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Jeudi 1^{er} octobre 2009

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 1 October 2009

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 1^{er} octobre 2009

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PUBLIC SECTOR EXPENSES REVIEW ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR L'EXAMEN DES DÉPENSES DANS LE SECTEUR PUBLIC

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 28, 2009, on the motion for second reading of Bill 201, An Act to provide for review of expenses in the public sector / Projet de loi 201, Loi prévoyant l'examen des dépenses dans le secteur public.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to the order of the House dated September 30, 2009, I am now required to put the question.

On September 17, 2009, Mr. Takhar moved second reading of Bill 201. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This vote is deferred to following question period today.

Second reading vote deferred.

INTERPROVINCIAL POLICING ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR LES SERVICES POLICIERS INTERPROVINCIAUX

Mr. Bartolucci moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 203, An Act to allow for better cross-border policing co-operation with other Canadian provinces and territories and to make consequential amendments to the Police Services Act / Projet de loi 203, Loi visant à permettre une meilleure coopération avec les autres provinces et les territoires du Canada en ce qui concerne les

services policiers transfrontaliers et à apporter des modifications corrélatives à la Loi sur les services policiers.

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

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: Last week, I introduced Bill 203, the Interprovincial Policing Act, 2009. I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this proposed legislation again on second reading.

Bill 203 is about enabling police officers from provinces and territories outside Ontario to pursue investigations into criminals and their illegal activities within the borders of the province of Ontario. If passed, the Interprovincial Policing Act, 2009, would create a system by which police from other Canadian provinces or territories would be allowed to come into Ontario, be recognized as police officers with full policing powers and be held accountable for their actions. It would be a major step forward towards cross-border policing co-operation with other provinces and territories and a major blow to criminals who apply their trade across our borders.

We know that criminal activity does not recognize borders, so we must provide out-of-province police services with the means to investigate and stop it wherever it happens, to track criminals and their activities, even if it means crossing into Ontario to do so.

We, as a government, must evolve so that we can ensure police have the tools needed to effectively and efficiently do their jobs. Police tell us that they need to cross provincial boundaries to carry on their investigations. Police services in Ontario and other provinces have called for legislation to enable provincially appointed police officers to retain their police officer powers when they travel to another Canadian jurisdiction on police business. Specifically, the Ottawa Police Service has suggested that both Ontario and Quebec implement a model extra-provincial policing statute to allow for seamless policing across provincial borders.

Our police partners, such as the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, the Ontario Provincial Police Association and the Police Association of Ontario, support provincial legislation for extra-provincial policing. They note that Ontario police officers are increasingly involved in major investigations that straddle provincial boundaries: bank robberies, guns and gangs, and organized crime, for example. The Interprovincial Policing Act, 2009, proposes to establish a system to allow police officers from other Canadian provinces and territories to be granted police powers in Ontario.

If adopted into law, the bill would give the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services the author-

ity to designate officials who would receive and decide on applications from police commanders from other provinces and territories to have their officers designated as extra-provincial police officers with full policing powers in Ontario.

In order to appreciate the effect of this change, I'm going to have to explain very briefly what the current situation is. Currently, Ontario cannot confer legal status or authority on a police officer while he or she is working in another province. For example, Ontario police officers working in Quebec lose the powers and protections afforded to them as police officers in Ontario as soon as they cross provincial boundaries for police business. Currently, when it is necessary for a police officer from another Canadian province or territory to conduct an investigation in Ontario, that police officer must be appointed temporarily as a special constable. That process requires an application through a municipal police services board or to the OPP commissioner, the approval of the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, and then the administration of an oath.

Under present provincial legislation, special constables are given only those policing powers specifically spelled out in their application. They do not have all the powers of an Ontario police officer. They are not subject to oversight by Ontario's special investigations unit, which investigates incidents involving police and civilians that have resulted in a serious injury or death, nor are they subject to a formal process of public complaints. As well, special constable appointments are sometimes delayed by administrative procedures.

0910

So we move forward to this bill. If passed, Bill 203 seeks to rectify these issues. Under the proposed legislation, out-of-province police officers would receive all the powers of an Ontario police officer. Specific police powers would not need to be spelled out. By the same token, the proposed legislation would, if adopted, provide for increased accountability. An out-of-province police officer would be subject to investigation by the SIU and would be required to co-operate with such an investigation.

The new legislation would also allow the public to lodge complaints against out-of-province police officers, and for investigations of those complaints to take place in Ontario. Disciplinary proceedings, if warranted, would remain the responsibility of the out-of-province police officer's home province.

This legislation, if passed, would bring Ontario in line with several other Canadian provinces on the matter of cross-border policing. Where did this all happen? For the next minute or so, I would like to talk a little bit about the Uniform Law Conference of Canada.

In 1998, in response to a Manitoba proposal, the Uniform Law Conference of Canada established a working group to develop model uniform legislation that would address extra-provincial policing issues. That working group had representation from Nova Scotia, Quebec, Justice Canada, the Solicitor General of Canada, Mani-

toba and Saskatchewan. The working group consulted various police groups, such as the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Police Association, the Canadian Association of Police Boards and the Canadian Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement, to ensure that the draft legislation was responsive to police needs.

In 2003, a model statute, entitled the Uniform Act, was presented to the Uniform Law Conference of Canada and was approved by its members. The Uniform Act establishes a mechanism whereby a police service can obtain police officer status for one of its members to carry out duties in another province, and also addresses oversight and indemnification issues. Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan and New Brunswick have since enacted cross-border policing legislation using the Uniform Act as a legislative base.

For Ontario to benefit from cross-border policing legislation, another province must have legislation that extends the same powers to Ontario police officers. And so, it is noteworthy that as of July 2009, there were approximately 400 Quebec police officers appointed as special constables in Ontario. There were, at the same time, more than 400 OPP officers appointed as special constables in Quebec. These numbers demonstrate the reality of cross-border policing today and the need to adopt legislation that gives police the necessary authority to do their work while protecting the public by holding them accountable.

Ontario has been in discussions with Quebec for some time concerning the implementation of cross-border policing legislation in both provinces. We have determined that Ontario's proposals on the cross-border policing issue are generally in line with those of Quebec. These proposals are also based on the model statute developed by the Uniform Law Conference of Canada and adopted by the other provinces I mentioned earlier. Our discussions with Quebec culminated in the signing of a declaration last month that commits our two governments to introducing this type of legislation creating a basis of reciprocal arrangements for cross-border policing for Ontario police officers in Quebec and for Quebec police officers in Ontario.

For about the next two and a half minutes, I'd like to highlight some of the key proposals found within the act. The Interprovincial Policing Act, 2009, would, if adopted, establish a process whereby an Ontario official designated by the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services could grant a police officer from another Canadian province or territory permission to enter Ontario to perform police duties.

Under the terms of the proposed legislation, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services would designate one or more persons in Ontario as appointing officials with the power to appoint an extra-provincial police officer as a police officer in Ontario. An extra-provincial, or out-of-province, police service that wishes to obtain police officer status for one or more of its police officers would be required to make a written

application to an appointing official in Ontario. An appointing official may appoint an extra-provincial police officer as a police officer in Ontario for a period of not more than three years, subject to any conditions imposed by that appointment. The appointing official would be required to make a decision within seven days after receiving the request.

Bill 203 would also allow municipal police chiefs and OPP detachment commanders to extend police powers for short periods of time in urgent circumstances. Once approved, the appointment would be effective on the date indicated on the appointment form. Similar legislation in other Canadian provinces and territories would grant the reciprocal authority to Ontario police officers working outside Ontario.

I'd like to conclude very simply: This legislation, if adopted, would support Ontario's commitment to public safety, including the guns-and-gangs strategy, by: one, allowing an extra-provincial police officer to apply for and obtain extra-provincial police status in a timely manner, thereby avoiding unnecessary delays to operations or investigations; and secondly, enhancing the enforcement ability of extra-provincial police officers conducting investigations or operations in Ontario. Finally, as extra-provincial police officers, they will be able to continue their investigations and/or operations when they enter Ontario. This may help to reduce the number of criminals on the streets, while also working to enhance public safety.

It would subject extra-provincial police officers to the oversight of Ontario's SIU and allow public complaints to be lodged and examined. Moreover, it would create a legislative system of reciprocity whereby Ontario police officers could apply for and receive police officer status in other provinces and territories that have similar legislation enabling them to pursue Ontario's criminals outside our borders.

I submit that for all these reasons, the Interprovincial Policing Act, 2009, deserves the support of all members in the House.

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I was listening to the honourable member, the minister of the crown, speaking about the importance of creating mobility between the provinces and sharing information between the Ontario police system and other provinces for the safety of the people of Ontario.

I think it's a very important step toward trying to get all the information together. I'm the member from London-Fanshawe, and as you know, we sit between two big cities, Toronto and the United States, and many people—criminals—cross the border through the 401, and sometimes they stop in London. Sometimes they cross the border from the United States to Canada, or they come from Quebec or other provinces.

I think it's very important to create some kind of a mechanism to share information and try to create safety for the people of Ontario. Therefore, I hope all the mem-

bers of this House stand up for Ontario and support the initiative being put forward by the minister in order to create a safety mechanism for people who want to live safely in this beautiful province.

Therefore, I am willing to support the bill. Hopefully, the debate will take place, and I know through the process, when people debate the issues, a lot of ideas will develop and give us more sense and direction in order to engage people in this province and create better understanding and a better system for the people of Ontario.

0920

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: I appreciate the introduction of the bill on the part of the minister. Our critic, the member for Simcoe North, Garfield Dunlop, is unable to speak to the bill at this time because we didn't have a whole lot of notice as to when it was going to be brought for second reading.

I did hear some interesting stuff from the minister. We're always looking for ways that we can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of policing, here and across the country. We're going to be taking a good look at this bill to see if that is in fact what it accomplishes. I certainly want to give the minister the benefit of the doubt, because the premise behind the bill is certainly one that we can all support; because we all have recognized and have seen instances in the past where the inability of police to pursue across borders or whatever has inhibited them with respect to apprehending criminals.

We are going to be taking a look at the nuances and the minutiae of this bill in order to make proper comment on it, but we do appreciate the fact that the government has at least recognized that there is a situation that needs to be addressed here in Canada. We hope that this bill in fact does that. When we have more opportunity to examine it in its totality, we'll be in a better position to comment further.

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

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I guess I would agree with the comments that have just been made by my colleague the member from Renfrew, and that is that we certainly were not aware that the bill was going to be called today. We haven't had an opportunity to thoroughly examine the content of the bill, but obviously our party has always been a strong supporter of increased enforcement and of cross-border policing. We certainly support all efforts that would support better cross-border policing co-operation with other Canadian provinces and territories. So we look forward to having the opportunity. Unfortunately, our critic had another commitment in committee today. As I say, we weren't aware the bill was going to be called. We hope to give this bill the due diligence that it requires, but certainly anything we can do to enhance co-operation, to better provide enforcement in order that the public is protected, we would be very supportive of.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Questions and comments? Minister, two minutes to respond.

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: I want to thank the members from London–Fanshawe, Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and Kitchener–Waterloo for their comments.

Just as a point of clarification—and not one that we should be debating—all three parties were aware that this bill was coming forward today. I understand and appreciate that sometimes critics can't be available and so the critics' times have been deferred. I look forward to a very good debate with regard to this. My staff has given both opposition parties a technical briefing, a full briefing, so that both the opposition parties will be well aware of not only the intent but the direction of the bill.

Listen, there isn't anybody in this House who doesn't want public safety to be enhanced as much as it can be. We are all members of good intention. So I look forward to a very good debate. I look forward to the advice and the criticisms—constructive criticisms—by others who will be a part of the dialogue around this bill, because at the end of the day what we want is an effective tool for police services from other jurisdictions in Canada as well as within Ontario, to be able to do their jobs to the fullest; so that at the end of the day, your loved ones, your neighbours, your family, your friends, your fellow citizens of Ontario will know, without a doubt, that Ontario's streets are safer because of this particular piece of legislation. Obviously, I hope that the House will pass this.

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

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I think both opposition parties are in agreement with this: In order to allow them to prepare for the debate, I move adjournment of the debate.

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

Second reading debate adjourned.

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

Hon. Gerry Phillips: There is no further business until question period.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): There being no further business, this House stands recessed until 10:30 a.m. this morning.

The House recessed from 0925 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the member from Durham and page Ava Doner, to welcome her mother, Anita, and a family friend, Lori, sitting in the east gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

On behalf of the member from Mississauga–Erindale, we'd like to take this opportunity to welcome his wife, Balwinder Takhar, to the Legislature today, along with Colonel Tejinder Singh Khangura, brother of Mrs. Takhar, and Adarsh Khangura, sister-in-law of Mr. and Mrs. Takhar. Welcome to Queen's Park, Colonel.

Mr. Phil McNeely: I am very pleased to introduce three visitors sitting in the east gallery. They are all from the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators, NECL: Adam Schafer, the executive director; the Honourable

Dennis Ozment, Minnesota state representative; and the Honourable Jane Krentz, former Minnesota state senator, known for her work on the environment and on conservation.

Hon. John Milloy: I'd like to welcome members of the Ontario Literacy Coalition, who are visiting the Legislature today. In the gallery, we have Lesley Brown, executive director of the Ontario Literacy Coalition; Jody Lundrigan, manager of communications and marketing with the Ontario Literacy Coalition; Michael Shaughnessy, board director and student with the Ontario Literacy Coalition; Deb Hotchkiss, board director of the Ontario Literacy Coalition's Partners in Employment; and Maria Moriarty, board director and vice-president, the Ontario Literacy Coalition from the AlphaPlus Centre. We welcome them all to Queen's Park today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

AGENCY SPENDING

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is for the Deputy Premier. Do you have full confidence in the expenses claimed by Steve Mahoney, the chair of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board?

Hon. George Smitherman: To the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: The member raises a point here about one of the chairs of one of our largest agencies. What I can say to the member is that there is an expectation by this government, by this Premier and by the public that all our government agencies are responsible and prudent with all their expenses. That's why I can tell the member that at the WSIB—and with all our Ministry of Labour agencies, boards and commissions—they have received the message. They have received the message that there is a new policy in place. There are new rules. They must adhere to those new rules. I have been given assurances by the chair that all senior staff in the WSIB are aware of these changes.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Well, apparently that message has not been received. Mr. Mahoney is listed as the part-time chair of the WSIB. He may be part-time, but Mr. Mahoney billed over \$140,000 last year. He collected a per diem for more than there are working days in the year while also collecting three pensions, including one for when he was an Ontario Liberal MPP.

Despite all that public money in his pocket, Mr. Mahoney expensed thousands of dollars for limos until they finally gave him a car; meals where he had no meetings; and travel to China, Australia, Hong Kong and elsewhere. He travelled so much he got lost in Myrtle Beach, where he billed four days for one day of meetings and then expensed a GPS system.

Minister, how was Mr. Mahoney held accountable for his overbilling and expenses?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I say again to the member that the WSIB, as well as all our Ministry of Labour agencies, boards and commissions, understands that the new rule changes must be adhered to. I know they are working very hard to ensure that those changes are in place. What the member speaks to, I can say that it was reviewed, and the WSIB chair did stay within policy at the WSIB when it came to their expense policy. That policy has changed today.

Furthermore, our government has taken more steps, as the Premier has said, to increase accountability, to further protect the taxpayers' dollar. Now all OPS employees, as well as employees at our largest agencies, must—

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

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I don't think that message has been clearly received, and perhaps there is a reason for it. Steve Mahoney was once a member of the Ontario Liberal caucus and a federal Liberal cabinet minister in the era when they said they were entitled to their entitlements. While one can see how the expense scandal at the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. occurred in a culture of all that income coming in, the WSIB that Mr. Mahoney helms is teetering on the brink of total financial collapse.

When the Premier attended a hastily arranged press conference to announce he was dumping the accountability-for-expenses scandals on the Integrity Commissioner, he said, "You must lead by example." Minister Fonseca's example is to look the other way. Isn't this just another example of the rot in the McGuinty Liberal government?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: As I've informed the member, there is total recognition by the WSIB and by our government agencies that there are new policies in place. The changes, as I was saying to the member in the supplementary: Again, all OPS employees are mandated now to receive mandatory online expense training, and expenses for OPS senior management, cabinet ministers, political staff and senior executives at Ontario's largest agencies will be posted online—more transparency, more accountability. We're increasing the number of random audits to ensure that the rules are being followed, and we're moving forward on all expenses that will be reviewed by the Integrity Commissioner.

The WSIB recognizes that the environment has changed. I could say with assurance—

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

WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE BOARD

Mr. Randy Hillier: I have a further question for the Minister of Labour. It's not like Steve Mahoney has been getting things done at the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business has raised the alarm, alerting the McGuinty Liberals to the "gross mismanagement" of the WSIB. The WSIB's unfunded liability has tripled to over \$11 billion

in four years, even though the McGuinty government said it would eliminate the unfunded liability by 2014. The McGuinty Liberals simply have no credibility when it comes to economic management.

Why did you promise to fix the problem, Minister, and then make things worse?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: The member would be well aware that the WSIB, as well as other large organizations with large capital pools, has been hit by the downturn in the economy. We've had some great years and great prosperity. For 10 or 15 years the WSIB was making great progress with its fund as the economy grew. The downturn in the unfunded liability is completely attributed to the downturn in the markets. We have looked at other compensation boards across the country, and their liabilities and assets have also been hit by the recession.

I've spoken to the chair and to the board of the WSIB, and they've advised me that the current financial position has weakened, and the global—

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

1040

Mr. Randy Hillier: Again for the minister: A pattern is developing where the McGuinty Liberals will say anything to avoid fixing the problem. Even before the global recession, the WSIB's plan for a 9% return on investment was irresponsible. Were they planning on banking with Bernie Madoff? Now, with the global recession, we can't know if they've learned their lesson. Why? Because the WSIB hasn't filed an annual report for 2008 and 2009. But what we do know is that the McGuinty Liberals—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just ask the Minister of Finance—I'm having difficulty hearing the question, and he's sitting just to my left.

Mr. Randy Hillier: We do know that the McGuinty Liberals' new plan to stop the bleeding at the WSIB is for premium hikes and making small businesses pay for secretaries and office staff who will never collect benefits. It's a Ponzi scheme, only the people being added to the pyramid go in knowing that they are being cheated. Why did the McGuinty Liberals create a scheme where everyone pays for something that doesn't work?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: The member is completely wrong. When it comes to—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd just say to the government side: You have your own member who is up speaking—stop the clock, please—your own member who is trying to answer a question and you're shouting him down. It's making it extremely difficult for me to hear the minister speak.

Minister.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: Again, the member is completely wrong. When we look at premium rates at the WSIB, premium rates have not changed in the last number of years. We have held the line on premium rates again this year. We understand that there is a balance between how we set premium rates for employers and the impact to

employers, as well as the good work that those premium rates do to help our injured workers. That's what the WSIB is meant to do: be an insurance for those injured workers, a no-fault insurance that provides the ability for employers to do their business in Ontario.

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: I think the pattern is clear: It's called rot. With eHealth, the Premier has senior ministers deciding who to hand untendered contracts to, and they end up spending billions of dollars while we're no closer to having electronic health records. At OLG, the Premier and his ministers are so preoccupied with PR around these expenses that the McGuinty Liberals have no credible plan to prevent insider wins. With Mahoney, the Premier and his minister are so busy looking after their Liberal friend, they look the other way when he expenses his entitlements, and they have no credible plan to deal with the unfunded liability at the WSIB.

Why doesn't the McGuinty government understand that it's not just the money they're wasting; it's that Premier McGuinty and his ministers just aren't doing their jobs?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: The member maybe doesn't realize that what the WSIB is there for is to ensure that our workers, if they get injured, are cared for. That's what those premium rates go to.

The member and some of the other Conservative Party members bring in the question of expenses and other things that are happening at the WSIB. I know the member had the opportunity to have a lunch or an outing with the chair of the WSIB. My understanding is that there was some alcohol expensed. The member had some alcohol with the chair, and that alcohol was expensed. So I don't know what the member is saying. The member should look at his own actions when he comes to this House and starts—

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

ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Acting Premier. The Acting Premier sits on Management Board of Cabinet. Can he confirm media reports that Management Board authorized an untendered contract worth \$30 million to IBM?

Hon. George Smitherman: As has been the practice for a good, long time in the history of the province of Ontario, through all parties that are represented in this Legislature, mechanisms for single-source contract were possible. We've stopped that.

In the case of the IBM contract that the honourable member refers to, I don't know whether I was at a treasury board meeting. I'm privileged to sit on that committee. What I can tell the—

Interjection.

Hon. George Smitherman: I'm happy to find out, but I don't know the answer. I will tell the honourable member that in the case of the product that was being de-

livered, IBM had created the original system that this was supposed to connect into. Accordingly, I think it was very, very prudent in the circumstances to look for that such opportunity.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Minister of Health fired the eHealth CEO for irresponsibly doling out millions in untendered contracts. Now we learn that the Minister of Health pushed through a \$30-million untendered contract himself that the Acting Premier approved. Can the Acting Premier explain this double standard?

Hon. George Smitherman: Firstly, the honourable member misspeaks—I don't think deliberately, but perhaps misunderstands the way the treasury board functions. A number of individuals are representative there.

But I do think what's important to recognize here is that the practice in the government of Ontario, over all parties and over decades, was that there were mechanisms that allowed for single-source contracts. There were. You had them. We've had them. But the one difference is that they're gone. The one difference is that we've stopped those.

In the case of the product that was being contracted, IBM had created the original system. Accordingly, they had specialized technical skills which made them a very, very likely provider for such a service. But nevertheless, this practice, long-standing in the province of Ontario, has ended, and ended on the watch of our government. It didn't end there, and it didn't end there.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Perhaps the Acting Premier has more important things on his mind: pay raises to consultants without approval, contracts to people without signing authority, high-priced consultants hiring other high-priced consultants, favouritism, and the people are left without an electronic health system in the province.

They fired Sarah Kramer for this kind of behaviour. Did the McGuinty Liberals set the bar too high for their own ministers?

Hon. George Smitherman: The honourable member is right that our government, in addition to dealing with these matters of administration, which are important, has many other things on our mind.

We have on our mind to make the largest investments in the history of infrastructure. We have on our mind to bring in new policies that will create incredible opportunities for employment in the area of renewable energy. We have in mind to expand policies which will enhance the capacity for our four- and five-year-olds to enjoy all-day learning. We have in mind many obligations on the part of the people of the province of Ontario, and we're working diligently to fulfill those.

We recognize that in the area of these contracts, there is substantial room for improvement. We look forward to the further offerings that will come from the auditor in a report, and we will, as a government, on behalf of the people of the province of Ontario, do our utmost to live

out the recommendations and quality of advice that comes on offer from the auditor.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is to the Minister of Finance.

Since confusion seems to rule the day when it comes to the McGuinty government's HST, my question is a simple one. Can the Minister of Finance clarify for us what his government is and is not going to exempt from his unfair HST scheme?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We showed in the budget what we're exempting. That remains the policy of the government of Ontario. We do continue to meet with a range of groups—groups, by the way, that support the HST, that have some issues around transitional rules and so on. But we did specify in the budget those exemptions which we are providing.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Just yesterday, the Premier declared that mutual fund fees might be exempted from his unfair tax grab. He said there were "conversations" happening. My concern is for the thousands of Ontarians worried about the tax whack that they're going to receive on home heating, on hydro, on gas for the car, even on the coffee and Danish. We've received hundreds of letters from people like them in the last day alone. They can't afford a lobbyist or a \$1,000 ticket to a Liberal fundraiser. What do they have to do and who do they have to know to have their concerns about this unfair tax grab heard?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The government was very careful to put together a package of tax cuts: tax cuts for senior citizens, tax cuts for low-income Ontarians, tax cuts, sir, that are going to help other Ontarians and the transition to the new HST. Our project was a balanced project. It's designed to make the tax system more competitive.

I should also tell the member that any rules around the HST with respect to transition rules and exemptions have to be agreed to by the federal government. In the case of the mutual fund industry, they've had a long-standing dispute with the federal government around GST collection. Now British Columbia and Ontario are working with the federal government in the context of transition rules in order to facilitate those tax cuts that we're providing for low-income Ontarians. Those tax cuts have been saluted by people—

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

1050

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The finance minister might not have heard, but I'm talking about the tax grab that they're foisting on the regular people of this province, not the smokescreen of a tax cut that he likes to talk about.

The Premier is supposed to govern for everyone in this province, but it seems the only people who he hears are the people who can buy their way to the front, those who can pay for access. My real concern is for the people across this province who can't afford to buy their own lobbyist. When will this government start listening to them and scrap this unfair tax grab?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Our government has acted on the HST and a series of tax cuts to make our economy more competitive and to improve job creation potential in order to ensure that Ontario can compete with other jurisdictions around the world.

The leader of the third party only tells part of the story, as is their case. She forgets to talk about the endorsements we had from people such as Hugh Mackenzie, a well-known supporter of her party. I know that he has advised you and your caucus colleagues that you ought to rethink your position because of the progressive nature of the reforms in this system, which will, in fact, benefit people of modest income more than others.

She forgets to talk about the two property tax credits for senior citizens, which she and her party voted against—

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

TAXATION

Mrs. Julia Munro: My question is also for the Minister of Labour. Back in March, the Premier said his jobs budget would create 150,000 new full-time jobs, but Ontario lost 74,000 full-time jobs since he said that. The McGuinty Liberals said the unfunded liability of the WSIB would be retired by 2014, but it's growing each year. It's now \$11 billion. They're just not credible.

Why is hitting the average small construction business with \$11,000 in new taxes a good idea in this economy?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: At the Ministry of Labour and the WSIB, our top priority is the health and safety of Ontario workers. The mandatory coverage for construction workers will level the playing field, will provide more health and safety measures and will allow us to address the underground economic activity that we know happens in that sector.

When it comes to the unfunded liability, as I have said, the WSIB takes this matter very seriously. They have a stewardship role over that insurance fund. That insurance fund is what pays out to all those injured workers—155,000 injured workers here in this province. Those premiums are invested prudently. Because of the downturn, as we know, in the economy, the fund, as well as all funds—

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: Under the McGuinty Liberals, Ontario families are working harder than ever to keep up. Actually, it's worse than that: Minister Fonseca's WSIB legislation forces office workers, from clerical staff to managers, to give up more of their paycheques through higher payroll taxes. The CFIB, the Ontario Chamber of

Commerce and the Ontario Home Builders' Association all oppose the McGuinty Liberals expanding this tax. They say it will kill new business and job creation and hurt the businesses and jobs we have right now. This just piles on top of the massive red-tape burden that penalizes employers and employees even further.

Why is the minister actively trying to undermine job creation within the private sector?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I don't understand what the member is against. Is the member against health and safety? Today in this province we celebrate 30 years of the Occupational Health and Safety Act protecting workers. This government has a track record where we have seen a reduction in the amount of lost-time injuries in the workplace of 25%. What that means is 50,000 to 60,000 less injuries, less suffering; and it also means that those precious dollars can be spent in our health care system, in our education system, in protecting the environment. These dollars that are paid in premiums—

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

TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. Howard Hampton: My question is to the Acting Premier. Media reports suggest that a US-Canada trade deal is about to be signed that would effectively forbid provincial and municipal governments from using local tax dollars to create good-paying local jobs. New Democrats see real problems with a trade deal that would tie the hands of provinces and municipalities and prevent them from creating good jobs in transit and good jobs in green energy. Will the minister commit this government to opposing any trade deal that would prevent local governments from using local tax dollars to create good-paying local jobs?

Hon. George Smitherman: I think that many of us took note that an issue that has been on the tip of many people's tongues and under discussion for many months seems to be gaining some resonance in the chambers of power in Washington, DC. At the heart of it is the desire to ensure that Ontario, which is one of the most trade-oriented jurisdictions from the standpoint of our economic activity to be found anywhere, has the opportunity for products to be able to be freely offered in support of projects that might be taking place in other spots. The government is paying close attention, working with other governments across the country to try and ensure that there is openness to markets, and I think that this issue continues to percolate on that basis.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Howard Hampton: The question was very specific; I didn't hear an answer. You can't promote a made-in-Ontario, buy-in-Ontario, green energy strategy, and it's very difficult to promote a made-in-Ontario, jobs-in-Ontario transit strategy, if you support one of these agreements. Domestic content rules are a crucial tool in ensuring that local tax dollars can be used to support the creation of good local jobs. So I ask the question again: Will the McGuinty government commit to opposing any

trade deal that would prevent provincial and municipal governments from using local tax dollars to create good local jobs?

Hon. George Smitherman: First, I think the honourable member fails to address the extent to which many of our businesses, which are operating in local areas and local municipalities, are involved in export. We look to the mayor of Halton Hills, who, as an example, has exposed circumstances where companies in that area have been prevented from exporting even to customers they have had long-standing and historic relationships with. We think it's important to continue to have dialogue on these matters. We have found here in the government of Ontario, in our policies related to green energy, an opportunity to encourage more of a domestic industry and capability to emerge. Accordingly, we will be continuing to take strong interest in this. But at the heart of it, Ontario is a jurisdiction that's intensely reliant upon our capacity to export our innovative products, which are designed and built by some of the best-trained workers anywhere in the world, and we think it is important to remain very vigilant in such discussions.

GO TRANSIT

Mrs. Laura Albanese: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. After Metrolinx submitted their environmental project report for the GO Transit Georgetown South expansion and air-rail link project, the public had one month to review the report and send any comments to Metrolinx and to the Minister of the Environment. I understand the report is now under review, along with observations and objections submitted by the public.

1100
Minister, I would like to ask when we can expect to receive the Minister of the Environment's response to the environmental project report. I'm also hoping that the Minister of Transportation can assure this House that, moving forward, Metrolinx will continue to take into consideration the concerns of the community, especially those relative to any possible street closures associated with the project and any possible health effects on the communities living in the area.

Hon. James J. Bradley: After extensive public consultation, the notice of completion of the environmental project report is now with the Minister of the Environment for review and decision on how to proceed. I understand that the review period ends October 5, which means we should hear back shortly on this matter. We will look forward to the minister's response.

Metrolinx, of course, understands the importance of keeping the community involved every step of the way. That is why they continue to reach out to the public through publications, information on their website and a customer care line where the community can obtain answers to any questions. Public consultation has been, and will continue to be, a key part of this process.

Since January 2009, Metrolinx has hosted an extensive public engagement process, including 18 open houses,

over 20 community meetings and a 24/7 virtual open house accessible throughout the entire—

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

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I would like to address another question to the Minister of Transportation on the same topic. In previous questions to the minister, this House has heard about the public consultations held by Metrolinx throughout this process. It is very important that the community continue to be consulted and informed about the next stages and throughout the decision-making process. The people living along the Georgetown corridor will be the most affected by these decisions.

One of the main concerns brought forth by the people living in York South–Weston relates to the use of diesel energy for the expansion project. I am hoping that the Minister of Transportation can address this concern. Can the minister assure us that, moving forward, the benefits of electrification will be taken into consideration?

Hon. James J. Bradley: The best thing we know, and I think all members of the House would agree, for cleaner air and a healthy environment is to get people out of their single-occupant vehicles and on to public transit.

The GO trains in the Georgetown South corridor are currently operating at capacity. That is why Metrolinx is moving forward with expansion now. Only the newest and latest technologies that meet the most stringent new emission standards will be used for the passenger trains in this corridor.

Taking it one step further, Metrolinx is moving forward with its electrification study, which is expected to be completed in the winter of 2010. Electrification is a critically important issue, and when making what will be a multi-billion-dollar decision, we want to get it right. That's why we're pleased that Metrolinx established a community advisory committee, which includes former Environmental Commissioner Eva Ligeti, Bob Oliver of Pollution Probe, and Dr. Linn Holness—

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

ONTARIO LOTTERY AND GAMING CORP.

Mr. Peter Shurman: My question is for the finance minister. The McGuinty Liberals spent \$430 million and climbing for a Windsor casino expansion project that wasn't supposed to cost more than \$400 million. You spent \$80 million more on building the Windsor Energy Centre, which wasn't supposed to be built at all. Now the public accounts show us that “to fund current operations and the continuing negative cash flow at Caesars,” you have Ontario taxpayers on the hook for at least another \$212 million. Here I thought the house wasn't supposed to lose. What are the profits the Windsor casino has generated since you attended its \$2.3-million opening spectacle in June 2008?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The construction of a convention facility and a hotel to encourage tourism that benefits

all of Ontario was in fact the appropriate decision to make. It is continuing to yield benefits to the local community and others. The member is right: The public accounts, contrary to what he said last week, do reveal that there are two separate projects and also very clearly reveal, with respect to the casino project itself, the cost of that and then the separate project on the energy centre and what happened there.

We continue to generate, through OLG, about \$1.4 billion a year in proceeds in the province of Ontario, and that continues to be an important funder of money for our government to provide health care, to provide education and a variety of other important public services—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Shurman: I'd say that's quite a mess you have on your hands: a sinkhole of a casino that's so deep it needs stimulus funds to stay afloat—at least until the McGuinty Liberals and their friends at eHealth and other boards show up for the Ontario Liberal Party annual general meeting at your casino at the end of this month. You still won't explain why the energy centre even exists. Yesterday, you said it was unacceptable that a budget item goes from \$40 million to \$80 million. Minister, do the math. The loss to taxpayers is approaching a half-billion dollars. Aside from Windsor–Tecumseh, is there anywhere else in the province of Ontario where you, Minister, would actually consider building a money-losing casino and a matching energy centre?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I remind the member that in fact that casino was authorized by the NDP and built by the Conservatives. Now, we did add a convention facility, we did add a hotel, and I'm glad to hear the Conservatives finally acknowledge that they would close it down and put 2,000 people out of work. I think that's irresponsible. I think it betrays the city with the highest unemployment rate in the country, and what do the Conservatives say?

Are you proposing that for Niagara Falls as well? Are you proposing that for Rama? I think you should be ashamed of yourself. I think the member ought to recognize that this important business, like the casino business around the world, has experienced tough times but it will come back. In fact, the investment of that—

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

SKILLS TRAINING

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My question is to the Minister of Training. All over the province, qualified applicants for the Second Career program are being denied by your ministry. Conestoga College President John Tibbits said that 30 to 60 students were accepted into courses at the college, only to be unexpectedly denied funding under the retraining program. In addition to devastating students, he said the college is affected because it hired teachers and bought equipment needed to train them. Mr. Tibbits says that government officials have to do something about this. They can't just leave it the way it is. Minister, are you going to just leave it the way it is?

Hon. John Milloy: I had a chance to speak about this earlier in the week, and I'd like to place the program in some context. Fifteen months ago, we announced the Second Career program, a program to help 20,000 laid-off workers over the course of three years. After 15 months, I'm pleased to inform the House that we have surpassed the 20,000 already and are moving up to close to 21,000. In September alone, this program approved the application of close to 10,000 people to move forward.

We realize that there are people who are interested in coming forward on that program. As I indicated to the House a number of days ago, we are in the process of reviewing the program. We are working with the colleges, and we hope to have a plan forward very soon to continue to address that backlog. We want to continue to welcome more workers into that program, but we have to move forward in a sustainable way.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Minister, unemployed workers need your help today. The ministry must develop a needs-based response instead of a numbers-based response to retraining. Many of these workers are struggling and running out of money, and you assured them the Second Career program would bring them hope.

You closed the door on many unemployed workers in September, and many fear you're going to close the door on them in October as well. To calm the fears of unemployed workers, Minister, will you guarantee that all qualified applicants who have submitted the appropriate documents and applied to approved Second Career programs will be able to start in October?

1110

Hon. John Milloy: I know the honourable member would never want to leave the impression in this Legislature that anyone who was approved for Second Career has not entered the program of their choice and is moving forward. We have worked with all the colleges to make sure that all individuals who have been approved for the program have moved forward with their training. We are working to address the backlog, I acknowledge the backlog, but I find it passing strange that the member from that party, who voted against this program and spent the last year standing up in this House and calling it a flop, criticizing it and saying it was a joke, would stand up today and not congratulate the government for having helped over 20,000, close to 21,000, workers in the course of 15 months.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: My question is to the Minister of Labour. Earlier today you made mention of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the fact that today is the 30th anniversary. As we all know, the legislation is the foundation for efforts to ensure health and safety in workplaces across the province. This is an important piece of legislation, as it affects my constituents and workers across the province. I know your ministry and many others are working hard to ensure that it ac-

complishes the purposes for which it was created. Everyone has a responsibility to ensure healthy and safe work environments.

Would the minister tell us a little bit about the Occupational Health and Safety Act and what impact this act has had on the health and safety of Ontario's workers and their families over the past three decades?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I'd like to thank the member for the question. Indeed, today is an historic day. As the member has said, this is the 30th anniversary of the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Before this act came into force, Ontario was governed by a mix of legislation that had many gaps in place and many overlaps, but on October 1, 1979, those disparate laws were replaced by one comprehensive law. This act transformed how workplaces manage health and safety. It extended workers three key rights: the right to know about workplace hazards; the right to participate in matters affecting health and safety; and the right to refuse unsafe work.

Today, 30 years later, we can all look back and be proud of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and what it's done for Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: This anniversary obviously represents an important milestone for workers in Ontario. Our government continues to lead the effort to ensure that workers in the province of Ontario make it home safe after a hard day's work. We know workers and employers are becoming more aware of their rights and responsibilities under this act, but more needs to be done. My constituents have asked me what our government is doing to ensure safe and healthy workplaces.

Would the minister please tell us about some of the ways that the Occupational Health and Safety Act has evolved to respond to the challenges being faced in today's workplaces?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: Times have changed, and workplace dynamics change year over year. My ministry strives to ensure that our health and safety legislation keeps pace with the changing times. We have a program called Safe at Work Ontario. It's our compliance strategy for occupational health and safety. Our inspectors work with employers, labour representatives and industry to ensure that our workplace cultures are healthy and safe. They also want to get in there and provide the types of resources that employers need. We have our health and safety associations that provide those best practices, that make sure that the internal responsibility system is in place.

The most important thing that we have done is that this legislation helps us save lives—

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

CANCER TREATMENT

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, colon cancer patients using Avastin, whose treatments have been showing positive results, have repeatedly asked you to remove the cap so that they

may continue their treatments. Your lack of response prompted me to get the Ombudsman to take a look into the matter. The Ombudsman said in his report yesterday, "Remove the cap." Will you agree today, Mr. Minister, to remove that cap for Avastin patients?

Hon. David Caplan: I want to thank the member for the question. First and foremost, I want to extend my deepest sympathy to Ontarians who are suffering from advanced colorectal—or any cancer, for that matter. I understand the difficulties that families and individuals face, that physicians face, in battling this serious disease.

The member mentions the Ombudsman. In doing his review, the Ombudsman chose anecdotal and emotional evidence over clinical and medical evidence and advice to make his recommendation.

We announced back in July 2008 to provide more than \$30 million in funding for Avastin. The funding was based on several clinical studies, three in particular, that were used to determine the best treatment for first-line defence against colorectal cancer. The trials were focused on outcomes and benefits, and experts came up with an effective, safe and cost-efficient plan. It is based upon medical evidence that these decisions are made—

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

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: That answer is shameful and repugnant to people suffering from colorectal cancer in Ontario today. What is so offensive to these patients is that, and I'm going to quote from the Ombudsman's report, "this investigation proved to be the exception, with senior ministry and Cancer Care Ontario officials refusing to have their interviews recorded."

Is this yet another example of your ministry's unwillingness to be transparent? Why did your ministry officials refuse to be recorded? What have you got to hide?

Hon. David Caplan: In fact, the clinical evidence is online, available for anybody who wants to review it. There are 20 experts who serve on the committee to evaluate drugs and make this particular advice to government about what should be funded and how that will work.

Decisions regarding critical-care medical treatments have to be based on clinical evidence, I say to the member opposite. That's to ensure safety for patients, effectiveness of treatment and cost-efficiencies in context of the overall drug program and the needs of all Ontarians.

This government invested \$30 million to be able to support Avastin treatment. Without clinical evidence to support his recommendations to extend Avastin treatment, I can't find reason to fund this treatment beyond the 16 cycles that are currently funded. Should additional evidence be provided, of course it would be evaluated and it would be an important input into other decisions that could be made.

HOSPITAL SPENDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Minister of Health. Diane Beattie is the vice-president and chief

information officer at London Health Sciences Centre. She broke the rules and awarded more than \$3 million worth of untendered electronic health contracts to a single consulting company, a company run by a former colleague of hers. Beattie is losing her job, but is being given a \$451,000 golden handshake.

As London families struggle to find long-term-care beds and to cope with cuts to important health care services, is this minister going to look the other way, or will he step in and stop this scandalous abuse of health care dollars by saying no to this golden handshake?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister?

Hon. David Caplan: In fact, the member has her facts quite wrong. Funding for London health care has only increased under this government, as opposed to what we have seen under previous governments.

Ontarians expect that government agencies and institutions use public funding prudently, and so do I. In this case, the rules were broken. They were caught by an internal audit, and the hospital did the appropriate thing and cancelled the contract.

Our government is all about openness and transparency. That's why we have made a number of changes in this House. It was our government that expanded the role of the Auditor General. The members opposite opposed these steps. We've opened up our hospitals, our schools, our colleges and universities and crown corporations to value-for-money audits. Expenses, in addition, for Ontario public service senior management, cabinet ministers, political staff and senior executives at Ontario's—

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

1120

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This minister needs to just say, "Enough is enough." When someone so blatantly breaks the rules, they shouldn't be able to walk away with almost half a million dollars of the taxpayers' money, of their precious health care dollars. Why won't this minister just do the right thing? Why won't he stand up for health care in London and demand that the London Health Sciences Centre board cancel Ms. Beattie's golden handshake?

Hon. David Caplan: The member now says that hospital boards should receive direction. They are independent corporations governed by independent boards. In this particular case, the board and senior management have made decisions that are within their purview. In fact, I think that whether it is through the internal auditing process or whether it is through the cancellation of the contract, I would say that the senior management have taken the very important steps that people in London and indeed the people of Ontario would expect that they would do.

I do note, in fact, that this member has changed her mind on several occasions in these matters. In some cases she believes it should be treated one way and sometimes she believes it ought to be treated a different way. Looking for consistency from my friend opposite is not a light at the end of the tunnel. Speaker—

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

ADULT LITERACY

Ms. Helena Jaczek: My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. We know that right here in Ontario and in fact across Canada, there are people who lack the necessary literacy skills to fully participate in today's workforce. Without strong reading, writing and numeracy skills, individuals have fewer possibilities of sustainable employment and cannot further access education or training that leads to better work opportunities.

As we move to a knowledge-based economy, the need for Ontarians to acquire these skills is becoming more and more necessary. We know that by 2020, 70% of jobs will require some form of post-secondary educational training. Investing in literacy and essential skills is not only good for people; it is good for our economy. Literacy training plays an important role in strengthening Ontario's workforce, which will in fact strengthen our economy.

Minister, how are you helping the many Ontarians who need these crucial skills?

Hon. John Milloy: I want to thank the member for the question. I think all members in the House recognize the important role that literacy training plays in what I like to call the continuum of education that exists for adults here in the province of Ontario. Indeed, statistics bear out the need for substantial literacy support out there.

I'm very pleased to say that our government, on an annual basis, usually invests about \$80 million. In the 2009 budget, we announced a further sum: some \$90 million over two years to support literacy programs here in Ontario. This will help to provide support, for example, for the literacy programs that are offered at almost 300 sites across this province, including colleges, school boards and community-based organizations, to make sure that Ontarians have access to the services that they need.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I've had the opportunity to meet with literacy and basic skill service providers in my community, and I can tell you that the York Region District School Board is doing an outstanding job at reaching out to those who need help and getting them the assistance they need to upgrade their skills for success. Literacy Council York South has also demonstrated a commitment to provide opportunities for members of my rapidly growing community to build critical foundation skills and participate in today's workforce.

But they cannot do it alone. I've heard from local literacy organizations that more and more people are accessing their services and demand is great. Minister, how are you helping these important organizations at a time when their services and support are so needed?

Hon. John Milloy: I'm pleased to report to the House that in July of this year, I visited the Hamilton Literacy Council, where I was pleased to announce our government's investment of \$25 million in colleges, school boards and community literacy organizations in the Employment Ontario network to help laid-off workers and other adult learners train for highly skilled jobs.

At the same time, I was able to announce \$5 million this year to expand online literacy training. By expanding online resources, this project provides more learning opportunities for English-speaking, French-speaking, aboriginal learners living in remote communities, and deaf adult learners.

I had a chance during that announcement and during subsequent visits as minister to visit many of these centres and see the outstanding work that's going on. I want to credit everyone who's part of this network for the service they provide to Ontarians looking to upgrade their literacy skills, one that is a valuable part of—

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

CORONER'S OFFICE

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. This House has been following the saga of the Farlow family, Tim and Barb Farlow, for the last year or so at least. I spoke a couple of times on Bill 115, and again in response to you the other day. Also, Mr. Farlow has responded and had a deputation at the Bill 115 hearings.

They are here with family and friends seeking assurance that their baby Annie's death was natural and inevitable. After the chief coroner refused to answer questions, the family turned to you, Minister. In multiple letters to the family, the minister has repeatedly assured them that the coroner's report was sound and that a report existed that revealed that all of the narcotics used on the baby were accounted for.

The Farlows have asked you to provide written assurance that their question regarding the lethal narcotics given to their daughter will be answered. Minister, will you provide the family with that assurance?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: Obviously, whenever there is tragedy within a family, everyone shares in that sympathy and everyone wants to ensure that as many answers as possible are given to the family. That's why we rely on our experts. That's why we rely on the chief coroner to provide the expertise in the determination of whatever final decision will be made. Obviously, our sympathy goes out, but I will defer always to those experts who can provide the best possible answers to those families who are grieving.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Recently, the hospital admitted that they were not certain where the deadly narcotic used on their daughter had gone to. Clearly, the narcotics were not accounted for, and despite this, the minister refused to order a disinterment. The Farlows are correct in their belief that the coroner's report was seriously flawed. Serious questions are raised regarding whether the report that the coroner's office says it's relying on even exists today.

Minister, can you explain why you defended a coroner's document that has been proven not to account for the missing narcotics, as the coroner's report stated?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: Again, in a very, very sensitive manner, I can only provide the best possible answer, given the facts. The facts in this instance are that the chief coroner—the coroner—is the best person, the most qualified person, the person who will look at all the evidence with professional eyes. I have to say that at the end of the day, he or she—that coroner, the chief coroner—is the one who is best positioned to give the answer, although it may not be the answer that an individual is looking for. It is the best possible answer that can be given, based on professional ethics.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Mr. Howard Hampton: A question to the Minister of Children and Youth Services: The Family and Children's Services of the District of Rainy River has had a balanced budget for the last three years, despite receiving a blended funding rate of only \$39 per child in care, while the provincial blended funding rate is \$79 per child in care. However, this agency has now been put in a very difficult financial situation because your ministry, mid-year, cut their budget by \$400,000, on a full-year budget of only \$3 million. This means they will not have the money to provide services for children in need over the last three months.

My question is this: Why is the McGuinty government undermining this family and children's services organization's capacity to protect children in need?

1130

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Let me begin by telling you that nothing is more important to me than kids in the care of our children's aid societies—nothing is more important. On this particular case we're working very closely with Family and Children's Services of the District of Rainy River to find a solution to this particular situation. But let me assure you: There is no impending shutdown. We are looking to actually improve services to kids.

Across this system, we've increased funding for child protection by \$385 million since we were elected in 2003-04. In fact, this year's budget contains \$30 million more for child protection than last year's budget. It's also important to note that our transformation is working: 41% fewer kids, fewer cases—

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: That's the minister's story. The minister should read a letter from the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies to the Premier, a letter of just a couple of days ago. Let me quote:

"Currently ... the government's ... funding strategy for children's aid societies ... threatens to undermine their capacity to protect children and to meet even the minimum standards of the Child and Family Services Act. The negative impact of this funding strategy"—cutting back money mid-year—"on all CASs has been enormous ... it is estimated that one fifth of the 53 CASs in Ontario will be insolvent by the end of this fiscal year. Operations

at some may not be sustainable within the next few weeks....

"The government's recent actions represent a significant and far-reaching funding strategy change...."

I ask again: Why are you undermining the capacity of CASs, like the Rainy River CAS, to protect vulnerable children?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: As I was saying, we actually have increased funding, budget to budget, for CASs this year. The difference is, we are not—and we've been clear with the CASs—going back for year-end funding to fund those deficits. Those days are behind us.

Mr. Howard Hampton: You should read the letter.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I have read the letter.

Over the last decade, funding to the child protection system has increased by almost a billion dollars, from about \$500 million to \$1.4 billion. It's clear we need to take a good hard look at where that money is being spent, and that's why we are establishing a commission to promote sustainability in the child protection sector.

As I said, there is nothing more important, no responsibility greater, than kids in our care. We need to make sure that that money is getting to where it can do the most good.

TAXATION

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. This past spring there were inaccurate reports in the media with regard to the implementation of the proposed single sales tax and its impact for farmers. It was reported that farmers will have to pay 8% more for farmland under the proposed single sales tax and that at \$10,000 an acre, this will add an \$80,000 cost to a 100-acre farm.

On behalf of the farmers of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, I ask the minister for clarification to correct the record and to explain how farmland sales will be impacted by the new proposed single sales tax.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I have really three points of clarification, because the information that has been put out there is not accurate. Where the purchase of farmland is to be used in farming business, any taxes that would be paid would be totally reimbursed—point number one. Point number two, where farmland is sold by a farmer as part of a sale of a farming business, by completing the necessary paperwork, both parties may elect not to pay the single sales tax at all. That's the second option. The third important point is that when an individual who is related is purchasing farmland, there is no tax paid with that farmland transfer at all.

Those are the facts. If anyone on the other side of the House is not—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. The time for question period has ended.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: Speaker, is it a point of order to recognize Rod Elliot on his last day assisting us in the duties of this House?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): No, it's not a point of order, but we wish Rod well.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

DEFERRED VOTES

PUBLIC SECTOR EXPENSES
REVIEW ACT, 2009
LOI DE 2009
SUR L'EXAMEN DES DÉPENSES
DANS LE SECTEUR PUBLIC

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 201, An Act to provide for review of expenses in the public sector / Projet de loi 201, Loi prévoyant l'examen des dépenses dans le secteur public.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1135 to 1140.

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

Ayes

| | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Aggelonitis, Sophia | Fonseca, Peter | Pendergast, Leeanna |
| Albanese, Laura | Gerretsen, John | Phillips, Gerry |
| Arthurs, Wayne | Gélinas, France | Prue, Michael |
| Balkissoon, Bas | Gravelle, Michael | Pupatello, Sandra |
| Bartolucci, Rick | Hoskins, Eric | Qaadri, Shafiq |
| Bentley, Christopher | Hoy, Pat | Ramal, Khalil |
| Berardinetti, Lorenzo | Jaczek, Helena | Rinaldi, Lou |
| Best, Margaret | Kular, Kuldip | Ruprecht, Tony |
| Bradley, James J. | Lalonde, Jean-Marc | Sandals, Liz |
| Brown, Michael A. | Leal, Jeff | Sergio, Mario |
| Cansfield, Donna H. | Marchese, Rosario | Smith, Monique |
| Caplan, David | Matthews, Deborah | Smitherman, George |
| Colle, Mike | McMeeKin, Ted | Sorbara, Greg |
| Delaney, Bob | McNeely, Phil | Sousa, Charles |
| Dickson, Joe | Meilleur, Madeleine | Takhar, Harinder S. |
| Dombrowsky, Leona | Miller, Paul | Van Bommel, Maria |
| Duguid, Brad | Milloy, John | Wynne, Kathleen O. |
| Duncan, Dwight | Moridi, Reza | |
| Flynn, Kevin Daniel | Oraziotti, David | |

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

Nays

| | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Bailey, Robert | Jones, Sylvia | Savoline, Joyce |
| Dunlop, Garfield | Martiniuk, Gerry | Shurman, Peter |
| Elliott, Christine | Miller, Norm | Witmer, Elizabeth |
| Hardeman, Ernie | Munro, Julia | Yakabuski, John |
| Hillier, Randy | Runciman, Robert W. | |

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 55; the nays are 14.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to the September 30, 2009, order of the House, this bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1143 to 1300.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I was alarmed to learn this summer that a review of the underserved area program could mean communities in Dufferin–Caledon will lose financial incentives to recruit and retain much-needed doctors.

Many families in my constituency cannot find a doctor because my area is so underserved. Six years ago, Premier McGuinty promised to recruit and train more doctors. He also promised that no person would go without regular medical attention. Six years later, nearly 20,000 residents in Dufferin–Caledon are still without a family physician.

The town of Caledon has experienced significant population growth, and the Central West LHIN is projected to be the fastest-growing region in the province over the next 10 years. Based on the current physician-to-patient ratio of one doctor for every 1,380 people, the recommended number of physicians is 41. By this formula, Caledon alone is underserved by 18 physicians. The government's own report, prepared by the Central West LHIN, clearly indicates that Caledon is underserved for primary health physicians.

All health studies indicate that access to a family doctor is essential for early detection and management of chronic diseases. It is also the only way a family can access the services of family health teams. The government needs to be doing everything it can to ensure that Ontario has enough family doctors.

Caledon needs access to the underserved area program to have the tools to recruit and retain family doctors for our community, and I trust that the underserved area—

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

TECHALLIANCE

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I rise today to tell the House some good news about a project that is unique to London. Last Friday, Minister Matthews, Minister Bentley and I participated in the BiOlympics. A non-profit organization called TechAlliance is an initiative that brings elementary and high school students together with businesses and government leaders for high-spirited science competitions.

London has a tough time retaining its science grads, and TechAlliance took the initiative to establish bridges between students and local employers. The project is to create long-term growth and stability in London's bio-tech sector by engaging youth in fun and challenging activities.

Along with event leaders, we guided teams of very intelligent students through games like extracting DNA from a banana and genetic decoding. The entire event was exciting and the students were exemplary team players.

I would like to thank TechAlliance and their partners in their grassroots efforts that will give London the competitive edge over other cities across North America. I am proud to have such entrepreneurship in my city. I would like to commend Allison Fischer, her team and the students who participated in this very important event. I participated in it and enjoyed it, and hopefully every city across the province of Ontario experienced that enjoyment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to make this statement.

FIREFIGHTERS' MEMORIAL

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: This Sunday, October 4, the Ontario Fire Fighters Memorial Foundation will be holding its annual memorial service, on the northwest corner of Queen's Park Circle and College Street, to honour firefighters whose names have been inscribed on the monument. This dedication will begin around 1 p.m.

In March 2003, the Ontario Fire Fighters Memorial Foundation was incorporated. The mission is to establish and maintain a lasting memorial dedicated to the firefighters who have sacrificed their lives to the service of the people of Ontario.

I want to read into the record a firefighters' prayer which is inscribed on the memorial. It goes as follows:

“When I am called to duty, God,
 “Whenever flames may rage,
 “Give me the strength to save some life
 “Whatever be its age.
 “Help me embrace a little child,
 “Before it is too late,
 “Or save an older person from
 “The horror of that fate.
 “Enable me to be alert,
 “And hear the weakest shout,
 “And quickly and efficiently
 “To put the fire out.
 “I want to give my calling and
 “To give the best in me,
 “To guard my every neighbour and
 “Protect his property.
 “And if according to Your will,
 “I am to lose my life,
 “Please bless with your protecting hand
 “My children and my spouse.”

I would welcome everyone in this House, if they have an opportunity, to try to get out this Sunday to the firefighters' memorial here at Queen's Park.

GRAPE AND WINE INDUSTRY

Mr. Peter Kormos: There's a crisis in the greenbelt down in Niagara. It's happening right now. This government is turning its back on grape growers who still have 8,000 metric tonnes of grape rotting on the vine because they can't sell it. Grape growers have been very modest

in their request of this government. They're asking that the government increase the Ontario grape content in cellared-in-Canada wines to a mere 50%. I argue that it should be much higher, but the plonk producers—the ones who import shipped tankerfuls of Chilean plonk, which ferments on its way up the west coast of South America and across the Panama Canal—insist that they want to control it at 30%. What this does is leave grape to rot, and it puts those very valuable and scarce vineyard/wine-producing, grape-growing lands at risk. All the greenbelt legislation in the world isn't going to save that land if farmers working it can't make even a modest living producing high-quality harvest.

This government has got to move quickly to increase the requirement for Ontario grape in cellared-in-Canada wine products. This province has to move quickly to ensure that those grape growers who are left with those 8,000 metric tonnes aren't bankrupted by the market.

CHANGA HOUSE

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I rise today to talk about an exciting project in my riding. The project is known as Changa House. This is part of a vision that has become reality through someone by the name of Dr. Roz Roach. Dr. Roz Roach runs a healing place which is used for empowerment and healing for women and children who exist in environments of violence. The same concept now is being moved to young people.

The idea behind Changa House, which is being built and is going to be started in the next little while, is to bring about a place for young people and teenagers to get past the violence and get involved in programs and other things that are positive and move them away from the negative environments that they may be in.

I stand today to commend and congratulate Dr. Roz Roach. She runs a successful centre already, as I said, for women who suffer from violence, and she's doing the same thing now with young teenagers and other young people who require help.

The word “Changa” has its roots in African, and it means “strength”, “strong as iron” and “good.” It's my wish and desire, and hopefully that of all members of this House, that when Changa House finally opens its doors, it will be a place of strength and of good for all the young people who come in there.

Even though we require police and we require enforcement and other mechanisms to ensure that our society is safe, I think the very best route is what this person, Dr. Roz Roach, is trying to take. I commend her and I look forward to its opening.

HEATHER SIFTON

Mr. Frank Klees: It's my privilege to bring to the attention of the Legislature that Ms. Heather Sifton will be honoured as the first recipient of the Elsie MacGill Northern Lights Award. This award was established by the first Canadian chapter of the Ninety-Nines Organiz-

ation of Women Pilots, and is named after the first female aircraft designer in the world. The award recognizes women who have made a significant contribution to aviation in Canada.

Heather Sifton is a worthy recipient of this award. She is an accomplished pilot and a long-time supporter of general aviation and women in aviation. Among many other contributions to aviation, Heather and her family have operated the Buttonville airport in York region continuously since 1963.

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Heather Sifton is also well-known in York region and throughout Ontario for her charitable community work. She has been a stalwart supporter of many charitable causes, including Polo for Heart and the McMichael and Varley art galleries.

Throughout her entire life, Heather Sifton has always reached for the sky in her personal, community and professional undertakings. On behalf of all members of the Legislature, I congratulate Heather Sifton on achieving this well-deserved recognition of her lifelong contribution to aviation in Canada.

PREMIER'S AWARDS FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Mrs. Linda Jeffrey: It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House to let members know that nominations are now being accepted for the Premier's Awards for Teaching Excellence.

Each school day, parents hand over their most precious gift—their children—to teachers. The McGuinty government commends the work that teachers and school board staff do on a daily basis to help our students reach their full potential.

The Premier's awards are a great way to acknowledge those individuals who choose to make a difference in our children's education. Starting today, parents, students, educators and community members can nominate an outstanding educator or support staff worker for an award. The deadline for nominations is February 1, 2010. The Ministry of Education has just launched the fourth year of this highly successful program, which has seen more than 3,000 nominations received and 50 educators and support staff recognized for this prestigious award.

These awards signify the McGuinty government's commitment to our education system and understanding that our teachers are its backbone. I encourage all members of the House and all Ontarians to recognize the efforts of Ontario's teachers not just until February 1 but all through the year.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: It gives me pleasure to rise and talk about the latest initiative in the McGuinty government's ongoing commitment to improving driver safety across Ontario. The McGuinty Liberals have made tremendous progress in improving road safety through

repairs to aging infrastructure, tough new street racing legislation and the aerial enforcement of the 400-series highways. This government also recognizes that a leading cause of collisions is distracted drivers, and I am pleased that our bill to ban the use of electronic communication devices while driving will take effect October 26, 2009.

We also realize that education surrounding this legislation is essential, and tickets will be issued beginning February 1, following a three-month driver education campaign. Our legislation will extend to the multitude of electronic communication devices currently on the market, including BlackBerrys, PDAs and hand-held GPS devices, making this legislation truly groundbreaking. Ontario joins more than 50 countries worldwide, and Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec and Nova Scotia, in understanding that attentive drivers are the first step in reducing traffic accidents and fatalities.

This legislation is another example of the bold moves taken by the McGuinty Liberals to increase driver safety on Ontario roads. We'll continue to work hard so that people arrive home safely to their loved ones—

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

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: On this day 60 years ago exactly, October 1, 1949, a great event took place in the history of mankind: the establishment of the People's Republic of China. Today, as you know, Mr. Speaker—you were present—we raised the flag of the People's Republic. As the flag was raised, we were reminded of a number of items of history.

This flag today speaks to us. It speaks to us about the great revolution and the great drive for independence. It speaks to us for the determination of the Chinese people to ensure that they structure their own future and determine their own destiny, because we remember what happened in the past when China was divided: China was dominated and China was divided up between the great powers.

So today, as we raise this flag, we are reminded of this history of pain and this history of suffering, but we were also reminded of a chance to think about liberty and freedom: freedom for the Chinese people to look into the future and to ensure that the relationship between Canada and China is being maintained and, in fact, expanded.

But what is most important when you raise this flag is that we are reminded of the Chinese Canadian people who have maintained and ensured that our own country is being built, that our own country is being changed, and we look towards the future.

I want to ensure that we recognize the people who have come today not only to help us to celebrate but to maintain and cement the friendship between Canada and China. There is the consul general of the People's Republic of China, Madam Zhu. Next to her is her husband, Mr. Huo. Next to her husband is the vice-governor of Henan

province, Mr. Mancang. Next to her is Mr. Lu, who is the vice-consul of China.

Congratulations, and we wish you very well as we think about the future of the relationship between Canada and China.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We welcome our guests, and to my friend the consul general, Madam Zhu, welcome to Queen's Park.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. O'Toole assumes ballot item number 42 and Mr. Runciman assumes ballot item number 43.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent for each member to wear a purple bracelet—

Interjection: The ribbon.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: —and the ribbon in recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month, and for a member from each party to speak for up to five minutes regarding Child Abuse Prevention Month.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I rise today to recognize that October is Child Abuse Prevention Month. I thank the members of the House who are joining me in bringing awareness to this important cause by wearing a purple ribbon, pin or bracelet. The purple ribbon campaign reminds Ontarians everywhere about the signs of abuse and neglect, and their obligation to report suspected cases.

Abuse takes many forms. It can be physical, emotional or sexual. Abuse can also take the form of neglect. Neglect is when a caregiver fails to provide basic needs to a child, such as food, shelter and safety.

Too often after a tragic event occurs, neighbours, colleagues or friends are heard remarking that something didn't seem right. Well, if something doesn't seem right, there's a chance that it's not right, and expressing that concern after the event is simply too late.

Children are least able to protect themselves. They count on the adults around them to defend them. That's why all of us have both a moral and a legal responsibility to report suspicions to our authorities.

You will not be alone if you report your concerns; last year, thousands of people did. Children's aid societies across the province investigated more than 77,000 reports of alleged abuse.

The legal duty to report suspected abuse and neglect extends to all Ontarians. Our government is committed to the protection of the most vulnerable members of our society. We're committed to protecting children and youth and supporting a strengthened child well-being and protection system.

I want to take this opportunity to salute our CASs across the province and the dedicated professionals and service providers who are making the difference each and every day for those most at risk.

It is enormously challenging work. I am reminded of the great difference that caring individuals and a caring community can make.

As you know, a few years ago our government made changes to the Child and Family Services Act. We brought in reforms that make it easier for relatives to provide permanent homes for children and youth. And it has made a difference: There are fewer kids coming into care and more moving into permanent placements.

But with almost 10,000 crown wards in Ontario's system, we have much work to do. We're all committed to helping crown wards succeed.

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A big step forward is occurring through the child welfare outcomes expert reference group. Our government established this group, which includes members of children's aid societies, child welfare researchers and youth in care, so we can better help kids reach their full potential. Through their work, the ministry and CASs will identify a set of key outcomes for all children and youth receiving and/or transitioning from child welfare services in Ontario. We're focused on helping kids in care gain a higher degree of resiliency, improve their educational achievement and make smoother transitions to emerging adulthood.

This is entirely consistent with the direction our government is taking, but government programs alone cannot reduce or stop abuse. This is a collective responsibility. I urge all members of the House and all Ontarians to use their voice and report known or suspected child abuse and neglect to their local CAS.

Everyone has a role to play today and every day to speak out on behalf of abused children. Each and every one of us has the power to protect the safety and well-being of a child. It's up to us to speak up for those who aren't able to speak up for themselves.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased to speak on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus on the beginning of Child Abuse Prevention Month here in Ontario.

We are wearing our purple ribbons today to remind us that, as citizens, we have the moral and legal obligation to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect that may be happening in our communities. As legislators, we have the responsibility to ensure that these children are well taken care of outside of their abusive or neglectful situations and that the legal system does not fail them.

On behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus, I would first like to express our thanks to those who are working every day to help people overcome their experiences with child abuse. I urge all members of this Legislature to work towards raising awareness not just during the month of October but every month.

Children need to know that we as legislators and as Ontarians stand behind them. It is important that we

provide the front-line child abuse care providers with the tools they need to provide the best possible care for our children. Protecting the children of Ontario is important to everyone. Unfortunately, we wake up daily to newspaper reports of children being abused, neglected, exploited and, in the worst cases, dying.

We all remember the case of seven-year-old Katelynn Sampson. Her young life came to an abrupt end on August 2, 2008, when she was found dead in the apartment of her caregiver and legal guardian. Katelynn's legal guardian and her boyfriend were charged with second-degree murder.

We have a responsibility to ensure that children in Ontario are safe, secure and have a bright future to look forward to. Although we know cases like this do happen, it is unacceptable that children in this province are still being abused, with no regard for their safety or their lives. By acknowledging that children need to be protected within their homes, schools and communities, we are taking the necessary steps to ensure that children are safe.

That is why my colleague Lisa MacLeod, the member for Nepean–Carleton, tried last spring with her private member's bill, the Children's Safety and Protection Rights Act. This bill would have been a step in the right direction to ensuring the safety of our province's children. This bill would have expanded Christopher's Law to include child abuse. It would have strengthened the Provincial Offences Act so that child abusers may be detained and unable to contact their victims. It also would have expanded the role of the Ombudsman and the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth.

Unfortunately, Liberal members chose to vote it down. It's unfortunate that we cared more about partisanship than we did about passing a law that would protect Ontario's children.

My colleague received much support for her bill, with endorsements coming from the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, Boost Child Abuse Prevention and Intervention, and the Ontario Ombudsman, to name a few.

During debate this afternoon, another one of my colleagues, Gerry Martiniuk, the member for Cambridge, will debate his private member's bill. This bill will ensure that libraries and schools in Ontario install software that will block pornographic websites. As today marks the beginning of Child Abuse Prevention Month, we hope that the Liberal members will see how passionate my colleague is about protecting children and that they will support him by passing Bill 202.

I think that we can all agree that we all want young people across the province of Ontario to have the means and support to reach their full potential, especially children in the most vulnerable situations.

As citizens, parents and legislators, we have the duty to ensure that our children are protected and that they have the opportunity to reach their full potential. It is our job to make sure that children have the tools necessary to help them build a brighter and better Ontario.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I rise today really in honour of the memory of Katelynn Sampson. Katelynn was a constituent of mine, as is her mother, Bernice Sampson. Bernice is someone I see and pass on the streets at least once a month. Bernice is a woman who has struggled with addiction issues all her life, and I can't help but think, on this eve of Child Abuse Prevention Month, how we—and I'm not going to be partisan about this—failed that family. We failed her as legislators; we failed her as educators; we failed her as a law enforcement and justice system; we failed her on all counts. The hope is that this year, this time, we'll do something differently.

Here is what we should be doing differently. Number one, we need to have enough money in our school system that there are enough adults whose eyes are on our children. That is to say, when a little girl goes missing from school for three months, it can't stop with a phone call home to see if she's okay, where an adult voice at the end of the line says, "Yes, she is." It can't stop there. There has to be follow-up. Quite frankly, it wasn't the fault of the public school; they just didn't have the money to send somebody out to check out that this little girl had been sent back to her reserve, which was what the line was on the other end. So we failed her there.

Had Bernice, her mother, had access to good child care, that little girl would have been in child care, but she couldn't afford good child care. She didn't have the social worker to send her child to good child care. So instead, she felt it was in the interest of the child to give her over to a couple she thought would look after her.

Then what happened? That's where the justice system failed her. Then the judge who presided over that case signed off on Katelynn Sampson without checking the criminal record of the foster caregivers. We wouldn't do that for a dog, but we did it for a child.

We know what happened at the end. But this little girl still, her spirit, I think, cries out really for redemption and for some kind of action, real action.

Today we heard the member from Kenora–Rainy River, who asked a question on behalf of over 30 children's aid societies across Ontario, all of which are chronically underfunded. They cannot provide the care to the high-risk children in their care. Surely, that's the first thing we should be doing: providing enough funding for all the CASs to do the work that they should do. So that's something else we can do.

What else can we do, an action that we could take? Certainly, the member from Dufferin–Caledon talked about a couple. I'd like to add my own.

We, on behalf of Maria Jones, another constituent, and Holly Jones—not a victim of abuse per se, a victim of violence, but Maria has decided to have something happen in Holly's memory, and that something is the Boost program in every elementary school. We have been working with the Boost providers and we have been talking to the Minister of Education. July 10 is when Boost applied to have their program made accessible to all the elementary teachers across this province. They're

still waiting. So I would ask—I see the Minister of Education here—that that program be made available to all the elementary teachers who want it, because it will assist them with identifying those in their classrooms who may be being abused, and it will give them the tools to deal with those in their classrooms who may be abused. That should be across the system. Maria Jones specifically has asked for this because she recognizes that although nothing might have saved her little girl, something very well might have been done to save other little girls, other little girls like Katelynn—and other little boys as well.

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So, am I pleased to rise? On the advent of Child Abuse Prevention Month, I think of that great biblical saying, “Better that a millstone be hung around their necks and they be thrown into the deepest sea than that they hurt a hair on the head of one of these.”

Now it's our turn, as all parties, to do everything within our means to prevent abuse from happening tomorrow, tonight, this afternoon, while we speak, because it is happening while we speak. Again, I just dedicate these comments in honour of the memory of Katelynn Sampson.

PETITIONS

TAXATION

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I have a petition sent to me by Preston Travel Centre Limited and Cambridge Insurance, which reads:

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty said he wouldn't raise taxes in the 2003 election, but in 2004 he brought in the health tax, the biggest tax hike in Ontario's history, but he still wants to cut health care services and nurses;

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty will increase taxes again on Canada Day 2010 with his new 13% combined GST, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it;

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty's new 13% combined GST will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day, such as: coffee, gas at the pumps, home heating oil, postage stamps, haircuts, dry cleaning, home renovations, veterinary care, arena ice, Internet fees, theatre admissions, funerals, courier fees, fast food sold for more than \$4, bus fares, golf green fees, gym fees, snowplowing, bicycles, taxi fares, train fares, domestic air travel, accountant services and real estate commissions;

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

“That the Dalton McGuinty government wake up to Ontario's current economic reality and stop raising taxes, once and for all, on Ontario's hard-working families and businesses.”

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

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Joe Dickson: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas current changes to ServiceOntario will expand and improve access to licensing, registration, health card renewal and other services; it will also close effective and service-oriented local businesses and cost us local jobs, such as the licence office that the Donald family has owned and operated in Whitby and Durham region for over 50 years; and

“Whereas we recognize the quality of service provided by the Donald family to be rated above the 100% efficiency level, including extended hours;

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

“That the Donald family be maintained as a licence bureau of the highest quality in the region of Durham.”

I will submit the balance of about 1,500 names that have been delegated to this forum in the last week.

TAXATION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition signed by hundreds, thousands, if not more, residents of Oxford county. It is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas residents of Oxford do not want Dalton McGuinty's new sales tax, which will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals' new sales tax of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, and will be applied to home sales over \$500,000; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals' new sales tax of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for meals under \$4, haircuts, funeral services, gym memberships, newspapers, and lawyer and accountant fees; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals' new sales tax grab will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families, farmers and low-income Ontarians;

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

“That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario families.”

Thank you very much, Speaker, for allowing me to present this petition. I will sign it, as I agree with it.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly that has been very kindly sent to me by the brothers and sisters at the ISNA mosque in Mississauga. I especially want to thank Dr. Mohammed Ashraf, Zubair Malik and Muhammad Haroon for having collected the signatures on this. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

“That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care allocate funds in its 2009-10 capital budget to begin planning and construction of an ambulatory surgery centre located in western Mississauga to serve the Mississauga-Halton area and enable greater access to ‘day surgery’ procedures that comprise about four fifths of all surgical procedures performed.”

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

TAXATION

Mr. Frank Klees: I have petitions here relating to the HST, which is strongly opposed by many thousands in my constituency. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty said he wouldn’t raise taxes in the 2003 election, but in 2004 he brought in the health tax, the biggest tax hike in Ontario’s history; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty will increase taxes yet again with his new 13% combined sales tax, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty’s new 13% sales tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day, such as coffee, newspapers and magazines, gas at the pumps, home heating oil and electricity, postage stamps, haircuts, dry cleaning, home renovations, some health care services such as athletic therapy, acupuncture and massage therapy, veterinary care, and arena ice and soccer field rentals;

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

“That the Dalton McGuinty government wake up to Ontario’s current economic reality and stop raising taxes, once and for all, on Ontario’s hard-working families and businesses.”

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

TAXATION

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I have petitions presented to me by Alison Tone and Lois Cybalski from Cambridge, which read:

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty said he wouldn’t raise taxes in the 2003 election, but in 2004 he brought in the health tax, the largest tax hike in Ontario’s history, but he still cuts health care services and nurses;

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty will increase taxes yet again on Canada Day 2010, with his new 13% combined GST, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it;

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty’s new 13% combined GST will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day, such as coffee ... gas at the pumps, home heating oil and electricity, postage stamps, haircuts, dry cleaning, home renovations, veterinary care, arena ice and soccer field rentals, Internet fees, theatre admissions, funerals, courier fees, fast food sold for” more than “\$4, bus fares, golf green fees, gym fees, snowplowing, bicycles, taxi fares, train fares, domestic air travel, accountant services and real estate commissions;

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

“That the Dalton McGuinty government wake up to Ontario’s current economic reality and stop raising taxes, once and for all, on Ontario’s hard-working families and businesses.”

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

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PARENTING EDUCATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that I would like to read on behalf of my seatmate, the hard-working member for Niagara Falls. It reads as follows:

“Whereas effective parenting practices do not come instinctively, and parenting is our most crucial social role, parenting and human development courses need to be taught to all secondary school students. Parenting education will reduce teen pregnancies; reduce the rate of costly fetal alcohol spectrum disorders and increase the number of healthy pregnancies; reduce the number of costly social problems related to ineffective parenting practices; and improve the ‘social fabric’ of Ontario to create a more civil society. Parenting education for students is considered to be socially valuable by a majority of adults of voting age and should be included as a mandatory credit course within the Ontario curriculum;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the requirements for the Ontario secondary school diploma to include one senior level (grade 11 or 12) credit course in parenting education (students to select one of: living and working with children [HPW3C]; parenting [HPC30]; issues in human growth and development [HHG4M]; parenting and human development [HPD4E]) as a compulsory credit.”

On behalf of the member for Niagara Falls, I’m pleased to affix my signature to this petition and to ask page Ava to carry it for me.

TAXATION

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a petition on the McGuinty sales tax. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the McGuinty government is planning to merge the 8% provincial sales tax and the 5% federal sales tax; and

“Whereas the new 13% sales tax will be applied to products and services not previously subject to provincial sales tax, such as gasoline, home heating fuels, home renovations, haircuts, hamburgers, television service, Internet service, telephone and cell services, taxi fees, bus, train and airplane tickets, and dry cleaning services;

“Whereas rural and northern Ontarians will be particularly hard hit by Mr. McGuinty’s new sales tax, as will seniors and families;

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

“That the McGuinty government should eliminate the new sales tax.”

I’ll give this to Nicole.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Jeff Leal: I just got a petition from a Cathy Walker who lives in Mississauga, Ontario.

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

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

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

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

I agree with this petition and will give it to Alyssa.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

EDUCATION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT (ELECTRONIC SEXUAL MATERIAL), 2009 LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI A TRAIT À L’ÉDUCATION (DOCUMENTS ÉLECTRONIQUES À CARACTÈRE SEXUEL)

Mr. Martiniuk moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 202, An Act to protect our children from pornography / Projet de loi 202, Loi visant à protéger nos enfants contre la pornographie.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: The title of this bill is An Act to protect our children from pornography, and it aims to do one thing and one thing only: protect children from viewing pornography and other sexually explicit material on the Internet, in our schools and libraries. It does not affect Internet content outside of our schools and libraries.

In the event you are not familiar with hard-core porn on the Internet, it goes far beyond the familiar Playboy. We are talking about degrading sexual violence to women and young children.

I personally was not aware that libraries and schools weren’t required to use Internet filtering software until one of my constituents, Rob Nickel, witnessed a man downloading porn at the Cambridge library. There were two young children sitting next to this man. Coincidentally, Nickel is a retired police officer who worked online undercover in the OPP child pornography unit.

Industry sources estimate that only 30% to 35% of the children in Ontario are protected in our schools and libraries by Internet filtering. That’s right: 65% to 70% of our children are presently unprotected.

Currently, Rob Nickel operates Cyber Safety and tours North America, educating parents, teachers and other groups about the importance of keeping our children safe online, so you can appreciate his deep concern when he witnessed graphic images on a computer at a public library in my area. Cambridge is the only library system in Waterloo region that does not use filters to block offensive material. We are fortunate that all the schools in our region do protect children by Internet filtering.

Recently, I received a copy of a letter that a London, Ontario, woman wrote to several politicians and library administrators. The letter explains that she witnessed a male patron of the London library viewing very graphic and degrading images of women. In the letter she wrote: “I didn’t have to peer over his shoulder because it was on full display to anyone who walked or sat nearby. I moved and complained to the librarian that there were children in the area. I was given a complaint slip and told there was nothing they could do. I received the same response when I spoke to the library management the next day. ‘Porn is not illegal,’ I was told.”

Ironically, this incident at the London, Ontario, library occurred two days after a 71-year-old man from the same city was charged after a complaint was received that he was viewing and printing child pornography at the central branch of the London Public Library. A search warrant executed at his residence resulted in a charge of accessing child pornography, possessing child pornography and printing child pornography.

We cannot permit such activity to occur in public places frequented by our children. If one child is exposed

to pornography, it is one child too many, and as I have said, 65% to 70% of our children are presently without protection.

Premier McGuinty has stated that it is not up to the government but the parents to protect their children from pornography. Well, the province's top cop disagrees. In a Cambridge Times article published September 25, 2009, OPP officer Julian Fantino agreed that filters are a must and government legislation should not be required for something that just makes sense.

“These are things that are just common sense,” he told the Times.... “It’s just the right thing to do.”

“Fantino’s talk” to the Kiwanis Club of Cambridge “emphasized a greater need to protect children from Internet predators who use” their computers to lure children for sex....

“We are all responsible for the well-being of our children,” he said. “Besides, it makes no sense. These are places where the learning is supposed to be happening.”

Internet filtering software is so advanced that fears of useful information being blocked are unfounded. There is no doubt that the software in its infancy, some 15 to 20 years ago, had numerous bugs and faults, but today the software on the market is much more sophisticated. Internet filtering software has advanced well beyond the simple search for words. With this simplistic methodology, the example of “breast cancer” would run the risk of being blocked. Now with the advanced programs, these problems have been solved.

In the United States and the United Kingdom, schools and libraries use Internet filtering software. Those countries are way ahead of us and point the way to the future. Libraries in the United States started using Internet filtering in the late 1990s due to community pressure and the Children’s Internet Protection Act. CIPA is a federal law that requires all computers in public libraries to be filtered if that library accepts any federal funds for computers that access the Internet or costs associated with connection to the Internet.

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One industry expert who endorsed my bill through a letter to the Premier says that on average, kids begin to use computers and the Internet at the age of three. As you can imagine, young children learning to use a mouse have a tendency to click all over the screen. More than 26 children’s sites, such as Pokémon and My Little Pony, have the potential to lead to pornographic sites.

Raheema Rehmtulla, from PurePages, a company that specializes in clean, safe Internet usage, writes: “On the Internet we are not just dealing with people from our own community; we are dealing with people all around the world, strangers to children: people that can teach them many things about parts of the world, and people that can also lure them into the world of child pornography. This is not a problem just in Ontario or Canada but a global problem. That is why the United States is working on it, and Australian, Chinese, Sri Lankan and Japanese governments are already enforcing different laws about

Internet safety. We need to act now to help save our communities and children.”

According to my source at Netsweeper, Internet filtering software is inexpensive. For example, it would cost a small library a few hundred dollars over two or three years to install such software.

The government protects our children from viewing tobacco products in stores, and children are unable to view or purchase adult magazines. It is a natural extension to protect our children from inappropriate material that is available online in our tax-supported libraries and schools.

I repeat that this bill is not about censorship but about the safety and protection of a majority of users of the school and public library systems. We should not be harming our children on the altar of ideology of a few persons.

Many of the items on this government’s long list of bans specifically target the protection of children. They banned smoking in cars, junk food in elementary schools and trans fats in schools.

I ask Premier McGuinty to please adopt this simple and inexpensive policy that will protect our children from the pornography and pedophiles that are a threat to young Internet users. The status quo, if we did nothing, simply means that 65% to 70% of our children are without protection against pornography in our tax-paid public schools and libraries in Ontario.

I hope all members will give my bill serious consideration when we vote on it later this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): The member from Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It’s apropos, on the eve of Child Abuse Prevention Month, to be dealing with a bill like this, and I want to commend the member from Cambridge for bringing it forward.

I want to note, however, for the record that this is not a bill that’s supported by librarians or teachers, who clearly feel that their presence is what’s really needed to monitor Internet access and use. I would extend that to the home situation and say that, again, it’s incumbent upon every parent to monitor their children’s Internet use and access, because without that, the kind of pedophile who preys on children is going to have access anyway.

The problem here—and I would point this out to the member from Cambridge—is that the filters that we have right now are fairly blunt tools. For example, if you were to look up information on Middlesex or Essex, some of the filters that are used would filter out that information. So if you were a child who lives in Essex or Middlesex and wanted to do homework on your own municipality, you might have a bit of a problem. That’s where the filters are at right now, not to mention the fact—

Mr. Michael Prue: Sussex.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Sussex—we could go on—and not to mention the fact that if you want to research biology, again, anything with the term “sex” in it might be problematic.

Unfortunately, I have to point out to the member that this really is somewhat bordering on censorship, and

that's the problem. That's the problem: Where do you draw the line?

What stood out most pre-eminently to me was access to information for our lesbian, gay, trans and bisexual students, who, while in the coming-out process, really need to access information, and most of that information has something around sex in it, quite frankly. They need to be able to get at that information. We know that our LGBT students in schools are the ones highest at risk for suicide. As legislators, I think it's incumbent upon us to do everything we can to protect them. We want to make sure that they can get the information they need. This kind of filtering device—again, there are many filters out there that are optional, but many of them would in fact filter out that life-saving information as well. So that's a cautionary note and I think it's an important cautionary note. That's why—one of the reasons, certainly—our librarians and teachers are not in support of this bill.

The member gave an example, and I think it was an interesting one, of the librarian where it was a public library, some man was sitting at the computer, surfing porn sites, there were children around him, and the librarian said, "Well, fill out a complaint slip." I actually think—and I have a great deal of regard for librarians—that most librarians would not do that. Most librarians who know their job and take their responsibility seriously would actually intervene in a situation like that. I always hate it when something disparaging goes out from this place about those who work so hard with our children—teachers and librarians—and truly, I've never met a librarian who would not have intervened in a similar situation.

We want to make sure that the responsibility lies with parents, teachers, educators, librarians—that's who has it, and we trust them with it; we trust them to use their judgment—and not with the blunt tool of a filter that may or may not do what it's supposed to do. We're not quite there yet in our technology.

Of course, again, the motivation of this bill is nothing but positive. We need to do everything—and "everything" means everything—to keep our children safe.

There are certainly some actions that this government could take that I think would keep our children safe and that aren't in place. I mentioned some in my response to the ministerial statement just a short while ago. Make sure that all teachers have the materials at their fingertips so that they can identify and deal with child abuse as it's happening in their classrooms; that's a critical piece. We think the justice system needs to be a little bit more proactive when it comes to children's safety. We think that children's aid societies need to be funded so that they can look after the most vulnerable of our children. These are the children who are most at risk. These are the children with whom we need to work immediately, and the systems that are charged with their care.

So this, although on first blush it sounds like an answer, I really don't think is an answer. Keep in mind, too, that most instances of child abuse—and this is a hideous thing to have to say, but it's the truth—are with someone the child knows: a father, a stepfather, an uncle,

a trusted person in their community. This bill will do nothing to stop that.

Again, it's a very blunt tool, I think, to deal with a very complex problem, not one that I think will really work at its aim. It's certainly motivated by all the right reasons. Perhaps in the future the technology will exist that will be fine-tuned enough to allow for its implementation without, again, putting LGBT kids at risk, without stopping kids from doing research on Middlesex or Essex and on their biology projects, but that does not exist right now.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): Member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

Ms. Laurel C. Broten: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am glad that my mike is now on and I have a chance to speak about this Bill 202 that is before us on debate today. The benefit of private members' time is to bring forward issues that need to be spoken about in this Legislature and to find ways we can tackle, as a collectivity of elected members, issues that really affect all of our communities.

The member for Cambridge has brought forward, in the course of Bill 202, An Act to protect our children from pornography, a very important conversation, a conversation that we've had on the floor of this Legislature many times: How we can best protect our children. There is no doubt that there are many aspects to protecting our children from child pornography and other forms of pornography and making them feel safe, and I want to, in the time that I have today, talk about a couple of those issues.

There is no doubt that it is imperative that we educate our children themselves as to the safe use of the Internet, what our expectations are of them. I would suggest that that is a conversation we are able to have as our children age—our expectations about what they will look at on the Internet, the various aspects with respect to the Internet.

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There are experts, such as the Kids' Internet Safety Alliance, with whom I've had the privilege of working and the Minister of Education has had the privilege of working with, who have been funded by the government to the tune of about \$500,000 to develop programs and work with our kids in Ontario to make sure they protect themselves. So that's one aspect. Whether it's KINSA or whether it is Cybertip.ca, those organizations are there to give our children the resources they need to protect themselves when they are accessing information on the Internet.

Our school boards and schools also have a role to play: 66 school boards of 72 in Ontario, I understand, have guidance with respect to the use of computers in libraries, some of which includes screening, and utilizing, in the best way they can, the modern technology.

There is another aspect of protecting our children: collective responsibility, which the member for Cambridge raised early in his discussion. That was with respect to a woman on a computer observing someone beside her searching for information which she found

distasteful and which I think made her feel unsafe. That is the root of many programs in the province, where we've seen women's organizations, mothers' organizations say, "We need to act collectively and make sure that women and children are safe." I think about children in my own community, and my own children, who would be at the library. No matter what you might have taught them about how they can best protect themselves, I don't think there is one of us who would want them to be sitting beside someone who is accessing information in a very public location, in a library, and the librarians felt they could not or did not have the tools to say, "I'm sorry, that's not what you're to be doing here."

This is an important conversation to have. I think the member from Cambridge has brought forward something that is critical. Shelagh Paterson, the executive director of the Ontario Library Association, said that many libraries do put filters on computers in the children's sections, require users to sign terms-of-use agreements and place terminals in highly visible locations.

All of these tools are important to better protect children, but I do not think we can suggest that we have done everything perfectly and there is no more to do. There is, no doubt, more work that needs to be done. We need to examine the technology that exists to give libraries, in particular public libraries and libraries in our schools, the tools that they need and that the experts think are needed to best protect our children.

This work really does, in some ways, tie into the work I've been privileged to do over many years, which is with respect to protecting children from child pornography. One of the things I often talk about is that we can't be bystanders when something is happening that might be harming a child or is harming a child. I would suggest that the member from Cambridge has brought forward this bill, Bill 202, to say that we need to act collectively, we need to not be bystanders and we need to have this important conversation about how we can do a better job of protecting our children in Ontario from pornography in all of its forms, and whether or not we can have that conversation in this place and move that yardstick forward. I think this is an important conversation. I commend him for bringing forward Bill 202 and I look forward to hearing the rest of the debate today.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): The Member from Nepean—Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's an honour to be able to speak to the bill in front of us, Bill 202, An Act to protect our children from pornography. I want to congratulate first my colleague from Cambridge, Gerry Martiniuk, for his work. It takes great courage to put forward a piece of legislation to protect children when there are so many different ideas on whether or not this is freedom of speech or expression. But ultimately, what comes first is obviously child protection, and that's why I chose to speak to this private member's bill. I think it's worth voting for. I think he's got an idea here that will bring Ontario in line with other jurisdictions. Two of the greatest nations in the world outside of Canada have

adopted safety filters in their schools and libraries: the United States of America and Great Britain.

I'm a little disappointed. Two colleagues before me spoke, one about censorship and I think some inaccuracies about filters, and the other—presumably one whom I've often admired as a great protector of children—who can't see how helpful this would be. I hope that partisan politics will not get in the way of passing this bill so that it gets to committee.

I need to tell you why. Child protection in this province is a bit behind. This government, just last year, voted against a very comprehensive bill of mine which was probably the most wide-ranging piece of child protection legislation this province has ever seen. It was voted down. It contained a very important aspect of child protection: the sexualization of children under the age of 16, so that we would have in this province laws and standards that children under the age of 16 would not be placed in advertising or other forms in a sexualized manner. That did not pass.

Now my colleague has come forward with a bill that would make it impossible for people to view this kind of pornographic material near children. He got this idea from a former OPP officer. Not only is he a former OPP officer, but Rob Nickel is also an expert on online pornography. This OPP officer once witnessed a man downloading pornography at a Cambridge library with children sitting nearby. So for those opposite who suggest that this is just a parental issue, I urge them to consider this: If there is a child at a library who is of the age of 12 or 13 or 14 or 15 years old and who's not there with their mom or dad, who know better, and you have an older gentleman or an older woman who has made a decision, at a public library, to view this type of material, what kind of protection are we offering them? What does that say about society? I say that it doesn't say much.

Libraries in the United States have been using Internet filters since the 1990s, due to community pressure and the Children's Internet Protection Act, or CIPA. CIPA is a federal law that requires all computers in a public library to be filtered if that library accepts any federal funds for computers that access the Internet or for costs associated with the connection of the Internet. I can't see why in this province we couldn't enact something similar. It makes a lot of sense. We're funding libraries; we're funding schools. Why can't we make the Internet more safe for my daughter and every other child in this province? That is a question that I have, and it remains unanswered by the governing Liberals.

Again, I hate to say that this is going to be partisan, but by all accounts, it appears that the government is going to stop this bill from making it into committee. And it says something else: It says that we're not doing as much as we possibly can when you have former OPP officers coming out and speaking about what a need we have to do more.

In the United Kingdom, for example, school systems have a regulatory mandate—and I'm glad the Minister of Education is here—called BECTA, and in the United States it is through CIPA.

Internet filtering software is user-friendly. For those who are concerned, particularly those in the NDP, if an adult library patron is operating in those jurisdictions on a filtered computer and wishes the site to be unblocked, they simply have to speak to the head librarian or anybody else that has the authority in that particular library and the patron could request an override code. That could be done here in this province.

1410

But this is a good bill that my colleague Gerry Martiniuk believes will protect children, it's a bill that I believe will protect children and it's a bill that I urge all members opposite to support. I know that my colleagues in the Progressive Conservative Party will be here with him, because we really take seriously our views on the protection of children.

With that, Madam Speaker, I want to thank you for the opportunity to debate. I look forward to my colleagues on all sides of this Legislature supporting Mr. Martiniuk's bill, and I look forward to working with the other parties so that children are better protected in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): The member from Beaches–East York.

Mr. Michael Prue: I have listened intently to all the speakers. I must say to my colleague who just spoke that I also listened to the member from Etobicoke, and I don't believe that that is the gist of what she was trying to say. I'm not sure what her position was, because perhaps she is as conflicted on this issue as I myself am.

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Prue: Yes, perhaps.

I fashion myself as a person who believes in civil liberties. I've looked carefully at what the member from Cambridge is attempting to do, and the words trouble me a little. I'm not saying I'm not going to vote for the bill, because I probably will. But some of the things that trouble me here are "technology measures ... that ... block access on the Internet" as well as to "electronic communication, including electronic mail and chat rooms" that "could reasonably be expected to contain any material, including written material, pictures and recordings, that is obscene ... or sexually explicit or that constitutes child pornography...."

Now, some of those I understand very well. But some words, like "could reasonably be expected to contain any material"—as a civil libertarian and a person who is responsible for formulating the laws of the province of Ontario, I have difficulty, because that is not very explicit to me, nor I do understand what that will include.

I don't know about the chat rooms. This perhaps is a bad admission, but I have never myself visited a chat room. I've never felt the need to type in something and communicate with somebody I don't know on any topic, and I don't know why some people insist that this is a harmless and wonderful way of meeting strangers.

In any event, I'm not sure that people in a library visiting chat rooms are going to necessarily involve pornography that is going to influence children, save and

except if they were reading the explicit chat material coming across, and I don't know why they would be sitting there reading correspondence between two adults.

It is the pictures that trouble me the most. I think that where Mr. Martiniuk's bill may good is because the pictures are easily understood. Pictures are broad and graphic, and you can see them just as easily as watching television, whereas to read lines and lines of chat would be somewhat difficult.

I'm also a little conflicted because I think what his policy says is a good policy, but I wonder how it's going to work. I have a computer in my office, and I use it. But I would be the first to admit that I am not in the same category as Bill Gates or his many minions and myrmidons who develop all these programs and who are able to know how to access and build them and what to put into them. I don't know how the filters could possibly work.

I listened to my colleague from Parkdale–High Park, and she's probably right: When you type in a word like "Middlesex" or "Sussex," is that going to be filtered? I'm worried about that. I'm worried about whether you're going to have a filter that is much too blunt an instrument.

Conversely—and I told you that I feel conflicted here—I am worried because I think that every school board and library must have a policy in place that determines which minors or classes of minors are authorized to use the school's computers and what Internet sites are permitted. I don't think that this, in the short term, is a bad policy. The computers belong to the schools and the libraries—the computers, in fact, belong to the public—and there needs to be some kind of policy in place that restricts what could be seen on them—not just by children but by adults and everyone alike.

He also suggests that the policy must comply with the regulations in the act and monitor the use of computers by minors. I agree with that. He also says that the policy must be posted in a conspicuous place in the school where the library is. I think that is absolutely imperative, that the policy be put up either beside the computers themselves or in close proximity to the computers so that everyone knows what the policy is, so that if and when a person comes in and is using the computers for an obscene purpose, for looking at child pornography or any other illegal act, it is clear that the rules are in front and the person cannot claim not knowing, and the librarian can call the police or the authorities if necessary or come simply and shut off the machine. I think that that needs to happen. So I commend that portion of the bill.

In the last few seconds, as I said, I feel conflicted. In the end, though, I do believe that I'm going to vote for the bill—I want to hear some more debate—because I think it's necessary to send this to second reading. This is not a bill that is very easy. This is not a bill that's going to pass, and it's not a bill—it's going to have to be a bill in which the language is tightened to an extent that everyone knows the rules and responsibilities. I can't just simply say that I agree that you can't have e-mail and chat rooms that could reasonably be expected to contain

any material, including written material. That just goes beyond. So I'm asking all of the members to consider this to be a serious idea, to support the bill, and to send it to second reading, understanding full well that it's going to need a lot of work.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): Member from London—Fanshawe.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I am privileged and honoured to stand up in my place to speak on the bill brought by the member from Cambridge, Bill 202, An Act to protect our children from pornography.

I listened to my colleague the member from Etobicoke—Lakeshore, and I think she outlined the government's position on this matter. I think she's a great supporter of protection for kids and families in this province. She is also a great advocate for many, many kids. Since she is a mother of two, I believe she has a great interest in defending the children in this province.

I listened to the member from Cambridge speaking as he outlined his policy, his intentions, his direction and his aim for this bill. I think it's a very good initiative. I think it brings to this House a very important issue: the protection of children in this province, especially when they go to the library and turn on the computer, see websites, do searches on the Internet and many different technologies.

I know it's very difficult—and I listened to the member from Beaches—East York talking about the difficulty of this issue, because, as you know, the technology is very advanced. Right now, you don't have to go to a library to go on the computer or the Internet. Now if you buy an iPod, you can walk on the streets and catch any website on the Internet. I was shocked the other day—I have a son who's 14 years old. I did my best to have all the filters in place in order to make sure he sleeps before me and to have whatever he watches monitored by me and that the computer is also shut off before I go to sleep, and many different ways and regulations that I put in place to create some kind of protection. I was shocked. He told me, "You know what? I go to my bedroom and I play with my iPod. I can connect my Internet through the Internet from the neighbour," because some neighbours don't secure their Internet. And I'm thinking that they can log in and they can see whatever website they want on the Internet. He said, "You know, whatever you do, it's not going to work."

The most important thing, I'm convinced, is not to go on those sites. It's not good for me and not good for anyone. That's the most important thing.

I listened to my colleague from Etobicoke—Lakeshore and many other colleagues speak before me about education being the most important thing for all of us in this province. We have to start working with families; we have to start working with everyone.

I know the member from Cambridge spoke about the issues of London and when that 54-year-old lady went to the library—actually, she's my constituent, and she has e-mailed me many different times. I know her very well, and she said to me, "You know what? I can go to the

library. I am an adult." She listened to the debate that was going on in London for many different days.

1420

I know the chair of the library—he was a member of this House and is a city councillor right now; he's a great, honourable lawyer—David Winninger. Many people in this place know him. He's the chair of the library board. I listened to him extensively when he was talking about the importance of this issue, but he was puzzled about how we can filter the system. He does not know how, technically, legally and many different aspects. But the most important thing he said is that we should make sure our kids, when they go to the library, are protected—enough staff to go around and see what people are doing.

That lady, as I mentioned, has been mentioned by Maclean's magazine. She sent me an e-mail. She was walking in the library and she saw a 71-year-old man. He'd opened a website and was watching pornography. She was disgusted and she was uncomfortable. It's not just about kids; it's about all of us.

I think it's very important for all of us to find a way to create some kind of protection for our children in the province of Ontario, whatever it takes—whether we go to committee, whether we create a different technology to create some kind of protection for our children on this important issue. Yes, it is important.

I want to commend the member from Cambridge. I want to commend also the member from Etobicoke—Lakeshore and all the members from the third party—Beaches—East York and Parkdale—High Park—who spoke on the issue, because this issue is important. It's not just one side's issue—a Conservative issue, a NDP issue, a Liberal issue; it's a community issue. It's a provincial issue. It's our duty and responsibility in this province to find a way to protect our children, to see how we can nurture our children in Ontario and guide them in the right path.

As has been mentioned before, technology is advancing. You can get a BlackBerry and many different tools and technologies on which our children are smarter—far smarter—than us. They know better than us, by far.

So I am supporting this initiative, supporting this bill. Yes, I do support the bill. Am I convinced these are the only tools we can use? No. But as the member from Beaches—East York mentioned, it should be open for debate. It should be open for different ideas, for stakeholders. Technical people maybe will come to this place and advise us on how we can implement it.

I want to commend the Minister of Education, who instructed all the school boards. Of 72 boards, 66 have filter systems in their schools, in their libraries. Also, many libraries in the province of Ontario use the filter system. But is the filter system good enough? No, it's not good enough. Is there enough safe technology in place to filter all the systems? No.

Some people want open computers. They want the ability to surf the net and go to any website they want because that's what a library is about—for knowledge

and search and research. But our obligation and duty as elected officials in this place is to make sure our children live in a safe environment; that when they go to school, they have a safe computer to go on; that when they go to the library, they can access safe websites and use the Internet in a professional and safe manner, only for education, not to divert them from the right direction.

I think I'm going to support the member from Cambridge. It's a good bill to create awareness in this province. I want to commend him and thank him for bringing it to this place to be discussed and debated.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): The member from Simcoe North.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: It's a pleasure to rise this afternoon and speak on Bill 202, An Act to protect our children from pornography.

First of all, I want to congratulate the member from Cambridge, my colleague Gerry Martiniuk, for bringing this bill forward. I think, as we look at this bill in the House and hopefully at committee, we'll recognize the fact that he's actually kind of doing the job of the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

I looked at comments made just this past week, on September 25, by the OPP commissioner, Julian Fantino. He said, "Government legislation shouldn't be necessary to prompt public libraries to install computer software to prevent downloading of porn. It should just be automatic." You know what? I think that, as some of the members in this House have mentioned here today, there may remain unanswered questions or some concerns about portions of this bill or exactly what it means, but that's why we have committee. That's why we go to committee, like—I point to the Speaker for a moment—your sprinkler bill that you've had on a number of occasions: a very, very important bill as well. That is why we would like to see this bill carried forward.

I think it's good legislation. The reality is, he's looking at schools and libraries having a filter to protect our young people from seeing porn. Yes, we know there are other options, there are other alternatives to how they can see porn, but the reality is, I think it's good community leadership on behalf of the government and on behalf of this House to at least make a good attempt at eliminating porn from the eyes of young people.

As you know, young people grow up very, very quickly. They're born one day and the next day they're off to elementary school, and it seems like no time until they're off to secondary school. They do grow up quickly and they see sexuality very, very early—much earlier today than they might have in past generations. But I can tell you that I think we have a responsibility to not make it any faster for them.

I can tell you that I've had an opportunity in the past to work with some of the members of Project P, the Ontario Provincial Police Project P. They are located here in Toronto. I don't want to give the exact location away, but I visited and talked to the officers who work in that area. Child pornography in itself is something that is disgusting and beyond belief. Having a tour of the organ-

ization at one time, I actually got to see some of the clips of what actually happens on a scale of one to 10. And you know what? The exposure is absolutely incredible—to think how some of these perverted people and perverted minds deal with young people. We have a moral obligation to take legislation like this, good legislation like Bill 202, and advance it to the next stage, and that would mean this House passing Bill 202 today and allowing it to get on to committee.

You look in terms of legislation. The minister just this week introduced a bill as a result of the cabinet meeting with the members of the Quebec cabinet. It was the cross-border policing issue, and we're going to be debating that now. Obviously, that's an important topic, and we understand that. But this is just as important. Having children view porn—the pornography industry and child pornography in itself are running rampant throughout the world because of the Internet. We look at legislation, and I think that the legislation that Mr. Martiniuk has introduced today, Bill 202, is just as important as the legislation introduced by the minister on cross-border policing. It's just as important for the families of our communities and for the citizens of this province.

I look forward to seeing this bill passed today. I look forward to the opportunity to debate this and to get a lot of opportunity for people across the province to give their different views. We've heard already that there are some conflicting ideas around some of the content of the legislation. However, we have a responsibility to the citizens to make sure that we protect our children and their children and set a solid example for future generations of citizens of the province of Ontario and how we protect their children as well.

Thank you very much. I look forward to supporting this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): Seeing no further speakers, the member from Cambridge has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I'd like to thank the members from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Parkdale–High Park, London–Fanshawe, Nepean–Carleton, Simcoe North and Beaches–East York for their comments.

If someone had told me 20 years ago that I would be standing here attempting to censor anyone, I would have been surprised. However, there is a distinction between censorship where adults are involved, which I am totally opposed to, and censorship where children are in fact the persons who are affected. That is not censorship; surely, that is giving comfort and guidance to our young ones, who are not able to cope for themselves. It isn't that complicated.

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We, in our region, are presently offering filtering systems very effectively at the Kitchener library board—all of Kitchener—the Waterloo libraries, the Waterloo Catholic school system and the Waterloo public school system. They are all effectively running filtering systems. I have heard no complaints, but if there are any, that is exactly what a committee should be doing.

But whatever happens here, I urge parents, grandparents, friends and people who are just concerned for our children and their future to approach your library, approach your municipality, approach your school board and determine whether or not there are in fact safeguards in place by filtering in those institutions and urge them to adopt them.

SMALL BUSINESS

Mrs. Julia Munro: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the McGuinty government has failed to help Ontario small businesses by reducing the financial and time burden of government regulation; and therefore, the government should re-establish the Red Tape Commission, which it abolished; and, that the commission must publicly demonstrate that it has worked with small business leaders to reduce both the number of regulations and the time and expense required of Ontario's businesses and citizens in complying with government regulation.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Every week in my riding, I hear from constituents frustrated by the amount of red tape government forces them to go through. Small businesses and ordinary citizens feel as if they are constantly forced to jump through hoops to satisfy some government official at Queen's Park or in Ottawa. I talk to doctors who cannot get the Ministry of Health to approve a family health team in my hometown of Georgina, even though it is an underserved area. I talk to people out of work who are trying to get into training programs such as Second Career, but who cannot.

In August, I learned that the ladies at the Knox United Church in Sutton were told they have to bake all their pies for bake sales in the kitchen at the church. They cannot bring them from home. For some reason, government does not trust them to keep their baking safe, even though they may have baked for their own families for many years. Business owners tell me of all the time they have to spend filling out government paperwork instead of building their companies and creating jobs. It doesn't seem to matter if you are a citizen looking for help or if you are a business owner trying to make a living; all of your interactions with government are mired in red tape.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business has surveyed its members on the cost of red tape. A presentation they made to this House in 2007 identified the burden of government regulation as a priority for business of 67%, second only to the total tax burden at 78%. Government members should remember this if they claim that the new sales tax will reduce the regulatory burden. The only item that worries small business more than overregulation is higher taxes. The aim should be to reduce both of these.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business stated in the 2007 presentation that this government

makes no attempt to control red tape, either the size of the regulatory workload or the regulatory cost government imposes on small business. The CFIB said that additional regulation pours out uncontrollably from all levels of government. They also say that government regulation now far exceeds small business's capacity to cope and government's capacity to administer, communicate or enforce.

CFIB's 2005 national survey on regulation provided some stark numbers about the cost of meeting government regulation on business owners:

- 79% of owners of firms with four or fewer employees and 67% of those with six to 19 employees handled it themselves;

- 67% reported it added significant stress to their lives;

- 62% said it takes significant time away from family and friends.

- 52% said they spent a significant amount of time on regulation outside normal working hours;

- 54% said it impeded their ability to compete with larger firms; and

- 63% said it significantly reduced their business's productivity.

The study also asked small businesses what they would do if regulatory costs were reduced, and 54% said they would invest in equipment or expansion; 46% said they would pay down debt; and 28% would hire more employees.

Some of the specific examples of red tape the CFIB gives are just startling. They tell of a new poster issued by the Ministry of Labour outlining employee rights and responsibilities. The ministry added one sentence to it in 2006 and issued a press release that no media printed. Sixty days later, their inspectors started giving out \$350 fines to any business that hadn't replaced the old poster with the one line changed. How does this contribute to safety or security for anyone? Shouldn't the government have some responsibility to inform businesses that their rules have changed? Is this poster even necessary?

The CFIB also gives a great example from the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board system. The owner of a masonry business bought planks that a workers' compensation inspector said were mandatory. These are press-board planks with a finish. Unfortunately, the finish repels water, making them slippery. The owner ended up slipping on a plank, cutting his hand and requiring 17 stitches, his first injury in 30 years.

The CFIB members also had some ideas on how to make the system better:

- 81% said to simplify existing regulations;

- 72% said to reduce the total number of regulations;

- 58% said government needs to clearly communicate new regulations to business; and

- 57% said to improve government customer service.

Now, don't get me wrong: I know there are many areas where regulation is vital and necessary. Protecting health, safety and security has to be done, and it has to be government that sets the rules. But we do not need a rule

for everything. Not every occurrence in life is a problem seeking a solution.

I think a good slogan is the one used by the pro-free-market Free Democratic Party in Germany: “As much government as necessary; as little government as possible.” Both of these aims are important, so we should treat regulation as a necessary evil. The freedom of citizens to do as they please with their lives should be the default position, and regulation should only be used if there is no other option.

What has this government done to eliminate regulation? At first it would appear that the government sees reducing regulations as important. After all, they did issue a press release in March of this year stating that they would cut regulations by 25% over two years. That was seven months ago. In the spring they did nothing, in the summer they did nothing, and a few days into the fall, they have done nothing. Perhaps the government speaker to this resolution will give us a timetable of action. Maybe we will be told when we will see something happen.

If we want some examples of what can be done, we need only look to British Columbia. BC is a prime example of a provincial government offering action, not just words. The BC government has removed more than 151,000 needless regulations since 2001, a reduction of over 42%. The province is committed to maintaining a net zero increase in regulatory requirements.

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The BC government signed a trade, investment and labour mobility agreement so that skilled workers regulated in both BC and Alberta can freely practise their occupations in both places without added regulatory requirements like material exams or training. It also streamlined business registration and reporting requirements so that businesses registering in one province will automatically be recognized by the other.

The Alberta government has also given us a model. It established its Regulatory Review Secretariat with the following principles: necessity, effectiveness, proportionality, transparency, accountability and consistency. This means that every department must obtain a compliance statement from the secretariat before they can pass any regulation. There is no reason Ontario couldn't have a regulatory review process with equal strength to determine if any proposed regulation is necessary and workable.

When the PC government was in office, we had a Red Tape Commission, which advised the government on reducing regulations and making government work better. The commission coordinated the passage of 15 red-tape-reduction and government-efficiency acts. These acts helped repeal over 80 outdated statutes and amended well over 200.

Let's contrast this with the Liberal record. The 2003 Ontario Liberal plan for economic growth said, “We will convert the Red Tape Commission to make it an agency specifically devoted to meeting the needs of small business.” The House should know that the Liberals did

no such thing. The McGuinty government abolished the commission in 2004, and the only thing they have done to fight red tape in the five years since is to issue a press release in March—one press release seven months ago; since then, zero action.

It is time for this government to take some action—any action—to help small businesses that are constantly held up by red tape.

This is what you should do: Re-establish the Red Tape Commission to review regulations and make cuts. Set up a process to review all new necessary regulations to see if they are necessary. And when you cut regulations, make sure that you do not just cut the number of regulations; cut the burden on businesses. Most importantly, ask for the views of Ontario's small businesses at every stage of the process.

Just like value-for-money auditing principles, Ontarians deserve to know the efficacy of regulations. For the sake of Ontario's small businesses and citizens, I hope you take action to reduce red tape. If you do not, businesses will have to wait two years for Tim Hudak's PC government to cut the red tape.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): The member from Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I listened with great interest to my friend from York–Simcoe and her elucidation of the state of the union as far as small business is concerned in the province of Ontario. It's quite an Orwellian little adventure, and surely it is.

Let's face the facts: 90% of all new jobs come through small business. Small business is a way, in a sense, out of the recession—one of the ways, anyway. And yet we have a government—and I couldn't agree with her more. The beginning of her motion says, “That, in the opinion of this House, the McGuinty government has failed to help Ontario small businesses.” No doubt it has failed to help Ontario's small businesses. Ask any small business proprietor on the advent of the HST, the so-called harmonized sales tax, what they think about that. My friend from Beaches–East York and I will have lots of fun a little later this afternoon talking about the thousands of responses we've received anti-HST from small business.

So, certainly small business isn't happy. Small business is suffering right now. There's no doubt. Any member here knows if they speak to their BIA, if they speak to members in their business community in their local neighbourhood, they will hear the tales of woe. One of those tales of woe is exactly what Ms. Munro was talking about, and that is that small business, unlike big business—and the McGuinty government is a government, let's face it, of big business—doesn't have the people power to set aside a person to do nothing but fill out forms. Big business does. That's the difference, and that's where regulations and red tape really hurt the small proprietor.

Other things hurt the small proprietor too, lots of other things. For one thing, we as a party, of course, have put forward a motion to reform the business education tax,

which is a provincial tax that was supported by TABIA, which represents over 300,000 small businesses. What we asked there was, why is it that a 905 business pays far less for an education tax than a 416 business? There's no rhyme or reason to it. We all have the same educational system. They wanted that. We put it forward as a motion; it hasn't happened.

Certainly in other regards, we've got a situation in Ontario where, for example, the McGuinty government favours big pharmaceutical companies over the little local pharmacists. The little local pharmacists can't get WSIB business under current regulations, whereas the Shoppers Drug Marts can. One has to look at who supports which political party. He who pays the piper calls the tune. This is very clearly what's going on here.

It's the same with small butchers. We had the case here of Karl's butcher shop, where some of their advocates came. It closed after 40 years of business because of a government regulation that was going to cost them \$200,000. The Toronto Board of Health had passed them every single year, saying they were fine. Were they responsible for the listeria outbreak? Not at all. It was Maple Leaf Foods, a big meat processing plant. This was a regulation brought in by the McGuinty government in favour of a big business over and against a small business. We fought again on behalf of the small business person to see if we could get some justice. No justice was to be had. Karl's went out of business, and one by one your little ethnic sausage maker or the butcher on your street corner are going out of business. Why? Because big business is going to take over, and the only time you're going to see meat is going to be in those plastic packages in the big dispensers, the big grocery stores, not the little guy.

What else can this government do or should this government be doing to help small business?

Well, one thing: Back in the day, back in the early 1990s, there was a grant program. Whoa. If you wanted to start a small business in the midst of a recession, which is when people who are laid off want to start small businesses—instead of having them on EI, instead of having them on social assistance, why not give them some money straight up? If they have a good idea and they can't get money from the bank, give them some money to start their own business. We did that as government. We gave them a grant. If we brought back that grant program to those with great ideas for small businesses, that again would be helping.

It's interesting: With the OLG scandal, who gets blamed? It's the small retailer. It's not the fat cats at OLG who have ridiculous expenses. It's the small retailer who got blamed for that one yet again by this government.

So I couldn't agree more that in the opinion of this House, the McGuinty government has failed to help Ontario small businesses.

Where I might have some slight disagreement with my friend is the answer to the problem, by bringing back the Red Tape Commission. I don't know. I have yet to be

convinced. I'll withhold comment on that. But certainly I can agree that this is not the government of small business. Ask any small business owner and you'll hear that.

Another issue that I'll just point out—I want to leave some time for my colleague from Beaches–East York—is an interesting one, and that is that when government decides to plow ahead with maybe some ill-considered adventures like putting 450 diesel trains through the neighbourhoods of many Toronto ridings instead of clean electric trains, what they fail to consider is the effect on all the small businesses that those trains are going to be running behind. Certainly we've had the pile-driving incident in Parkdale–High Park. Interestingly, there's a case that has gone to the Supreme Court where small business actually sued the government over an issue like that and won because it cost them business. They were never consulted and it cost them business, because you can't do business if there's a pile driver outside your door going eight hours a day or if there are 450 diesel trains running through your backyard. That affects your small business.

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Again, wouldn't it be nice if this government were open and amenable, at the time when we as Ontarians need it most, to small business, the creator of 90% of the jobs in Ontario? Yes, it would be.

I'm going to leave some time for my friend to talk about some of the other implications of this government's lack of action on the small business file.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): The member from London–Fanshawe.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I'm honoured and privileged to stand up and speak and say a couple words in comment on the speech from the member from York–Simcoe, especially when she brought motion 108 calling the government to re-establish the Red Tape Commission.

I came from a small-business background, and I did work in the industry for almost two decades. I had a lot of experience with many different sets of rules and regulations in Ontario. It's very important, I think, for all small businesses, to help them, to eliminate the bureaucratic levels and also assist them in many different ways. I think by harmonizing the taxes, bringing the provincial and federal tax together, we'll save them more than \$500 million every year—all the businesses across the province of Ontario.

I agree with the member on one issue: Yes, small businesses support our economy. They do more than 90% of our economy, and almost 317,000 small businesses across this province perform on a daily basis to support our economy. That's why our government eliminated the surtax for many of those companies and also established more than 57 centres across the province that work provincially and with municipalities to help entrepreneurial people to establish a business. I know one centre in my riding, London–Fanshawe, and that centre plays a pivotal role in our community to assist small business people to renovate and relaunch their businesses, to try to

make profits and sustain their ability to maintain in the marketplace. Also, if anyone has an idea, has some money to invest, they go to this small business centre, and that business centre helps them to make a plan to establish their business. Beside my office, a restaurant opened as a result of this business centre in London.

Also, we have 12 regional centres in the province of Ontario to link all the centres together, to help them to reach further and see how we can help them, in turn, sustain their ability to maintain, to open the door in Ontario, to make a profit and also to reach to other centres, link to different provinces or link to outside the country. All these initiatives were put by our government in order to support those small businesses.

Besides that, in the recent budget, we eliminated almost 18% from the corporate tax to allow those businesses to be able to stay in the market. Are they facing difficult times? Yes.

I listened to the member from Parkdale–High Park talk about small companies closing down. I'm not sure if she's asking to eliminate all regulation and safety which was put in place to protect the people. It's another issue.

I know the member from York–Simcoe was in a government, when she was in power back then, that eliminated all the food inspectors and meat inspectors, all these inspectors—that's why we had a lot of disasters in Aylmer, in our region—and also water inspectors, which caused a lot of damage to our province.

I think it's important to keep the door open and to talk about these issues. I believe strongly that our small businesses are important to keep in Ontario, that it's important to give them whatever tools and assistance they need in order to be prosperous and able to maintain and sustain the ability to pay the taxes which give us the ability to govern as a government, to be able to support our health care, our education, our infrastructure.

I'm looking forward to hearing much debate on this issue because it's a very important issue.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka.

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to have an opportunity to speak to the resolution brought forward by my colleague from York–Simcoe, Julia Munro, to re-establish the Red Tape Commission. In the few minutes I have available, I will try to get at least one example in, but I'm certainly very familiar with the issue that she has raised. In fact, I introduced a private member's bill on the topic last fall. That bill passed second reading and was referred to committee.

As the past small business critic, I've heard from a lot of business owners who are frustrated by the business climate in Ontario. As a past business owner, I'm acutely aware of the challenges that face operators, particularly in a business environment as hostile as we've seen in Ontario.

Businesses have been suffocating under the weight of regulations and red tape in this province. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business reports that two out of three businesses say that the provincial red tape and

regulations have increased in recent years. I think you just need to look at the recent huge drop we've seen in corporate tax revenues to understand that businesses have not been thriving in Ontario. We fell harder and faster than other provinces during this recession. Why?

I'd like to just give one example—I've got lots but not enough time to give them, so one example: A construction operator writes to me about class A road testing and the requirements that discriminate against small companies like his. Instead of allowing drivers to be tested using the equipment they use on a daily basis and that they own, he's forced to rent tractor-trailer units with fifth wheels, coupling and trailers. They may even need to pay for driving instruction before the units can be rented. The costs can come in between \$2,000 and \$5,000. He asks, "Why are we subjected to such costs?" That's one example. I could give you reams and reams of examples.

I would just say this: The Red Tape Commission was working. I sat on it for a short time. It helps make simpler, smarter rules for business. I remember sitting on the Red Tape Commission and bringing in 30 letters of rejection to do with a northern health travel grant, where the government was sending out a letter of rejection for every trip in the northern health travel grant, and bringing that to the commission to try to get them to come up with a better system. I don't know whether that has happened yet.

I think business needs simpler rules and the government needs to communicate them better. We need an attitude change in the civil service, where civil servants will actually help business to succeed.

Small business is the engine of the economy in this province. They are the job creators in this province. We need them to be successful. Currently, under this government, they are being suffocated by regulations. It's tough for small business.

With that, I will leave time for my other colleagues who I know wish to speak to this resolution.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): Any other speakers? Minister of Government Services.

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: I was the Minister of Small Business for three years, so I think I have a fairly good idea about small business and its contribution to our province. They are in fact the engine of this province: 97% of all businesses fall into this category. Also, \$250 billion worth of activity is generated by small businesses. We are very much aware that 50%-plus of jobs are created by small businesses, and most other new jobs are created by small businesses. That's why we moved in a very systematic way to reduce the burden on small business.

I want to give a couple of examples. My ministry was responsible for reduction of the paperwork in the government. In the very first year, we worked on all large ministries and we reduced the paperwork by 25% in the ministries. In the second year, we worked with the rest of the ministries and we reduced the paperwork by 25%. So that has been an incredible achievement in its own right, and I want to tell you that this is important.

The other thing I want to tell you is that we also moved ahead with automating the business forms so that people can do it more easily and they don't have to repeat the information again and again.

Our government is moving ahead with assigning a single business number to each business so it can be tracked properly.

There are two-for-one regulations: Every minister has been instructed by the Premier that if you want to bring in one regulation, you must bring two to eliminate.

My colleague talked about the collection of the taxes. Actually, we have worked with the federal government so that we can collect the taxes together. That reduces the burdens on small business.

Harmonization of provincial and federal sales tax is another step in the right direction. That will also save our businesses an incredible amount of money and will make them more and more competitive.

I want to talk to you about the enterprise centres, which the member for London–Fanshawe talked about. These enterprise centres are out there to help small businesses so that small businesses can succeed and become more successful.

We are not only doing all these things—cutting the business forms, cutting the rules and regulations for small business—but we are in fact making it easier for small business to sell to the government. That has never been done before.

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The issue here isn't to create more red tape, which also puts more burdens or rules and regulations on the small businesses; the issue is to work with the small businesses, make it easier for them to sell to the government, make it easier for them to be successful in the community. We actually have programs like the Smart program that have been very successful for the small business community. We also have other programs to assist them if they want to export to other countries where they have not exported before with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. All those programs were new programs that we introduced and made very successful.

Interjection.

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: I know my colleague on the other side doesn't want to hear of all the good programs that we have instituted. He wants to interrupt me. That he can do. But I want to tell you what our government has done consistently and moved consistently to help the small businesses succeed. As well, our government was the first government to actually create the Ministry of Small Business.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): The member from Oxford.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise in support of the resolution from the member from York–Simcoe, my seatmate here, a suggestion that the government bring back the Red Tape Commission.

We recognize that the government said that they wanted to get rid of 25% of regulations in order to support small business in the province of Ontario, yet

they have absolutely nothing in place to set the benchmark by or in fact to have anyone look at it to make sure that each individual ministry is doing it or that the government in general is doing it.

It's not just the regulations presently in place that are inhibiting small businesses from doing business. With the new legislation that the government brings in, there is no one on the government side looking at that legislation to see what impact that legislation will have on small business and, in fact, all business in the province. Every action has a reaction. There are always negatives in the regulatory powers that each bill gives the minister, and there are things that will inhibit the ability of people to do business.

I have a letter that I received today. It was written to the Honourable Tim Hudak, leader of our party. It's on behalf of the Archer Daniels Midland Co., which is one of the largest agri-food businesses in the province of Ontario.

"We are writing to bring to your attention recently proposed draft regulations developed by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment (MOE) under the Toxics Reduction Act." One would think that that would not have much to do with food processing in the province.

It goes on: "The regulation would capture many food ingredients and products, and require that they be reported under the act.

"For example, the flour produced in our Ontario grain milling facilities would be considered a form of non-specific particulate matter under the regulations and would have to be reported in a public registry of toxic emissions associated with the act." Have you any idea of the impact that would have on the selling of our flour, if it's reported on the list of toxic materials in our province?

"Many other foods and food ingredients, including chocolate, cocoa, sugar, starch, baking ingredients, cereal grains, malted barley, rice, coffee, and tea would also be treated as toxic substances under the regulations. The regulations would also apply to animal feed ingredients which are by-products of grain and oilseed processing for food, such as canola, soybean and wheat grain." Can you imagine the impact of that?

"Foods are clearly not the intended focus of the act—foods are not toxic. The simple solution is to exempt food and feed from the regulations or to exempt facilities that produce foods and animal feed. In other words, the regulations should have the common sense not to include food with the toxic substances the act was designed to address."

That's the reason it's so important that we have this resolution that came forward today, that we have that Red Tape Commission in place, so this bill would be reviewed to make sure this regulation doesn't come into play and we don't start declaring the best food in the world, produced in this province, and putting it on the list of toxic materials. I just don't think that's acceptable. That's why we should all support this resolution today, so we can implement that and protect our food industry.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): The member from Beaches–East York.

Mr. Michael Prue: I let my turn go around the last time because I was very anxious and I could see that the Minister of Small Business was anxious to speak. I wanted to hear a defence of the government, or at least an explanation from some of the government members as to why they were or were not going to vote for this bill. Sadly, I've now heard from two of them and I haven't heard a single rational reason given either to support or not support the bill.

Both of the members who spoke talked, I think, in glowing terms in their own minds about how much this government has done for business and the business experience in the province of Ontario, but nothing about whether or not the red tape idea is a good idea or nothing in defence of having abolished the Red Tape Commission during this term of government. That's what I was waiting to hear, and I still haven't heard it. I'm hoping that maybe the next one will stand up and say whether they think it's a good idea or a bad idea, or defend why it was abolished in the first place. Maybe somebody will do that. I don't know where the government stands on the issue.

Quite frankly, the Red Tape Commission was an idea of the Harris government back some many years ago. There was perhaps some merit to that position at that time, because there was a lot of government regulation that was superfluous. There were a lot of things that small business complained about that were done away with, some to good effect and some to bad effect. But I really have to question, and want to hear somebody explain to me in detail how, and what regulations. My friend next to me here from—

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Oxford.

Mr. Michael Prue: —Oxford did explain about animal feed and food products, and that's a rational thing to say. I can understand those terms of reasoning and that the red tape around those might be taken away. I need to hear about other red tape scenarios that will in fact help business, because I don't believe we're doing enough to help business in this province. Quite frankly, we need to be doing far more.

Today I listened to my colleague from Kenora–Rainy River stand up and ask a very simple question that I think is on a great many people's minds; that is, what is going to happen with the proposed free trade deal that is being inked or being signed or being contemplated as I stand here speaking? We know that the United States went very protectionist, and we know that a great deal of our exports to the United States were put at risk. At the same time, if a deal is negotiated, it may put at risk something that many Canadians, Ontarians and small-town Ontarians hold very dear; that is, to be able to use tax monies to hire local businesses and put local people to work. I know that if you go into northern Ontario—the mayor of Smooth Rock Falls was here yesterday—any monies they expend, they would like to expend on businesses and services in adjacent areas, so that they can keep their economy moving and growing.

When my colleague from Kenora–Rainy River stood up and asked the question, there was no answer. I don't

know what the Ontario government's position is on this or just about any other economic development. I certainly know that the HST is not going to create jobs. How are you going to create them? If we're not going to protect Ontario jobs and we're going to freer trade, then say so and say how you think that is going to create some jobs.

You've got other things that can be done and are simply not being done. If you're not going with the buy-Ontario program, tell us where you're going to buy goods and services. Is it the intent of the Ontario government to go to the cheapest manufacturer or to a freer trade policy with the United States—is that what the intent is—and to sell our raw goods, which Canada has been doing for generations, and you're happy with that? Is Ontario going to look at a pro-jobs, pro-investment tax regime? It's all well and good for this government to talk, and I heard my friend from London–Fanshawe talk about reducing the taxes on corporations. Yes, but when you reduce taxes on corporations, it is only corporations that make a profit that can be taxed. If you're not making a profit, or even if you're indeed making a small profit and have a good accountant, you don't pay any tax in the first place, so it doesn't matter whether you reduce it or don't reduce it.

The Minister of Finance was at great difficulty trying to explain this week how corporate taxes had gone so far down without any of these things being implemented. The amount of corporate taxes and the value that Ontarians are getting have been reduced significantly over the last six months or a year. I'm not sure how this is going to help, and I'm asking the government members, when it's their turn to stand up, to please explain two things to me: one, why you eliminated the red tape program in the first place, and secondly, whether you're in favour of bringing it back, so that I can understand your position.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): The member for Mississauga–Streetsville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: It is a pleasure to stand and to address the resolution brought forth by my colleague from York–Simcoe, a very thoughtful member who has brought forth what I consider to be a well-meaning resolution.

1510

I'd like to parse this resolution into its operative parts. Part number one: “reducing the financial and time burden of government regulation.” Who can quarrel with that? Part number two: “publicly demonstrate that” Ontario “has worked with small business leaders.” Who can quarrel with that? Part number three: “re-establish the Red Tape Commission.” I have a problem with that. Part number four: an assertion, which I do believe to be incorrect, that Ontario has failed to help small businesses. So let's take it one at a time.

My colleague from Beaches–East York asks: “What replaces the Red Tape Commission?” Here's the answer: the Open for Business initiative. Ontario has, some time ago, embarked on a three-year initiative to create faster, smarter, more streamlined government by—and here we go—reducing the regulatory burden in Ontario by 25%. If you're a minister, as Minister Takhar is, you know that

before you can bring out new regulations, you have got to find, either in your ministry or in other ministries, more regulations to cut or reduce before you bring out any other. Consequently, the total burden of regulations is going down and will continue to go down.

We have also begun to build a foundation for improving services to business that protects the public interest, fosters competitiveness—and I'll talk more about that—and also welcomes new businesses to the province. What is not at issue here is that Ontario has aggressively cut our taxes and enacted measures to ensure that Ontario is the single most competitive place in all of North America to start a business, to grow a business and to relocate a business. No one is quarrelling with that.

Let's talk now a little bit about the regulatory registry. This is a one-stop website. It makes it easier for businesses to find out about existing and proposed government of Ontario regulatory initiatives that may affect them and to learn about regulations that have recently been approved.

I cannot see the reason or the sense in creating red tape, which would be the Red Tape Commission, to do what already exists, so let's just set that aside. It already exists; it's called the Open for Business initiative. It does the things that the member has asked for, and it will continue to do the things that the member has asked for.

Let's address the second part, where she says, "demonstrate that" Ontario "has worked with small business leaders." Okay, there are 57 small business enterprise centres to help entrepreneurs with start-ups and with growing businesses—57. Demonstrated? Done. Twelve regional offices that provide direct consulting services to high-performing small and medium businesses across southern Ontario—done.

How about this one: the Rural Connections broadband program. If you want to operate on the web, you've got to be able to have a decent broadband connection, so Ontario has a \$40-million, five-year initiative—which, by the way, is led by the Ministry of Agriculture—which is already supporting 18 municipal projects, providing broadband service to unserved rural areas in southern Ontario, enabling them to connect to the information highway.

Let's talk about the Export Market Access program. The business advisory services branch works with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, hand-in-hand with the private sector, to develop and to implement the Export Market Access program, which was launched more than a year ago. The branch has also collaborated with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce on a new, simplified—and, in direct response to the member—web-based application process. It went live this March.

The Small Business Agency of Ontario improves the interactions between government and small and medium-sized enterprises.

Here's one that's really effective: the Wisdom Exchange, which is peer-to-peer forums.

Unfortunately, I'm out of time, but I have got pages and pages of concrete, solid examples of how Ontario is already doing what member has asked.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): The member from Newmarket–Aurora.

Mr. Frank Klees: I am in support, of course, of this resolution brought forward by my colleague from York–Simcoe, for the very reason that it's practical.

Her recommendation to bring back the Red Tape Commission is something that will allow us to actually measure what the Minister of Government Services and the member from Mississauga South are saying that the government is doing. You see, the evidence is to the contrary. When we speak to small business people within our ridings, we hear from them directly about what their practical experience is with regulations and with the cost of existing regulations.

One of the things that the Red Tape Commission did that I don't hear coming from this government is an actual measurement of the number of regulations that are being eliminated. What I can tell the Minister of Government Services is that under the Red Tape Commission, from the time that it was implemented until this government took over, there were more than 2,000 regulations taken off the books of the government. There is no evidence, none whatsoever, of the number of regulations that have been reduced by this government. In fact, what we have is evidence of a mounting amount of regulation that continues to strangle business in this province. The cost of compliance to regulations is estimated at over \$5,000 per employee for companies that have less than five employees. That is significant, and we are appealing to the government to listen to small business people from across this province and respond and become partners with them, rather than stifling their efforts to be in business in this province.

I thank my colleague for bringing this initiative forward. What we would look forward to is for the Minister of Government Services to in fact call Frank Sheehan and reinstate him as the chair of the Red Tape Commission.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): Do I have another speaker? Okay, member from Kitchener–Waterloo.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I certainly support the motion that has been put forward by my colleague. We've been quite disappointed over the past six years, since the Liberals have taken over government, to see the impact of their many regulations and the burden of red tape that has been foisted upon the small business owners in our communities. I would say to you that probably on a weekly basis, our office and I, personally, when we're out at functions, are confronted by a small business owner telling us about the huge regulatory burden and all of the hoops that they have to go through in order to achieve certain ends.

I think you've heard my colleague say that we did have a Red Tape Commission. The Red Tape Commission did oversee the passage of 15 red-tape-reduction and government-efficiency acts, they repealed over 80 outdated statutes and they amended well over 200 other acts. In contrast, we've had a government these past years, since 2003, despite the fact that they said we will

convert the Red Tape Commission to make it an agency specifically devoted to meeting the needs of small business, do exactly the opposite. They have simply added to the burden of red tape and regulation. The Liberals have broken their promise to the small business community, who have struggled hard these past few years as the economy has turned downward.

The other thing, of course, this government did, despite the 2003 promise, is to totally abolish the commission. They just simply lost all interest and have had little in the way of any empathy or support for the small business community. I would encourage them to re-establish the Red Tape Commission, to review the regulations and make the cuts; set up a process to review the regulations to see if they're necessary; and I think, most importantly, it's time for this government to actually listen to the small business community in this province. They are the ones who can tell you first-hand how much they're suffering at the present time and how much of that suffering is as a result of the additional red tape and regulatory burden.

I would encourage this government to actually listen, and then I would encourage this government to actually implement the changes that are recommended.

1520

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): Seeing no further speakers, the member from York-Simcoe has two minutes to speak to her resolution.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I just want to highlight a couple of things that I think emerged from the very interesting discussion that we have had this afternoon on this issue.

First of all, a couple of the government members have referred to Open for Business, which of course I did as well. But my concern about this is, first of all, if the government has done as it suggests—one regulation in, two out—if it has created the kind of environment that it suggests, they've kept this light under a bushel. It's very difficult to determine the success of Open for Business. The only public reference there is a one-line announcement in March.

The other thing I would suggest is that one of the government members talked about the tools that people need, providing the tools for small business. More than providing tools—that sounds to me like top down—what should be the focus of any effort in this regard should be on the question of performance measures. How well are these working? That's the litmus test. That's the most important thing to determine, and if you can't demonstrate that this is actually making a difference, allowing someone to make a greater investment in their business, hiring another person, expanding their marketplace, then those kinds of performance measures are the key. If they're not there and you're not measuring them, then you have no idea how well the kinds of tools and money and programs and websites that you're putting out are doing.

So, my recommendation is that if performance measures for small business aren't there, you're not doing the job.

TAXATION

Mr. David Zimmer: I move that, in the opinion of this House, in response to the current economic climate, the Ontario government should heed the recommendations of federal finance minister Jim Flaherty with respect to sales tax harmonization, and the recommendation of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario contained in their 2009 pre-budget consultation submission before the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs with respect to Ontario's tax competitiveness, and implement a harmonized sales tax.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. David Zimmer: The Ontario Conservative Party has taken, in my view, a duplicitous position on the harmonization of sales tax. It's duplicitous, it's disingenuous—

Mr. Michael Prue: On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I do not believe the word that was used is parliamentary.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): Member from Willowdale, do you withdraw?

Mr. David Zimmer: I withdraw that.

Their current position on the proposed HST harmonization is a contradiction. It's in contradiction to their position for at least the last 14 years. Going back as far as April 11, 1986, then finance minister Ernie Eves, referring to the harmonization of sales tax: “[O]bviously it makes sense to harmonize.”

Then we skip forward to June 7, 1995. Premier Mike Harris, in the *Toronto Star*: “It seems ludicrous to us to have two different” sales “taxes, two different bureaucracies to collect it and more paperwork.” Then it continues on with the next leader of the Conservative Party of Ontario, John Tory, in a *scrum* on November 14, 2007: “The business community would say that the biggest thing to be done to assist their competitive position would be to have this harmonized tax because it would help them to buy, incent them to buy equipment and re-equip themselves to compete more effectively.”

We have to ask ourselves why the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party suddenly, in the last couple of months, has done an about-face on that position that it has maintained for 15 years. It's not just those leaders that I've just quoted; the current leadership of the party and the current senior membership of the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus have, over that same 13- or 14-year time frame, right up to just the last couple of months, supported, endorsed and encouraged Ontario to move to a harmonized sales tax regime.

Jim Flaherty, the former Ontario finance minister, now the federal finance minister, said that the single sales tax “is the single most important step that provinces ... could take to stimulate new business investment, create jobs and improve Canada's overall economic competitiveness.”

Jim Flaherty, *Toronto Star*, March 27, 2009: "I'm quite encouraged by the fact that the government of Ontario decided to harmonize the PST with the GST. This is jobs; this is investment; this is good economic policy."

That's very interesting. Now let me offer some quotes from the current leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party. You see, I was trained as a trial lawyer, and one of the things that you do when you want to confront an about-face, either of a witness or in this case a political party, is, guess what? Confront them with their prior statements which are inconsistent with the position they take today in a courtroom or, in this case, the position they take in the Legislature.

So what's the most recent position of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party? Tim Hudak launches his leadership campaign, April 2, 2009: "You know, certainly we have called for business tax reductions for five years."

And, "Now, I know that some business leaders support the harmonized sales tax, and to be clear, I believe that there's little sense in allowing two separate governments to apply two separate sets of taxes and policies and collect two separate groups of sales tax." The leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party also made that same point, using the same words, speaking to the Economic Club of Toronto on April 23, 2009.

Mr. Hudak made an appearance before the Progressive Conservative Don Valley West annual general meeting, on March 24, 2009. He said, "You know, well, we understand that, uh, you can relieve some of the taxes on businesses, right? In the manufacturing sector, the problem with the PST is it cascades, so every step along the way there's tax on tax on tax, which raises the cost of goods and ... punishes exporters. So we understand" what we need to do to "help the economy."

Tim Hudak on Radio AM980, speaking in support of business groups that have said they want to see a harmonized sales tax regime, said, on August 13, 2009, "In some areas there's no doubt that businesses will say this is better for them because, uh, they don't have the cascading impacts like in the manufacturing..."

But it's not just the leader of the Ontario Conservative Party; the senior members of the caucus have also, over the years, pushed and endorsed the harmonized sales tax. Let me just run through a few of the senior leadership of the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus who are in this House day after day after day.

John O'Toole, speaking in *Scugog* on January 28, 2009: "I think (the province is) going to do it and I think it should ... be done."

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John O'Toole on a website, *Staying In Touch*, June 24 to July 4—he had an item on the website: "Most Ontarians have no difficulty with PST and GST being harmonized in order to help businesses avoid duplication and red tape."

Let's see what the interim leader of the Ontario Conservative Party, Bob Runciman, said in a scrum on

March 24: "I think, in theory ... our party is supportive of ... harmonization."

In a scrum the next day, on March 25, 2009—so he had overnight to think it through, to see if he really meant it the day before, and he came back the day after and said, after an evening of full and mature thought, that he thinks "it's something that should occur," referring to the harmonization of the HST.

What does another senior member of the Progressive Conservative caucus, Peter Shurman, say? In a scrum on March 24, 2009: "If there's an announcement on Thursday that what we're going for is harmonization, I am not saying that harmonization ultimately is a bad idea."

The list goes on. Let me quote from a very distinguished senior member of the Conservative caucus, Christine Elliott, who has a relationship of sorts with the federal finance minister—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): Can I ask people just to settle down?

I think that we just want to calm the timbre down. Member from Willowdale, can you continue and not talk about the relationships of other people outside the House?

Mr. David Zimmer: The relationship of Christine Elliott is one of membership in the same political party as Mr. Flaherty.

Christine Elliott said, at a PC leadership debate in London, on May 21, 2009, "We would need to take a look at what the situation is when we take government in 2011." I think the question that was asked was, "Would she rescind the sales tax if they formed the government?" Not prepared to make a commitment.

Christine Elliott again in the debate on May 21, 2009, in London: "So it would depend very much on"—she hesitates—"there are many variables at play here and I don't think anyone at this point can speculate on what the situation would be in 2011."

So now you see that we're moving from strong endorsement of the HST, then a change in policy on HST—they're not in favour of it—and now we're moving to sort of a third position, where, if they did form the government in 2011, they're ambivalent as to whether they would rescind the HST or not. Talk about wanting it both ways—in this case, three ways.

I could go on and offer another hour or hour and a half of quotes from the senior leadership of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party. The gist of each of those quotes is that they have strongly, over the years—over at least 13 or 14 years—endorsed the rationale and have supported the HST. It's only recently, when this government brought forward the harmonization regime and has proposed it, that they've suddenly, overnight, changed their minds and opposed it.

So the question remains: Why would a responsible political party do that in the face of all of the evidence and in the face of all of the statements from the senior leadership of their caucus, former finance ministers and

former Premiers? Why are they doing that? It seems to me that they're doing it because they know that it's at least getting them media attention. It's a media initiative. It's an attempt to grab the headlines. It's an attempt to create controversy. You know, that may be good for the Conservative Party, in the sense that they're getting ink in the press and they're getting on television and on the radio, but that's a very selfish reason. They should ask themselves: What is in the best interests of Ontario? What is in the best interests of Ontario's economy? And that is, we should harmonize the sales tax.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): The member from Nepean–Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's a pleasure to be able to take part in the debate on the Dalton sales tax.

I notice that this motion by the member from Willowdale is craftily worded to drive a wedge between those who oppose the Dalton sales tax, but I won't be deterred in my assessment of his tax grab. Indeed, it's a facile and, I might say, farcical attempt to gain support for the Liberals' ill-conceived and horrifically timed \$3-billion tax grab on the middle class and on seniors that Mr. McGuinty has locked us into for five years, with no ability to reduce the tax for two years.

As the revenue critic for the Progressive Conservative Party, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to focus on the particular line in the resolution, "and implement a harmonized sales tax," because I'm going to criticize Dalton's sales tax for the next six minutes. I only wish I had more time.

I might remind the member that since his government took office a few short years ago—I believe it was six—we have gone from first to worst in economic growth. We've lost over 300,000 manufacturing jobs, and for the first time since Confederation, Ontario is accepting welfare payments from the rest of Canada. We're a have-not province. Our taxes are the highest they've ever been in our history, and our debt and deficit are climbing at rates that would make Bob Rae blush. This is not the time to raise taxes, unless of course you are a government that cannot control your spending.

This government looks at every hockey mother, retired police officer and granny as its personal ATM. Indeed, while Ontarians are penny-pinching, Mr. McGuinty and Mr. Zimmer are nickel-and-diming them. How else can you explain their decision to add an 8% tax increase on home heating, Internet access fees, plumber and electrician fees and cellphone bills? And that's before I even leave the house. Then I'm going to find that they're going to increase taxes by 8% on landscaping fees and snow removal fees, and they're even going to find another way to tax the gas in my car. That's all before he takes another 8% from me on my mutual fund savings, my dog's veterinary bills, my Tim Hortons coffee and even my kid's soccer registration. And not only is Mr. McGuinty trying to tax me and the rest of Ontario to death; he's going to tax us in death. He's going to tax us in death. Funeral services are now going to increase by 8%.

This isn't even a complete list of the Dalton sales tax. Ontarians who are watching this at home can go to Daltonsalestax.com to find a complete list. They can even go to a calculator we've got to show them that this tax is going to cost them anywhere between \$1,000 and \$2,000 more a year.

And what about the bribe they're going to give you, the \$1,000 bribe right before an election to offset the cost of the HST? What is that really doing? It's offsetting the cost of the health tax they told us they weren't going to bring in the first time they raised our taxes. Of course, the next time, they did.

Mr. McGuinty is trying to communicate this as good economic policy, as is Mr. Zimmer, but a \$3-billion tax grab on Ontarians is the worst thing to do for the economy. This deal is so bad that even Mr. McGuinty doesn't, or should I say didn't, agree with the harmonization of taxes.

I have a few quotes for Mr. Zimmer. Let me share with you Mr. McGuinty's own words. I'm not sure if they let you know about his previous position, but of course he does have a record of flip-flopping from time to time.

He said in 1994, after speaking to Bob Rae, whom I think he now agrees with, "People have had it up to here and beyond when it comes to taxes." Then he said in 1999, before he became Premier of Ontario: "All of the information that I have received tells me that harmonization ... would lead to a net increase in taxes for the province of Ontario and for Ontarians. There's going to be a net loss here to the province of Ontario if we proceed with that harmonization, and that's why I will not go ahead with that."

Then he just keeps on digging that hole. Again in 1999, he said he "won't do it because it's going to come at an economic disadvantage to the province of Ontario. I can't see it happening unless our taxes go up.... In fact, we'll have a net loss. So I'm not going to be harmonizing our taxes."

There's more, but I've got to tell you something: I don't have the time; I have to split my time with my colleague the finance critic. But I wonder what's changed, and I'll tell you what's changed: Dalton McGuinty is broke. He doesn't want to stop spending. He just wants to take more money from us. And his caucus doesn't even like it. I'm sure a couple of anonymous folks over there have said this: "If they can't give me a 30-second sound bite on why this is a good thing to do, then I'm screwed"—that, says one Liberal MPP in the *Toronto Star*.

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Another, in the same paper two days later, says, "Voters are not stupid. People will figure out that we're bribing them with their own money." My favourite personal quote from a Liberal MPP is this one: "As soon as we say you're going to get a cheque, the reaction we're all getting is people are pissed. They say Ernie Eves tried it and it inflames them even more."

And even Mr. Zimmer's own constituents detest this tax. I just received this today: "We have been working on

sending letters to our local MPP (David Zimmer) and to Dalton McGuinty. David did visit our condominium with a member of the finance department.... It was not productive at all. It showed us that the employees of the ministry are going along with Dalton's sales tax, deceiving the public as to the fact that this is helping businesses ... etc."

Mr. Zimmer, that e-mail comes under the category, "It inflames them every time."

I'm out of time, so thank you, Madam Speaker. We're going to continue to stop this tax.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): The member from Beaches–East York.

Mr. Michael Prue: Where do you go from here? You've got the pot calling the kettle black and the kettle calling the pot blacker: A pox on both your houses, because the reality is that the Liberals for years said they would never do such a thing and did it; the Conservatives said for years that they wanted it done, and when it happens, they don't want it.

I have to tell you, the reality is that only the people of Ontario know that this is a bad tax. They know that politicians will say whatever they want to say to get elected, if you're a Liberal, and they'll say whatever they can say if you're a Conservative to pretend that it's not your problem and you never thought it up in the first place.

I have to say, I am extremely disappointed in both of my colleagues' parties. I'm very disappointed in what they're doing, digging up all this stuff. Come and talk about what the tax is actually going to do to Ontarians. Tell Ontarians exactly what they are going to pay for now that they didn't have to pay before.

My colleague read some of them out but I have a list that I think might be exhaustive and I think—if anybody's watching—it includes: gasoline for your car; hydro and home heating; the Internet; veterinary care; newspapers and magazines; prepared foods under \$4; personal care services; hair styling; professional services; legal and mutual fund fees; campgrounds; taxi fares; real estate commissions; ice rink rentals; dry cleaning; labour costs for your home renovations; car rentals; funerals; domestic air, rail and bus tickets; vitamins; new homes over \$400,000; and commercial property rentals.

That's what's included. That's where the taxes are going to come from. You can say all you want that it's going to help business and I have no doubt it's going to help some business, but it's going to hurt consumers. It's going to hurt the very people who voted for you in the last election and the very people you told you wouldn't do it. That's who's going to be hurt. If you look at them and you tell them honestly, and look at what is going to happen, we know that with condo fees—and I've got a quote here from Murray Johnson, regional manager with Brookfield Residential. On condo fees: "When we ran the computer simulation of budgets we were able to consistently arrive at the overall 6.8% increase to the annual budget and thereby the monthly fees. We are somewhat reassured that our numbers are correct in that we have

heard our major competitors have arrived at the same figures."

So if you live in a condo, you are looking at a 6.8% increase. I heard a question asked the other day, and what a question: Are rents going to go up? No, the rents can't go up and the rents aren't going to go up, but the cost to the people who own the apartment buildings are going to go up approximately 3%, and they are going to apply to have that rent increased. You know and I know it's going to happen.

David Murrell of the University of New Brunswick has done a study on this already, and he suggested that, over the next few years, Ontario consumers will pay \$7.1 billion more annually. It works out to \$1,560 per household. The consumers aren't being fooled. They know who's going to pay: They're going to pay. And it doesn't matter whether Jim Flaherty likes it or Dalton McGuinty was once opposed to it. In the end, the people who are going to pay are the consumers, and they are not going to forget come the next election. They are not going to forget what is happening here in this Legislature and what is being debated.

In fact, when we informed some of the 100,000 people who have signed our petition of the debate here today and what Mr. Zimmer was putting forward, we received literally 1,000 e-mails. I'd like to read a couple of them, because this is what ordinary people out there think of this whole debate.

The first one is from Sandy Allan. "My wife and I are both senior citizens; we live in a condo. If this tax goes through we may have to sell up and move into rental accommodation; our condo fees are high enough as it is."

The next one, from Joni Bottos: "Say no to HST! In today's economy, we should be doing all we can to promote commerce. The introduction of HST will only cause people to think twice about spending money."

Or how about from Richard Reilly and Euna Branch from Innisfil, Ontario, who said, "While I am aware of recent government deficits and the need for new sources of tax, I find that for retired persons such as myself, there will be a very significant increase in my cost of living, as much as \$500, which I can ill afford."

Or how about Tanya Loeffen from Scotia Plaza: "In my opinion, by adding additional tax to services that are not currently taxed, i.e. haircuts, the government will do damage to the already rocky economy."

Or how about Gary Dinkel: "Another tax is simply unacceptable. As a senior on limited income, you will make everyday living even more expensive. I say no to this tax. Put yourself in our shoes."

Or how about Krysia Steinberg, who writes: "I cannot afford an additional increase in hydro, water, gas, repairs."

Or how about Cary Roy: "Once again a family that is just making it by will have to dish out more money to taxes, and once again the working class has to bear the brunt of the majority of the costs to implement this money grab."

I want to leave some time for my friend, but a couple more: “As a resident of Ontario, I am appalled that you would even consider bringing in the HST next year or any year for that matter.

“The people of this province are struggling enough to keep their heads above water. The jobless rate is at its highest and the welfare lines are growing and the food banks are empty....

“Shame on you!” from Maureen Fitzpatrick from Grimsby, Ontario.

Last but not least: “Please do not harmonize the GST and PST taxes.

“I do not appreciate the tax grab. Those of us working are already struggling with higher food and energy costs,” from Karen Martini, from Mississauga, Ontario.

I’ve got lots. The time is limited. I just want to say that the people of Ontario are not being fooled. They’re not being dragged into what Jim Flaherty wants, what Dalton McGuinty wants, what Tim Hudak said 10 years ago. They want not to be taxed in a way that this government is doing it, and they are telling this government that they are putting themselves at risk by continuing to do so.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): The member from Mississauga—Streetsville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I want to say hello to Ontario, and especially those of you who are watching this at Heritage Square in Meadovale.

Now that we’re all together, I do want to talk. Once upon a time, a long time ago, in fact, it was back in 1961, a Premier of Ontario raised taxes. His name was Leslie Frost, and later that year, he was succeeded by a young guy named John Robarts. That government instituted a retail sales tax. I think it was supposed to be called the RST, but the government of the day was worried it would be called the Robarts Sales Tax, so it became known as the PST, for provincial sales tax. Way back then there was no such expression as, say, “service sector.” Just to give you an idea: John F. Kennedy was in his first year as president, and the Chicago Blackhawks had just beaten the Detroit Red Wings for the Stanley Cup.

How many of us still live in the same house we occupied in 1961? How many of us still drive the same car? How many of us wear the same clothes we did in 1961? More importantly, how many of us still do business like we did in 1961? Now, those of you who are meeting with other seniors at the older adult centre in Square One might want to really pay attention to this. The Conservative Party in Ontario would have us continue to pay taxes like we did in 1961. Now, the rest of the world has moved on, it’s modernized, and Ontario simply seeks to do the same. Since Conservative Premier Leslie Frost brought in the sales tax at 3%, and Conservative Premiers John Robarts and Bill Davis increased the tax to 8%, Ontario has changed and so has the world.

1550

Supply chains are longer. The service sector is a vital part of our business. Now, logistics and storage are a vital part of that supply chain. So what has happened to the Robarts sales tax that you pay at 8% every day? Too

much of it, ladies and gentlemen, is stuck in the price that you pay. For example, all of the PST or the Robarts sales tax that you pay in a business on such things as furniture, office equipment, supplies, employee food, coffee and every single thing that you use in your business is stuck in your business. You have to pass this sales tax along in the form of higher costs. That extra tax burden amounts to between 2% and 5% of your total business costs. And who pays for that? You do. You do, if you’re chatting with your sister on Bartley Bull Parkway in Peel Village. You do, if you’re sitting there petting the cat in your den in Leaside.

Let me give you an example. Let’s look at a typical supply chain. You have a bunch of suppliers who will supply a manufacturer; who passes his goods to a wholesaler; who puts it into a distribution channel which is the retail chain, the franchisor, the corporate store, the jobbers; who puts it into a retail store from which you buy it. Now let’s follow the hidden tax. Let’s say there’s between 2% and 5%. Let’s start with the suppliers: 2% and 5%. It goes to the manufacturer. Now, compound interest is a great thing to collect. Compound expense is a terrible thing to pay, but the Conservatives and the NDP want you to pay it.

Now, when we compound the 1.02, times 1.02, by the time you get to the manufacturer that’s 4% to 10¼%. When it goes to the wholesaler, the tax stuck in your business is between 6⅞% and—wait for it—15¾%. When it gets through the distribution channel, it’s between 8¼% and 21½%. By the time it gets to the retailer, the embedded tax in the price that you’re paying is between 10.4% and 27⅝%. On top of that, you pay 8%, and when you compound that, that works out to between 19¼% and 37⅝% that the Conservatives and the NDP say you should continue to pay and this government says, “All we want from you is 8%; we do not want between 19¼% and 37⅝%.” You can do the math. You’ll end up at the same place that I did.

So let’s get this straight. The Tories and the NDP want you to continue to pay a price that includes embedded sales tax of between 19¼% and 37⅝%. Ontario’s move to harmonize your taxes means that the price on so many things that you buy every day will go down, not up.

To my colleagues, let me quote what Ernie Eves said. Let’s quote directly. “If the federal government can come to us with a proposal that will harmonize and at least be revenue-neutral in terms of its impact on consumers in the business community, or preferably from my point of view, save taxpayers money”—which is exactly what we’re doing—“heaven forbid, then obviously it makes sense to harmonize.” Who said that? Ernie Eves. He didn’t say it after he retired; Ernie Eves said that while he was Ontario’s finance minister.

Ontario will raise your benefits and cut your taxes. You get that? If you’re flipping the remote on Squire Drive in Richmond Hill, Ontario will raise your benefits and cut your taxes. This province is going to cut your personal income taxes on January 1 next year, six months ahead of the introduction of the single sales tax. The

Tories and the NDP are going to vote against cutting your taxes permanently.

You guys who are watching in the auto body shop off of Royal Windsor Drive in Oakville: Pay attention to this. Effective January 1, your small business surtax will be permanently eliminated. Ontario is the only province in Canada to do so. You guys are going to be able to grow your business better. But the Conservatives and the NDP will vote against cutting your small business surtax permanently.

To the lady who's doing her ironing in Humber Valley Village, you're getting a new permanent sales tax credit. Despite the long list of tax-exempt items and despite the price reductions that you can expect on so many of the products that you buy every day, this is going to help offset those things for those services whose price may go up. But the Conservatives and the NDP will vote against your best interests.

To the ladies doing their knitting nestled in their homes on the Queensway, your senior homeowner's property tax credit is going to be doubled from \$250 to \$500 on January 1, six months before the single sales tax comes into effect. You are going to be able to stay in your own home longer. But the Conservatives and the NDP are going to vote against that.

What it comes down to is this: Ontario is changing the way that we collect tax. We are not going to stay stuck in the year 1961. We are going to say this very clearly: It took the federal government some \$4.3 billion to offset the revenue that will no longer come out of your pocket. That's the amount that's going to stay in your pocket beginning next year, which includes the conversion to a single sales tax.

For the people who are selling things to others, what that also means is that you're no longer going to have to face the complete insanity of one transaction being subject to two different taxes by two layers of government at two separate rates under two different sets of rules, where you deal with two independent sets of bureaucrats who often don't talk to one another. It's estimated that you people in business across Ontario are going to save some \$500 million in tax compliance expenses.

My colleague across the way, Ms. Munro, the member for York-Simcoe, just finished a resolution in which she asked, "What are we doing to help businesses?" How about \$500 million in tax savings? That's exactly what she asked for.

For those of you people who are surfing the net and switching channels in Brantford, just hang with me for another two minutes here. Across the world, some 130 countries and about 90% of Canada's population, when we implement the single sales tax, will all be in step, with much the same set of rules. People came into my constituency office, especially when I was the parliamentary assistant for research and innovation, and they would sit down with me and talk about the many advantages of doing business here in Ontario and say, "You know, you have so many things going for you," listing off our universities, our proximity to the United States, our abun-

dant, inexpensive electricity, whatever. But then they would say to me, "Why in heaven's name do you people in Ontario still retain this stupid, idiotic, archaic way of collecting tax?" All I could do at the time was shrug my shoulders and say, "Because we've always done it." But now we're going to get in step with the rest of the world.

Should Canada choose to pursue its course in a free trade agreement with Europe, we then get access to that market, which is larger than our largest trading partner, which is the United States. To give you an idea of what size of a market that is, one US company alone, Home Depot, does more business with Canada than all of France. What kind of place do you want your children and your grandchildren to grow up in—a place that can't do business with the progressive economies in Europe and in Asia because our tax rules are so antiquated or a place that continues to be the most competitive, aggressive place to start a business, to grow a business and to enable people in our province to compete on a level playing field? The people who have been signing my petitions in western Mississauga who say, "We want to hear the whole story, not just half the story"—they're the ones who know that.

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I think what we're trying to say here is, if what you heard are the doomsday scenarios, say no to the half-the-story Tories. Ask to hear the whole story. That is the difference. Canada's population will be in step with the rest of the world, and only the Ontario Conservatives will be out of line.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): The member from Parry Sound-Muskoka.

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to add my comments on this resolution today. Since it is apparent the McGuinty government isn't listening to the people of Ontario, I'm going to speak on the adverse impact that the proposed harmonized sales tax will have on three principal groups: the public, small business and the larger provincial economy. I'd like to thank my new intern, Greg Anthony, who's just finishing his first week, for his help with notes today.

First of all, the member from Willowdale used quotes from individual PC members speculating about a harmonized sales tax. I know that we quoted Premier McGuinty when he was a member of opposition. I think the true measure of what you intend to do is what you did when you were in government.

The PC Party was in government for eight years. For a good part of those eight years, the finance minister was Ernie Eves. The member from Mississauga-Streetsville quoted Ernie Eves, but I went and met with the past finance minister last week. I asked him about the HST, and his reaction was, "This is a tax grab by the McGuinty government." He told me how, when he was finance minister, he met with Paul Martin, then finance minister of the federal government, and made a proposal to him, which they carefully evaluated, and they decided that it wasn't good for Ontario.

Ernie's words to me last week when I met with him were, "Why do you think the McGuinty government wants to bring in this tax? Do you think they would be doing it if it wasn't going to bring in more tax revenues?" And of course, the answer is, "No." This is a tax grab by a government that's addicted to spending, a government that is wasteful in its spending. We just need to look at the recent revelations to do with eHealth—and it has been well-documented—with OLG and now with the WSIB's extravagant spending that's coming out. We know for a fact that this government has increased spending by some 60% over the time they've been in government, average program spending increasing 7.4% every year. They have to find new sources of revenue when their spending increases so dramatically every year.

The negative impact this tax grab will have on the citizens of Ontario seems to be obvious to everyone but the Liberals. A poll conducted by the government earlier this year found that nearly 70% of those surveyed were opposed to a new harmonized sales tax. It's an understandable sentiment, given the difficult economic climate. Ontarians are working hard, but with this latest tax grab, paid for on backs of the middle class and seniors, it will be even harder for people of this province to balance their finances. Ontarians are being punished at a time when they can least afford it because of the reckless fiscal policies of the McGuinty government.

Price increases on everything from heating oil to electricity, Internet services to haircuts will make everyday living for Ontarians much more costly. Condo owners will also be hard hit; their fees will be increased 7% to 8% if the HST comes into effect. This tax hike would also be applied to recreational facility rentals such as hockey arenas, baseball diamonds and soccer fields.

As a former minor hockey coach in Bracebridge, the idea of a tax hike affecting all parents whose children play minor hockey and other organized sports is simply unacceptable. The government should be encouraging Ontario's children to lead healthy, active lifestyles. Instead, they are imposing taxes that make playing hockey and other sports unaffordable to parents.

The riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka depends a great deal on seasonal tourism. I've had first-hand experience with this, being a former resort owner myself. With this new HST, visitors will be paying more for gasoline, lunches, golf fees and even their Tim Hortons coffee. The tax rebates and income tax changes will simply not cover all these added expenses, despite what the government has said to the contrary.

In the short couple of minutes or minute and a half I have left, I'd like to just illustrate two other points. One is that this government is imposing this tax on mutual funds. When I met with the financial industry, they told me we'd be the only jurisdiction in the world that would be taxing the management fees on mutual funds. That one change would be a \$300-million to \$500-million increase in tax for people: for seniors and for individuals trying to save for retirement. Ontario would be unique in

applying this tax to the management fees on mutual funds.

I'd also like to point out in the short minute I have left that one of the sales pitches to business on this is that they can claim the tax back. They can have input tax credits. Well, on page 134 in the budget, you see "Temporary ITC restrictions for business," and then you find out that billions of dollars in input tax credits will be denied to business. So they're going to be denied. That's up to eight years. In year 3, it's \$1.3 billion. Well, they won't get it back, and that will affect especially big business—businesses with sales over \$10 million—on energy, telecommunications, road vehicles—all the sales forces—on food, beverages and entertainment. That's a hidden part of this, where one of the advantages for businesses will be denied.

Unfortunately, I'm out of time, but it's clear where we stand on this issue.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): The member from Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Boy, oh, boy, are we being kept awake this afternoon in the House. We have Zany Delaney and his voodoo economics over there.

Let's be really clear here.

Mr. Bob Delaney: On a point of order, Speaker: The standing orders specifically state that members are to be referred to by their riding names. Nor may a member make an allegation against another member.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): The member from Parkdale–High Park, could you refrain from upsetting the other member?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Sure, I will.

Quite frankly, as a New Democrat—this is the adage: Liberals, Tories, same old stories. Here we have Liberals blaming Tories, Tories blaming Liberals, but the reality is, here we have a government that gave \$4 billion away to corporations and has to make up the tax shortfall somewhere. They have opted, and everyone in Ontario knows this, to take it out of your pockets, if you're listening.

How have they opted to do that? It's called the HST. It is not a progressive tax—there is such a thing; it is a regressive tax. That means that those who can least afford it are taxed the most. Unlike progressive income taxes, where if you make more money, you pay a greater percentage of tax, this levies a tax on those who can afford it least, at the same rate as that on those who can afford it most. Thereby it is regressive, so end of argument there.

Will it help small business? Absolutely not. I would challenge this government to come forward with small business owners who say this tax is going to help them. That's not what we hear from the CFIB. That's not what we hear from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. That's not what we hear from the BIAs in our neighbourhoods. And that is not what we're hearing from thousands of e-mails: tens of thousands of e-mails from individuals, thousands of e-mails from small business owners, ones like this:

"I simply can't afford this. I'm stretched to the max. As a business person, I've seen how the HST has had a negative effect on sales in Halifax." That's from Deborah Clark.

"As a small business person who provides services to my clients, I strongly oppose the implementation of the HST." Cheryl Sellers on Oak Street.

I could go on. There are literally thousands of them. Why? Because they know it's going to hurt business.

Not only is it going to hurt business, but we are getting letters from condo owners who say they simply cannot afford what amounts to an increase of more than 6% in what it is going to cost them for their condos.

This is the worst possible time in the history of the economy of Ontario to levy a regressive tax on those who can afford it least.

One might ask—because we're asked, "Well, what about St. Paul's? What about the by-election?" Quite frankly, the impact has not hit and will not hit renters, single mothers with families or anybody else until next July 2010, and then stand back, because then, despite this government's attempt to bribe the electorate with the little \$1,000 give-out just before the election, these folks will know because they'll be paying it out of their pockets. Of course it's not added onto rent. Of course landlords will download the extra cost, because they can. It's completely within their right to download the cost of utilities to their renters.

1610

This is absurd, and the attempts to justify it are absurd. At least stand up and say, "We need the money. We're a government running an outrageous deficit. We need the money. We're going after the people who won't come back at us at our fundraising dinners and blame us for it." That's the little people, the people in Ontario, not the big corporations—the corporations, who are friends of this government, who are getting the money from this government by way of huge, multi-billion-dollar handout tax cuts, not to mention the untendered contracts. Thank you to my colleague here.

Suffice to say, let's hear real justification of the tax. Let's hear the truth. Let's hear, "We need the money, and we're frightened to get it from the big corporations. We need their money to help support us and get re-elected. So we're going to hit you, the little people of Ontario," and the little people of Ontario know that. They know it. Small business knows it. Seniors know it. Condo owners know it. Everyone knows it except the people across the way.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): Seeing no further speakers, the member from Willowdale has two minutes to reply.

Mr. David Zimmer: I urge the voters who are watching this debate, I urge the voters who will read the record in Hansard tomorrow, who will read the reports in the press tomorrow, to pay attention to the position of the Ontario Conservative Party.

For 14 years, the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party has called upon and promoted and urged harmon-

ized sales tax, and that position continues. That position continues with the senior leadership of the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus.

In closing, I'm just going to offer three or four more quotes to drive the point home. If the people out there think that if this Conservative Party were to form a government in 2011 and they're going to carry through on their position today, which is no harmonization, that is just a pipe dream.

Tim Hudak, speaking to the Economic Club of Toronto on April 23, 2009: "I know that some business leaders support the harmonized sales tax, and, to be clear"—he said that for emphasis—I believe that there is little sense in allowing two separate governments to apply two separate sets of taxes."

Bob Runciman in a scrum, March 25, 2009: "I think in theory our party is supportive of the harmonization. In principle, we think it's something that should occur."

Peter Shurman in the scrum, March 24: "If there's an announcement on Thursday, that's where we're going to go on harmonization. I'm not saying that harmonization is ultimately a bad thing."

Christine Elliott, in the St. Catharines Standard—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): Thank you. The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

EDUCATION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT (ELECTRONIC SEXUAL MATERIAL), 2009

LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI A TRAIT À L'ÉDUCATION (DOCUMENTS ÉLECTRONIQUES À CARACTÈRE SEXUEL)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): We will deal with the first ballot item, standing in the name of Mr. Martiniuk.

Mr. Martiniuk has moved second reading of Bill 202. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour?

All those opposed?

That's carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): Mr. Martiniuk, referred to committee of the whole?

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: No. I want a division.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): You already won the vote, and I needed—

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I want a division. I heard some nays.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): I didn't see five people stand up.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I want a division. What are you scared of?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): The motion carries.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I ask that it be referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

SMALL BUSINESS

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): On the second resolution, Ms. Munro has moved private members' notice of motion 108. Is it the pleasure of the House that the resolution carry?

All those in favour?

All those opposed?

The nays have it. That motion is lost.

Motion negatived.

TAXATION

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): On the third item, Mr. Zimmer has moved private member's notice of motion 111. Shall that motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): Orders of the day.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour?

There's no dissent? That's carried.

This House is adjourned until Monday, October 5, at 10:30.

The House adjourned at 1616.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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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 | |
| 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 | |
| Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (LIB) | Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre | Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles |
| Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB) | Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est | Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée |
| 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 | Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative |
| 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 Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement |
| 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 |
| Dunlop, Garfield (PC) | Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord | |
| Elliott, Christine (PC) | Whitby–Oshawa | Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle |
| Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB) | Oakville | |

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|---|---|---|
| Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB) Gélinas, France (NDP) | Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville Nickel Belt | Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail |
| 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) Hampton, Howard (NDP) Hardeman, Ernie (PC) | Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord Kenora–Rainy River Oxford | Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts 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 | Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario |
| Hoskins, Eric (LIB) | St. Paul's | |
| Hoy, Pat (LIB) | Chatham–Kent–Essex | |
| Hudak, Tim (PC) | Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook | Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario |
| Jaczek, Helena (LIB) | Oak Ridges–Markham | |
| Jeffrey, Linda (LIB) | Brampton–Springdale | |
| Johnson, Rick (LIB) | Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock | |
| 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 | |
| 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 Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation 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 | |

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|--|--|---|
| Munro, Julia (PC) | York–Simcoe | Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative |
| Murdoch, Bill (PC) | Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound | |
| 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 | |
| Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB) | Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest | Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce |
| 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 | Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle |
| Ruprecht, Tony (LIB) | Davenport | |
| Sandals, Liz (LIB) | Guelph | |
| Savoline, Joyce (PC) | Burlington | |
| 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 Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire 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 | Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu |
| Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB) | Mississauga–Erindale | Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux |
| 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 Revenue / Ministre du Revenu |
| Wilson, Jim (PC) | Simcoe–Grey | First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée |
| Witmer, Elizabeth (PC) | Kitchener–Waterloo | |
| 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 | Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle |
| 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: Garfield Dunlop
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Robert Bailey
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson
Jim Brownell, Kim Craiton
Bob Delaney, Garfield Dunlop
Phil McNeely, John O'Toole
Khalil Ramal
Clerks / Greffiers: William Short (pro tem.), Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laura Albanese
Laura Albanese, Wayne Arthurs
Toby Barrett, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Eric Hoskins, Pat Hoy
Michael Prue, Peter Shurman
Charles Sousa
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: David Oraziatti
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Helena Jaczek
Laurel C. Broten, Helena Jaczek
Kuldip Kular, Amrit Mangat
Rosario Marchese, Bill Mauro
David Oraziatti, Joyce Savoline
John Yakabuski
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Laura Albanese, Michael A. Brown
Howard Hampton, Ernie Hardeman
Rick Johnson, Lisa MacLeod
Yasir Naqvi, Leeanna Pendergast
Jim Wilson
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, Ted Chudleigh
Christine Elliott, Peter Kormos
Jeff Leal, Dave Levac
Reza Moridi, Lou Rinaldi
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: Khalil Ramal
Bas Balkissoon, Jim Brownell
Bob Delaney, Joe Dickson
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones
Norm Miller, Khalil Ramal
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: Ted Arnott
Ted Arnott, France Gélinas
Phil McNeely, Jerry J. Ouellette
David Ramsay, 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 Craiton, Gerry Martiniuk
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch
Michael Prue, Tony Ruprecht
Mario Sergio
Clerks / Greffiers: Trevor Day (pro tem.), Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Sophia Aggelonitis, Vic Dhillon
Cheri DiNovo, Linda Jeffrey
Sylvia Jones, Jean-Marc Lalonde
Carol Mitchell, Shafiq Qaadri
Elizabeth Witmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions / Comité
spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances**

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott
Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott
Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas
Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones
Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

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