that they might. Teens would not be able to do the things they need to do."

That is from Haig Kennedy in Aurora. It's interesting that he makes the two points I made with the minister earlier; that is, that on these two parts of this bill, we cannot support him. We're looking for him to hear not only Haig but many thousands of young people like him—and as we've heard, parents as well—and commit to amending his legislation, and make a commitment to us in this House that he will not proceed with the amendments that would put those provisions in place.

The next e-mail is from Greg Leroux. Greg lives in Newmarket. He's a 21-year-old university student. He writes:

"I am a constituent with concerns over the recent proposed bill to alter driving regulations on persons under the age of 21.

"I can appreciate the need to curb the dangerous driving habits of the under 21 demographic. Unfortunately, I believe the bill in question could have severe unintended negative consequences.

"Though the majority of drivers under 21 years of age are students, many hold full-time jobs (and many of the students work full-time in the summer). To get to these jobs, a commute downtown is often necessary. During these commutes, it's impractical—and sometimes downright dangerous—to drive slower than the speed of traffic. Suspending the licence of a youth caught driving the speed of traffic during a morning commute wouldn't make the roads safer, and would only serve to ruin the job prospects of a responsible citizen."

To Greg's point, I drive from Aurora to Queen's Park four days a week when the House is sitting. On Highway 404, unless it's going nowhere because of congestion, when traffic is moving, the speed of traffic is between 110 and 120, and if you're driving slower than that, quite frankly, you're creating some problems on that highway. Police officers will tell you that if you're not driving the speed of traffic, they actually have the ability to ticket you for that very reason, because it could be considered dangerous driving.

So Greg Leroux makes a very practical point. As a young person, if he knows that the law of Ontario is such that he can lose his licence for 30 days for any speeding violation, what is his choice? It's a predicament we don't want to put Greg or any other young person into, and I thank him for his submission.

The final e-mail I want to read comes to us from Jason Edwards. He writes as follows: "I urge you to oppose this legislation, or at least the points highlighted above"—he had made reference to the single passenger and expressed concern about zero tolerance for speeding. In his submission he indicated, with regard to the zero tolerance for drinking—he doesn't support drinking and driving—that there's a concern that if there is zero tolerance at all times, you run the risk of losing your licence even if perhaps there is some detection of alcohol for other reasons.

1740

I have heard—in fact, we have a paper that I'm going to be delivering to the minister—that the equipment that's used to test alcohol concentration could well pick up other substances, such as mouthwash. It could well pick up other substances. For example, if someone happens to be at a Christmas party and has a rum ball dessert, the very fact that the flavouring is there and that there is some small content of alcohol could create a serious problem. So while Jason is expressing his support, he also raises that caution that I believe we have to have some discussion about in committee, and the minister has agreed to listen to some of these things. Hopefully we can provide within the context of this legislation some understanding and some flexibility and latitude for the circumstances that Jason Edwards presents.

With regard to these three major points that I've made, I want to reiterate to the minister that we cannot support the legislation as it is presented to us, we cannot support the concept of not allowing more than one passenger for young people in their cars, we cannot support the zero tolerance for a speeding violation at any point, and we will be looking to the minister to provide with us amendments and to provide a commitment that he will reconsider those provisions.

With regard to the first point, zero tolerance for alcohol content, there's broad support for that. We're hoping, when this bill comes to a vote, even the vote on second reading, that the minister will have come to us and given us those commitments that there will be changes and that he does not intend to move forward with those sections of the bill that are offensive to us.

During question period this past week, I asked the minister specifically to make that commitment before we get to the point of a second reading vote. He chose at the time not to, but perhaps on reflection he will see his way clear to doing that. If not, I can tell you now, and I won't predict how every member of our caucus will vote, that I will vote against the bill even though it will be a vote in principle. But I think we have to send a strong message to the government that we simply cannot support the legislation as it is presented to us now.

I would like to take just a few minutes, however, and speak to some other sections of the bill that contain some very positive elements that we will certainly support. One of those is the section that removes the liability for road clearance initiatives. We know that in this province we have a serious problem with gridlock. It is always frustrating when we have traffic backed up, sometimes for kilometres, because of a single crash or because of, in some cases, a minor accident. But where there's property damage, especially where there's property damage, individuals are hesitant to move debris from the road, to move any of the cars or interfere with the scene, for fear of liability.

Section 134.1 of the act allows for "removing vehicles, cargo and debris from the highway in order to clear the way for traffic and avoid injury or damage to persons or property" and it extends protection for personal liability "to prescribed persons who are ordered by a police officer to remove or store a vehicle, cargo or debris for anything done in good faith in the performance or intended performance of a duty under that" circumstance. We will support that. It's an appropriate measure for the minister to bring forward.

The second aspect of this bill that goes into some more of the administrative measures is section 40 of the act, which will give the minister the authority to enter into reciprocal agreements with other provinces as well as all of the states within the United States. I think this is important. In other words, if an Ontario driver commits an offence in one of the other jurisdictions, we will be notified here in Ontario of that offence and the appropriate consequences will then be meted on that driver. I think that is important, because offences on a driver's licence are indicative of one's ability to drive, the care with which one drives and one's attitude toward driving. So I think the reciprocal measures that are provided here in this legislation are appropriate.

I want to raise an issue—and I raised this with the minister earlier—and that is subsection 34(1): "Subsection 104(2.1) of the act is repealed and the following substituted"—I'll read it into the record for the benefit of other members. The minister was uncertain about the interpretation of this, and I'm going to ask him to clarify this for all members, because my interpretation of it is that with this new section, it would be mandatory for all people who ride bicycles in the province of Ontario to wear helmets. The minister wasn't aware of it. His staff advised him that this only relates to motorcycles or power-assisted bicycles.

I'm going to read the section into the record now: "(2.1) Subject to subsection 103.1(2), no person shall ride on or operate a bicycle on a highway unless the person is wearing a bicycle helmet that complies with the regulations and the chinstrap of the helmet is securely fastened under the chin." That's what's contained in the legislation. My reading of this is that this is a change in regulation in the province of Ontario that, if passed, would make it mandatory for everyone riding a bicycle to wear a helmet.

I don't think that's such a bad thing to do, by the way. I actually thought that perhaps the government had become enlightened by including this. I was surprised that the minister didn't make reference to it when he introduced the bill, but when I found out that the minister wasn't aware that it was in here, it explained that. The minister has undertaken to get clarification. My preference would be that he leave it there and that he issue another press release to announce that, because I think it makes good sense. I had a submission from a number of health care workers who in fact encouraged us to take that initiative.

I want to just very quickly also make another recommendation to the minister around the consequences that he has announced with regard to impoundments for individuals who are driving while their licence is suspended. I support that idea. I have advocated that for some time and, again, I'm pleased to see that it is in the legislation.

1750

But what is missing here and what I would ask the minister to seriously consider when we come to committee is to apply that same consequence, that same penalty to people who drive while uninsured. Uninsured motorists are a serious problem in this province. They are putting other innocent people at risk every day in this province. They know if they're insured or not. To get on the road, to get behind the wheel and subject not only themselves but other innocent people to circumstances where there's perhaps serious property damage, more importantly, serious personal injury, and there isn't sufficient insurance to cover off those damages is unconscionable. I believe it's important, and we have an opportunity through this legislation to amend the legislation to deal with that issue.

I'm coming to the end of my remarks. I know that there perhaps is some more business for us to do here. I've just been handed a note from the whip and it says, "Frank, stop for a motion when you get a signal." Do I have the signal?

I'm always willing to co-operate. Having been a whip before, I know it's a tough job. The last thing you want, Speaker, as a whip is an uncooperative member of the Legislature.

Now I've been given the signal. I want to thank you, Speaker, for your attention. There have been times during the course of the past hour when you've been the only one listening, and I want to thank you. I want to thank the parliamentary assistant and the minister for responding to

our recommendations, hopefully, for amendments to this legislation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I haven't been handed a note, so I haven't the slightest idea what's going on. The Chair recognizes the deputy House leader.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I seek unanimous consent to put forward two motions regarding private members' public business.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Ms. Smith has asked for unanimous consent to put forward two motions with regard to private members' public business. Do we agree? Agreed. Minister?

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I did not hear a "no."

Mr. Gilles Bisson: On a point of order, Speaker: I have no instructions at this point as far as a unanimous consent motion, and I did say no. It was clearly heard.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): We're a little bit late for that, too. I'll take it under advisement that there was a "no," although, as I said, I'm sorry, I didn't hear it. There is not consent, obviously. Now I'll go back to the deputy House leader.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can I move for unanimous consent for a recess for five minutes?

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Unanimous consent for a three-minute recess. Agreed? Okay. We will recess for three minutes.

The House recessed from 1754 to 1757.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you for making my day interesting. I'm going to presume at the outset that we have adjourned debate on Bill 126. Yes? Thank you.

Second reading debate adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The deputy House leader.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I seek unanimous consent to put forward two motions regarding private members' public business, one motion specifically in regard to Bill 111 and one motion in regard to Bills 37, 98, 111 and 124, and that no debate or amendment be allowed on the motions and that the vote shall be immediately put by the Speaker.

I move that the order for second reading of Bill 111—sorry.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I think we're reading the motion. Now, do we have unanimous consent to put forward? Agreed? Agreed.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that the order for second reading of Bill 111, An Act to proclaim Emancipation Day, may be called during orders of the day tomorrow morning. At that time, the Speaker shall put the question on motion for second reading of the bill forthwith, without debate or amendment, and upon

passage of the second reading stage, the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called on that same day.

I move that—sorry, Mr. Speaker, do we deal with one at a time?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Yes.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: That's the first motion.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is the House familiar with the motion? Agreed? Agreed.

This is new territory. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Now we can continue, Minister.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that the order of the House referring Bill 37, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act to protect Ontario's children, to the Standing Committee on Social Policy be discharged; and

That the order of the House referring Bill 98, An Act to promote the sale of Ontario grown agricultural food products by amending the Municipal Act, 2001 and the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act, to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy be discharged; and

That the order of the House referring Bill 124, An Act to amend the Smoke-Free Ontario Act with respect to cigarillos, to the Standing Committee on Government Committee be discharged; and

That Bills 37, 98 and 124 be referred instead to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, which committee is authorized to meet in the morning of Thursday, December 4, 2008, for the purpose of conducting clause-by-clause consideration of the bills; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bills with the clerk of the committee shall be 9 a.m. on December 4, 2008. At that time, those amendments to any of the bills which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of each of the bills in succession and any amendments thereto. The committee shall be authorized to meet until completion of clause-by-clause consideration of Bills 37, 98 and 124. No deferral of any division shall be permitted and no waiting period pursuant to standing 129(a) shall be allowed; and

That the committee shall report the bills to the House no later than the routine proceeding "Reports by committees" on December 4, 2008. In the event that the committee fails to report the bills on that day, the bills shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon adoption by the House of the reports of the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly on Bills 37, 98 and 124, the bills shall be ordered for third

reading, which orders may be called on that same day; and

That during afternoon orders of the day on Thursday, December 4, the time remaining until 6 p.m. be divided into four segments for consideration of the motions for third reading of the following four bills in the following order: 37, 98, 111 and 124; and

That during the consideration of the motions for third reading of each of Bills 37, 98, 111 and 124, the time allotted to each segment shall be shared equally among the three parties; and

At the end of each segment, the Speaker shall put the question for each respective bill without further debate or amendment; and

That in the case of any recorded division, the bell be limited to five minutes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is the House familiar with the motion? Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

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

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer given by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care concerning hospital deficits, and pursuant to standing order 38, the question that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made. The member for Parry Sound–Muskoka.

Mr. Norm Miller: Last week in the House during oral questions, I asked the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care a specific question about his plan for Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare. They expected a projected deficit to double by the end of the year. The minister, like many of the answers we get from government ministers, blamed past governments and rattled on about the good work being done by the local health integration networks, but he did not address the question.

The situation is serious. Under Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare's current agreement with the local health integration network, it is supposed to present a \$1-million deficit budget this year and a balanced budget for 2009–10. Guy Burry, the resources and accountability committee chair and board member, describes the situation as "not a good story."

Hospital "board chair Mike Provan says he's frustrated by the continual budget despair at the organization, and by the fact that it continues despite what he says are numerous steps taken in recent years to correct the financial situation."

In our local newspaper he's quoted as saying, "We're not hopeless but we're frustrated because we've been in existence for about four years and every year it seems we have another million-dollar deficit."

He goes on: "We've looked at a number of areas (in the organization), we've had consultants' reports and we've done most of what they've said to do (to find efficiencies) and in other areas they're saying we're the best (at financial efficiencies)"

When asked if Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare was going to be able to reach its \$1-million deficit goal for this year, Provan replied, "I don't know."

Mr. Provan went on to explain that the hospitals do not get more money when they do more work. The Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare organization is given a global budget which is increased every year by a certain percentage, but which is not adjusted to reflect more traffic through the hospital doors.

Provan explains:

"Because most of it's on a fixed budget, the more operations we do don't necessarily mean we get more money. Sure, the surgeon gets paid but that's a whole different issue.

"The hospital doesn't get paid (for supplies and equipment costs)."

As we know, in Parry Sound–Muskoka, health demands go up dramatically in the summer months.

According to CEO Barry Lockhart, the global funding amount from the province accounts for 75% of their revenue. That funding is increased by a certain percentage point every year, which is supposed to cover off any expenditure increases. Last year, they received a 2.8% increase, but their costs went up over 4%. This year, the LHIN which approves Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare's budget received \$1.3 million for population growth. That money was split between Barrie and Collingwood, the two areas within the LHIN that saw the most growth.

One of the biggest problems at Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare is with alternate-level-of-care patients, people who should be in long-term-care homes or receiving care at home, but who are taking up hospital beds due to lack of space or services in other areas. They run 138 beds, total, in their system, and today there are 50 alternate-level-of-care patients in those beds, so that equates to about 40% of the beds being occupied by individuals who could be cared for elsewhere. Most of the ALC patients in Muskoka are those who should be in a long-term-care home. Barry Lockhart advises that according to the provincial formula of 100 long-term-care beds per 1,000 people over the age of 65, Muskoka has enough beds, but that as a retirement destination, perhaps our formula should be different.

Although both Huntsville District Memorial Hospital and South Muskoka Memorial Hospital in Bracebridge are designed to run at about 85% occupancy, they've been hitting the 100% mark this year. The board must consider the real possibility of service cuts, and they're going to be holding meetings to try to deal with that point.

Mr. Lockhart goes on: "I think we can do some things and still maintain a rather excellent health care service. The concern we have now is, how far down the road do we have to keep going before some of our issues that are driving our costs have to be resolved?"

So I say again, other than service cuts, what is your plan, Minister, to deal with these hospital deficits that are growing from year to year?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Scarborough–Rouge River, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, you have up to five minutes.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: In response to the concern of the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, I have to say that the health care sector is going to continue to rise as a dominant employer in Ontario for years to come. Our population continues to age, and demands on our health care system will increase, and patient care will remain our top focus. That means we're going to hire more nurses; that means we're going to hire more doctors. We'll need them in our hospitals; we'll need them in our long-term-care homes; we'll need them throughout our communities, as we increase access to care outside our hospitals.

However, these are long-term goals of the government. In the current fiscal climate, we all need to work with the resources that we have. We are asking our partners—the unions, the hospitals, patients, and all our colleagues in this Legislature—to work with us through these challenging times, as we work to protect public services in the midst of a difficult economy.

Our government made a tough choice to take a deficit to protect health care, after working so hard to eliminate the \$5.5-billion deficit left behind by the previous government. However, we will continue to invest more in our hospitals and the health care sector overall, just as we have every single year that we have been in office. What we are seeing is an improvement and proper alignment of services to make sure that hospitals are focusing on acute care and that the community-based supports are in place to support patients closer to home.

In 2003, we embarked on a plan of unprecedented investments to build a more sustainable health care system in Ontario. Health care spending has increased 37%, the highest level it has ever been.

With regard to Muskoka health care, I would like to say to this House that our investments in Muskoka

Algonquin Healthcare include a more than \$6.9-million increase in base funding since 2003-04. That would account for an 18% increase. We've invested over \$23 million in the North Simcoe Muskoka LHIN toward a three-year local aging at home strategy. Nineteen nurses have been added to Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare as part of our nursing graduate program. We've invested \$100,000 for 150 more cataract surgeries at this hospital, part of the \$515,900 in funding that Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare has received to reduce wait times.

The government has reached its goal of creating 150 family health care teams across the province to expand access to comprehensive primary care for all Ontarians. Six of these FHTs are in the North Simcoe Muskoka LHIN. As part of our ER and ALC strategy, we've also invested \$844,470 in the local LHIN to provide community alternatives to hospital care.

The member has raised this issue in the House before and I would like to add to it. We are working with our partners in health care to ensure that Ontario's health care system is and remains responsive and continues to meet patient needs.

A review was undertaken in 2007 by an independent outside consulting firm to assess the service delivery model initiated in a pilot project in 1997 as part of our lab restructuring initiative in this area. Upon consultation and review, the ministry and Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare hospital together determined that the best alternative to maintain local service was to accept the review's recommendations to adopt the same model of community lab services used across Ontario. The ministry is working closely with the community lab provider, the Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare hospital, and the North Simcoe Muskoka LHIN in the transition planning process to ensure that all residents of the pilot communities of Bracebridge, Huntsville and Burks Falls continue to have timely access to lab services in their communities.

I believe that the response from the minister and the one that I've provided today provide the member with clarity on his question.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried.

This House is adjourned until Thursday, December 4 at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1813.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Broten, Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development / Ministre du Développement économique
Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
		Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
		Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	Minister of Culture / Ministre de la Culture
		Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Crozier, Bruce (LIB)	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
		Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
		Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
		Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murdoch, Bill (IND)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres
		Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of International Trade and Investment / Ministre du Commerce international et de l'Investissement
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Nipissing	Minister of Tourism / Ministre du Tourisme
		Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre
		Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services / Ministre des Petites Entreprises et des Services aux consommateurs
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
		Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Tim Hudak
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Garfield Dunlop
Gilles Bisson, Kim Craitor
Bob Delaney, Garfield Dunlop
Tim Hudak, Amrit Mangat
Phil McNeely, John O'Toole
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jean-Marc Lalonde
Sophia Ageloniitis, Ted Arnott
Wayne Arthurs, Toby Barrett
Pat Hoy, Jean-Marc Lalonde
Leeanna Pendergast, Michael Prue
Charles Sousa
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Présidente: Linda Jeffrey
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: David Oraziatti
Robert Bailey, Jim Brownell
Linda Jeffrey, Kuldip Kular
Rosario Marchese, Bill Mauro
Carol Mitchell, David Oraziatti
Joyce Savoline
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Présidente: Julia Munro
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Michael A. Brown, Kevin Daniel Flynn
France Gélinas, Randy Hillier
Lisa MacLeod, Julia Munro
David Ramsay, Liz Sandals
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeff Leal
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Christine Elliott
Peter Kormos, Jeff Leal
Reza Moridi, Yasir Naqvi
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Kevin Daniel Flynn
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon
Bob Delaney, Joe Dickson
Kevin Daniel Flynn, Sylvia Jones
Norm Miller, Mario Sergio
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jerry J. Ouellette
Laura Albanese, Ernie Hardeman
Andrea Horwath, Phil McNeely
Jerry J. Ouellette, Liz Sandals
Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Michael Prue
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller
Bas Balkissoon, Mike Colle
Kim Craitor, Gerry Martiniuk
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch
Michael Prue, Tony Ruprecht
Mario Sergio
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Laurel C. Broten, Vic Dhillon
Cheri DiNovo, Helena Jaczek
Dave Levac, Shafiq Qaadri
Khalil Ramal, Laurie Scott
Peter Shurman
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Select Committee on Elections / Comité spécial des élections

Chair / Président: Greg Sorbara
Howard Hampton, Greg Sorbara
Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Continued from back cover

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS /
DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS**

Long Point

Mr. Toby Barrett4425

Cooper Marsh Conservation Area

Mr. Jim Brownell4425

School principals

Mrs. Joyce Savoline4425

Ukrainian genocide

Mr. Khalil Ramal4426

Road safety

Mr. Ted Arnott4426

University labour dispute

Mr. Rosario Marchese4426

School principals

Mr. Mike Colle4426

Child abuse

Mr. Jeff Leal4427

Ted Rogers

Mrs. Laura Albanese4427

**REPORTS BY COMMITTEES /
RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS**

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private
Bills**

Mr. Michael Prue4427

Report adopted4427

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS /
DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI**

**Education Amendment Act (Pupils with Diabetes),
2008, Bill 137, Mr. Martiniuk / Loi de 2008
modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation (élèves
diabétiques), projet de loi 137, M. Martiniuk**

First reading agreed to4427

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk4427

**Joseph and Wolf Lebovic Jewish Community
Campus Act, 2008, Bill Pr20, Mr. Sorbara**

First reading agreed to4428

**STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS
MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES**

Maynard Sam George

Hon. Brad Duguid4428

**International Day of Persons with Disabilities /
Journée internationale des personnes handicapées**
Hon. Madeleine Meilleur4428

Maynard Sam George

Mr. Norm Miller4429

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

Ms. Sylvia Jones4429

Maynard Sam George

Mr. Gilles Bisson4430

**International Day of Persons with Disabilities /
Journée Internationale des personnes handicapées**
Mme France Gélinas4431

**National Day of Remembrance and Action on
Violence Against Women**

Hon. Deborah Matthews4431

Mrs. Christine Elliott4432

Ms. Cheri DiNovo4433

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters)4433

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Child care

Ms. Sylvia Jones4433

Firearms control

Mr. Mike Colle4433

Diabetes treatment

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk4434

Bathurst Heights Adult Learning Centre

Mr. Mike Colle4434

Firearms control

Mr. Mike Colle4434

Lupus

Mr. Charles Sousa4434

Child custody

Mr. Jim Brownell4435

Diabetes treatment

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk4435

Drinking and driving

Mr. Frank Klees4435

Diabetes treatment

Mr. John O'Toole4435

Child custody

Mr. Jim Brownell4436

Diabetes treatment

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk4436

Notice of dissatisfaction

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier)4436

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Road Safety Act, 2008, Bill 126, Mr. Bradley / Loi de 2008 sur la sécurité routière, projet de loi 126, M. Bradley

Hon. James J. Bradley	4437
Mr. Michael A. Brown.....	4441
Mr. Gilles Bisson	4441
Mr. Pat Hoy	4442
Mr. John O'Toole	4442
Mr. Michael A. Brown.....	4442
Mr. Frank Klees.....	4443
Second reading debate adjourned	4449

Order of business

Hon. Monique M. Smith.....	4449
Motion agreed to.....	4449

Order of business

Hon. Monique M. Smith.....	4449
Motion agreed to.....	4450

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE / DÉBAT SUR LA MOTION D'AJOURNEMENT

Health care funding

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier)	4450
Mr. Norm Miller	4450
Mr. Bas Balkissoon.....	4451

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Wednesday 3 December 2008 / Mercredi 3 décembre 2008

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Coroners Amendment Act, 2008, Bill 115, Mr. Bartolucci / Loi de 2008 modifiant la Loi sur les coroners, projet de loi 115, M. Bartolucci	
Mr. Peter Kormos.....	4407
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	4411
Mr. Khalil Ramal	4413
Mr. John O'Toole.....	4413
Mr. Dave Levac.....	4413
Ms. Helena Jaczek.....	4414
Mr. Peter Kormos.....	4414
Second reading debate deemed adjourned	4414

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Michael Prue	4414
Ms. Helena Jaczek.....	4414
Mme France Gélinas	4414
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	4415

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Government spending	
Mr. Robert W. Runciman.....	4415
Hon. Dwight Duncan	4415
Government spending	
Mr. Robert W. Runciman.....	4415
Hon. Peter Fonseca	4416
Government spending	
Mr. Howard Hampton	4416
Hon. Dwight Duncan	4416
Government spending	
Mr. Howard Hampton	4417
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	4417
Ministry spending	
Ms. Lisa MacLeod	4418
Hon. Ted McMeekin	4418
Breastfeeding	
Mme France Gélinas	4418
Hon. Margaret R. Best	4418
Pediatric forensic pathology inquiry	
Mr. Bill Mauro	4419
Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	4419

Government spending

Mr. Peter Shurman	4419
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	4419

Energy policies

Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	4420
Hon. George Smitherman.....	4420

Aboriginal affairs

Mrs. Van Bommel	4420
Hon. Brad Duguid	4420

Ministry spending

Mrs. Joyce Savoline	4421
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	4421

Child care

Mr. Paul Miller.....	4422
Hon. Madeleine Meilleur	4422

Use of tasers

Mr. Khalil Ramal	4422
Hon. Rick Bartolucci.....	4422

Ontario public service

Mr. Tim Hudak.....	4423
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	4423

Autism treatment

Ms. Andrea Horwath	4423
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	4423

Lake Simcoe

Mr. Mike Colle.....	4424
Hon. John Gerretsen.....	4424

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Hon. Brad Duguid	4424
Mr. Gerry Martiniuk.....	4424
Mr. John O'Toole.....	4424

Legislative staff

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	4425
--------------------------------------	------

Continued on inside back cover