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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 25 February 2010

Jeudi 25 février 2010

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk
Deborah Deller

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Deborah Deller

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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Thursday 25 February 2010

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Jeudi 25 février 2010

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

**FULL DAY EARLY LEARNING
STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2010**

**LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE L'APPRENTISSAGE
DES JEUNES ENFANTS À TEMPS PLEIN**

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 24, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 242, An Act to amend the Education Act and certain other Acts in relation to early childhood educators, junior kindergarten and kindergarten, extended day programs and certain other matters/ Projet de loi 242, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation et d'autres lois en ce qui concerne les éducateurs de la petite enfance, la maternelle et le jardin d'enfants, les programmes de jour prolongé et d'autres questions.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Certainly it's a pleasure to rise today in the House, and it's going to be, I warn everyone, a historic moment. I'm about to say something that I've never said before and probably—well, who knows?—may never say again. So put aside your crossword puzzles, drop the clippings, and those who are watching at home, turn up the volume and maybe switch channels from the 150th replay of last night's game and listen, because I'm going to say that for once the McGuinty government has done something very good.

Applause.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I know. What can one say? I see Sophia over there beaming, the Minister of Consumer Services—congratulations; by the way, Minister of Agriculture, congratulations to you too.

Certainly this is something that we, as New Democrats, wanted to see and have been really pressing for a long time. I can't remember a time personally when, as a feminist, I haven't been struggling for more child care, which is really what we're speaking about here, because, quite frankly, women's rights hinge on having an adequate child care program in this province.

Now, of course, you know there are going to be caveats. You know that this isn't the full story yet, and far from it, because we're still dealing with women who have two-year-olds and three-year-olds and even four-year-olds, where they need help, and even the four- and five-year-old program, of course, we feel is going to be phased in a little too slowly and will not extend to everybody yet; we understand that. But way, way back in the 1970s, I remember asking for free universal, accessible child care. Because without it, women simply will never have equality. That is a huge piece of this puzzle. We could also, and I will, talk about how it affects children—and it's always positive. The experience of other countries and other jurisdictions is always positive, when the government steps into this.

I look to neighbours who still, we in the New Democratic Party think, do it better. Manitoba has \$17-a-day child care. Quebec, with a Liberal government, has \$7-a-day child care. These, we feel, are better models, and they're paying for themselves. I'll talk about that as well. But, hey, this is a step, and we have to celebrate it, even though it's not the whole story.

Certainly Sid Ryan, head of CUPE and now the OFL, said it best when he said, "The best way to keep our eyes on the prize is to involve all concerned parties in the implementation of this new program. That means parents, schools, school- and community-based child care agencies, ECEs and teachers and the unions that represent them. Particularly, the province must take care not to disrupt existing child care programs as we go through the transition to an integrated, seamless day." So says the new head of the OFL. He's right. Those are some of the problems the government is going to face as this gets phased in. Like any new program, it's going to have some kinks. And of course we in the New Democratic Party will be there to assist the government, to call the government to account, to actually try to pave the way so that this works well and gets spread out across the province quickly. We would like to see this spread out across the province a little bit more quickly than the government has on its agenda.

I have to say that in my own riding of Parkdale-High Park we've seen tragedies, in fact in part because of the lack of adult oversight of our children and adult care for our children. I think here in particular of the tragic case of Katelynn Sampson. Here is a case of a little girl who went missing from school for several months. There were not enough—and there are still not enough, quite frankly—adults in our schools, adults who have oversight over our children. So the school did what they could. They did

everything they could. They phoned; they were told that she was back on the reservation. They had no people to send to check out the factuality of that submission. So they had to go on the caregivers' word—caregivers who were far from caregivers, who were in fact murderers. But they didn't know that then. Had we more adults in the school system, they would have been able to send somebody out. But also, had we had more child care—after school, before school, and for four- and five-year-olds—at that point, Katelynn would have had some contacts in the community. She would have been known by adults in the community, and her absence would have been noted and there would have been follow-up. This is a little life that might have been saved had there been adequate daycare supports, had there been adequate daycare supports for four- and five-year-olds, had there been adequate after-school and before-school daycare supports—and of course the supports would have had to be free or at very low cost, because we're talking about a family that had very little money, a mother who wrestled with health issues of her own and was unable to look after her daughter.

So there is a classic case, a case of a death that might, just might, have been averted had there been more adults watching, more adults able to follow up and to find out what was going on in that household, where that little girl really was: Was what the so-called caregivers said true, or not? That's something that we live with in Parkdale-High Park still. As I pass her mother on the street, probably at least once a week, I'm reminded of it. So, again, universal, accessible, free daycare is what we should all be aiming for, to protect women, to allow women to achieve equality, which we don't have yet in this province, and to protect our children. It's something we're not doing yet for our children, although this is a step toward that.

0910

Certainly, when I walked into this place—and I don't know if I'm alone in this, but I'm sure all women, as they walk into this place, are struck by a couple of noted details. Number one, that there are no—there are actually only two representations of women on the two public floors of Queen's Park. Although there are dozens of portraits of men, there are only two women depicted. One is Agnes Macphail—that's a bust of her as you walk up the stairs—and the other is the Queen. That's it. Everybody else's picture is a picture of a man.

Now, what does that say to our girl children as they walk in here on school tours? Well, it says that this place is the domain of men. Quite frankly, it is the domain of men. There are only about 24% of us who are female in this place.

Why is that? I would certainly say that part of it is the lack of child care. We are a symbolic representation of what goes on in the rest of the province. There is no child care for MPPs present at Queen's Park. Why not? I mean, if it were only symbolic, it would be important. It would be important if it were only symbolic. Because what we're saying to young women—not to women whose

children have grown up—is that there's no place for you here.

If you have children, you've got to choose: either your children's welfare or political life. Because quite frankly, political life takes 12 to 14 hours a day. We all know that. And if there isn't accessible child care on-site where, between meetings and sessions of the House, we can go and see our children and interact with them, it's no place for a young woman, this place.

That's still the case, and I would really ask of the government that they look at that, that they look at the symbolism of not having child care for sitting MPPs, of having nothing but pictures of men on the first two floors of this building. The symbolic nature of that has real ramifications.

What are the ramifications for women, again, because of the lack of child care? We still only make 71 cents for every dollar made by men. That's the reality. That really hasn't changed much in decades. Why is that?

Again, look at the vast majority of folk who take time off on leave to look after their children. The vast majority of them are women. In their most productive professional years they have to take a year off, or sometimes more—many women take more—when men are still working. And those productive lags are what hurt women. Why do they have to take that time off, or why do they need to? Because again, there's not a child care around the corner that they feel really confident leaving their children with.

We're not talking here about what is increasingly happening in this province, which is a privatization of child care. Most women, most families, most men don't want to leave their child anywhere just so they can go to work. They want to be assured that if they are leaving their child, they're going to be educated, loved and cared for, and that it's going to be an enriching experience, not a depleting experience.

I can't tell you—and I know all the MPPs share in this—the number of times I've knocked on apartment buildings and houses where, clearly, there is unlicensed, unregulated child care happening, and what you see is a group of little kids watching TV. That's what you see. Is that the future of children in this province? I hope not.

Here is a step forward—not adequate, but it's a step forward. As I said, it's a historic moment that I would be saying anything good about this government, but I am. Who knew?

If we look at Charles Pascal's notes to the government, if we look at his report, we note a number of interesting details. First of all, we note that he made a number of recommendations—not only the one that the government followed up on, but a number of ones, and he made them for a reason. Because studies have shown—and across the board, really, there's no debate about it—that good child care, enriching child care, is good for people, and it's a great leveller. That is to say that children who are marginalized, who are racialized, who go into adequate, enriching, good child care actually get a step up. It helps them and it levels the playing field in terms of how they'll do in school later on and how they'll do later in life.

His recommendations: He said, first of all, “The province should create a continuum of early learning, child care, and family supports for children from the prenatal period through to adolescence, under the leadership of the Minister of Education.”

That was recommendation number 1. Even the government will admit that hasn't happened yet. We're working toward that—I hear you—but it hasn't happened yet. I think again of Katelynn Sampson. Would that have helped? Of course it would have. It might have saved her life.

Number 2: “The Ministry of Education should establish an early years division to develop and implement an early years policy framework that will create a continuity of early learning experiences for children from 0 to 8 years of age.”

We point out that although it's a good thing, this legislation only affects four- and five-year-olds, not younger children. Again, there's work to be done, a great deal of work to be done there.

Number 3 is the one recommendation the government has acted on, and what we see is what we get: “a two-year, full-day early learning program prior to grade 1, available to all children.”

Not quite all children, however; not quite phased in the way we'd like to see it; perhaps not quite funded the way we'd like to see it—a great question mark hanging over this piece of legislation is where the money will come from. Again, New Democrats will fully support this, assist where we can and push where we can to make sure that it rolls out the way it should.

Number 3: “The early years policy framework should also guide the transformation of programming for Ontario's youngest learners. Municipal authorities, with the necessary resources, should be mandated to plan, develop, support, and monitor an integrated network of Best Start child and family centres providing” children with—and here's where we see the great gap:

“—flexible, part-time/full-day/full-year early learning/care options for children up to age 4,” says Dr. Pascal;

“—prenatal and postnatal information and supports”—again, I think of these marginalized children, born to parents who are marginalized, and wonder where those postnatal supports are; I know that our social workers and social work agencies do their best, but they're not funded to the tune that would accommodate this;

“—parenting and family support programming, including home visiting, family literacy, and play groups”—home visiting was something completely absent in the poor, short life of Katelynn Sampson;

“—nutrition and nutrition counselling;

“—early identification and intervention resources;

“—links to special-needs treatment and community resources, including libraries, recreation and community centres, health care, family counselling, housing, language services, and employment/training services.”

In fact, none of these early options are offered, and many of them, quite frankly, are threatened—I hope the government didn't plan it this way—in part because our

daycares now losing their four- and five-year-olds also suffer a financial hit.

Again, I read the article today about the Minister of Education, as did everybody, and this was raised in that article, which was otherwise quite glowing. It said, “What is the government going to do?” And the government threw this back on the daycare operators and said, “Well, maybe they'll take more younger children.” But, as we know, the reality is that the younger the child, the more early childhood educators you need to run the daycare, so it changes the financial model of our daycares. That's problematic.

Coupled with that, as we all know, is the serious problem we're facing with the lack of federal funding. Toronto is looking at cutting maybe 5,000 daycare spaces because the federal funds aren't flowing. So that, coupled with this, is extremely problematic for those folk in Ontario. Remember that the stats are horrendous in this province: Only one out of 10 children currently has a child care spot, and it costs over \$1,000 a month on average. I contrast that with Manitoba's \$17 a day and Quebec's \$7 a day. This is a problem, and this may make it worse. In fact, there are signs that it's making it worse right now.

So all I would do is caution my friends across the aisle and say, please, if we bring this in, let it not be at the expense of daycare spaces for younger children, because we need to guarantee those; in fact, we need to add to those. In fact, we need a daycare policy. And there, I know, this government always points at the federal government, as they do on so many issues, and says, “You go first.” Well, where daycare is concerned, that's just not good enough; where women are concerned, that's just not good enough; where children are concerned, that's just not good enough; and certainly where Katelynn Sampson was concerned, it was far from good enough.

0920

Let's go on. Charles Pascal also made some other recommendations. He said: “Under the systems management of municipal authorities, the direct operation of Best Start child and family centres could be provided by local or regional governments, school boards, post-secondary institutions, or non-profit agencies.”

It's a good dream, but we know here, and certainly they know at the municipal level, that they simply don't have the funds to do that. So if we are to ask them to do that, in light of Dr. Pascal's recommendations, then we need to give them the funds to be able to do that.

“Non-profit and commercial providers may continue to operate licensed child care in accordance”—goes on Dr. Pascal, in recommendation number 7—“with current program standards. All service expansion would take place through Best Start child and family centres and school boards.”

Unfortunately, although we tried, we didn't get a comment about this recommendation from this government. Again, I would challenge the government to give us a comment on that. What do they think of that recommendation? I mean, it's in the same report. What are they going to do about it?

The eighth recommendation: “The expectations set out in the Early Years policy framework should be operationalized through local Early Years service plans developed by municipal authorities in partnership with school boards and community partners. Outcomes and targets should be developed through provincial-municipal collaboration and funding flowed through municipal authorities and school boards to meet targets.”

This is quite a substantial recommendation. This really gets to the hub of the problem with daycare in our province. Again, unfortunately, there has been no action from the government.

Really, we see here that this is a government that has done a piece of the job. It’s an important piece—we’ll give them that. As I said, it’s not often that I stand here and give kudos to my friends across the aisle, but I am doing that today. I don’t want to detract from that; I’m doing that today. But it’s only the very first step. It has to be done carefully, in consultation with the daycare operators, so as to not cost these precious and rare daycare spots.

Also, and most importantly, it’s not the full answer to daycare in the province of Ontario. We still need to see from this government a program so that women can go to work on equal footing with men; so that children can be protected, not just from four years old and up but from two years old and up, one and a half years old and up; so that women, finally, can get back to work on the same level playing field as men, which is absolutely not the case right now, as exemplified by this place in and of itself, Queen’s Park, that is called the Pink Palace in name only but certainly isn’t very pink when it comes to women’s rights.

Women from all parties: We should be working together on this. This should not be a partisan issue. We should be calling on both our own caucuses and also the government of the day, which happens to be, quite frankly, yours, in the Liberal Party, to make this the first step only and to go on to a full daycare program. Don’t wait for the feds. You’ll wait forever. You know that. Work now to make sure that our children are protected and to make sure that all of the recommendations of Dr. Pascal are implemented, not just recommendation number 3.

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

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It’s a pleasure to join the debate. It’s great to hear the remarks from the member from Parkdale–High Park, and it’s great to hear that she’ll be supporting this and has added constructive suggestions. It is a bill that’s worthy of support, and I think that it takes some courage sometimes to stand up and say that the government’s getting something right. In this sense, for a member of the opposition to do that I think speaks to the quality of the bill.

Mr. Michael Prue: We’re waiting for you to tell us you’ve done something wrong.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Well, the member seems quite good at telling us when we’ve done something wrong, so I really did appreciate it.

About 20 years ago, I was chair of the child care committee in the region of Halton. At that time, it was an unusual role for a man to take. Quite simply, I was chair of that committee because I had a son, because I was a father. I found that when my wife and I were continuing in our careers, our son was put into a fractured system—that he spent part of the morning somewhere, he got picked up by a bus and then got taken to school, then somebody came back to pick him up at noon in a bus, then he went to a child care centre and stayed there until about six.

There were still people back then, and probably still people around, that called child care glorified babysitting, something that was unnecessary and the state shouldn’t involve itself in it, but I think we’ve evolved as a society since that time. It has led to the introduction of a bill that I think speaks to the principle of a system that’s not just good for the economy but is actually good for the kids themselves. It brings together two professions we’ve come to rely on over the years to work in harmony in the best interests of our young children, specifically four- and five-year-olds. It brings the teaching profession and the early childhood educators together to work in the best interests of our children. So it makes Ontario a leader.

It’s something we should be supporting. I appreciate the support from the member from Parkdale–High Park, and I hope the bill receives support from all members of the House at the end of the day.

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

Mr. John O’Toole: I thank the member. I spoke to her earlier this morning about her remarks—and a commendable job in Parkdale–High Park.

I think the clippings this morning are a good indication—I spoke on this issue yesterday. I like the issue here from the Brampton Expositor. I won’t read this, but it says there are many questions about how the program will work: “School boards have been told they must provide before- and after-school care for these young students, but not how administration and operating costs for the after-hours service will be covered. Cash-strapped school boards also don’t know who will cover extra expenses for lighting, heating, transportation and school cleaning” etc. “and how care will be provided on non-school days, including PA days, March break and during the summer.” These are really important questions about implementation. I think they should pause and get it right.

Grand Erie trustee Don Werden “called the plan to have school boards provide before- and after-school care ‘a disaster waiting to happen.’” Imagine exposing our children to these risks.

Jim Wibberley, Grand Erie’s director of education, “has complained that ‘we are not only going to be a board of education, but a board of child care.’” From the same article: “Child care centre operators say the children in their programs for four- and five-year-olds help to subsidize the cost of space for younger children. When thousands of children move from child care centres to

full-day kindergarten, the cost for spaces for babies and toddlers, who require more care, is expected to go up.”

They're actually not resolving this issue. This is a legacy issue of the Premier; that's all this really is. It's not fairly implemented, and I would like to have more time to draw to the attention of the public—

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

Mr. Michael Prue: I rise to celebrate what my colleague from Parkdale–High Park had to say. Yes, we in the New Democratic Party are going to support this, but we have the opportunity, and I think we have the right, to be critical at the same time. We need to point out that although this is a good program, Dr. Pascal has made a number of recommendations, of which the government has seen fit, to this point in time, to only implement or attempt to implement one of them.

My colleague from Parkdale–High Park was impassioned and she was reasoned, and in my view she gave a really holistic approach to what has to happen. It is all well and good to give full-day kindergarten to four- and five-year-olds, but what about the other children? What about those who require daycare? What about those moms, particularly single moms who need to have subsidized daycare in order to contribute to this society and go out and work? Surely if the province of Quebec can provide daycare for \$7 a day or the province of Manitoba can provide it for \$17 a day, then the government of Ontario needs to look at this approach as well.

I know we might be unique in going down the road to full-day kindergarten, but we need to look at our daycare situation. It is not adequate; it has never been adequate. I don't know how many times people in the New Democratic Party have had to stand up over the years and ask for a better daycare plan. We've done it for all of the eight years I've been here, and I know they were doing it before I was here. It's not happening, and it needs to happen. If we are to be truly a progressive province, if we are truly going to help women and children, then we have to go that next step.

So although I will be supporting the legislation, I concur with my colleague from Parkdale–High Park that we need to do more. When that “more” is done, then we can truly say we are a progressive province.

0930

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

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: It's my pleasure to join the debate. I had the opportunity yesterday to speak at length on Bill 242, but it's wonderful to be able to stand up and respond to the member from Parkdale–High Park, who spoke very well this morning. I thought I would just go back in support for the comments that she made. She began her eloquent speech this morning by saying that the government has done something right, and I thank her for that. This is the right thing to do for the children of Ontario.

In response to the first opposition yesterday, and we heard it again this morning, I must reiterate that the time

is now. We saw them stall it years ago, and we never want to go back. So I thank the member from Parkdale–High Park for her comments this morning.

We also support her comments about the effect of low-income neighbourhoods. More than half of the phase one schools are in communities that do demonstrate the highest need. Approximately 60% of the phase one schools are in high-needs areas, which is according to the low-income cut-off data. So I thank her for her comments.

She also spoke at length about children and child care, and I thank her for that. On-the-ground support from someone who is out in the field every day in my riding in the Wilmot Family Resource Centre is Trisha Robinson, the executive director, who agrees. She says, “We can see that a number of children in our community will benefit from this program. Implementing it will also give increased credibility to early childhood educators in using their skills and education focused on this age group.”

And finally, the member from Parkdale–High Park talked about studies that show the importance of quality early learning, and again, an on-the-ground quote from a retired principal and chair of the Waterloo Catholic District School Board, who says, “There's an old poster claiming that everything you needed to know you learned in kindergarten.” There is a lot of truth in that. The government—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. The honourable member from Parkdale–High Park has up to two minutes for her response.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Thanks to the members for Kitchener–Conestoga, Beaches–East York, Oakville, and Durham for their comments and their support.

Certainly we're coming up, in another week, to International Women's Day, to the march. I hope to see women from all political parties out there. It would be great. On that day, certainly, we're going to be hearing the same calls that we've heard every day for decades, literally decades, if not probably a century, which is for access to daycare for all women in Ontario and all women, quite frankly, across Canada. That has always been one of the demands. Does this bill meet that demand? No, of course, it doesn't, but it is a step forward, and I said as much.

What I would love to see, from taking the step forward, is a few more steps forward, that is, “Hey, we've got some momentum now. Let's start looking at the whole daycare issue. Let's start looking at what is happening to our two-year-olds, to our three-year-olds.”

Let's start looking at what is happening to the women in our communities: as my friend from Beaches–East York said, single mothers, but not just single mothers, married mothers, all mothers who want to go out to work and want to work on an equal footing with their male colleagues, who don't want to have to take a huge chunk of time off in the prime of their careers simply because they can't find adequate child care. This holds women back and it holds our children back, and as I pointed out in the tragic case of Katelynn Sampson, sometimes the

lack of adult oversight on our children's lives actually is harmful and terribly detrimental.

So, again, kudos on this move. We will make sure, as you know, as is our prerogative and our calling in the opposition, to hold your feet to the fire and make sure that this rolls out well. Certainly this will not be the last you hear from us, but for the time being, let's celebrate a little bit, and let's move forward from here.

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

M. Phil McNeely: Il me donne plaisir ce matin de parler sur la loi 242. À Ottawa–Orléans et à Ottawa, généralement, et à travers la province, les écoles francophones ont déjà été en avant avec les journées pleines pour le « junior kindergarten » et le « kindergarten » dans nos écoles. Ils ont déjà prouvé que c'est bon pour les enfants, c'est bon pour les parents—

Mr. Michael Prue: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: The member is giving a good speech, but I don't think he's giving the speech to anyone. Is a quorum present?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I would ask the Clerk to find out if a quorum is present.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman): A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): A quorum now being present, we'll continue the debate. The honourable member for Ottawa–Orléans.

M. Phil McNeely: Comme j'ai dit, les écoles francophones à Ottawa–Orléans—à Ottawa et à travers la province—ont déjà été en avant avec les journées pleines pour les jeunes enfants dans leurs écoles. Alors, c'est déjà vu comme quelque chose qui est très bon pour les parents, c'est très bon pour les enfants, et c'est comme ça, avec la nouvelle loi, qu'on va aller avec toutes les écoles en Ontario.

I was just saying in the other official language that is very prominent in Ottawa and in my riding of Ottawa–Orléans that the francophone schools have already gone ahead with full-day junior kindergarten and kindergarten and it has proved to be excellent for the kids and the parents. Certainly, it is a head start that we have, that we know the system works; we know it's great. So I'm pleased to speak today on Bill 242, the full-day learning.

I just think it's important to read a couple of quotes that you may have heard before:

“Full-day learning for our four- and five-year-old kids will better prepare them for grade 1. That gives them a better chance of finishing high school, going on to post-secondary education and getting a good job. And that's in everyone's interest.” That was Dalton McGuinty.

That all ties in to Reaching Higher and the better achievements that we've achieved throughout our school system, the better graduation rates. This just adds to what we want to do in strengthening our education system in Ontario, giving our kids more chances to get better jobs when they graduate.

“By giving more children a better start on their education, we're giving them more chances to succeed. Investing in early learning is good for children, good for parents and good for Ontario.” That was our former Minister of Education, Kathleen Wynne. This is the reason we're doing it.

“Full-day learning will give children a stronger start during the early years that are so critical to their educational and social development. It's the right thing to do for the children and their families.” That's Laurel Broten, Minister of Children and Youth Services.

This is a tough year to start this in, we know that, but it is the right year. It is the right year to get this full-day kindergarten going.

I would just read some of the reasons why we have chosen the first schools to do this.

We looked at available space. School boards looked at which schools had classroom space available and did not require new additions or renovations.

The impact on existing local child care was looked at.

But I think the most important thing that was looked at was that school boards considered the various needs of all the communities they serve and how early learning could meet those needs. A portion of the phase one schools will serve low-income neighbourhoods. I think that is really important. Some parents can give their children a lot of that early learning; some parents are too caught up in trying to make a living, trying to survive in these tough economic times. So in looking at where the needs were greatest, I think this was a good place to start.

I don't have that much educational background. I did go to teachers' college back in the—well, I won't say which decade, but it was a long time ago. I taught school one year. I taught a rural school, 30 kids, and seven grades. It was a different approach to education. My own first years—in grade 1, of course, we walked a couple of miles to our school.

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Things are so different now. The kids are in need of a lot more attention than the parents of today can give them. I've discussed this with a good friend of my son's who is a teacher in eastern Ontario. She comes over and looks after our grandchildren sometimes, and she makes that whole activity a learning activity. She's looking forward to this. She's looking forward, as a kindergarten teacher, to working with an early childhood educator and giving these children the start they need in life, that important start that was talked about by the member for Parkdale–High Park. I thank her for all the support that she has given this program. It's not something that is easy to do. It wasn't an easy decision for this government, but it was the right decision.

Back a few years ago, that hockey player, that goalie, Ken Dryden, had a good program that was going to be excellent for this country. As things turned out, what we got was \$100 a month, which is not really making any impact on helping parents to give children the right start in life and for them to keep those two jobs which are essential in most households. I've had parents come in to

me and say that their alternatives weren't great. Two people working, the cost of daycare \$15,000 a year for one child—these costs were just too high for them to absorb. They would often have to make that decision—and often it would be the mother who would have to make the decision to not pursue that career. That's unfair.

This move forward by this government with the support of many people in opposition is the right move. It's going to put us in that position where our kids will get the right start. The value of those dollars invested will come back, according to some experts, sevenfold. So that's an important investment. What more important investment could one have than our children?

It's up to 35,000 four- and five-year-olds in nearly 1,400 classes around the country. At roughly 100 ridings, that means 600 schools. We will see how this support comes from the parents for these systems. We know it's there. I've only had good feedback from my community. I think that's the case with most parents. People know that these are tough economic times, that program dollars are difficult—but nobody in my riding is telling me that this is the wrong direction for us to go.

If passed, the Full Day Early Learning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010, will provide school board staff, principals, teachers and early childhood educators with a clear framework for the government's full-day learning program to provide full-day JK and K on every instructional day in every calendar year in every elementary school according to the approved model and to provide extended day care according to the approved model led by the ECE.

With the early childhood educators teaching in these classrooms, the classroom size will go up to approximately 26, but the person per child will be down to 13 to one. That's even better than the 20 to 1. It will give the kids the attention they need, the support they need and will certainly move Ontario into that situation where we've got it started and now we have to take it forward and make it across the board for every child who enters school.

These are some quotes that I've been given by people: "We are pleased to see early childhood education move forward in Ontario with the combined strength of a team of both early childhood educators and teachers.... With registered early childhood educators in the classrooms, children will get the full benefit of education during these critical early years." That's Lois Mahon, president of the council of the College of Early Childhood Educators.

"We commend the government for its commitment to the welfare of young children. The decision took a lot of courage in today's economic environment, but it will pay a lifetime of rewards, not only for children, but for our communities and for our economy." That's Sam Hammond, president of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario.

"We applaud the government for its leadership and improving education opportunities and services to children and their families....

"Teachers welcome early childhood educators ... as part of a full-time integrated team that will work together

to meet the needs of every student.... ECEs will help teachers deliver a quality, age-appropriate program—and that would improve the program." That's James Ryan, president of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association.

So we see there is the support throughout the system. We acknowledge that it has taken a few years to get to this, but it's an important step. It's a step that will be continued, and we'll be delivering, for our young people and for those parents that need that assistance, the right program. The parents will be able to participate in a full day, they'll be able to deliver their children early and they will be able to pick them up later. They will have to, of course, pay for that system, but also they will be receiving help where needed.

So 35,000 four- and five-year-olds are going to have this opportunity. Full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds will better prepare them for grade 1. It will give them a better chance to finish high school, go on to post-secondary education and get a good job. This is going to be so important, that we don't have to work with the children in grades 1, 2 and 3 to get them up to the right level—they're going to get an equal chance. Those children who aren't getting the attention at home and don't have that support will have an equal chance with the other children, and we will not be spending the money in later grades trying to do that.

Since 2003, the graduation rate in our high schools has risen from 68% to 74%—I'm not sure; those are the figures that I recall, but 6% or 7%. So that's important. We have to get those graduation rates up. We have to get more of our high school kids into colleges, into the technical training, into universities so that they have jobs in this very competitive economy, which just seems to be getting tougher and tougher for the young people. The ones that get left out are the ones that do not graduate from high school. So it's a process that starts very early that we're going to support and that we're going to make sure we move forward with.

From my experience as a consulting engineer—I was out last night with engineers from the University of Toronto, trying to give them advice on how to impact more in our society, how to get more involved in the political areas. You meet some wonderful people who are working very hard, who are into great research projects, their professors are excited etc. We have to give more of our kids that opportunity. Just because a young person is not in a family where they have the resources—this will certainly help them.

One of the things that we talked about with engineers last night was that they have to be able to communicate their ideas more. In my day, the engineer graduated and he became—people like myself, we spent decades in engineering, but being able to get our ideas out. Climate change is something now that I think we have to go to the young people with. Climate change is such a peril to our planet, yet the adults don't have time for it, the politicians will not make the right decisions. So I've got something coming up with 16 high schools in Ottawa that

will get the kids involved at the high school level, get them involved in how to interpret reports they get from government. We still have all these deniers of climate change out there. Why would people be denying climate change today when our Arctic Ocean, a million square kilometres of ice—the summer ice will disappear in 10 or 20 years. So I'm going out to the students in my high schools with some speakers, with my own message, trying to get them more involved.

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What we have to do is make sure that that whole education system is better; the kids who are graduating are going to have all these challenges that we never faced. When I graduated back in the 1960s, it was, "Which job did you want?" They're not facing that any more. So the kids who don't get the right start in junior kindergarten and five-year-old kindergarten are the ones who are not going to be able to get into grades 1 and 2, and all the way up through the system they will have difficulties.

This is the first step. It's a good step; it's the right step. A member over here said that it was a brave thing to be doing today in this economic situation, but it's necessary. We do not have the choice to let these kids struggle through the early grades. We have to get them prepared. The way we're going to get them prepared is to give them an equal chance with the kids who are coming from homes where those supports are. There are a lot of homes where the supports aren't there.

I had three boys. We put them into French immersion, but it was difficult running a business, working 60 hours a week and giving them the time they needed, but you knew that when they got that time, they prospered as students. They learned better.

We're just trying to level the playing field here. It will take a few years to get all our young people into these supports, but it's the right direction to go. It's the way that Dryden wanted to move things three or four years ago with the federal government. Hopefully, we'll have the federal government on board, that they will start to really help our children, really help these programs. To try to fund it ourselves is difficult in these days. There are so many demands on the dollars from any provincial government, but we must do that. We must have the federal government on board. The federal government, of course, gets involved in picking up the pieces when we don't get our kids started in the right direction.

I'm pleased to support this bill. I know that there are problems that were indicated, that this is going to happen and that is going to happen. Sure there are challenges. There are going to be big challenges getting this going right in our schools, but those challenges are worth facing. I know our teachers want to face those challenges. Our teachers realize these are important. We will see, as we move down the road, that those problems are met, those problems are dealt with and that the program grows.

The importance to our economy—when they say that a dollar invested here comes back seven times, I believe that. I believe that any of the investments that go into

young people come back to us. Whether we have that dollar to make that investment now or not, I do not think that is the question. We must go in that direction. We must provide for our young people an equal chance.

I'm very pleased to have been able to speak to this bill.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I thank the member from Ottawa-Orléans for reading the notes he was provided so well. Some of the quotes were on topic and some weren't.

Nonetheless, I think there are people who support this. You can count us in as supporting early childhood learning. We did the primary work on this file with the Mustard-McCain report and the resource centres that we set up. I think those were good options that we provided for different parts of Ontario.

If the member is listening—the parliamentary assistant is here—I'm going to present three options that it would be helpful for the government to look at, starting with the premise that we have to provide resources—and how we provide them is really the question. I'm suggesting we could look at the early learning centres that exist today as well as the existing child care operators—regulated child care spaces. They already have the capital and the trained staff who are licensed and regulated as ECE people. Give them some more resources. It probably won't cost as much as \$1.5 billion.

The second option is to work closely with families. Some families choose to spend that time with their children in a learning environment. You could provide supports for them in different ways, whether it be more leave time from their place of work or parent and toddler programming, resource centres, and strengthening those locations—or they could have chosen the current model that you're proposing, the larger school-based unionized program.

My sense there is that really, the issue doesn't satisfy. It's not going to address weekends, PD days or summer vacations. There are a lot of loopholes where families are going to be left stranded. You are going to decimate the daycare spaces that exist today.

It's a poorly thought out plan—

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I thank the member from Ottawa-Orléans for standing up, although there was a little ramble in the middle of his dissertation about climate change that I found difficult to follow. I don't quite know what climate change has to do with full-day learning.

Nevertheless, as I said earlier, we in the New Democratic Party are absolutely in favour of full-day learning. We would just like to see full-day learning extended to all children, not just some children. Certainly the woman who has to spend \$15,000 a year for child care for each child to be able to go back to work is still going to be hampered. Imagine two children: It's \$30,000 net just to pay for child care.

This is a women's issue as well as a child issue, and it still exists in our province despite this forward move—and it is a forward move by the government. It still exists. Women will still be unequal under the law in the province of Ontario until there is a child care program like we see in Manitoba, \$17 a day, or Quebec, \$7 a day. Had we those programs, then truly we could say that women are able to go back to work on the same plane as men.

The argument that men can stay home is really fallacious. Let's face it: Women are, by and large, the ones who stay home to raise the children, and they need the supports necessary, but so do the children. The children need early learning and enrichment at an early age, not necessarily starting at four, but starting much, much earlier.

However, having said that, as I said originally, the historic moment has come to pass. I think the McGuinty government has done something good. We are supporting them and we will hold their feet to the fire to make sure that it's implemented well, evenly and fairly.

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

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: First of all, I would agree with my colleague from Durham region that the notes were well read. I listened very carefully. We talked about the need for early childhood education, and I think all in our party and all parties in the House think that's a positive move in our education system. But one of the things that we have to look at is to prioritize what's in our education system and provide the resources that are available in the places where they will provide the greatest benefit to the children in the system.

There are many areas, such as special needs education, where the government says they don't have sufficient money to provide the attention that these children need. It seems strange to me that we would then just accept that and come up with a new program.

Having said that, I also think it's very important to recognize the positiveness of this. Giving all of these children a better start in education and a better start in life will pay dividends in the end; that's where we need to go. We heard that from the member in his presentation. But what I think is important is, because of the phasing in of this, there is a very small group of children in today's society who will benefit from this, but most children who are going to start in our education system in the next five years will not be able to avail themselves of this service. So we're saying that it's okay to have this program—we know it benefits young children; we know it will give those children a better start in life—but we're not going to provide it to all of them. If this is a positive move and it's going to pay benefits, as the member said in his presentation, then we have to find a way to make it available much quicker and more evenly and fairly to all the students in the province, rather than to just a few.

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: Why is this being done? This is a good question. Let's look at some numbers: China, 1.3

billion people; Ontario, 13 million. They outnumber us 100 to 1. India, 1.1 billion people; Ontario, 13 million. They outnumber us 85 to 1. Brazil outnumbers us 15 to 1.

All of these places are no longer backwaters or underdeveloped. They want what we have. They want the prosperity that we enjoy here in Ontario. With 13 million people, the only way that we are going to continue to be the leading-edge place that we have always been is to ensure that every Ontarian is at his or her best. We do that by starting our training young, at age four or five, in senior and junior kindergarten and with all-day learning. This is the type of program that is going to pay dividends in lower dropout rates after high school and a higher proportion of Ontarians who go on to post-secondary training.

When people come to Ontario, the raw materials they are looking for are not those that are in the ground, in the forests or on our farms. The raw material that really is going to drive value in the 21st century is the raw material people find in the brains of Ontarians, the stuff that they come to look for in our universities, and the way that we are going to continue to have the prosperity that we've always enjoyed, the high-value jobs that our province seeks, is to go out to kids at the age when they're ready to start school and ready to learn and to bring them in for all-day learning. That's what this program does.

To very briefly paraphrase what James Ryan, president of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, said, "We applaud the government for its leadership in improving education opportunities and services to children and their families."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The member for Ottawa–Orléans has up to two minutes for his response.

Mr. Phil McNeely: I thank the members for Durham, Beaches–East York, Oxford and Mississauga–Streetsville for the comments.

To the member from Durham, I'd just like to say that we have to start. Sure, right now, almost 100% of the kids don't have that opportunity, but next year, starting next September, some of our kids will, and in five years, all of our kids will have the opportunity.

This is a major program that's being rolled out. We don't have all the physical space we need, we don't have all the early childhood educators we need, but this will come. There is a plan to roll this out in a positive way. It's better to have some of our children already benefiting from this now than none at all, so at least we are on our way. It's a four- or five- year program, but we will do it in a measured and proper manner so that it is a good program. We'll work out all the difficulties when we get there.

Again, I would like to thank the member for Beaches–East York for the support of this endeavour. I think generally, in this House and throughout our province, there is that acceptance that this is the right thing to do. It's a difficult time to do it, but we have to move ahead.

I did talk about climate change in my speech, but I was just talking about getting out into our high schools

and talking to the kids and giving them some of the tools where they are going for this big challenge we have in the future. It all deals with education. We're going to have a better start for children, a better situation for mothers particularly, where they will have someone sharing their duties. So this is the right bill and—

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

Mr. Michael Prue: I rise to support this bill. As my colleague from Parkdale–High Park had to say, New Democrats will be supporting this bill because we believe it's the right thing to do at this time. In fact, we believe it was the right thing to have done a long time ago. I know, although I was not here at that time, that it was part of the NDP platform in the 1999 election. We do agree that Dr. Pascal has done a good job in outlining what needs to be done.

Sometimes it has been said that New Democrats are often Liberals in a hurry. I'm in a hurry in this one, too. I'm not sure that the six-year rollout is something that we ought to be doing. I just want to speak about that for a moment because as the member for Beaches–East York, I waited with anticipation to see what was going to happen when this was going to be announced. There were leaks to the press a few days in advance. I knew it was coming down the pipe. I was waiting to see what the government was going to announce and I wanted to see how it was going to affect my community.

As you all know, I represent an area in Toronto in the Beach and East York, what is now part of the megacity of Toronto. It is a highly urbanized place. Part of Beaches–East York—the Crescent Town area, the Teesdale area, Dawes Road—is considered a high-needs community. It was identified by the United Way and by Frances Lankin and people within the United Way as one of those places in Toronto—one of the 13—with the highest need for young people, children, new immigrants and the like. So I waited with some anticipation to see how this was going to unravel, how it was going to unfurl, what was going to happen in terms of all-day education for the people of my riding.

I have to say I was very disappointed when the results came out because, of the 120,000 people I represent, with all of those schools—Catholic schools, public schools and French schools, everything that is in the riding—there isn't a single school that has been identified in all of Beaches–East York, not one.

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Prue: I'm going to get to the board in a minute. Not a single school was identified in all of Beaches–East York.

So when I looked at this, I was somewhat perplexed. Given that there is such a high-needs community at the centre of Beaches–East York, I picked up the phone. I phoned my local school trustee. Actually, I phoned two school trustees—the local public one, for whom I vote because I am a public school supporter, and then I phoned the Catholic school board trustee as well. I asked both of them why there was no identified school in all of

Beaches–East York. They both told me the exact same thing. They said that the government had set criteria that the boards had to follow in the determination of who got the school spaces in the first round. Because of the way the criteria had been set, there was no potential school in all of Beaches–East York save and except one school, which is called Presteign.

Presteign is the school in my local neighbourhood. I'm fully aware of this school, but I also know that my local neighbourhood is not a high-needs area. The homes in there sell for \$700,000, \$800,000 or \$900,000. That's what they sell for. The people who are my neighbours are mostly professional people—they're doctors, they're lawyers, they're teachers—who earn a lot of money. The only school that was identified by the Toronto school board on both the Catholic and the public side was that school. So it was not surprising in the end that that school was rejected. None of the schools that were identified and which met the criteria as set down by the government in the high-needs areas qualified—none of them. I have to question what the criteria were in the first place.

I'm asking the government to take a good, hard look at this because there are people who desperately need this service. There are people who desperately want their children to have the highest opportunity, particularly where the fall-down comes. The fall-down comes in those areas where there are new immigrants, where there are a lot of single parents, where the kids don't have the same kinds of opportunities they may have in more affluent neighbourhoods and communities.

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I want to go on by saying that I was concerned, so I went to what was the most amazing all-day learning for preschoolers I have ever seen. It was, if not a Montessori school, at least a Montessori-inspired school on Coatsworth Crescent, in the riding of Beaches–East York. I spoke to the people who operate that school. I spoke to the people who do the all-day learning with young children. I talked about the number of subsidized spaces, of which there are pitifully few, but also about what they were able to accomplish.

It was amazing to me, a man who has no children, to watch these two- and three- and four-year-olds, what they were doing and what they were learning. I was especially entranced that the three-year-olds were writing stories; they had props and things they were given, and they had to write stories and take the stories back. Now, they weren't complex stories, but they were writing in sentences—three years old—and handing them back to the teachers. It was amazing. I was there for an hour and a half. I never heard one child cry. Nobody cried. Everybody was getting along. The teachers were doing a remarkable job.

They spoke to me, though, because they had fear. They had fear of what was going to happen to that particular institution on Coatsworth Crescent when all-day learning came in. They all support all-day learning—they all support it—but they know that it's going to be difficult to maintain the classrooms and what they're trying

to do for the parents who live in Beaches–East York, because of the funding.

It costs much more to look after one- and two-year-olds. They showed me the ratio—it was very high—in the rooms with one- and two-year-olds with the early childhood educators. They showed me that the ratio was much higher than when they turned to be four and five, and the costs that were going to be borne. I asked about the cost, and it's about \$1,700 or \$1,800 or more a month for a child. I'm sure that child is getting the absolute best start that is possible in this entire city, in this entire country, and what I witnessed was truly remarkable to me. But they're worried about the subsidies. They're worried about the all-day education and how it's going to change the mix. They're worried about keeping some of the people who work in their schools, because many of them will be hired by the school boards at more money. We all know that's going to happen, too. We all know that those people who do this great job are going to be hired off to make more money, because the school board will have that money to spend.

They asked me to convey that message, and they asked me, when it was my opportunity to speak, to speak about ensuring that those kinds of opportunities that parents rely on are kept. They will be kept, of course, in Beaches–East York, because the parents have nowhere else to send their children next year. Maybe in the years that follow they may, but for the conceivable future that is the only option that will be available to many of them.

I've spoken often in this Legislature about my coming from Regent Park. I remember, even to this day, the number of children who came from poor homes, who came to school and the difficulty they had to learn, because they did not have the same opportunities and the same experiences or the same expectations in their homes that people from more affluent families often had. There were not books available. In my day, most of them didn't have televisions either, which was perhaps a good thing, but there was not that method of communication that was readily available. Many of them went to school hungry, so that was a problem as well.

It seems that what the government is attempting to do is a good thing, and that is to give those children an opportunity, at an early age, to try to catch up so that when they are three or four or five years old, going to all-day kindergarten, they'll be able to learn at the same rate that one would who came from a more affluent family or whose family could afford the kind of quality daycare that I saw on Coatsworth Crescent. That is what is important, and that is what needs to be done, but it needs to be done more quickly.

With the greatest of respect, I'm waiting for the budget. I know the budget will be coming sometime towards the end of March. The budget, I'm sure, when it unfurls, will say how much money the government is planning to spend in this particular area. It may take a couple of days to comb through it—because when the minister stands up, he'll talk about education and how much money is being put into education. It'll take a few days to figure out how much of that is going into senior kindergarten

and how much is going to be spent on wages and the like in order to facilitate the first phase. But we need to make sure that that phase does not take six years. We need to make sure that subsequent budgets plan in advance so that no child is left out, and especially that no child is left out in the high-needs communities, like those in Crescent Town, that are not going to be given an opportunity in this round.

I can see, Mr. Speaker, that it's about time, so I will stop now if you will allow me to continue the debate on the next occasion.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): It being 10:15 of the clock, this House stands in recess until 10:30, at which time we will have question period.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Helena Jaczek: It gives me great pleasure to welcome the family of my page Jullian Yapeter, sitting in the west members' gallery: his parents, Janny and Yimmy Yapeter, his grandmother Liu Lie Kian Sumarno, and his brother Jonathan.

Hon. Carol Mitchell: It's certainly my pleasure to introduce the mother of page Colin Jansen, Val Millson. Welcome, Val.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On behalf of the member from Don Valley East and page Ava D'Souza, we'd like to welcome her mother, Angela D'Souza, her father, Ludovic D'Souza, and her brother Jordan D'Souza, in the members' gallery.

I'd also take this opportunity to introduce a guest who will be joining us in the Speaker's gallery, Bette Jean Crews, the president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture.

There being no further introductions, it is now time for oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Ted Arnott: My question is for the Acting Premier. The PC caucus has been asking the hard questions on accountability that the Premier refuses to ask about the LHINs, or regional health bureaucracies, that he created; so has the Ombudsman. Is that why your government wants him fired?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I think it's very important to note that there is a little bit of history here. In fact, one of the members of this House suggested that regardless of who the commissioners are, no matter how wonderful they are, they ought to go through an appropriate process of reappointment, or give others an opportunity to apply as well. That is exactly what we've selected to do.

I know that in particular the member from Welland is pleased to see that we've listened, that there is a process and that we welcome the opportunity for everyone who feels they can serve the government of Ontario and the people of Ontario. They are welcome in this place.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Ted Arnott: The Premier has created a new layer of health bureaucracy to deflect blame when something goes wrong and create a haven for Liberal friends and donors. But the LHINs have not improved health care. The CEO of Toronto Central is walking away from his LHIN. Our PC caucus revealed that LHINs are handing out sweetheart deals to disgraced eHealth consultants.

The Ombudsman heard so many complaints, he said, "There is a lot of public concern about the accountability and transparency of the LHIN." This move comes just before the Ombudsman reports on the Premier's special pet project. Why is shining a light on the Liberal government's dirty secrets a firing offence, while handing out millions of dollars in untendered contracts gets you promoted?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: This member opposite will know full well, because he was part of a government that also continued to appoint or reappoint commissioners in various positions of the government. In fact, what we know is that there are five-year terms that come up for appointment, and often reappointment. So we suggested that, in listening to some of the opposition members who wanted to see a fair process so that others could also apply. That is exactly what we selected to do. So after a five-year term—and I must say that, whether it's our Ombudsman or our Environmental Commissioner, they have done some tremendous work, not just for the government but for the people of Ontario—I would think that the member opposite would want to see a fair, transparent and open process of appointments and/or reappointments for people who frankly do stellar jobs for the people of Ontario.

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

Mr. Ted Arnott: We see a clear pattern here. The Premier fires anyone who criticizes him or holds his government accountable. The Ombudsman has been a tough critic. He called the Liberal government a "colossal failure" in its handling of criminal injuries compensation. He called its decision to cut off funds for cancer therapy wrong, unreasonable and verging on cruelty, and he exposed insider wins at OLG that your government ignored.

The Liberal government would have let these scandals go on if the Ombudsman hadn't caught them. His report on LHINs will likely reveal even more about the character of the Premier and his government, but it looks like the Liberals plan to get him before he gets them. Is this the real reason they're trying to silence the Ombudsman?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I just want to point out that, for example, a number of people, including members of the opposition when they were in government, were subjected to some criticism from our privacy commissioner.

Our privacy commissioner was reappointed. That is one example of people who, whether critical or not, play a vital role in assisting the government to do the right thing for the people of Ontario. There's not one person who would suggest that the Ombudsman and, in fact, the Environmental Commissioner didn't do tremendous work for the people of Ontario. To suggest that after a five-year term we ought to have an open and transparent system of appointment or reappointment—I think it's incumbent on the government to listen to the MPP from Welland and suggest, yes, there's a process that people can be proud of and that they can see. We welcome the opportunity for a huge number of people who want to serve the people of Ontario through these terrific roles in government.

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Toby Barrett: A new question for the Acting Premier: You're not only dumping the Ombudsman; you're tossing aside the Environmental Commissioner. Like the Ombudsman, he called it like it is and now you're getting even. How low will Dalton McGuinty go to duck accountability?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: Back to the same question. I really find it interesting that there are examples across our government that show that people are appointed and reappointed many times. That certainly happened when the members opposite were part of the government. It was in fact the opposition members who suggested that we ought to have a fair and open process. I think it was the MPP from Welland who said they are adamant that "there should be the same process ... and the process is pretty clear. You advertise the position, you see who's interested in the job, you vet them." We're listening to the MPP from Welland. In fairness, let's give the process some time and see what happens.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Toby Barrett: The real point is that Dalton McGuinty has two standards. If you're a Liberal friend like Hugh MacLeod, Dalton McGuinty will raid hospital budgets of \$325,000, meant for patients, and he'll help you sneak out the back door to avoid your record. But watch out if you're a public servant like the Environmental Commissioner. He revealed that Dalton McGuinty and his former hand-picked climate change adviser have done nothing to advance their mandate. In his annual report, the commissioner slammed this government for a "lack of vision" and not giving the tools needed to get the job done.

My question: Are you hanging him out to dry because he says your plan is no good, or is it because he says your execution is no good?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I do find it interesting that this party wants to subject this commissioner to any criticism of his job. In fact, I believe he has done a stellar job for the people of Ontario. I think it's incumbent on all of us to appreciate the long hours and the hard work that he has produced. This is the same individual who, in 2004, had his term expire. We went through a vetting process,

which included ads in the *Globe and Mail*, and after two days of hearings and interviews, he was reappointed. We didn't hear a word from you back then. You were in opposition then; you didn't say a word then. Today is exactly the same process as 2004. So really, let's be clear: Let's ask a decent question in question period that's of interest to the people of Ontario.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: Let's be clear: It's obvious Dalton McGuinty didn't learn from his failures in the disgraceful eHealth boondoggle. In eHealth, Liberal friends like Geoff Smith and Khalil Barsoum were allowed to make a quiet getaway out the back door. Dalton McGuinty is also protecting Karli Farrow, John Ronson, Alan Hudson and George Smitherman from further inquiry. Now he's at it again, letting Hugh MacLeod skip town without having to account for a \$320,000 salary. However, the Environmental Commissioner and the Ombudsman join public servants like Kelly McDougald in being thrown under the bus.

Why does Dalton McGuinty get rid of anyone who shows any integrity but take care of Liberal friends who don't?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I don't know if the member opposite is advocating a sole-sourced contract to the value of the salary of this Environmental Commissioner.

Let me say it again. The Environmental Commissioner has served Ontario well. I think all of us in this House agree. And in 2004, when his other term expired, there was an open, fair and transparent process. There were ads in the newspapers; five interviews over the course of two days. He passed that process and he was reappointed. You, at that time, didn't ask a question.

Today, it is exactly the same process, and we are doing it again. It is a process that you asked for and that we are delivering on. So let's be clear: The Environmental Commissioner has served Ontario well and there is a process in place to have the opportunity to do that again.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Acting Premier. Earlier this week, the revenue minister helpfully provided some sage consumer advice to Ontario families: "The price of gasoline will go up 8% on July 1. That's why so many people will be filling up on June 30."

Does the Acting Premier agree with the revenue minister that consumers should fill up before they pay up, and will he finally tell them exactly how much extra they'll shell out for gas each and every year because of his government's harmonized sales tax?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: To the Minister of Revenue.

Hon. John Wilkinson: Thanks for the question, I say to the leader of the third party.

You know, this has been quite open on our side of the House since March. This is not news. Energy and services will be subjected to the HST. Fortunately for the

businesses that provide that service, their cost of business is going down. We know consumers will demand the best price, but it is important for consumers to understand what those changes are. That's why I recommend people go to our website at www.ontario.ca/taxchange to get their questions answered.

We're doing this because a quarter of a million people, through no fault of their own, have lost their jobs and we believe we have to do what is required to make sure that there are jobs in the 21st century for our people, for our children and our grandchildren. That is why we're moving forward and doing something that's happening in 140 other countries around the world and in four of our sister provinces; the province of British Columbia will be doing it on the same day. All because we need—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Yesterday the Acting Premier claimed he couldn't tell Ontario families how much extra they're going to be paying for gas. "Everyone's different," he said. The Ministry of Finance admits that it actually has this information, but it's a big secret. Why won't the Acting Premier reveal today what she knows and tell Ontarians just how much the new tax on gas is going to cost them each and every year?

Hon. John Wilkinson: Just for the member, I want to repeat this. It's actually quite simple when it comes to the HST. If there's no GST or PST for things like basic groceries or prescription drugs, there's no change in tax. If you're already paying 13%, you're going to keep on paying 13%, but the price of those objects, the price of those goods will go down because we're dropping the cost of business. That's happened everywhere else in the world. When it comes to the question of things where they just have GST but not PST, there's going to be an increase in the tax, but the cost of business is going down.

I find it difficult that our friends over there have decided that consumers will somehow not demand the best price. I don't know about you, but the consumers I know are pretty sharp. You have an opinion over there that somehow consumers will willingly overpay. That is not the reality that I know—

Interjections.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: There's only one thing I would agree with in what this minister said, and from our perspective it's a very simple request that we're making. The Ministry of Finance has the information that the people of Ontario want. People have a right to know how much extra they should expect to pay when this tax is implemented on July 1. StatsCan suggests it will be at least \$185 more each and every year. If the Acting Premier actually rejects this figure, why won't he provide Ontario families with his government's own estimates?

Hon. John Wilkinson: It goes back to the question that we are reforming taxes; not just sales tax, but income tax as well. So if a person wants to have a balanced

approach to this and to understand the impact for the typical family or their own family, what you need to do, in my estimation, is that one would visit the website, where the whole story is there, where we're very clear about which things are going to attract new tax and, particularly, what are the tax cuts that people will enjoy, the tax relief, both permanent and temporary.

You know, for people it amounts to over \$10 billion over the next three years. You would think the average consumer is going to want to know, "Well, what's my share of the \$10 billion over next three years?" That's why we tell people to go to that website, because you can go there and find the information, what it means to you and to your family, and, if you own a business, what it means for your business.

So I can tell you that on this side of the House we are committed to making sure we have more jobs in this province. More jobs means that we can afford the vital public services—

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

PENSION REFORM

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is to the Acting Premier. People across Ontario are increasingly concerned about their retirement. Some who worked at places like Nortel, AbitibiBowater and CanWest Global paid into a company pension plan all of their lives, only to learn that it might not be there for them when they retire. Others just don't have enough to retire on, and after putting faith in solutions like RRSPs, they're less secure than ever before.

Sixteen months have passed since Harry Arthurs tabled his recommendations for comprehensive pension reform in this province. My question is simple: Why hasn't the McGuinty government implemented any of his key recommendations?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Well, in fact, there's a piece of legislation before the House today that introduces the first 44 responses. The 45th response was the actuarial study that's going on right now with respect to the PBGF. And as I have indicated, we will be introducing a second piece of legislation likely this spring, later in the spring, which will respond to the balance of Mr. Arthurs' recommendations.

In addition, Premier McGuinty called for and has now seen come to pass a national summit on pensions among the provinces at the next Council of the Federation, which is an important step forward. This government participated. We actually had an entire actuarial study done with recommendations from a labour-oriented economist about this in preparation for my next meeting with the Canadian Ministers of Finance this May.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, 65% of Ontarians have no workplace pension plan. Across Canada, provincial governments are grappling with that fact; every-

body's aware of it. But here in Ontario, with this government, the silence has been deafening.

Finance ministers will be meeting in late spring, I agree with this minister, to try to find a solution to the pension crisis in this country. So my question is, when he goes to the conference in the spring, will this minister go there and support the proposal that is being put forward by the Canadian Labour Congress for expansion of the Canada pension plan?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: There are a variety of proposals put forward by a variety of groups. One of the things I think all of us have to be careful of is that in the steps we take to respond to the challenges around pensions, we don't disincite employers to provide pensions. That's why a variety of people, including the economist we hired, who has a long association with the labour movement, have said that we have to proceed carefully.

There are a number of—

Interjection.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: No, actually; he worked for the federal government on this one.

I would say to the member opposite that I think the NDP here in Ontario put forward some very interesting proposals that merit very serious consideration in this debate, and I applaud them for that. I think as Canada moves forward, the provinces will come together, along with the federal government, to begin to address this. I applaud the effort of the third party in providing recommendations, and they will be looked at, along with a variety of others—

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

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Ms. Andrea Horwath: Since the McGuinty government seems unwilling to commit to supporting a national solution to this problem with the pension system in Canada, how about our made-in-Ontario solution? New Democrats, as the minister has indicated, have put forward a proposal already to provide Ontarians with greater economic security in an Ontario retirement plan. Our proposal has been very well received by all quarters in this province, all the way across the province, but the government really hasn't produced any ideas of its own. So, with four million Ontarians waiting, will this government support our Ontario retirement plan?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Again, I want to applaud the member and her party for putting forward a recommendation. In fact, there are some challenges to it. One of the challenges we see now is incenting savings by individuals. We have an RRSP system, which has not worked. Your plan closely resembles that, except it takes the management of pension funds and in fact puts it into sort of a centralized thing. It does merit consideration. I'm not rejecting it, and I welcome further discussion.

Nine hundred billion dollars of unused RRSP room in this country shows that we have to look very carefully at how we incent people to save. The role of government, the role of employers, the role of employees, the role of individual citizens—these are all challenging issues. They

all merit serious consideration. I look forward to representing Ontario at the Ministers of Finance meeting in May, and I know Premier McGuinty will continue to lead at the Council of the Federation.

NATURAL RESOURCE INDUSTRIES

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: My question is for Minister of Natural Resources. First of all, congratulations on your new appointment. Personally, having worked for decades in the industry directly related to MNR, I can tell you that it is the greatest ministry in government to work for.

Now that we're done with the pleasantries, Minister, I'm sure you've heard from stakeholders in the same fashion that I have regarding this industry in the province that's been decimated, that used to be the economic engine of Ontario and northern Ontario, especially, as stakeholders are saying, when your own members from places like Sault Ste. Marie, that have some resource towns, have been passed over.

Ontario families who work in the struggling resource industry want to know if your appointment by the Premier continues to treat natural resources as a social industry as opposed to an economic, job-creating industry.

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I am pleased to be the Minister of Natural Resources, and I appreciate the congratulations. Thank you. I am blessed. This is a great ministry to be a part of.

Really, I think what the member was alluding to was perhaps some of the regulations we have around forestry. I have met with many stakeholders in the last few weeks to talk about the kinds of regulations we're putting forward through the Endangered Species Act. I'm pleased to say that many of the conversations I've had with our stakeholders have been very productive. We have spoken about the initiatives that we are putting forward in the ministry, and I look forward to the supplementary.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: Ontario was the economic engine of Canada from Confederation until Dalton McGuinty turned it into a have-not province. The hardest hit are the resource and auto sectors. Perhaps this is because Dalton McGuinty paid \$2.2 million for an economic plan from hip, urban theorist Richard Florida, whose report demeans the work of resource industries. Or maybe Harold Wilson, president of the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce, is right when he says that the price of hydro is twice that of Manitoba and Quebec and that the Green Energy Act will push them even higher.

If it's not up to you, then who is the champion of the resource families of Ontario, who made our province the leading economy in Canada and who are ready to do it again?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I would like to refer this to the minister of mining and forestry.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: We are very encouraged by the discussions we've had with our stakeholders in the forestry sector. In terms of our ministry, what's important to us is that we're taking some actions that are going to

bring the forest sector back to a truly competitive position.

For example, our wood supply competition: We're excited about the opportunities; 11 million cubic metres of wood is up for competition. We want to put Ontario's wood back to work. Indeed, we expect that once the proposals are put in place, we'll be making announcements soon that will bring those jobs back. This is very important to us.

Also, the review of our forest tenure policy in the province of Ontario: We see some real opportunities to make some adjustments to how we allocate licences and price our wood in the province of Ontario.

These are things that we can do, and we are very conscious of the opportunities that are there in northern Ontario, working very hard with the Minister of Natural Resources and the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure to bring about some positive opportunities for the north.

FUNDRAISING

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. The Greater Toronto Airports Authority is a non-profit organization. It is governed by a board filled with appointees named by the provincial, federal and local municipal governments. It raises revenue from rent and airport fees collected from travellers.

Why did the Ontario Liberal Party accept \$12,784.95 in donations over the past five years from this organization?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I assume that this is actually not a transportation question; this is actually a political question that this member is asking. What I would say is that we, as a party—as the third party does—follow the rules in terms of our fundraising endeavours.

It's extremely important that individuals and organizations in this province have the opportunity to take part in the democratic process. Part of the democratic process is raising money so that we can do the work of democracy in this province—

Interjections.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —we collectively in this Legislature.

I would suggest that if the member has a question that pertains to transportation, I'd be happy to answer it in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Prue: I am appalled. I don't think this minister gets it. Passengers pay the GTAA fees, some of the highest in the world, every time they fly out of Pearson airport. Elections Ontario records show a long history of donations by the GTAA to the Ontario Liberal Party; for example, \$1,200 to the St. Paul's by-election campaign, \$2,800 to Liberal riding associations, \$700 to the Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock by-election and an additional \$4,200 in 2008.

Why are unsuspecting travellers subsidizing the Ontario Liberal Party? What right do you have to take their money?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I said earlier, we follow the rules as they are laid out. Because I know this member doesn't ask frivolous questions, I will absolutely undertake to look into the question that he has asked. I can tell you that the rules are laid out; the information is public. We have made more information public about the donations that have been given to our party. I will look into the question that he has asked.

But I return to my original point, and that is that in order for the democratic process to work, many individuals, many organizations need to be involved with the governing party and with the opposition parties. If that didn't happen, then our system would grind to a halt. I will undertake to ask questions about this specific issue.

PATIENT SAFETY

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Having a sister who is currently waging her own battle against breast cancer, I was really shocked to hear about the mistaken mastectomies that were performed at Windsor. We are now hearing reports of two women and possibly more who have had unnecessary mastectomies and who were told that they had breast cancer when, in fact, they did not.

From time to time, we all worry about our own health, and clearly the confidence of my constituents in our surgeons has really been shaken. Accuracy is very important to appropriate treatment.

Minister, could you tell us what happened in the events that occurred at Windsor?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: First and foremost, I know I speak for everyone in this House when I express my deepest sympathy to the patients who were affected by these errors and, of course, their family members. I want to assure you that I take this very, very seriously.

I can tell you that the hospital has taken the appropriate steps. It has launched a formal review both of the incident and of the doctor in question. The doctor has stopped performing surgeries.

I can also tell you that I have confirmed that the College of Physicians and Surgeons is investigating this issue. They have the important responsibility of investigating concerns and complaints from members of the public about doctors who are licensed to practise here in Ontario. Of course, the college must act, first and foremost, in the best interests of the public.

We take surgical safety very, very seriously. That's why we are requiring all hospitals to use a surgical safety checklist. I look forward to speaking more about—

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

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Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I'm certainly relieved to hear that the hospital has launched a formal review of these incidents. I understand the importance of the role that the College of Physicians and Surgeons plays in investigating concerns regarding doctors in Ontario.

People naturally trust their physicians to act in the patient's best interests and they expect that safeguards will be in place to protect them. My family, the constituents of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex and all Ontarians would like to know what action is being taken to restore their confidence in patient safety. Minister, could you tell this House how the surgeons' checklist will improve patient safety in Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We have partnered with the Ontario Hospital Association and have developed a surgical safety checklist that will be required for all operations in all hospitals across the province as of April 2010. Dr. Michael Baker from the University Health Network is our lead on this initiative. The checklist includes a mandatory review of the pathology and biopsy results by the entire operating room team—that includes surgeons, the anaesthetist and nurses—before the patient is given the anaesthetic.

The results of a 2009 New England Journal of Medicine study demonstrate that a consistent use of a surgical checklist reduces the rates of death and complications that are associated with surgical care.

A province-wide education program with a comprehensive tool kit has now been developed. Yesterday morning, the OHA and ministry officials held a province-wide webcast. We are educating hospitals on how to use this tool—

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

ABORIGINAL LAND DISPUTE

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: My question is for the Attorney General. In a discovery transcript filed in the Caledonia lawsuit, a government witness acknowledges that the tract of land the illegal occupiers claim stretches all the way to downtown Kitchener.

Minister, how have you notified families in Brantford and Kitchener that what is going on in Caledonia can happen to them next?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: My friend opposite outlines the nature of a very important challenge. You have a 200-year-old land claim pre-dating Confederation. The federal government has constitutional, legal and jurisdictional responsibility. So I'm sure my friend opposite will join with me in saying that the only way we can ultimately resolve this very important issue is to have an energized, creative and bold federal government at the table to work with the parties to resolve the issue for the benefit of all throughout the province of Ontario. I look forward to my colleague's support as we get the federal government energized.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Until four years ago, families in Caledonia had no reason to believe that the same things that you and I do every day—you wake up, you feed the kids, you go to work, you have a summer barbecue in the backyard—would just stop. Then barricades went up, fires were set, and a hydro substation was destroyed.

People have been physically attacked, homes invaded and ransacked, and families' insurance cancelled for "acts of terrorism"—acts of terrorism in Ontario, Minister.

The only thing Dalton McGuinty has done is pay lots of money to Liberal friends Jane Stewart, Tom Molloy and David Peterson, with no plans and no results from those studies. Lives of Caledonia families have been interrupted for four years. Brantford and Kitchener could be next.

When will you give the lives of the families of Caledonia back to them, Minister?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I'm not sure why my friend doesn't want to be part of the solution in a more creative way. This government has been working very hard strengthening the relationship with all aboriginal peoples and First Nations. He is correct that we have been at the table. We've been as creative as we can be. We ask his assistance in getting an energized federal government to the table.

When he suggests that for many, many years people lived together as neighbours, worked together, played together, built communities together, he's absolutely right, which is why earlier in the week I called upon my friend and his colleagues opposite to work with us to build stronger relationships with people rather than finding ways that we cannot do that. Work with us, I say to my friend opposite. It's a brighter—

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

PRIVATE CAREER COLLEGES

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. The Niagara-on-the-Lake Culinary School has become another in a long line of colleges which have left students high and dry under your ministry. These students paid as much as \$18,000, and now they have nothing. The school was registered with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, and I add that your website says, "When a private career college closes suddenly while students are enrolled in vocational programs, the Ministry of the Training, Colleges and Universities will ensure that either training completions or refunds are provided to the students."

When are these students going to get their money back?

Hon. John Milloy: I appreciate the question because it allows me to bring a little bit more information, because I know the honourable member would want to make sure that all the facts are on the table.

First of all, what happened in Niagara-on-the-Lake was an unfortunate situation, but I think it shows that a new, enhanced, strengthened system is working. As soon as the ministry received complaints from students at this culinary college, we acted. The complaints immediately went to our ministry's investigation unit and, over the course of a week, ministry officials worked with the

Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of the Attorney General, the federal government and those involved with immigration in order to execute a search. I'm pleased to say that on Friday, February 12, action was taken, a search was executed, the school's registration was suspended and fines were issued.

The honourable member talks about students, and he's right. We do have a system in place to protect students in these—

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

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My question was, "When are they going to get their money back?" We know you have a system in place. That's why we say, in the past year, the Ombudsman, who has written two reports on this—it's not an unusual situation, but a very regular situation—said that "students should be entitled to look to the ministry to ensure that their interests as education consumers are protected." He also called on the ministry to implement adequate safeguards, including active monitoring to protect students.

What steps is your ministry taking to prevent disasters like this, instead of stepping in after lives have been ruined?

Hon. John Milloy: I'm very, very familiar with the Ombudsman's report, and I would recommend that the member look at some of the follow-up comments from the Ombudsman, when he has actually praised the actions that have been taken by this ministry since we brought in changes through the act. We've also introduced fines for PCCs operating illegally. They can range from \$250 to \$1,000 per day, to a maximum of \$250,000.

But I want to speak about the situation in Niagara, and I want to talk about the training completion assurance fund, which is one of the safeguards in there to help students who find themselves in this situation. TCAF allows students to complete their training or receive a refund if a PCC suddenly closes. I'd like to inform the member that we deal with these situations on a case-by-case, student-by-student basis. We have encouraged students at the culinary institute to come forward to the ministry, and we are working with—

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

IMMIGRANT SERVICES

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Minister, one of the issues that should be important to all of us is the integration of newcomers into our economy. Many people come to Canada to seek a better life for their families and more opportunity for meaningful and productive work. It is no surprise that a large proportion of Canada's newcomers come to Ontario not only to join our workforce but also to become important parts of our communities. However, just like many Ontarians, many newcomers have found themselves vulnerable as they face the hard realities of this recession.

Minister, there is no doubt we deliver much-needed programs and assistance to newcomers. How can we ensure Ontario's immigrants do not fall behind in these critical times?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I would like to thank the member from Ottawa Centre for his question. There's no doubt that the recession has hit newcomers particularly hard. Between October 2008 and October 2009, the net decline in employment in Toronto was 36,300 jobs. Of those affected, most were recent or very recent newcomers.

In these challenging times, it's important that all Ontarians, including newcomers, be able to apply their skills and talents in the workplace. That's why we continue to work at changing long-standing, systemic barriers and provide newcomers with programs like language and bridge training, tailored not only to get them through this hard time but ready for long-term success.

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I'm proud to report that since 2003, the McGuinty government has invested more than \$700 million in programs and services to help newcomers get settled, job-ready and licensed to work.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Minister, I know that much of our immigration funding and framework stems from the Canada-Ontario immigration agreement with the federal government, which is due to expire in March of this year. Especially when faced with such challenges as we have seen in this economic climate, it is imperative that all levels of government are at the table to ensure that vulnerable groups like newcomers receive the right support.

I'm surprised to learn that millions of dollars that were promised under the COIA by the federal government have been withheld. Surely this has hurt our ability to support newcomers in the province of Ontario. I know that organizations in my riding of Ottawa Centre rely on this funding, like the Catholic Immigration Centre, the Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization and the Chinese-Canadian services agency.

Minister, how do you propose we ensure that newcomers receive the services they need as we look towards the expiration of the COIA?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: The member from Ottawa Centre is correct that in spite of repeated requests from Ontario, the federal government has not lived up to its funding promises.

Over the first four years of the Canada-Ontario immigration agreement, there was an underspending by the federal government of \$193 million, approximately 30% of the federal commitment. That's why it's important that Ontario receives a new and fair deal with Ottawa on immigration funding, a deal which includes federal funding of settlement and language training programs flowing directly to the province.

To this end, Ontario is asking for more control of these funds to better help newcomers. BC, Manitoba and Quebec have done this already. Why shouldn't Ontario have the same ability to help our newcomers? Ontario

has a closer understanding of the needs of our newcomers and is better positioned to identify and address their needs.

We are committed to helping newcomers. We know that when newcomers succeed, Ontario succeeds.

SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED

Mr. Frank Klees: My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. On January 11, I wrote to the minister requesting specific information relating to the home and vehicle modification program. In that letter to the minister, I asked for specific information, such as, first, how many applications were received over the past year from my region; how many were approved; and what the criteria is on which decisions are made to either approve or reject applications.

The minister did reply to me, but I find her response totally unacceptable. She stated in her letter that she was advised by her staff that the information I requested relating to the allocation of funds is not collected—it's not collected.

I'd like to know from the minister how she can justify accepting that answer and expecting me to—

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

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Thank you for the question. Home and vehicle modification is a program that is very highly subscribed to. We have been increasing that budget since we came into power. There's never enough money in that budget, but what I can say to the member today is that we will continue to look at the program and we will continue to make sure that we add to this program, because if we want people to continue to work or to continue to live in their homes, we need to make sure that these programs are available.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: Under the program, more than \$9 million was transferred out by this ministry over the past year.

In my letter, I also pointed out that applications for the program are vague; that there is no formal medical documentation required with the application; and that there is no formal waiting list maintained to ensure fairness and equity in terms of ascribing this multi-million-dollar program.

I'm saying this to the minister: Will she agree to ask the Auditor General to investigate how this program is being administered to ensure that the \$9 million-plus are being allocated on a fair and equitable basis, and that the people responsible for administering the program are accountable to her and her ministry?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I trust those partners that administer this program. They have an excellent reputation in the community. They have been doing that work for quite some time. They themselves do their fundraising to make sure that the money is there for those who are in need of modification of their home or their vehicle. Like I said, there are more applications, and a lot

of them are for senior people. We know that for them to be able to continue to live at home, they need to have their home modified. We believe in the program, and we believe in the partners that are administering this program for us.

PALLIATIVE CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Minister of Health. A renowned palliative care expert found there is a “big, big gap” when it comes to decent end-of-life care in Ottawa. He says it’s putting unnecessary pressure on local Ottawa hospitals, causing cancelled surgeries and long wait times in emergency rooms. The irony is that treating palliative patients outside hospitals saves taxpayer money because it frees up vital hospital resources for patients in need of critical care.

This government had years to move forward with pragmatic cost-saving innovations like these. Can the health minister tell us why this government still refuses to act?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I very much appreciate the question. I think it’s fair to say that we have more to do when it comes to end-of-life care, but we have made substantial investments in exactly the kind of initiatives that she has spoken about. Our aging-at-home strategy has put over \$1 billion into communities to provide exactly the kind of supports that provide that continuum of care. We know that people get excellent care in hospitals and they get excellent care in long-term-care homes. We know that there is excellent home care available, but we know we need to strengthen the continuum of supports available to people, whether they are at the end of their life or dealing with other health challenges that require more support.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Ottawa families have already been told to brace for cuts—100 hospital beds at the Ottawa Hospital alone—because this government would rather hand out consulting contracts to its friends than invest in health care. We’ve been reminded again today that it’s not just dollars and cents that our health care system needs; it’s common sense and innovation. Building palliative care capacity improves the system and saves money.

When will this government finally take the steps needed to address this important health care issue that affects all Ontario families?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Again, I completely agree that that is an area of our health care system that we need to continue to strengthen. As part of the 2008 budget, we approved over \$14 million to assist 10 residential hospices that are now open. The 2007 budget announced nearly \$10 million in hospices as part of that budget. That helped implement six residential hospices that had been part of an earlier announcement. We continue to invest in end-of-life care: \$29 million for the end-of-life care strategy. That provides the support to CCACs to help the clients who are at the very end of their life. Again, I say it

is an area where I believe we need to do more, but we have taken some important steps forward in that direction.

FOOD SAFETY

Mr. David Zimmer: My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Hon. John Gerretsen: From Willowdale.

Mr. David Zimmer: From Willowdale, and a number of constituents in Willowdale have raised this issue with me.

Minister, food safety and confidence in our food system are critical for Ontario’s farm system and the public, the producers and the consumers. A fundamental element of food safety is an effective food traceability system. Despite all the provincial and federal measures to promote food safety, consumer concern about food safety remains. Traceability of food products is essential for consumer confidence in the safety of Ontario’s food chain. Minister, what is Ontario’s strategy for the voluntary adoption of traceability in food products?

1120

Hon. Carol Mitchell: The McGuinty government is committed to traceability. Our government understands that traceability is a sound business investment for this province’s agribusiness. We believe Ontario’s agri-food sectors fully understand the benefits to be realized through the implementation of a traceability initiative and will do so voluntarily.

Traceability systems provide us with the means to track the movement of food products ultimately from farm to fork. They are a key element in a strong food safety system, and they support the emergency management process. Traceability also brings benefits to the producers of Ontario’s agri-food products by opening new opportunities along the value chain in the marketplace.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. David Zimmer: Minister, I know that the issue of traceability in food products was raised by you specifically at the recent federal, provincial and territorial ag ministers’ meeting here in Toronto, and I know that you attended the recent Ontario forum on the agri-food traceability issue in Guelph, Ontario.

Minister, can you be specific: How are you supporting a food traceability system in Ontario, and will you commit to strengthening traceability in Ontario? Will it be a long-term commitment for Ontario’s food safety?

Hon. Carol Mitchell: Thank you for this very important question. We are investing in new resources. We’re creating new tools and engaging industry to advance the voluntary adaptation of traceability systems in Ontario. The McGuinty government provided \$10 million in start-up funding for OnTrace to lead provincial agriculture and food traceability initiatives. The food safety and traceability initiatives were launched under the Growing Forward framework, and the program offers \$25.5 million over four years to support the implementation of food

safety programs and traceability systems. In 2009, the FTP agreed to mandatory livestock traceability by 2011, supported by national regulation and funding.

Our government will continue to work with the agri-food sector to advance the implementation of traceability systems in Ontario. Traceability strengthens our agri-industry, and I just want to say the member—

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

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Robert Bailey: My question today is to the Minister of Health. Minister, a group of local health, First Nations, industry, labour and municipal officials in Sarnia-Lambton have joined together in my riding to launch a study into whether industrial pollution is or is not harming the health of the residents of Sarnia-Lambton. Your predecessors in office promised the community health study committee and me that the ministry would consider providing up to \$75,000 in funding to get this study off the ground. The local government has stepped up and so has the local chamber of commerce, but to date, your ministry won't return our calls. Why did your ministry say it would give us an answer by February 16, when it hasn't?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I thank the member opposite for his question. What I can tell you is that this is a proposal that we are taking very seriously. We are reviewing the proposal. The health care of people across the province is important to us. We understand that people in the Sarnia area have concerns that are specific to that particular part of the province. So we'll take a very serious look at it, and we'll inform the member opposite as soon as we have made a decision on this issue.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Minister, I appreciate your promise to look into this issue; however, I regret that it has taken your ministry over two years to respond—acknowledging that you weren't in office at the time.

My community is regularly branded as a hotbed of environmental issues which have negatively affected the health of our residents. However, I'm proud to say that rather than stick our heads in the sand, the people of Sarnia-Lambton, through these committees, have decided to act and confront these possible health issues head-on. We cannot do this alone. Public health is a shared responsibility among all levels of government. To date, the county of Lambton has responded to our request for funding and our talks with the federal government seem quite promising, but the provincial government has continued to drag their feet.

Minister, why has it taken two years for the people of Sarnia-Lambton to receive a response from your ministry regarding this important issue?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Let me reassure the member opposite that we will look at this very carefully. Clearly, in this economy, we do take extra care when we

review proposals like this. We are doing that, and I will get back to you as soon as I possibly can.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry. Minister, when the auto sector was in trouble, your government and your Premier, rightfully so, intervened in order to assist those communities that had the auto sector as a big part of the local economies. Why is it that the Premier, yourself and your government are not equally interested in what is happening with the closure of the refinery in Timmins by Xstrata?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thank you very much for the question. It gives me an opportunity to remind the member, because he does know this, that indeed we are very involved in the very difficult situation in Timmins with the decision by Xstrata.

I've travelled up there, and we've had many discussions with Mayor Laughren. And, as you know, Premier McGuinty has been directly involved in the discussions as well and has made an offer on behalf of the province to help the community in terms of some solutions to this situation. We remain very, very committed to working with them. There are a number of programs that are in place. I've spoken to the member about them before—certainly the significant investments we've made through the northern Ontario heritage fund and ones we hope to make in the future.

I recognize this is a very difficult situation, one that I understand the member certainly continuing to be very much a strong advocate for, and I share the opportunity. I want to work with him on this.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Minister, you know very well there haven't been any discussions with your government with Xstrata. The only discussions you've had are with the mayor of the city of Timmins, myself and others who met with you in the city of Timmins and here at Queen's Park. You are trying to focus the discussion on what we do after the refinery is closed. We don't want to get into that debate. That is a refinery that is important to the economy of Ontario, and what we're asking from you, in the north, is that you treat northern Ontario no differently than we treated Windsor, Oshawa and other communities that were in peril about a year and a half ago.

So I ask you again, what is your Premier and what are you prepared to do as the government of Ontario to engage in discussions with Xstrata to make sure that facility does not close down?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: We would like nothing more than to have Xstrata change their mind and stay in the community. I have been involved in discussions with Xstrata and have made the case that indeed we would like to see them reconsider this. The fact is that there is a real challenge in terms of the decisions they make, but that does not in any way lessen the ability for us to get

involved with the community. We are working with the community closely. I am working with you, as the local member. We understand indeed how devastating this decision is.

We are bringing in policies that will have a very positive impact not just for Timmins but for northern Ontario in general. Certainly, there are opportunities related to the northern Ontario growth plan. We want to be able to bring forward an economic vision that will have a positive impact. I answered a question earlier about the forest sector recovery in terms of the wood supply competition, forest tenure review. We're working on all those issues. We will continue to do that. I look forward to being in Timmins very soon again to continue those discussions.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Mrs. Liz Sandals: My question is to the Minister of Government Services. Our government has made many environmental commitments to Ontarians. Beyond investments in clean energy and new technologies, the government has been encouraging Ontario businesses to employ methods and technologies that would ensure the long-term sustainability of our environment. Certainly, we are proud of those organizations that take a leading role in maintaining a green Ontario.

In Guelph, our new city hall, Guelph Hydro's new head office and Linamar's new training centre all have many green features included in them, and many other private sector companies around the province already utilize environmentally friendly practices.

With this kind of emphasis on environmental sustainability changing the way business in Ontario views green initiatives, could the minister please explain what the government is doing—

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

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: First of all, I would like to thank the member from Guelph for her question.

In 2007, the government launched Go Green, a climate change plan with very solid provincial targets through which the OPS has committed, first, to reducing the OPS's energy consumption by 10% by 2012; and second, to make all electricity purchases by the Ontario Legislature from 100% renewable energy. We have also designated that we will use our design standards for all new government-owned construction and major renovations, where appropriate. We continue to engage employees in building a green organizational culture through the OPS Green Office. This program is helping to position the OPS as a green employer—

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

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I think Ontarians agree that the government is on the right path in terms of its environmental commitments. Beyond taking active measures to ensure the long-term sustainability of our environment,

Ontario is leading the charge as an environmental trailblazer through initiatives such as energy and waste reduction, print and paper recycling, and green buildings. In fact, at the University of Guelph the students are actually paying an extra fee to help with energy retrofits.

But constituents in my riding would like to know whether the measures that we're taking are actually achieving their targets. We know that setting targets and priorities was important, but keeping the commitments and achieving reductions is what really matters. Could the minister please describe what additional measures are being taken through the OPS to reduce our carbon footprint through Ontario's action plan on climate change?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: I want to thank the member again for her question and I want to tell her that we are actually constructing a data centre in her riding, and it will meet all LEED standards as well.

The energy used in the OPS—between 2004 and 2007, we reduced energy consumption by 12%. For 2012, we set an additional 10% target for reduction of electricity consumption. Desktop power management on all OPS computers is saving 19 million kilowatt hours per year. We are banning fluorescent bulbs and using energy-efficient lights that consume 75% less electricity.

We are also working on our travel management, and it's estimated that 7,500 pounds of carbon emissions will be reduced by that initiative—

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

There being no deferred votes, the time for question period has expired. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

DECORUM IN CHAMBER

Mr. Glen R. Murray: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: During question period, the member for Haldimand-Norfolk accused the Premier of "getting even," saying, "How low will Dalton McGuinty go to duck accountability? Are you hanging him out to dry because he says your plan is no good, or is it because your execution is no good?"

Under section 23 of our standing orders, section (i) states the Speaker will call to order a member if he "imputes false or unavowed motives to another member."

Decorum in this House is pretty important. In the municipal world, where many of us come from, you cannot even suggest a motive to another member because it is considered one of the lowest and most base things you can do to your colleague. I would like the Speaker, if you please, sir, to take action and call the member to order.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I thank the honourable member for his point of order. I, as always, listened very closely during question period, and I chose to allow the question to stand.

This House stands recessed.

The House recessed from 1133 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Yesterday our leader, Tim Hudak, met with a number of fruit growers and spoke at the Ontario Fruit and Vegetables Growers' Association conference at Brock University. During his speech he reiterated the PC caucus's commitment to the agricultural and horticultural professionals in this province.

We know this is just one sector of the agriculture industry that needs help urgently. Our hog farmers, our cattle farmers and our fruit and vegetable farmers are losing money, and the current support programs just aren't working.

They aren't asking the government to write a blank cheque. They are asking for an insurance program that's based on the cost of production. Their proposal includes Ontario farmers contributing to the program in good times and bad, through insurance premiums.

Ontario farmers not only produce world-class products; they anchor our rural economy. For that, Ontario farmers deserve to see some return in return.

All the Liberal clichés in the world don't cover the fact that Dalton McGuinty and his government see farmers as nothing more than window dressing and scapegoats for Liberal broken promises and failed Liberal policies.

Tim Hudak and the PC caucus will not follow Dalton's path in treating farmers as an afterthought. Tim Hudak and the PC caucus will work with Ontario's farmers and sow the seeds for an economic plan to help our farming families have a sustainable future.

Ontario's fruit and vegetable growers know that there is a huge difference between Tim Hudak and Dalton McGuinty. That difference is underlined by Dalton McGuinty's ongoing failure to provide a principled commitment and needed support—

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

SENIORS' HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I am happy to report that my local health integration network, the South West LHIN, is creating rapid response teams to address the mental health and addiction issues facing London's elderly population.

The purpose of these teams is to keep elderly citizens dealing with these difficult and complex issues in their communities. This way, they will be able to maintain ties to their families and their friends while living in a stable and secure environment.

The South West LHIN has dedicated over \$3 million of funding for this initiative and over \$7 million in related projects in the next year.

I am very proud of these efforts, since many of our elderly dealing with these problems end up in emergency rooms or long-term-care homes for help. Under these

difficult circumstances, their situation becomes excessively stressful.

Mental health and addiction issues are something that our government takes very seriously. Our Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions has examined these issues in depth, and a report will be coming out later in this year.

I commend the efforts of the LHIN to proactively deal with the issues in an open way, to help our elderly population in our region.

I also want to commend the committee, which was set up by our government to address this issue, to examine it carefully and report to us and to the people of Ontario.

THINK INDIGENOUS EXPO

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to rise today and congratulate the 58 Port Perry High School students who received the Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Youth Achievement.

The Think Indigenous expo team was recognized last week for organizing a daylong celebration of Canada's First Nations, Metis and Inuit people. This event, held on April 20, 2009, brought together students from native studies classes, special education, culinary arts and French immersion. These students from grades 10 to 12 showcased the foods, crafts, history and culture of indigenous people across Canada.

The members of staff at Port Perry High School are to be commended for their leadership and sensitivity. Student teacher Dawn White introduced the event. She was assisted very capably by Nancy Hamer-Strahl, Harold Williams, Mike Aldred and Art Beaver.

Thanks to the Baagwating Community Association for providing financial support.

The Think Indigenous expo team created a unique opportunity in learning, understanding and leadership. I wish them continued success in their 2010 expo and thank them for their activities.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I rise to speak about a little-known fact and, I believe, a non-reported fact about prorogation in this House.

The Premier has prorogued this House, as we know, over a weekend, but what the public doesn't know about that is that every private member's bill, or almost every except for a few hand-picked bills, will be lost. This goes for Liberal backbenchers, it goes for Tories and it goes for NDP private members' bills. Think of all the work done by the citizens of this province, all the e-mails, all the petitioning that has been done by members of all of our ridings—all of that for nothing. Second readings of bills—waste of time. Committee work—gone, lost.

This is an ugly little secret, I think, in this House and is very different from the federal government. Much as we don't support what Harper has done, we have to admit that in the federal government, private members' bills

carry on. They don't here. I think that's absolutely outrageous, and people don't know it. So I'm doing my best to let my constituents who have—for example, in the inclusionary zoning bill: Municipalities, councils that have passed resolutions, councillors and even mayors who supported that bill—all for nothing. I'm going to have to do it all again, as we all are.

Again, just to let you know what's really going on at Queen's Park, private members' bills have been lost because of prorogation.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Bob Delaney: Ontarians increasingly see the difference between then and now in health care.

In the fall of 2003, health care was neglected, underfunded and understaffed. Thousands of nurses had been fired, more than two dozen hospitals had been closed, and it seemed as if the shift to pay-your-way-to-the-front-of-the-line health care was the unspoken Conservative government policy.

Today, wait times are down dramatically. Wait times are public knowledge and they're posted on the Internet. Some 10,000 nurses are serving patients in Ontario. More than 170 family health teams have brought a coordinated approach to family health care.

Conservatives cut seniors' programs. This government has built or is rebuilding some 35,000 more beds and improving home care so that some 220,000 more Ontarians can age in comfort and in dignity.

In our Mississauga community, Trillium Health Centre has completed a major expansion. Phase two at Credit Valley Hospital is ahead of schedule and within budget. Some 552 long-term-care beds have opened in Mississauga since 2003.

To the Conservatives, efficiency in health care means closed hospitals, fired nurses, longer wait times and a shift toward a US-style, expensive system.

JOB CREATION

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: Today I wanted to highlight job creation.

My riding of Kitchener–Conestoga, due to the global economic downturn, was especially hard hit in the area of manufacturing. I witnessed first-hand the strength of people such as Mike Devine, president of CAW Local 1451, who played a leadership role, working with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, to establish the Kitchener Frameworks Action Centre, which is helping people to find jobs.

1310

This government continues our plan to bring good jobs to the province, a plan that no other party has. Our government's \$32.5-billion investment in infrastructure will create and support 300,000 jobs in the next two years, important information for my constituents. We have invested in wind and solar power to create 16,000 new

green energy jobs, and economists are saying that our tax reform package will create 600,000 jobs.

Proven good news for my constituents and all Ontarians is that employment increased in January by more than 30,000 jobs. And good news for the manufacturing sector: an increase of 8,400 net jobs. Unfortunately, members of the opposition have failed to support these initiatives.

I see first-hand for the constituents of Kitchener–Conestoga that our government's plan is bringing Ontarians the high-paying, high-skilled jobs they need.

NUCLEAR POWER FACILITIES

Mr. Peter Shurman: On behalf of my friend the member from Durham, I'd like to read into the record a memorandum from the Ontario Power Generation chief nuclear officer, Wayne Robbins. It says, in part:

"Supporting the decision of continued operation on the Pickering plant is the extensive safety, environmental and equipment reliability studies conducted on Pickering B over the last four years. These studies concluded the Pickering plant can continue to operate safely and reliably, in an environmentally sound manner, to meet the province's energy needs. As you may recall, an investment was made on the Pickering A restart project a few years ago, which updated the Pickering A station's safety and environmental standards for continued operation as well.

"At the same time, OPG continues to proceed with the regulatory and planning processes for construction and operation of new nuclear units at the Darlington site to further secure generation capacity.

"OPG is committed to continued business investment in Durham region to help meet the electricity production needs of Ontarians. We're also committed to continued leadership in community building through partnerships in our host communities and a continued corporate presence from west to east in Durham region.

"Investing in refurbishment at Darlington and continued operation at Pickering B provides the best value for the people of Ontario. OPG's nuclear fleet provides safe, reliable and lower-cost baseload generation to Ontario's electricity system. We appreciate the support and partnership of the local communities in helping us achieve these goals."

It's signed by Wayne Robbins, chief nuclear officer.

BRAD MARTIN

Mr. Ted McMeekin: I rise today to celebrate the achievement of Brad Martin of Ancaster, who represented Canada in the Winter Olympics last week.

Brad, who is 23 years old, has a passion for snowboarding. I know Brad. He's a great athlete who has done us proud and is now looking forward to the 2014 Olympics in Sochi, Russia.

By the very nature of athletic competition, the majority of Olympic athletes must leave the games, sadly,

without a medal. Brad is one of those. When he failed to advance from the qualifying round, he said, "I wish I could have done a little bit more for Ancaster and Hamilton."

I understand the sentiment and I honour him for his loyalty to his home community. But I hope Brad will know just how very proud I and all Hamiltonians are of him and of the skill and dedication that took him to Vancouver.

He said, "It's great how proud Canada is of their own athletes, I hope it keeps up. When the crowd was going crazy, I just wanted to go bigger and stomp my run and just make everyone proud." You did, Brad; you did.

I ask this House to join me in saluting Brad Martin and our Olympic athletes, champions all.

OLYMPIC ATHLETES

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: One week ago today, I had the opportunity to stand in this House to recognize Shelley-Ann Brown from Pickering in her quest to become one of Canada's first female athletes ever to win a medal in bobsledding at the Vancouver Winter Olympics. Last night, Shelley-Ann and her partner, Helen Upperton, did indeed win a medal, a silver medal. Ahead of Shelley-Ann and Helen were their teammates Kaillie Humphries and Heather Moyse, who took home the gold.

Last night was a fantastic night for Canada's women's bobsled team. After years of hard work and dedication, they reached the podium in a one-two punch that brought cheering viewers to their feet all over Canada, Pickering included.

Shelley-Ann, who was an outstanding university track athlete, could never have dreamed only a few short years ago, when she went to Calgary to try her hand at bobsledding, that she would be standing on the podium with a Winter Olympic silver medal. Her dream of representing Canada at the Olympics would surely have been in a Summer Games.

It was truly magical to see both of Canada's women's bobsled teams stand together on the podium, arm in arm, sharing their moment with all of Canada.

I know that all of Pickering is extremely proud to have Shelley-Ann represent them at the Olympics, whether she won a medal or not. I know that this House will share my enthusiasm for her and all of our athletes who are representing Canada at the Vancouver Winter Olympics.

PETITIONS

TAXATION

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to be looking for my petitions—surprisingly, I've received this many petitions on the HST issue daily. I'll just read them.

"Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty is increasing taxes yet again with his new 13% combined sales tax, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it;

"Whereas by 2010, Dalton McGuinty's new tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day. A few examples" are campgrounds—they were here yesterday; "coffee, newspapers and magazines; gas for the car, home heating oil and electricity; haircuts, dry cleaning and personal grooming; home renovations and home services; veterinary care and pet care; legal services, the sale of resale homes," and last but not least, "funeral arrangements;

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised he wouldn't raise taxes in ... 2003"—most people don't remember that. "However, in 2004, he brought in the health tax, which costs upwards of ... \$900 per individual. And now he is raising our taxes again"—he's on a breakaway.

"Therefore 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 on Ontario's hard-working families and businesses."

I'm pleased to sign and support this and present it to Christopher, one of the respectful pages serving the Legislature.

HISPANIC COMMUNITY

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: Mr. Speaker, I wanted you to know that both the member from Eglinton–Lawrence and myself are still receiving petitions supporting Hispanic Heritage Month in April. The petition reads as follows:

"Whereas Canadians of Hispanic origin have made outstanding contributions in the building of this great province; and

"Whereas the Hispanic population is among the fastest-growing communities in Ontario; and

"Whereas the Hispanic population in Ontario represents 23 countries across the world, such as Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, United States, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Spain, Uruguay and Venezuela; and

"Whereas Hispanic Heritage Month would give Ontarians the opportunity to participate in various cultural and educational activities that would strengthen our diversity; and

"Whereas the proclamation of April as Hispanic Heritage Month in Ontario is an opportunity to recognize and learn about the contributions Canadians of Hispanic heritage have made to Canada and to the world in music, art, literature, films, economics, science and medicine;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support proclaiming April of each year as Hispanic Heritage Month in Ontario."

Mr. Speaker, the happy news is that this bill was proclaimed. Congratulations.

TAXATION

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

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

“Whereas by 2010, Dalton McGuinty’s new tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day. A few examples include: coffee, newspapers and magazines; gas for the car, home heating oil and electricity; haircuts, dry cleaning and personal grooming; home renovations and home services; veterinary care and pet care; legal services, the sale of resale homes, and funeral arrangements;

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised he wouldn’t raise taxes in the 2003 election. However, in 2004, he brought in the health tax, which costs upwards of \$600 to \$900 per individual. And now he is raising our taxes again;

“Therefore 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 on Ontario’s hard-working families and businesses.”

It’s signed by a significant number of residents of Ontario, and I have affixed my signature as well to the document.

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CHILD CUSTODY

Mr. Bob Delaney: I’m pleased to stand on behalf of my seatmate, the hard-working member for Niagara Falls, and read a petition sent to him by Olga Alexander, who got it signed at the Ottawa Farmers’ Market way back on Sunday, July 19, 2009. It’s addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and reads as follows:

“We, the people of Ontario, deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children’s Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children’s relationships with their parents and grandparents as requested in Bill 33 put forward by MPP Kim Craitor;

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

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

There are several other clauses, and it concludes by saying:

“We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children’s Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children’s relationships with their parents and grandparents.”

On behalf of the member for Niagara Falls, I’m pleased to present his petition to the House today, and to ask page Matthew to carry it for me.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Phil McNeely: My petition is from the St. Matthew Catholic High School in Orléans.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in its 2007 report, concluded that without dramatic reductions in human-induced carbon dioxide emissions, climate change may bring ‘abrupt and irreversible effects on oceans, glaciers, land, coastlines and species;’ and

“Whereas no one group, country or continent is responsible for climate change, but all human beings are collectively responsible for solving the problem; and

“Whereas the production of greenhouse gases in Canada has increased by 27% over 1990 levels; and

“Whereas our elected leaders have a responsibility to report to the public on their actions with respect to halting climate change for the sake of accountability; and

“Whereas youth in particular have a special interest in this issue, being those that will inherit this earth, our only home.

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario swiftly pass Bill 208, An Act to increase awareness of climate change.”

This is signed by Emily Aguiar, Hannah Rockwell, Charles Gay and 30 other people. I will submit this and put my name to it in support.

IDENTITY THEFT

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: I have a petition to the Parliament of Ontario and the Minister of Government Services:

“Whereas identity theft is the fastest-growing crime in North America;

“Whereas confidential and private information is being stolen on a regular basis, affecting literally thousands of people;

“Whereas the cost of this crime exceeds billions of dollars;

“Whereas countless hours are wasted to restore one’s good credit rating;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that Bill 38, which passed the second reading unanimously in the Ontario Legislature on December 8, 2005, be brought before committee and that the following issues be included for discussion and debate:

“(1) All consumer reports should be provided in a truncated (masked-out) form, protecting our vital private information, such as SIN and loan account numbers.

“(2) Should a consumer reporting agency discover that there has been an unlawful disclosure of consumer information, the agency should immediately inform the affected consumer.

“(3) The consumer reporting agency shall only report credit-inquiry records resulting from actual applications

for credit or increase of credit, except in a report given to the consumer.

“(4) The consumer reporting agency shall investigate disputed information within 30 days and correct, supplement or automatically delete any information found unconfirmed, incomplete or inaccurate.”

Since I agree, I am delighted to sign this petition.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Phil McNeely: Another petition from the students at St. Matthew High School in Orléans.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in its 2007 report, concluded that without dramatic reductions in human-induced carbon dioxide emissions, climate change may bring ‘abrupt and irreversible effects on oceans, glaciers, land, coastlines and species;’ and

“Whereas no one group, country or continent is responsible for climate change, but all human beings are collectively responsible for solving the problem; and

“Whereas the production of greenhouse gases in Canada has increased by 27% over 1990 levels; and

“Whereas our elected leaders have a responsibility to report to the public on their actions with respect to halting climate change for the sake of accountability; and

“Whereas youth in particular have a special interest in this issue, being those that will inherit this earth, our only home;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario swiftly pass Bill 208, An Act to increase awareness of climate change.”

It’s signed by Emmanuel Mboyo, Justin Ricker, Kerianne Shepley and about 20 others. I will sign my name in support of this petition and send it up with Rachael.

TAXATION

Mr. Peter Shurman: I have a petition from a number of concerned residents that reads as follows:

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

“Whereas by 2010, Dalton McGuinty’s new tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day. A few examples include ... newspapers and magazines; gas for the car, home heating oil and electricity; haircuts, dry cleaning and personal grooming; home renovations and home services; veterinary care and pet care; legal services, the sale of resale homes, and funeral arrangements;

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised he wouldn’t raise taxes in the 2003 election”—I remember that. “However, in 2004, he brought in the health tax, which

costs upwards of \$600 to \$900 per individual. And now he is raising our taxes again;

“Therefore 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 on Ontario’s hard-working families and businesses.”

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

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I’d like to take this opportunity to welcome the students from Davenport Public School in Aylmer, Ontario, from my riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London, who are visiting Queen’s Park today.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

ISRAELI APARTHEID WEEK

Mr. Peter Shurman: I move that in the opinion of this House, the term “Israeli Apartheid Week” is condemned as it serves to incite hatred against Israel, a democratic state that respects the rule of law and human rights, and the use of the word “apartheid” in this context diminishes the suffering of those who were victims of a true apartheid regime in South Africa.

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

Mr. Peter Shurman: We debate some interesting things in this chamber, not always what appear to be provincial business. One might think that my resolution falls into that category. But since Israeli Apartheid Week takes place next week on campuses across Ontario, I submit that it very much concerns us in this place and should concern all fair-minded Ontarians.

Resolutions here do one thing only: They send a message, moral suasion pertinent to any given subject. I am passionate about my resolution today and the subject, Israeli Apartheid Week. I am the MPP for Thornhill. Over 40% of my constituents are Jewish. Understandably, there is broad support for Israel in Thornhill, and not just in Thornhill and not just among Jewish people. I have been approached to champion this cause in and outside of Thornhill, and on and off college campuses all over Ontario, and I’m very happy to do so.

I am sick and tired of the demonization of Israel by the use of a word that was only ever applied in one historical case and remains applicable only to that one period of South African history. In honesty, I, along with all colleague MPPs, have been approached as well by those not in agreement with this resolution. I say here and now that I reject their position out of hand.

This is a resolution that is entirely appropriate for discussion in our Ontario Legislature. It's about an annual event in our province on our campuses, and most significantly it's about our values, because our values are the same as the values of the state of Israel: democracy, education, individual freedom, human rights and the right to defend oneself from aggressors.

1330

In fact, the values of Judaism and of Israel were bedrock values for the foundation of Canada, and those values from Judaism and from Israel date back over 3,000 years—all to say that if you're going to label Israel as apartheid, then you are also calling Canada apartheid and you are attacking Canadian values. The use of the phrase "Israeli Apartheid Week" is about as close to hate speech as one can get without being arrested, and I'm not certain it doesn't actually cross over that line.

It's also a thinly veiled campaign by those whose real agenda is to eradicate Israel entirely. During the last week, I read an online blog or journal—there are, sadly, many like it—and I'll quote from it. Bear in mind that this is not a secret website. It came to me because I am personally mentioned in it, and that simply triggered a Google alert. It's called ziofascism.net. Now quoting:

"Israel is a terrorist, apartheid state that bombs civilian neighbourhoods and hospitals, and engages in ethnic cleansing against its enemies and covert terror against its 'friends.'

"In Canada, the Israel Lobby—a web of organizations presided over by a handful of Jewish billionaires, who head the nominal 'Jewish groups' that together with media that is owned by some of the same billionaires—has shaped Canada's policy to favour Israel's security interests at the expense of Canada's."

Pure garbage—and Israeli Apartheid Week the same.

A few pertinent details about what my resolution is not: I am not attempting to tackle in 10 minutes in the Ontario Legislative Assembly any of the vast, ongoing problems relative to Israel—no discussion today of the peace process; no discussion of the existential questions of an Israeli state. Israel is quite simply there. It isn't going anywhere—not now and not ever.

Let me say that Israel, while demonstrating some very remarkable positives, is, in the end, just like Canada or any other democratic country: not always right, and always dealing with political challenges. My resolution is, however, not about any of that. I raise it by way of asserting that I or anyone else can debate such issues any time, any place, as long as such a debate is respectful and fair to all who seek to express an opinion.

That is precisely what Israeli Apartheid Week does not do, and in our free environment, in our hate-free public forum, it has no place.

Israeli Apartheid Week occurs about this time of year every year in various locations around the world, and it runs sometime within the first two weeks of March. As I have said, here it's in the first week of March, next week.

Here's what is truly remarkable about those who are supportive of Israeli Apartheid Week: Their very use of

that phraseology and the content of the supposedly neutral discussion seminars is really about an apartheid that is quite the reverse of what they contend exists.

Here's why: Those behind Israeli Apartheid Week are attempting to isolate Israel and place Israel on the receiving end of an apartheid experience—the minimization and the diminishment of any Jewish heritage in the region, the denigration of Jewish rights to a homeland, the lessening of Jewish people as not being on an equivalent level with any other members of humankind. How dare they? How dare they?

Do I have a problem with informed discussion about Israel or about West Bank Palestinians or Gazans? No, I do not. Do I have a problem with people of any stripe engaging in political dialogue about that region? No, I do not. Do I have a problem with one-sided views being expressed by either side? That's never a great idea, but actually, the answer there is also no, I do not.

So what is my problem? Well, my problem is the name Israeli Apartheid Week and what's in a name. Calling this series of events by a name that is, in itself, both assumptive and declaratory prior to anyone debating anything, we come dangerously close to an outright condemnation and engaging in hate speech before any dialogue—and there is no such dialogue. Dialogue is multifaceted, and this event is not.

The name is hateful, it is odious, and that's not how things should be in my Ontario, in our Ontario. In fact, my Ontario is not about drawing lines between differing elements of our diverse society and fighting battles 10,000 kilometres away by using labelling and unilateral positioning and sometimes even outright intimidation to make points.

My Ontario is about informed discussion, and if informed discussion should occur anywhere, it should be on the campuses of our universities and colleges. Israeli Apartheid Week is not and never has been about informed discussion. I became acquainted with campus activism as it exists today when I became personally and intimately involved in the York University strike and associated issues about 16 months ago. Factions on that and other campuses find themselves under siege, and that is quite unacceptable.

There are people on our campuses who assume untenable, unilateral positions about faraway places and offer no reasonable room for discussion. As a matter of fact, by way of example, in the last week, a group that went counter to Israeli Apartheid Week applied to York University—the same university that I mentioned—to hold an equal and opposite session, if you will, and was told that it couldn't. It certainly displayed a wide array of speakers, but it couldn't hold its session because the York University administration told it the security of those people couldn't be guaranteed. Isn't that interesting? You can't guarantee the security of people who want to speak in favour of Israel, but you can guarantee the security of people who don't? What does that say about balance on that campus?

In my day, universities were the places where solutions were found through informed dialogue. It seems

we've moved away from that and into a confrontation and intimidation stance. Isn't it precisely that from which people have escaped to take up a new life in multi-cultural, multi-ethnic Canada, where all are free and no one need be afraid? Isn't that one of the main reasons that we are all here in this place together?

My generation has not handled some things well. Perhaps the next generation will do better. But with a confrontational approach through events like Israeli Apartheid Week, how can we even begin?

"Apartheid" is an Afrikaans word that only applies to one single event in the history of humankind: the legislated separation and differentiation of races by colour in pre-Mandela South Africa. There is no comparison with any other situation on earth. Systemic racism is fairly uncommon, thank goodness, and it certainly is no hallmark of Israel. To say otherwise is at best a huge distortion and at worst, a damned lie. So I say to those who are behind Israeli Apartheid Week, the name of your event is propagandist and you are liars.

Israeli Apartheid Week, even according to some of its own proponents, makes historically inaccurate comparisons in order to delegitimize Israel and singles it out from every other country in the world. Campaigns like this are aimed solely at denying Israel's right to exist, and they do nothing at all to promote any kind of reconciliation or any kind of real dialogue. A true and lasting peace in the Middle East will only come through direct negotiation and open dialogue. Peace will never be achieved through any kind of inflammatory language promoted by this or any other campaign.

Israel is undeniably a democracy. It grants full rights to all of its citizens, regardless of race or religion. Arab- and Christian- and Muslim- and Druze- and Bedouin-Israelis have full citizenship and, foremost, the right to vote and to sit as members of the Israeli Parliament known as the Knesset.

Finally, Israeli Apartheid Week creates a toxic atmosphere on campuses, that labels supporters of Israel as racists and lessens their feelings of security. That is the truth. I have seen it personally.

It is time in Ontario to say what I am saying, to call for an end to hate speech. Israeli Apartheid Week is not an exercise in your free speech; it is an exercise in the curtailment of mine.

I said earlier that my resolution is not relevant to the existential question of Israel. Israel lives; it always has. The doubters can refer to archaeology. This is a land where Jewish people predate every other existing civilization, every other race on earth, and by thousands of years. Israel operates in a remarkably open and fully democratic way. Where else can anyone make that claim, especially in that region and, in a very real sense, over millennia?

The objectionable "apartheid" reference relates to the supposed isolation of Gazan and West Bank residents and their minimization by Israeli actions and policies. Anyone with an iota of intelligence knows that the day the Katyusha rockets stop landing in Israel and on its

children for good, the day Israel is fully accepted and recognized by its neighbours, that will be the day that productive dialogue and resolution will begin and come quickly.

Finally, I call on this Legislature to do what it has the moral right and obligation to do: Tell the people behind this odious distortion of facts and language that we don't do what they're trying to do in Ontario, that there is no Israeli apartheid, and that there should be no Israeli Apartheid Week suggesting anything to the contrary.

1340

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Before I begin, I want to dedicate these comments to someone that many of us knew and loved: a campaign manager, union activist, social justice activist and my campaign manager, who passed away on February 4, Julius Deutsch.

Julius asked me to officiate at his funeral, a funeral attended by some 500 people. The mayor spoke, among many others. And one of the things that Julius said to me before he passed away was when I asked him if there were any regrets in his life—and he lived three lives, not one. He said, "I never got to go to Israel."

I also want to dedicate these comments to my sister-in-law, who is Muslim and has travelled extensively in the Middle East, and to my church, because many of you know I was a United Church minister before I was elected to this position.

At Emmanuel Howard Park United Church, we did a number of firsts for a Christian church. The first thing we did was that on Holy Thursday—with many churches now, it's a tradition to do a Christianized reproduction, if I can say that, of Seder supper. What we did was a really Jewish Seder supper. We invited a Rabbinic friend to come in and to really walk us through, to have us experience what Jesus experienced on Holy Thursday.

The very Sunday after 9/11, we were the first church outside of Riverside in New York to recognize that what happened in 9/11 was going to be problematic for our Islamic neighbours. We invited Jami Mosque, the oldest mosque in Toronto, to come and worship with us that Sunday, and they came—a whole busload of them came. It was the first time anything like that had ever happened. They sat in our pews, we worshiped together, and we started a fast and friendly dialogue.

What I think we want on this issue, my friends, what we want in the Middle East and what we want in the world is the same, independent of our religious stripe, and that is peace. We want peace. We don't need inflammatory language on either side of this issue. We don't want it. We don't need it. We reject it.

Is "apartheid" an inflammatory term? Absolutely. There are lots of inflammatory terms flying around about the issue in the Middle East—lots of them on all sides of that issue. They are not helpful. They detract from the cause we're all engaged in, and that is peace.

I spoke to a number of people about this very issue before I stood here today and how really to deal with it. I heard from many Muslims—Muslims who have lived in

Israel and lived in other places in the Middle East—and many of them said the same thing to me: “We are not vested in that term. We don’t like that term. We’d like to talk about ending the occupation. We’d like to talk about the wall. We’d like to talk about substantive issues.” And these are both Jews and Muslims, both in and outside Israel. We don’t want to talk in inflammatory terms, and that’s what this motion speaks to.

It was interesting that one of the Muslims, a well-respected one, and I won’t drag his name out, said that, really, just like you heard from the member from Thornhill, Israel is one of the few if not the only real democracy in the Middle East. He said, having been a struggler for rights in Iran, “Certainly I’d rather live as a Muslim in Israel than in Iran at the moment.” And I think he speaks for many Muslims and certainly many of us—certainly as a woman.

As a woman who had the great good fortune of being the one to perform the first legalized same-sex marriage in North America, I know that the rights of LGBT people are important to me. They’re important to me, and they’re important to my constituents. So I look around the world as to where those rights are upheld, and it’s problematic. There are not too many places. We’re very much engaged, some of us, in the situation in Uganda right now. But I wouldn’t want to hold up any other place—I mean it’s a little freer in Israel than it is some of the places that surround Israel in that regard. This is problematic.

But one thing I will say, and I’ll say it to my friend from Thornhill, in terms of symbolism, one of the best things we can do in this House, dealing with a motion like this, is to reiterate what we all share, to reiterate the binds that bind us. I have to say, having been a studier of theology, having my doctorate in the theology and having read all of the scriptural precedents, that there is nothing in any of our scripture—Muslim, Jew or Christian—that does not call on us all to treat our brothers and sisters, independent of their religious background, independent of where they come from, as just that, brothers and sisters, with love—to extend a handshake and to avoid anything that would cause us to learn to hate each other, to propagate hatred or to propagate anything that would add to the deaths of children, for example. That’s why, when I stand here, I do so with some trepidation.

I’ve also heard the discussion, and I don’t think there’s validity to it, that this sort of motion does not belong here. I think, in a sense, it does. We are a place that is symbolic, in part at least. I know I have motions on the order paper that talk about the rights of Tibetans. We, as provincial representatives, really don’t have a lot to say about the rights of Tibetans, but we should say something about the rights of Tibetans, just as we should say something about the rights of all people who have legitimate grievances in the world. We should say something about it as human beings, never mind as political representatives.

Some have talked about peace—but, yes, peace with justice, absolutely. There’s no true peace without justice for everyone.

Certainly our federal New Democrats have a policy, a pretty widely supported policy, and that is the two-state solution. I don’t differ from that policy as a member of provincial Parliament. I think a two-state solution is the way to go.

But more importantly than talking about the politics in this place, what we really need to do is to talk about how to move from here as brothers and sisters, particularly at this time.

So here’s the thing. Israeli Apartheid Week: Does this help advance any cause? Even some friends that I have—and I have many—on the far left who have experienced real life in their home countries in the Middle East, and again mainly and mostly Muslim friends in the organization I’m thinking of, are very sceptical about such a term as “apartheid” when applying it to Israel.

First of all, as the member from Thornhill has pointed out, it’s not historically accurate any more than it would be to call Canada an apartheid nation because of our history with our First Nations people, although people have, right? It doesn’t help further the conversation. It doesn’t help First Nations people. It doesn’t help Muslims or Palestinians to talk about Israel as an apartheid nation. It doesn’t help Jews. It certainly doesn’t help Christians to use that term, and they support that.

The movement, though, is what I’m concerned about. I almost thought as I stood here that we should really start in prayer, because when you talk about such divisive issues, what I’m used to doing, coming from my background, is you start with prayer even if it’s in a multi-faith context, because you start where you share, and that’s with prayer. Just like in the Seder supper, you always pray for your enemies first. You pray for the Egyptians in the Seder supper. You pray for those that you have a contention with.

What I would suggest to all those on campuses is that instead of engaging in inflammatory language, instead of using terms that divide, we perhaps begin the discussion somewhere else. Perhaps we talk about what we do agree on and how we can move forward so that people’s lives could be saved. That is what we all want. What we all want to reiterate, and to go back to where I started, is peace—peace with justice, but peace. What we all want is safety. What we all want is what the member from Thornhill has in his riding, which, if I remember correctly, is a synagogue next to a mosque next to a Tibetan temple next to a Christian church. We want what we model in Canada. We want this for our neighbours around the world, in part. Not that we’re perfect—far from it—but we want what is so graphically shown in our city.

We want all faiths to work together. We want all peoples to work together. We want to take the level of rhetoric down at least a notch or two and to start seeing each other the way we see ourselves. That is what the Torah calls us to do. That is what the Christian Bible calls us to do. That is what the Quran calls us to do. That is what my Buddhist, Sikh and Hindu neighbours call us to do. That is what we are called to do—dare I say it?—by God. That is what we are called to do.

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I thank the member for standing and raising this. I also think, as I thank him, of all those Muslim friends of mine who are also concerned and have legitimate concerns. I suggest that perhaps rather than calling names at each other, they sit down the way we did at my church, around a common table, share a common meal—it's a meal we all share in some senses—and speak. What we suggest as a political party, the New Democratic Party, is that, again, we look towards a lasting peace, a peace with justice.

I have to say in closing that some of my favourite dissenting films come from the state of Israel, films against the draft in Israel, films that question the wall in Israel by Israelis themselves. In Israel there is fervid and ardent debate, as there should be here and everywhere; that's absolutely a given. But at the end of the day, let's drop the rhetoric, not just for now or this week but for all time, and let's go back to our scriptural roots, all of us, and let's speak as humans, the humans, as I say, our God meant us to be.

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

Mr. David Zimmer: I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Eglinton–Lawrence.

I too, like the previous speaker, am going to vote in support of the member from Thornhill's motion. Israeli Apartheid Week raises many, many troublesome questions. I have been thinking about it since the resolution was introduced. Some of the questions I've asked myself: What's the purpose of Israeli Apartheid Week? Secondly, what is the effect of Israeli Apartheid Week? What is it trying to achieve? I've asked myself in that regard, what is the endgame? What is the ultimate goal for everyone who's concerned about peace in the Middle East, particularly peace among the Israelis and the Palestinians? Does the concept of Israeli Apartheid Week serve that ultimate goal that all well-meaning people have, that is, peace?

With regard to its effect, I say my view is that Israeli Apartheid Week is, in effect, a block on that road to peace. It's a block on that road to peace because words have meaning. Words have effect. Words can be destructive. Apartheid: The word "apartheid," in my view, is a destructive word. It's particularly destructive in the context of trying to achieve an Israeli-Palestinian peace. To compare the situation in Israel, the tensions in Israel between Israelis and Palestinians, to apartheid in South Africa is just wrong; it's false and it's disingenuous. Apartheid week must surely serve another purpose, a not good purpose.

In the Israeli-Palestinian context, the word "apartheid," the suggestion that apartheid exists, is just factually wrong. That's the first problem with the word "apartheid" as it relates to the Middle East; it's factually wrong. In Israel, there's freedom of religion. All races, all ethnicities are free to come and go as they please. Arab Israelis serve in the Knesset. Arab Israelis vote. It's a fully functioning democracy; the Knesset is a fully

functioning democracy, unlike a lot of other countries in the world.

The question then becomes, when I reflect further on it, what can possibly be the motive or the intent of Israeli Apartheid Week? Assuming everyone wants peace—and they say they want peace, the organizers of Israeli Apartheid Week—I ask these questions of myself: Why do the organizers of Israeli Apartheid Week want to inflame the situation? Why do they want to inflame the situation between Jews and Palestinians? Why do they want to further divide Jews and Palestinians? Why do they want to aggravate an already fragile situation? Why not bring the parties together? Why not calm the fears and anxieties? Why not promote dialogue and reconciliation? In my view, Israeli Apartheid Week is destructive of any constructive Israeli-Palestinian relationship. It does nothing to promote the relationship.

Here's an idea, and I offer this to the organizers of Israeli Apartheid Week: Why not have an Israeli-Palestinian peace week? Now, that would be a novel and constructive step. You see, the real victim of Israeli Apartheid Week and that concept is peace itself: peace in Israel, peace in the Middle East. It's peace for Palestinians. It's peace for Arabs. It's peace for Israelis. It's peace for the Christians who live there. It's peace for everybody who lives there.

Why do the organizers, I ask myself, want to exacerbate an already difficult situation? Why not lower the temperature? Why not work towards dialogue, reconciliation and peace? What are they afraid of? What is their motive? Why won't they have an Israeli-Palestinian peace week? That would be truly something constructive.

Apartheid is a destructive concept. To accuse one side of practising apartheid does absolutely nothing to promote peace. That's why I'm supporting the member for Thornhill's motion.

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

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to participate briefly in this debate this afternoon. As you know, our caucus is afforded 12 minutes to speak to this motion, and there are two other speakers from our caucus who are interested—I understand maybe now one other speaker who is interested in making some remarks on the record with respect to this important private member's motion that has been brought forward this afternoon by my colleague and friend the member for Thornhill. He asked the House to consider "that, in the opinion of this House, the term Israeli Apartheid Week is condemned as it serves to incite hatred against Israel, a democratic state that respects the rule of law and human rights, and the use of the word 'apartheid' in this context diminishes the suffering of those who were victims of a true apartheid regime in South Africa."

From the outset, I want to indicate to the House my intention to support this resolution, to vote for it. I think the member is well-intentioned in his efforts to bring forward this issue this afternoon for consideration. It is timely, as he indicated. Campuses around Ontario, in

some cases, are organizing these kinds of events right now, and I think it's helpful and hopefully informative if the Ontario Legislature makes a statement and sends a strong message that this sort of event is not acceptable nor is it appropriate.

I agree with what has been said in the House this afternoon. I've always believed the state of Israel to be a free and democratic state with individual freedoms, free elections and a commitment to human rights. This kind of event that has been held, I guess, in campuses around Ontario, would appear to be not helpful in terms of advancing towards a solution.

I want to associate myself with some of the remarks that have been made by other members here so far. The member for Parkdale–High Park, I thought, gave an excellent speech, as did the member for—

Interjection: Unionville.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Unionville? David Zimmer.

Interjection: Willowdale.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Willowdale. I appreciated his positive and constructive discussion suggestion, whereby he challenged the students who might be participating in these kinds of events to have an Israel-Palestine peace week instead of this, and that would serve to create a foundation for reasoned dialogue, as opposed to potentially inciting hatred.

The member for Thornhill has been an outstanding addition to our caucus since he was first elected in 2007. He's really given us a new agree of enthusiasm that I hope people will see in this House day to day. He is a strong voice for fairness and for a logical, reasoned decision-making approach in government, and he adds a great deal to our discussions in this House. I want to commend him for bringing this forward today and again encourage all members of this House to express support for it when it comes time to vote.

1400

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

Mr. Mike Colle: Generally, I don't agree with many of the positions of the member from Thornhill, and I'm proud to say I don't, but in this case here, I unequivocally support this resolution, because he has clearly demonstrated a horrific example of what is really hate speech that has been put into a systematic attack on the only democracy in the Middle East. It's called Israeli Apartheid Week. It's just ludicrous.

Here is a small democracy surrounded by all these dictatorships. The organizers of this week never look at what is happening in Yemen or maybe Saudi Arabia or that regime in Iran. They don't bother with those regimes and the incredible amount of torture and systemic abuse of people, their populations, but they pick on Israel. Why do they pick on Israel? It has nothing to do with Muslims, nothing to do with Palestine; it has to do with this long-time systemic hate against anything to do with the Jewish religion. That's what it is.

So these hate-mongers have co-opted people into organizing this; basically, it's a worldwide campaign to

demonize Israel, and this is what this is part of. Israeli Apartheid Week is anti-academic, and it is not a debate but a prejudged diatribe against Israel that prides itself in creating hostility toward Israel. That's what they want to do. It stifles debate, as evidenced by the title alone. Labelling Israel as an apartheid state is a deliberate and calculated attempt to undermine the legitimacy of the state of Israel. That's what it is. Anything to do with Israel, anything to do with the Jewish state, is under attack by these propagators of hate.

It's not just the universities where this hate is organized. It has spread even to our churches. Earlier this summer, the United Church of Canada's 40th general council had a resolution basically calling for the divestment of Israel, entitled "Seeking Peace in the Middle East Using South African Actions for Justice as a Model." So even our churches are engaged in this. Luckily, the resolution did not pass. I'm proud to say that I sent a letter to David Giuliano, the moderator of the United Church, and said that it is appalling that this resolution is even before the church. It was just disgusting that Canada's largest church is discussing this anti-Israel apartheid type of motion.

Then we have Canada's largest union engaged in the same activity. CUPE has been doing this systemically for years: trying to boycott Israeli products and trying to condemn Israel.

We, as citizens of Ontario, should stand up to this type of hate-mongering, whether it's CUPE, the United Church or this group that organizes this Israeli Apartheid Week. It's couched with all kinds of different things about protecting and trying to help people, but it's basically a pointed, focused attack on the only democracy in the Middle East, which is having an incredibly difficult time coping with the enemies that surround it. The enemies are not only Iran and Yemen and all these pseudo states, but this worldwide hatred of anything to do with Israel.

So if we don't condemn this type of utter nonsense here in our universities, in our churches and in our unions, it is basically, with our silence, no different than what happened in Germany. Remember there was a famous quote in pre-war Germany that said something like, "First they came for the Jews, and I said nothing; then they came for the Catholics, and I said nothing; then they came for the Protestants, and I said nothing." At least by standing up and supporting such a resolution, we're able to say that this is wrong, that you don't arbitrarily malign, denigrate and attack one group of people and say that it's to the benefit of some other group. This type of pointed hate is not acceptable. This Israeli Apartheid Week unequivocally is based on systemic hate of Israel and anything Jewish, and there's no way around it. This type of thing is liable to spread, as it has spread beyond our colleges, and we should try to put an end to it as fast as we can. It's not about free speech at all; it's about hate-mongering for no substantiated reason. To equate Israel to apartheid in South Africa is absurd, considering what the state of Israel has

accomplished in democracy and what it has accomplished in terms of treating people from all walks of life. Yes, Israel is not a perfect state, but democracy is not perfect. So I urge you to support this resolution.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: It's a real privilege to have been asked by my good friend and colleague the member from Thornhill, Mr. Shurman, to speak and make remarks with respect to his resolution against Israeli Apartheid Week. I think it is striking, as well, to each member here to recognize the many points made by all three parties in support of the intent of this resolution. Each of us has a reflection on why we would like to make remarks. I have two particular reasons that are personal, bringing some reference to why I'm speaking not only in support of the resolution but to, as has been said, the term and the wordsmithing around it—whoever crafted this sort of statement, Israeli Apartheid Week. The two reference points are, first of all, my beloved sister, Jane, who married a wonderful man, Dr. Paul Goodman, who is unfortunately deceased; he died way too young. He was a very kind and generous man, a very intelligent man. I shared many feasts and celebrations with him in his Jewish faith, as well as he in my Christian faith. It's quite interesting that he taught me more about tolerance than anyone I had met, and that includes my sister, who does continue in the pursuit of studying theology, which is part of her life.

More importantly, I had a chance some years ago to participate as a peace observer in Northern Ireland. It was during the time of the Good Friday accord. There is quite an interesting parallel between these struggles, most of them based on differences of faith and most of them based on intolerance—often, intolerance based on ignorance of one another. In that respect, I was drawn to reflecting on the comments made by Mr. Shurman and the resolution itself.

I think it's absolutely true that it creates an artificial atmosphere and diminishes the struggles of peoples, really. The resolution uses the term—and the member from Willowdale pointed this out, the inappropriate use of the word “apartheid” in relation to Israel. It's not only false but also it diminishes, and in fact is offensive to, the millions of people who suffered under the actual apartheid of South Africa.

I know that Nelson Mandela—there was a movie just recently portraying his life and what a wonderful, inspiring person and individual he was, despite the suffering he endured during apartheid, the real apartheid. He in fact appeared here in the Ontario Legislature as a guest of then-Premier David Peterson. This was sometime before 1990. Nelson Mandela made the remark that he could not conceive of Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories “if Arab states do not recognize Israel within secure borders.” That's really the politics of intolerance, and the crucial part of this whole debate.

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But if you look at the comparison to apartheid, it's actually false and spurious, and provokes the toxic

atmosphere that my good friend mentioned. It bears no resemblance to the realities of contemporary Israel and plays down the uniqueness of South Africa and the experience of apartheid, as I've mentioned.

The resolution reminds us that “the use of the word ‘apartheid’ in this context diminishes the suffering of those who were victims of a true apartheid regime” and, in fact, the values of Judaism itself.

Prior to 1994, apartheid in the state of South Africa was extraordinarily repressive. Through legalized racism, it regulated every detail of the lives of 90% of the citizens on the basis of the colour of their skin. The concept of apartheid, or separateness, was actually enshrined in South African law in 1948 and only came to an end in 1994.

By contrast, the state of Israel was founded in 1948, on the very principles of democracy. The Israeli declaration of independence says that the nation will uphold the full social and political equality of all citizens, guaranteeing full freedom of conscience, worship, education and culture. The declaration affirms that the State of Israel will promote the development of the country for the benefit of all inhabitants. It is based on the precepts of liberty, justice and peace taught by the Hebrew prophets themselves. Israel's declaration of independence states that it will safeguard the sanctity of shrines and holy places of all religions and will dedicate itself to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The declaration stands in sharp contrast to the dozens of laws enacted by the South African regime to enforce the racism and segregation of apartheid. Israel's declaration of independence is honoured not only in principle but indeed in practice throughout the world.

As a democratic state, Israel upholds the rule of law for all citizens who fully participate in Israel's political life. Arab students and professors study, research, teach and debate at all Israeli university campuses, including at Haifa, a university where 20% of the student body is Arab. Those who might consider boycotting Israel's universities and other institutions should remember that, in doing so, they would indeed be boycotting both Jews and Arabs.

As a member of the Legislature, we have a duty to protect these very values that are being debated today. If a democratic country that supports the rule of law, human rights and personal freedom is described as an apartheid state, that claim should not go unchallenged.

I can tell you that I also have concerns that this terminology may indeed incite hatred and provoke conflict against the state and the people, as well as our own freedom and perception of it.

I will be voting, I hope with many others—or all others; I hope unanimously—in support and in favour of the resolution from my good friend, partner and colleague the member from Thornhill. I would call on this House to support this resolution unanimously.

With the final remaining seconds, I would only state that in the debate that I've listened to today, there has been no recognition for this hate speech of Israeli

Apartheid Week. That's what this is about: tolerance, to the fullest extent of the democracy that we all share.

In that spirit, I will leave the rest of the time for my colleagues to make remarks.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate? The honourable member for Thornhill.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Thank you to all of the members who participated in the debate, as well to members who approached me on a one-to-one basis and offered their support. It's a nice thing to stand in the Legislature, which is so often filled with acrimony and rancour, and hear members from all three parties talk in positive terms about something that should be a positive experience, which is the opportunity for people who live in Ontario to engage in informed debate, and very particularly on the campuses of Ontario to be able to put forward ideas that, ultimately, are not meant to demonstrate that Israel is any more perfect as a country than Canada or any other but, rather, to look for solutions to the problems that each country has.

Very particularly, thank you to the member from Parkdale–High Park, who I listen to often in debate, who brings her take on the world with a very wide-ranging and open-armed approach to questions that concern religion and background; to the member from Willowdale, for his recognition that this is about an endgame that has nothing to do with apartheid, but existence; to the members and my colleagues from Wellington–Halton Hills and Durham for their added comments, and to my friend from Eglinton–Lawrence who, while he may not agree with me most times, thank goodness agrees with me on this one.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I should have explained, since the Conservatives hadn't used all their time, you had the minute 30 plus two minutes.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Well, I have a couple more things, then, if you like.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The honourable member for—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Okay. That ending the time for this ballot item, we will vote on Mr. Shurman's item in about 100 minutes.

ZERO WASTE DAY ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LA JOURNÉE « ZÉRO DÉCHET »

Mr. Kular moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 247, An Act to proclaim Zero Waste Day / *Projet de loi 247, Loi proclamant la Journée zéro déchet* ».

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has up to 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Kuldip Kular: Thank you, Speaker. I would also like to thank my colleagues who have agreed to speak to Bill 247.

I would like to begin this debate of the merits of Bill 247 by acknowledging the excellent work that's already under way in this province by our government, municipal governments, non-governmental organizations and private citizens, to protect our public health, natural resources and our environment by reducing waste in our society, especially through waste diversion and conservation.

Bill 247 would proclaim the Wednesday of the third week of every October as Zero Waste Day. This bill would be an opportunity for every Ontarian to witness the actual amount of waste that's produced over the course of a typical day. It would be an opportunity to challenge Ontarians, for one day, to reduce as much as possible the waste in their lives and, in doing so, conserve resources and reduce their impact on the environment.

The challenge of achieving zero waste in Ontario may seem overwhelming. After all, the Minister of the Environment has expressed his belief that many people consider waste a normal by-product of their daily activities. You might even say that we live in a disposable age, when any products or material we no longer have use for may easily be thrown out and replaced. That's why we must continue to challenge Ontarians, as individuals, families, communities and industries, to transform that wasteful outlook and to see the opportunities to reduce our waste through conservation and waste diversion, sending what we do produce as waste to facilities where it can be reduced, reused or recycled, to have the value of our waste materials reclaimed as products with a renewed use, and in so doing, to help protect Ontario's natural legacy.

Certainly, this work is already under way in this province in a big way. Blue boxes to collect recyclable waste from households and businesses are a common sight. Waste diversion rates in communities and neighbourhoods with blue boxes are as high as 66%. The overall residential recycling rate is estimated to be about 39%.

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Manufacturers of plastic bottles, through industry stewards, are helping to fund recycling programs that capture as much of their disposable products as possible before they are abandoned in our landfills.

Twenty-six municipalities in Ontario offer household compost programs that transform organic household wastes into nutrient-rich soils for use in our gardens, parks and farms.

We have also introduced special programs to collect electronic and household hazardous wastes before they are allowed to slowly poison our natural environment and taint our vital water and soil. We have legislation to control factory and vehicle emissions.

We advocate energy conservation, which reduces the demand for fossil fuels through the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design—LEED—rating system to promote efficiency in public buildings. Through the Green Energy Act, we are demanding home energy

audits and investing strategically in the research and development of green energy alternatives that will power this province's communities and businesses through our Green Energy Act. Through the Waste Diversion Act, and in co-operation with stakeholders, businesses and industries, we continue to explore innovative and cost-effective solutions to our waste problems.

Some might say that all of this is enough, but the task of reducing our society's impact on the natural environment remains enormous. The Ministry of the Environment has estimated that about 34,000 tonnes of waste are produced each day in this province. The majority of that waste ends up in our landfills. On a yearly basis, this amounts to about 12.41 million tonnes a year—almost a tonne of garbage for every man, woman and child in this province.

While a growing amount of the most harmful waste is diverted to be reused, recycled and re-treated in order to reduce its damage to the natural environment, most of what remains is still harmful. In fact, roughly 80% of what we waste continues to make its way to landfills despite current efforts, taking years and decades or even centuries to break down and vanish.

Taken one day at a time and one person at a time, the challenge of drastically reducing waste becomes manageable at a very personal level. Zero Waste Day is something that can be taken into each home, school and workplace. At home, Zero Waste Day can be an opportunity for parents and children to pay special attention to the water and energy they use. They can take shorter showers, run less water through the taps, turn off lights and electronics when they are not needed, and even install electricity-saving equipment. They can throw out less garbage and make the choice to recycle more paper products, plastics and metals.

If renovating, they can be reminded to consider donating old carpets, kitchenettes, toilets, sinks and cans of paint to such places as a local Habitat for Humanity ReStore. Families can ensure they put their organic food waste into the household composter or compost bin.

On Zero Waste Day, students can brainstorm ways to conserve more in their own schools, beginning with ways they can produce less waste, such as buying personal supplies that are made from recycled materials. Classes can even use the day to organize a recycling drive to gather waste that can be diverted from the landfill to more useful places, such as recycling depots.

Even adults, in their workplaces, can be encouraged to rethink how they can use office material. They may opt to make fewer photocopies or print jobs in favour of sending more e-mails.

Reusable cups and mugs can be given to students and staff in order to reduce the need for single-use bottles of water. These cups can be refilled at water dispensers or using tap water.

Over this one day, the amount of waste that is reduced in Ontario may not seem much. What will have been achieved, however, is a dramatic illustration to individuals of just how much waste they have saved, and that

may be enough to encourage many of them to get into the habit of preventing more waste on an ongoing basis.

The fact is, this province—as a society as much as a government—can and should do more to promote conservation of our natural resources and our environment.

Zero Waste Day would help to promote this goal. It could also be a day to recognize what is being achieved by corporate leaders.

Plastic bottle manufacturers are doing their utmost to capture single-use bottles before their value as a waste material that can be remade is lost to a landfill.

In my own riding of Bramalea–Gore–Malton, the Emterra Tire Recycling facility can process up to 1.4 million used tires from cars and light trucks, shredding the rubber into crumb, which is then used to make doormats, gymnasium mats for schools and playgrounds, sports field turf, asphalt, industrial floor coverings and automotive products.

Clearly, the Zero Waste Day concept is not necessarily a competition between environmental stewardship and today's economic challenges.

Companies such as Walmart have proven that through environmentalism and conservation, there are in fact real economic opportunities for innovators and businesses.

I think it's very important that Zero Waste Day would be an opportunity for students, businesses, community leaders and each of us as legislators to study and research or at least be especially mindful of many creative solutions to waste management that are under way throughout the world.

I'm requesting members of all sides of this House to support this bill to enact and proclaim Zero Waste Day on Wednesday of the third week of October each year.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: Here we are debating yet again another day to create further awareness of the importance of waste diversion. Certainly it's a subject we all agree is a very important goal.

Specifically, we're being asked to designate the third Wednesday of October during what many would recognize as Waste Reduction Week and to designate a day as Zero Waste Day.

It was about three months ago when we were in the Legislature debating the merits of Climate Change Awareness Day. In fact, during that debate, I came to realize that in this session alone, we have debated Peace Officers Memorial Day, Tom Longboat Day, Congenital Heart Disease Awareness Day, Greenbelt Day, National Students against Impaired and Distracted Driving Day.

Interjection.

1430

Mr. Toby Barrett: That will be a long day; it's a long title—Stop Human Trafficking Day, St. John Ambulance Day, Mental Health Awareness Day and Climate Change Awareness Day, as I had mentioned. I'm not downplaying the importance of these days, these awareness initiatives, but there are just so many days in the year.

I do find in my area that much of the concern is with the economy, actually, and to some extent the deficit and where we're heading down that road as far as our children and grandchildren go. We're concerned that with yet another day, a Zero Waste Day—I don't see it as a diversion or anything; I don't mean to suggest that, but—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It is wasteful, though.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I don't know about that. Are you speaking next?

It will engender some positive headlines, I'm sure, and maybe make the 6 o'clock news. I am the environment critic, but I also get concerned with the economy and what we can do as far as job creation in this great province of Ontario.

So I know when one's ballot comes up, oftentimes members do come up with a designation for another day, and it's probably a good thing in one sense, a type of green awareness day. I'm not sure if there are any days left when we're not recognizing something. Again, there would be proponents for this bill, Bill 247, and their hearts would be in the right place. Quite frankly, I wonder, though, in designating yet another day in addition to the myriad of designated days, and more specifically the environmental type days, where does this end?

As far as the environmental calendar, we all know about Earth Day. That goes back to 1970. In 1970, I was teaching environmental science and I celebrated Earth Day. I was in New York City. I had a very large Earth Day decal on the front windshield of my truck. People recognized that decal—certainly in Manhattan they did.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Was it a big truck?

Mr. Toby Barrett: It was a gas-guzzler, a 289 Ford engine, four-wheel drive, but this was 1970.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: That was then.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Yes. After that, I drove something different.

But while we're on that subject, I would just like to take a look at Earth Day and the success of Earth Day.

Going back 39 years, I was teaching agriculture and environmental science. At that time, my students were up to the challenge in a very real and direct way. Each day, one of my students would go up to the cafeteria at about 3 in the afternoon, and the people who ran the cafeteria—it was quite a large high school—would have assembled all of the kitchen waste leftovers, the food leftovers and other related food waste. We would bring it down to my area—I had a greenhouse and there was a chicken pen—and we would throw it on a compost pile all that winter. Guess what? That spring—I had lots of students, about 200 students—we would shovel all this stuff through a compost shredder and you would get the most beautiful black tilthy soil you can imagine from the kitchen waste. It only took a few months. We would bag it up and put it in bushel baskets. People from the town of Simcoe and the area would come in the springtime, pick up some of the plants from our greenhouse, and go home with a bushel basket of compost that came right from the high

school cafeteria. So we had young people, then, contributing in a very direct way. Here we are, 39 years later, and I don't know how many high schools or universities—I don't know about the cafeteria here, whether they do any direct composting. We could have a compost pile at Queen's Park.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I expressed that to the Speaker.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I think you did, and I went on your tree tour.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: That was another one.

Mr. Toby Barrett: And that could be an idea. Who knows where the leaves go from Queen's Park? They do get raked up in the fall.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I know that the squirrels get eaten by the hawks.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Oh, the red-tailed hawk. Yes, I've watched that, and those who have a window looking out over Queen's Park. So within the legislative precinct and the adjacent park to the north, we're blessed with some opportunities to perhaps do some direct action for the benefit of our area environment.

I'm looking back to what I consider those visionary days of the early 1970s, and I do question to what extent we have progressed. Certainly the Ontario government of the day initiated much of the environmental legislation we presently have. I think of the founder of Earth Day, Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson. He was very concerned, at that time, with respect to population growth and environmental sustainability—the impact of the human population on our environment. Back in 1963, he persuaded President John F. Kennedy to take a nationwide conservation tour.

At the time, Gaylord Nelson, for purposes of environmental awareness, took a page out of the anti-Vietnam protest book as far as hosting teach-ins. He switched that to environmental teach-ins. His thought was, why not have a nationwide teach-in on the environment? That was the first Earth Day in 1970, and it involved 20 million participants. So we focus on Earth Day: a name, a symbol—a brand, if you will—that has become well-publicized and in many ways hasn't lost much in translation over the past 39 years.

Just going back to Gaylord Nelson's concern with overpopulation in the early 1970s, back then the global population was 3.7 billion, today we're clocking at 6.7 billion people and by the end of my statement, there will be another 375 residents on the planet. In the next 30 years there will be another 30 more Earth Days and there will be another four million people expected to arrive just in the GTA and the Golden Horseshoe alone. Greenbelt or not, in my view that is not sustainable.

As Environmental Commissioner Gord Miller has stated, "This rate of growth is unprecedented in Ontario; the anticipated increase is equivalent to creating a mid-sized city roughly the size of Kitchener every year for the next 24 years." If you get that many people arriving in the future, that's an awful lot of garbage, an awful lot of waste and an awful lot of potential waste management

concerns. Whether the impact of a Zero Waste Day is up to dealing with that—it would certainly contribute as part of an approach to that; I would certainly acknowledge that.

I think we should recognize and celebrate, if you will, the positive results, in my view, from the creation of Earth Day, something that I feel is well worth continuing to support.

1440

Just a few fast figures here: On April 5, the environment minister of the day, Leona Dombrowsky, announced 60% of the province's waste would be diverted by 2008. I have one quote from her: "Government intends to assist municipalities to divert 60% of their municipal solid waste by the year 2005."

We obviously did not meet that target. A deadline of 60% diversion has well passed, and I regret to inform the House that the minister admits it's just 22% at this point. So there is a target that wasn't met. Perhaps the designation of a day might help this government raise their own awareness on that front.

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

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I was going to be a little critical—not of the member, but of the government—as it relates to their commitment to conservation, the Liberal commitment to waste diversion and their interest in incineration, which former US Vice-President Al Gore spoke against.

But in the spirit of this bill, in the spirit of promoting the principles of zero waste in Ontario, I am not going to divert too much of my attention, including conserving my energy, so that I can deal with the next motion, the library services for the visually impaired.

So I just wanted to tell the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, I'll be supporting your motion.

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

M. Shafiq Qaadri: J'ai le plaisir maintenant de soutenir mon collègue le représentant de la circonscription de Bramalea–Gore–Malton et ce projet de loi 247, Loi proclamant la Journée « zéro déchet ».

Qu'est-ce que c'est que la Journée « zéro déchet »? C'est un jour pour faire face au défi. C'est une opportunité pour démontrer aux Ontariens et Ontariennes comment réduire nos déchets dans notre vie quotidienne, à travers notre société, dans le but de protéger notre écosystème.

Le défi pour nous tous est de produire le minimum possible de déchets et d'ordures.

Pour les étudiants, ceci veut dire ne pas prendre un repas à emballage jetable à l'école; pour les adultes, réduire le nombre de photocopies et d'impressions, et d'autres mesures.

One of my colleagues on the opposite side used a little bit of the easy humour approach on the many, many different days that are proclaimed in the province of Ontario. I would simply suggest that it's probably an

indication of how special and vibrant and full our political and social life in Ontario is.

While the Conservatives may wish to conserve the number of days, I would respectfully suggest that that is not really the mandate of this Legislature. I'd also just note that he did seem, in the latter part of his speech, to actually begin the proclamation of a compost day, which I, in advance, will support.

Le concept « zéro déchet » encourage la conservation de toutes les ressources, notamment de ces précieux biens que sont l'eau douce et les ressources naturelles. Il vise aussi à stimuler l'innovation économique et technologique, ce qui peut contribuer à réduire la quantité de déchets que produit notre société grâce à leur transformation en produits utiles.

Speaker, as you will know, as physicians, of course we have a particularly prescribed mandate; but I think those of us who are physicians and enter the Legislature can become, say, physicians to the body politic, possibly environmental physicians. Theologians, for example, have also been described as "spiritual physicians."

So with that, I would commend my colleague from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, who is utilizing both his vantage points, not only as a legislator, but also as a physician who is certainly concerned with the environment, with toxins, with environmental pollution, with air quality, with water quality, and of course, a myriad of other issues that impact the human body and the systemic health of our province in bringing forward this important issue, this important day for engaging our public, for bringing these issues to the forefront, whether it's in schools or colleges, in industry, in universities and so on.

With that, I would first of all like to offer congratulations to him for bringing forward this important resolution, as well as to yield the floor to my colleagues.

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

Mr. Phil McNeely: It's a pleasure for me to rise today to speak to Bill 247, An Act to proclaim Zero Waste Day.

First, I want to thank the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton for proposing this bill. Reducing waste in the environment is important in creating a culture of conservation in Ontario and fits into Ontario's already existing environmental policy and Ministry of the Environment programs.

As parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, and having worked on the Green Energy Act, I fully realize the importance of supporting new initiatives that will contribute to the province's efforts to increase awareness of environmental issues. For this reason, I will enthusiastically support my colleague from Bramalea–Gore–Malton in his efforts to see Zero Waste Day established in Ontario. In my own work on climate change, I have become convinced that we urgently need to take action, and in many directions. Taking action begins with creating awareness.

Statistics show that roughly 34,000 tonnes of waste is sent daily to Ontario landfills. This works out to about 12.4 million tonnes of waste that cannot be reused or

recycled and that ends up in our landfills each year. Looking at these numbers, it's clear that we need to do more than reuse and recycle; we need to reduce how much waste we produce. Also, it is clear that more needs to be done to encourage individuals and communities to change their habits and to inform them as to how they can reduce waste.

Many zero-waste projects are already under way at the grassroots level, whether they are in schools, in non-governmental and non-profit organizations or other community-based initiatives. I know that many high schools in my constituency—and I have to praise the high school kids. They are way the heck ahead of adults on this, and they're enthusiastic about contributing to and developing new ways to reduce, reuse and recycle. Creating a specific day that will focus the efforts of these groups to reduce waste will be an efficient and an effective way not only to create awareness but also to incite Ontarians to action.

Zero Waste Day also fits in nicely with Canada's Waste Reduction Week in the third week of October. Having zero waste on the Wednesday of that week will go even further in creating environmental awareness.

We urgently need to change the way we think about the waste we produce, whether the waste comes from disposable products or from using energy in a wasteful manner. Reducing waste is the most effective way to create a culture of conservation and to save ourselves money in the long run. By reducing the amount we waste, we will lessen the need to spend money and resources on recycling and reusing products. So much emphasis is placed on recycling and reusing; it is time we focus on cutting out wasteful habits altogether.

So I'm very, very pleased today to be able to support the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, and I hope that the House supports this bill.

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

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I'd also like to commend our colleague from Bramalea–Gore–Malton for introducing Bill 247, An Act to proclaim Zero Waste Day. It certainly is a good way to remind Ontarians about the importance of conservation and reducing waste.

I think it really is imperative that we place a very high priority on the three Rs—reduce, reuse and recycle. The ways of generations past are simply unsustainable. We need to move on a path towards a zero-waste future, and we need to look at waste in new ways, seeing the opportunities inherent in materials we once thought of as garbage.

This bill complements some of the initiatives that we've already taken. Certainly many of them did occur several decades ago. I well remember as medical officer of health for York region, when they had their very first household hazardous waste program at the region, getting the engineers involved to understand that it was extremely important to also divert needles that were used by diabetics from landfill, with the possibility of injury and contamination from bacteriological and viral risks. It

was something that we in fact implemented some 20 years ago. But now we have a uniform program across the province, and our new household hazardous waste program, as of July 1, 2010, will include things such as fluorescent lights, pharmaceuticals and household cleaners. It is very important that we do not have these end up in our landfills or even poured down the drain.

1450

It's also a great step forward that we have an e-waste program, which started April 1, 2009. The first phase involves computers and TVs. It was an impetus for us to finally get rid of our 1985 Zenith that had served us faithfully because we could now be confident that it would be recycled. These types of initiatives keep toxics like lead and mercury out of our landfills, and also we can recover valuable materials.

I'm very optimistic that the opposition parties will support this bill. We know that they like to reuse and recycle old ideas during question period, so no doubt this will appeal to them. I'm hoping they will move on the third R, reduce. I know, as a rule, that less is, in fact, more.

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

Mr. Joe Dickson: It's my pleasure to speak on Bill 247, brought forward by MPP Dr. Kular from Bramalea–Gore–Malton. I think it's an excellent bill in front of us and certainly I'm going to support it.

I can tell you, in my hometown community of Ajax–Pickering, we had already started some 25 years ago a project called Ajax Environmental Affairs Week. We were extremely successful. We have over 1,000 volunteers and we do tremendous good work in the community.

One night at Ajax council—back in those days, when I was a member of Ajax council, at the end of each council meeting there was a time left for residents to come forward and ask questions. I had spoken on Ajax Environmental Affairs Week that evening and a lady came forward. Her name was Sherry Brown. At that time I didn't realize she was the president of ACE, which is Ajax Citizens for the Environment. She asked the simple question, "What about waste reduction?" That's a quarter of a century ago. I have to tell you, even staff was a little stumped. I said, "By all means, I'd be pleased to speak with you after the meeting," and some year and a half later we were under way with an annual week that's now in its 23rd successive year. It is extremely successful and it does a tremendous amount of good work in the community. It has nowhere to go but grow.

I can tell you that producing zero waste is a challenge for manufacturers as well; let's be fair. That said, the onus is not 100% on the consumer. I'm a businessperson and I have a responsibility to help reduce packaging and to produce less weight at the end of the product's life. Business has a duty to do this throughout each and every one of their manufacturing processes. We should be reminding businesses of this. Let's remind business and the general public every day of the year, but let's

specifically remind them on October 20th annually, which is the date that the good doctor has brought forward to become Zero Waste Day in Ontario. I hope each and every one of us here today stand and support that unanimously. It certainly deserves it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Kular, you have up to two minutes for your response.

Mr. Kuldip Kular: I want to thank my honourable colleagues, the members for Haldimand–Norfolk, Trinity–Spadina, Etobicoke North, Ottawa–Orléans, Oak Ridges–Markham and Ajax–Pickering.

Proclaiming a day, whether it's a Zero Waste Day or not, reminds people to observe that day. I definitely think that if we can proclaim this Zero Waste Day by passing Bill 247 today, it will help remind us to reduce our waste.

As I said, Zero Waste Day, if passed, would fall on the Wednesday of the third week of every October, a week acknowledged by many organizations and communities in this province as Waste Reduction Week. So even if it's one day, it will definitely make some dent, and it will continue to move us forward, at least achieving some reduction in our waste production.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will vote on Mr. Kular's ballot item in about 50 minutes.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED

ACCESSIBILITÉ POUR LES PERSONNES HANDICAPÉES

Mr. Vic Dhillon: I move that, in the opinion of this House, all levels of government have a collective responsibility to strengthen accessibility across Canada by ensuring that necessary funding for library services, books and essential information is provided for accessible formats so that blind and partially sighted Canadians have the same opportunity as fully sighted people to read.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Dhillon moves private member's notice of motion number 128. Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has up to 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Vic Dhillon: I'm very proud to bring forward this resolution on behalf of the thousands of people who are blind and partially sighted in Ontario and across Canada. I would like to recognize, first of all, a few special visitors in the members' gallery. Representing the CNIB are Margaret McGory, Karen Madho and Martin Courcelles. I wish to welcome them to Queen's Park and thank them for the work they do every day on behalf of blind and partially sighted Canadians. Thank you very much for coming here today.

My resolution calls on all levels of government to strengthen accessibility across Canada so that those who are blind or partially sighted will have access to books in formats that will allow them to read. Certainly, all Ontarians have a right to read. They must have access to these materials. It is unacceptable to deny a blind or partially sighted person the right to read because it is

inconvenient or too costly to provide materials in a format that is accessible to them.

Our province funds libraries. On a yearly basis, local libraries purchase books so that our community members can enjoy the joys of reading. Why should someone who is blind or partially sighted be denied the same opportunity? There is simply no excuse. We have a collective responsibility across this province and across this country to ensure that anyone who wants to read will not be denied that right because their book, magazine, newspaper etc. is not available in a format that is accessible for them to read. Only 5% of materials in print are available in alternative format. This is a very low number.

In a 2003 speech to Library and Archives Canada, Jim Sanders, the then president and CEO of CNIB, spoke of the need for a multi-jurisdictional network of equitable library services for people with print disabilities in Canada. His dream was to be able to walk into his local library and receive the same access to services and books that every sighted person enjoys. He emphasized that equitable access to public libraries for all Canadians with print disabilities would only be possible when all the stakeholders are engaged and committed. These stakeholders include publishers, provincial and federal governments, the library sector and specialist libraries such as the CNIB.

I share Mr. Sanders's vision, and I believe that it is the responsibility of each level of government to make this possible. We have partners in the community that are advocating on behalf of the blind and partially sighted. Again, I would like to recognize the contribution of the CNIB. The CNIB is an organization that is dedicated to representing blind and partially sighted Canadians. The CNIB is Canada's largest producer of alternative-format reading materials, with an extensive collection which includes 80,000 alternative-format titles available on demand, Braille and electronic books, more than 50 newspapers in English and French, thousands of magazines, over 1,000 described videos, children's books in print-Braille format, and also, each year the CNIB library circulates 2.2 million items in alternative formats to Canadians at no cost.

1500

There are thousands of titles available only in antiquated analog format that await the resources to be converted to a digital format.

The CNIB launched a campaign called Right to Read. In this campaign, Canadians from across the country were encouraged to contact their provincial and federal representatives and urge them to support and sustain the CNIB library and the vital services they provide. I have heard from many of my constituents, and their voice is in unanimous support of this great campaign.

I am proud that our government has been and continues to be a strong advocate for the blind. I urge all stakeholders to take the initiative and support the blind and partially sighted people in their quest to read.

Most people are blessed with full vision. Many people who have difficulty seeing are able to use glasses as a corrective measure. However, people who are blind and

partially sighted cannot put on glasses to correct their vision. It is our collective responsibility to strengthen accessibility across Canada by ensuring necessary funding for library services, and that library services are provided in formats that the blind and partially sighted can use to read.

I ask for the support of this House in passing this resolution and, in doing so, sending a message across Canada that we stand with those who are blind and partially sighted and we will do whatever is necessary to allow them to read.

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

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise and speak to this resolution to ensure that blind and partially sighted Canadians have access to library services, books and essential information. I think all members of this House would agree that providing that access is the right thing to do.

I would just like to put on the record the resolution that we're debating, and I just want to refer to it a little bit in that context. The resolution is that, in the opinion of this House, all levels of government have a collective responsibility to strengthen accessibility across Canada by ensuring necessary funding for library services, books and essential information is provided for accessible formats so that blind and partially sighted Canadians have the same opportunity as fully sighted people to read. I think this is a very important resolution, and I thank the member for putting it forward. But it isn't just good enough to have a resolution that we agree with doing that. I think we need to do something more. In fact, I think the resolution is such that the honourable member who brought the resolution forward would expect that no one in this House would disagree with this resolution—because I think, as he said in his presentation, that it should be a right of every Canadian to have the same access.

This isn't just about books for entertainment. This is about ensuring that vision challenges do not prevent people from reading and learning. It's about textbooks, instructional guides, newspapers and magazines. This is about giving visually impaired people the tools to participate fully in society and in our workforce.

However, I do have some concerns with the way this resolution is written, and that's why I read it into the record. It doesn't offer a strategic plan for how to ensure that accessibility. A vague phrase such as "all levels of government have to do something" won't achieve much if there are no specific responsibilities assigned to anyone. I think everyone will agree that someone else is doing it and no one will get it done. It's absolutely impossible to disagree with the member from Brampton West, but it's also hard to understand what needs to be done by this resolution.

This resolution sounds great, but it doesn't help us reach any solutions. It doesn't tell us what we need to do to put this information in the hands of blind and partially sighted Canadians.

Today, over 800,000 visually impaired Canadians are in urgent need of basic resource information; 3.4 million more have sight-threatening eye disease that might limit their ability to read, and these numbers are growing rapidly every day. I do agree that the federal, provincial and territorial governments must all work together in order to provide full accessibility across the country. We have a problem here. We need a clear solution, not empty talk. We need a plan, not a vague commitment to throw money at the problem.

As the member said in his introduction to the bill, the CNIB, or the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, has been providing services for the visually impaired for over 90 years. I want to commend them for their commitment and their excellent work. As part of the service, CNIB has successfully operated Canada's largest library of Braille and accessible audio, funded entirely through donations at a cost of about \$10 million a year. They recently announced that the charity can no longer provide that library service without getting ongoing government support. Today, Canada is the only G8 country that does not have public funding for any library service for visually impaired people.

I want to commend the many provinces that have already made the commitment to assist the CNIB. We do have a responsibility to ensure that services like this continue to be provided to the people who need them. But at the same time, I hope that instead of simply writing a cheque, we will stop and look at the situation and whether anything can be done to once again make it viable for the non-profit sector to deliver the services they've been delivering for so many years. We should remember that fully accessible libraries are only part of the solution for visually impaired Canadians.

We also want to recognize that other important organizations are also doing their part to ensure that visually impaired Canadians have access to information, organizations like The Accessible Channel, known as TACTv, which broadcasts descriptive programming for people who are blind, visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing; and VoicePrint, which for many years has broadcast readings of full newspaper articles from more than 600 of Canada's newspapers and magazines into Canadian homes. As technology improves, there are many more options to guarantee that visually impaired Ontarians have access to all the information they need. Until that time, we need to ensure that there is a plan and then ensure that it has been appropriately funded.

We know that the Liberal government likes to spend the taxpayers' dollars first and ask questions later—that's why I brought this thing up about a plan. They are funding some of this spending with their massive HST. I think we want to bring that into this discussion. I find it a little ironic that this resolution came forward from a member of the Liberal Party when only a few months ago, they were scaring visually impaired Canadians with the news that the cost of audio books was going to increase by 8%—ironically one of the very items addressed in this resolution.

When the McGuinty government first announced the HST tax grab, it was obvious they hadn't considered the impact on Ontarians. They hadn't considered the fact that many Ontario families are already struggling to make ends meet; they hadn't considered the impact of taking the point-of-sale exemption away from our farmers; they hadn't considered the impact of increasing the cost of audio books for the visually impaired; and they hadn't considered how angry the people of Ontario would be that Dalton McGuinty was trying to tax their morning cup of Tim Hortons coffee.

It took almost eight months of questioning by the opposition before the McGuinty government finally admitted a little bit of their mistake and exempted a few more items, like that morning cup of coffee. At the same time, they finally clarified that they wouldn't be taxing audio books. I do not understand why it took so long for the member opposite and his party to realize that 800,000 blind and partially blind Ontarians shouldn't be the ones to be burdened with this giant tax grab.

A study by the Canadian Association of Optometrists revealed that by the age of 75, "one in four Canadians will experience vision loss, defined as being no longer able to drive, read, watch TV ... or see the faces of loved ones." Access to library resources and television for the visually impaired becomes more and more essential. That is why I am pleased to see this issue being debated here today and why I hope that the government will develop a plan to ensure that this information and these resources are available to everyone in need. It's also why I will be supporting this resolution to carry this issue forward.

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

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I will be supporting the motion. I will have a few criticisms, of course, of the government as I do this. I was conserving my energy from the previous bill in order to apply it to this one. I could have done the reverse, I suppose, but I felt this particular motion required a little more attention.

1510

The member is well intentioned in this regard, no doubt, and I applaud him for introducing it, but I do have some concerns about the motion as it is written. I can't help but wonder why the member opposite, as an experienced parliamentary assistant in a number of ministries, would word this motion to include federal and municipal governments when the provincial government has so much work to do to reach its own accessibility targets.

It is the province that sets the rules for libraries through the Public Libraries Act, and that sets the vision for access with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. What the motion should have done is call on the province to live up to the spirit and intent of our own rules and lead by example. To indirectly attack our municipal partners for accessibility shortfalls when the province fails to meet its own requirements, in my mind, defies logic.

I agree with him that the federal government has been negligent, if not irresponsible, in its approach to the

issues—i.e., they spend no money on this particular issue—but the municipalities are slightly different, I dare say. The question I ask is, does the Public Libraries Act set aside money for accessibility purposes? The answer is no. I'm convinced that the member from Brampton West knows this, but I raise the question anyway.

Our municipalities have done an outstanding job with our libraries. Libraries continue to be a community hub, because they've done an excellent job with the limited resources they have. I see the amazing tools they make available to our communities: everything from books and magazines to various forms of digital media, computer access and all types of educational programming provided either free or at very low cost. Our municipal partners are doing their best to live up to their end of the bargain and have proven that they are up to the challenge of stretching dollars to ensure that Ontarians receive the best services available.

It isn't our direction they need—they are fully aware of the task at hand—but the funding necessary to take on the job that lies ahead. Our library services take great pride in their ability to provide access to information and would gladly take on the challenge of improved access for visually impaired Ontarians. If history is any indicator, they're doing it efficiently and effectively. For our municipal library services, the issue is not a matter of intent but a question of resources or lack thereof.

Can the province help libraries continue to do the excellent work they already do? Are they prepared to provide our municipal partners with the funds necessary to meet the challenge of accessibility for visually impaired Ontarians? Is Ontario ready to fulfill its commitment to equal access to all citizens? This is the challenge that the motion should call on the Legislature to meet.

I want to thank our assistant Kevin, who has done some of the work I'm about to quote.

Understandably, there is a cost related to transcribing text to formats suitable for visually impaired Ontarians. At one time, the CNIB used to offer transcription services on the basis of demand by outside agencies, but they no longer run the program after funding cuts and the emergence of for-profit companies led to the closure of this initiative. The CNIB program was run on a subsidy or cost-recovery basis.

When the CNIB did run their program, it cost them \$1,500 to create a digital master that could be spun into accessible mediums—Braille, audiobooks and other formats—to assist the visually impaired. But the \$1,500 was only a start, as copying and reproduction fees were in addition to expenses incurred for the digital master file.

But even with the emergence of private sector operators, this is still a very specialized service with a much more restricted base than the market for, say, conventional publishers or copy houses. So, to get an idea of the costs, we made a few calls to Braille service agencies.

As this is a bilingual nation, and as section 20 of the Public Libraries Act requires library boards to provide services in French where appropriate, my office con-

tacted a couple of service providers to get a ballpark estimate of the costs necessary to support this motion.

Braille Jymico, based in Quebec, provided a quick rundown of the transcription costs on a per-page basis. As some of you may be aware, transcription costs depend largely on the nature of the book. For example, costs to generate Braille editions of math or science books start at a rate of \$7.50 per page and are more expensive than, say, novels or non-fiction, with a rate of \$6 per page. And that's just basic costs. Reproducing graphics in a math book—diagrams, figures and the like—costs \$10 a page. Graphic pages in biology books are \$15 a page. Maps and similar images found in texts like geography books can cost as much as \$18 per page. The average textbook or reference book is usually in excess of 100 pages, so it's not hard to see that the costs of even basic transcription would quickly add up. And if the transcription is of a geography-, math- or biology-based publication, those costs grow considerably.

Now, few people would argue with the concept of fully accessible library services. New Democrats understand the treasure that are our libraries and the incredible value that they provide to our communities. The problem is with the wording of this motion. Nowhere in the Ontario Public Libraries Act is funding set aside for accessibility services, and this motion does not call on the government to change the language and the regulations to ensure that our library networks are provided with the resources to meet the various access needs of visually impaired Ontarians.

Despite the promises to upload the download and all of the pomp and circumstance on the announcements and reannouncements that accompanied them, municipalities are still burdened with the responsibility to pay for a number of provincially mandated services. The glacial pace of your uploading commitments has still left them with difficult choices to make come budget time.

How is this motion any different than the downloading of previous governments? Sadly, in my view, it isn't very different at all.

And what about the McGuinty government's responsibility to accessibility under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act? While the act doesn't specifically address library materials, it can be argued that the legislation's mandate to provide access isn't limited to the physical structure but also speaks to an implicit obligation to ensure equal access to the resources inside.

Does this motion address the government's obligations stemming from this act and other laws on its own books? I argue that it doesn't do it at all and that the intent is not to do so at all. It simply calls on all governments to do something about this.

I have little doubt that the idea for this motion came from a genuine desire to expand access and to help those who are visually impaired, but the resolution would have benefited greatly from a bit more thought, a closer look at the existing responsibilities and mandates that are already on the books, and a challenge to government to live up to those provincial guidelines and commitments that are

already in place. Ontario has the jurisdiction and the power to help ensure that all Ontarians, including the visually impaired, enjoy the treasured resources that our local libraries provide.

1520

If we believe that improved access is the right thing to do, then it's time that the province took action on the things Ontario promised to do instead of passing this responsibility on to the levels of government. While I have agreed that the federal government has been negligent in this portfolio, those who have carried the load of public libraries are the municipalities. They cannot stretch the dollars any longer. They've done a tremendous job with our libraries and they still maintain a strong commitment to our libraries. But they cannot do it alone. They need the provinces, which have the genuine provincial mandate and responsibility, to help out. They have not done that and they have a poor record of doing this. So while I support this motion, I feel it's incumbent on me to remind the member from Brampton West that much of the work that he must do is to convince his colleagues, his ministers and the Premier that they've got to do a better job of this. If he had done that, this motion would be a little stronger.

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

Mr. Dave Levac: I do appreciate very much the opportunity to engage in this debate during private members' time. Private members' time is to provide a bill or a resolution of what the membership in this place think; it's the time in which we remove the shackles of party politics and we present the concepts that each of us come here—some even being sent by our special groups or our constituency or the passion that each of us brings. So I want to make sure that there's a reminder there of that so that we can continue the discussion.

Let me give you a little bit of a background as to why I immediately offered my services to the member from Brampton West, who is a friend of mine but also understands my background in this particular issue regarding the CNIB. I was a former president of the CNIB in the riding of Brant, home of Wayne and Walter Gretzky, who have an extremely strong affiliation to the CNIB. During the time I was president, it was in the last years of the Wayne Gretzky tournament for CNIB. I was very proud of the fact that during my presidency I was allowed by the family to reinstitute a different event altogether for Walter during his recuperation from the near-death experience of his aneurysm. He now supports the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the CNIB.

So I have an extremely strong attachment to this resolution. The two things that I will say above all are, not only that I will be supporting the resolution and its intent, but I would also suggest respectfully that we have the W. Ross Macdonald School for the Blind in my riding, which is world-renowned in its assistance of people that are visually impaired and blind.

What I would also like to suggest, respectfully, to my colleagues in the House is, I know the CNIB well and I

know that the issue that they are bringing before us is not done with the intent to inflame. They've made it quite clear that this is basically an education process to ensure that we are aware of the needs of those they serve; and they do a great job, by the way. They have asked us, as honourable members, to do our best not to inflame and finger-point, and to turn this into a resolution that can be used by all of us.

Interjection.

Mr. Dave Levac: This is the request of the CNIB, my friend.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: But, David, they need money.

Mr. Dave Levac: My friend from Trinity–Spadina is upset that I'm trying to explain that the CNIB has requested that this not be turned into a finger-pointing exercise. So if he's got an issue, I want him to take it up with them, because what I am referring you to is the fact they don't want any fed bashing; they don't want any provincial bashing. They want to educate. They want to make sure. That's what the member's resolution is written and designed to do. It's designed to make sure that we are continuing to move forward.

There was a day where people who were blind were relegated to zero participation in our communities, but it was thanks to the work of the CNIB and its long history, and to those that were pioneers in bringing education to the people's front, that you didn't hide people with disabilities in the corner or ship them away to an institution. It was organizations like that that brought us to the forefront of why we're debating a resolution today. I compliment them. I compliment the member from Brampton West and I compliment his intention. I thank the CNIB for the work that they've done.

I can tell you for a fact that there are things happening that are making it move forward. They're reminding us that there is still more to do, and there's nothing wrong with that at all.

I would respectfully say to the member from Trinity–Spadina that I did not hear a condemnation of governments on his behalf. I did not hear that. I'm just saying it as a reminder that our intentions should not be to inflame. The idea is that we will get the job done when we work together, when governments of all stripes stand up and say, "We have a program that would be beneficial, and we are looking for everyone's support." Let's go ahead and do that. That's the concept that I believe we're debating this afternoon.

They're asking in the resolution for "all levels of government." I want to add to this, and I hope the member does not take offence. I believe it's the private sector as well, which has stepped forward in the past, and they have done a great job of supporting institutions like the CNIB. We continue to encourage them to do so.

If we can say, with all impunity, that governments can offer all of the programs that absolutely everybody in the province wants, we wouldn't be sitting here very much. We have to have the responsibility that comes with that, and that's what the CNIB is telling us. The CNIB is

telling us, "With this kind of funding, we can get this much accomplished." And it's inside and woven into our public library system, which I believe is another partnership that they've created. That is another issue that we need to make sure we reinforce.

I do agree with the member from Trinity–Spadina when he hails the municipalities for maintaining the libraries the way they do. They are supported at all three levels of government, some not so good as others and some in more percentages than others. Yes, we should be encouraging them to continue and to improve. But I think we should be very cautious not to turn this resolution into anything else than what it is, and that is an educational process to encourage all of us to work together, that allows us to see that a disenfranchised piece of our community is being left behind. I believe that everyone should have—and if not, I believe most do have—the philosophy that people should not be left behind.

I laud the member from Brampton West. I thank him for this resolution. I will be supporting him 100%. Again, thank you to the CNIB for the work that they do in all of our communities in Ontario.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I also extend my welcome to the members of the CNIB here today and also congratulate the member for bringing forward this resolution in support of libraries for the issue with respect to the funding, and I think that's primarily the reason I'm standing here.

I had the privilege, before being elected here provincially, to serve on the provincial library board. I found that to be an important part of how people and the community have access to information.

What this really points up today is access for all people—persons with special needs, physical needs—and that's part of what the government, I should think, should be trying to do.

But if you look at the funding of libraries in the province of Ontario, there is a serious problem there. I want to commend the federal government. This has all come about, even this resolution that Mr. Dhillon has brought forward, as a result of the actions, I believe, of the CNIB. They have lobbied, if that's the correct word, or at least educated. All members have probably received letters and information packages to encourage this partnership.

I'm going to read just one of the many, many letters I've received from constituents. Whatever you're doing, we have a debate here today and we're participating in it.

One section here says: "I urge you to accept the short-term cost-sharing partnership that CNIB is proposing between CNIB and Canada's federal, provincial and territorial governments. Under this partnership CNIB would commit to providing a total of \$2.7 million in 2010-11, while your government's share would be \$4 million.

"Most people in Canada enjoy a taxpayer-funded library service, the very backbone of education, employment and an equal playing field in our society. But for

those who cannot read print because of vision loss or another disability, the benefits of libraries are missing. We must support the CNIB library.”

1530

You know, it's quite interesting, because I had the occasion in the past to visit a very important facility, Rotary Cheshire Homes, in North York. That's a really exceptional facility, a residence for persons who are deaf and blind. It's an inspiration to attend a facility like that, for those of us who don't often have a deeper insight. The work that they do at the Canadian Helen Keller Centre allows people to live independently.

This particular aspect of access to information is, in fact, even in the world of technology. We see the software program JAWS and others that allow larger print and manipulate data so it's readable or audible. That's the future. This funding will go a long way, I'm sure, to build these tools that are so essential to be more inclusive of people who have these special needs.

It's not always the age of people as they get older. It has been said that by 75, one in four people are going to be affected. I think even young children who have visual problems or auditory problems—these are the kinds of environments we're living in. The software tools available today to turn print into voice and voice into print—and large print—are the way of the future.

I think this initiative today by Mr. Dhillon is the right thing. I would be supportive of it, but at the same time remind your minister that they have a duty. By and large libraries are funded either municipally or provincially—most importantly, provincially. Often it's on the basis of circulation. But it should be on the number of books and access to the tools like software that make things like this more accessible.

I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to speak on this private member's bill this afternoon.

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

M. Shafiq Qaadri: J'ai le plaisir maintenant de soutenir mon collègue de Brampton West, M. Vic Dhillon. Comme vous le savez, selon l'avis de cette Chambre, tous les trois niveaux de gouvernement ont une responsabilité collective de renforcer l'accessibilité à travers le Canada en assurant les financements nécessaires pour que les services de bibliothèque, les livres et les informations essentielles soient fournis sous un format accessible, pour que les aveugles et les malvoyants canadiens aient les mêmes opportunités que les autres.

You've seen the resolution brought forth by my honourable colleague from Brampton West with regard to empowering and facilitating a community that not only contributes vigorously to Ontario but also is in need of remedy with regard to certain aspects of their interaction with society—their engagement, for example with reading material, which is the issue specifically addressed here. Hopefully, as we bring forward and support this resolution, we'll be able to aid the community as

we should, as honourable representatives of the people of Ontario.

At the outset, I would, first of all, like to acknowledge as well the various members of the CNIB who are ably represented here as well, but particularly to recognize Madame Karen Madho, who I recognize from a previous incarnation when she was serving that very noble institution known as the OMA, the Ontario Medical Association. As well, I'd like to broadly salute the CNIB because, as a graduate of the University of Toronto faculty of medicine, med school, here in Toronto, I know that there were many opportunities for us to learn, not only formally, through representatives of the CNIB. They also had an extraordinary volunteer corps and, of course, exploited to very best advantage their exact proximity to Sunnybrook hospital, one of the major teaching hospitals at the University of Toronto, on Bayview Avenue, as you know, where the CNIB itself is located. It was really, truly an eye-opener, if I may say that with, I suppose, pun intended, with reference to the difficulties and the challenges, and I would even say the quiet suffering and the quiet nobility, that many of the sight-challenged members of Ontario exhibit on a day-to-day basis.

I'd also like to just recognize for a moment one of our honourable colleagues here in the Legislature, the Honourable Alvin Curling, who I happened to bump into once again, at a reception at the consulate general of Pakistan, actually, over the weekend. It was Alvin Curling as, I believe, the representative of Scarborough—Rouge River who in my hand, probably 20 years or so ago, put the first card which had these—it was a tactile card, a “feelable” card, and upon inquiring what it was, because I don't think I'd ever seen it before, it was a card in Braille. It hit me then that here was a gentleman who really strove to represent all members of his community. I'm very pleased to see that many other colleagues of ours and of course ministers and different levels of government at all three levels in Ontario and Canada are actually participating in that type of outreach.

This initiative brought forth by my honourable colleague Vic Dhillon with regard to the CNIB's initiative of striving to bring the right to read to sight-challenged communities, I think, is not only needed, its time has come. It is really a mark of a sensitive, a just society—the phrase of Pierre Elliott Trudeau—and certainly part of the vision, literally—pun intended again—of the McGuinty government.

I bring to your attention, for example, a letter which is copied not only to my colleague Vic Dhillon but also initially addressed to Premier McGuinty, from the CNIB, and it says something to this effect:

“I understand ... that your government has committed to provide funding in support of local library access to CNIB library services for people who are blind, partially sighted or otherwise print disabled.

“I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the leadership your government has shown by supporting our residents with vision loss and other print disabilities.

“By committing to a cost-sharing partnership between CNIB and Canada's federal, provincial and territorial

governments, you are sustaining a lifeline for people who cannot read print because of vision loss or other print disabilities.”

I think that letter, no doubt full of ongoing heartfelt sentiments from the CNIB and the various people they represent, is something our government not only will act on, but also is broadly supporting today’s resolution.

With that, I would also compliment our colleague across the floor, Mr. Marchese from Trinity–Spadina, who, in an entirely legitimate and welcome way, does point the direction, as well as point fingers, with regard to opportunities that we should have and will have, hopefully, as this government moves forward with regard to concretizing, making real on the ground these initiatives—meaning bringing forth funding and, yes, calling upon other levels of government, federal and municipal, to really bring the finances to bear on this particular resolution, so that at the end of the day, it is not merely poeticism and flowery words but something that actually affects the lived experience of our blind and sight-challenged communities.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Dhillon, you have two minutes for your response.

Mr. Vic Dhillon: First of all, I’d like to thank the members from Brant, Etobicoke North, Oxford, Trinity–Spadina and Durham for their input because some very valuable information was shared on this topic.

With our challenges and responsibilities in life, I think we tend to forget sometimes about the people with sight difficulties who live in our communities, and from time to time I think we should all step back and look at life in their shoes because I firmly believe that, together, we really can make a difference.

I ask once again that this House support this resolution and send a strong message to other levels of government that they need to act and act now and support those who need the support the most.

Once again, I’d like to thank our folks from the CNIB for coming here today and being present during this debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you very much.

You’re not going to like this, but the time for private members’ public business has not expired. Standing order 98 requires that two and a half hours elapse from the time we begin private members’ public business. That’s to give people who are in their offices or who are coming in and out some certainty of when the votes would occur. The two and a half hours doesn’t expire until 4 o’clock, at which time we will vote. The House is suspended until 4 o’clock.

The House suspended proceedings from 1539 to 1600.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I’d ask members to take their seats.

The time provided for private members’ public business has expired.

ISRAELI APARTHEID WEEK

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will deal first with ballot item number 61, standing in the name of Mr. Shurman.

Mr. Shurman has moved private members’ notice of motion number 93. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

ZERO WASTE DAY ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LA JOURNÉE

« ZÉRO DÉCHET »

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We’ll now deal with ballot item number 62, standing in the name of Mr. Kular.

Mr. Kular has moved second reading of Bill 247, An Act to proclaim Zero Waste Day. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Kular, would you like the bill to go to committee?

Mr. Kuldip Kular: General government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): To the general government committee? So ordered.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We’ll now move to the final ballot item, ballot item number 63.

Mr. Dhillon has moved private members’ notice of motion number 128. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. John O’Toole: On a point of order, Speaker: I wondered if you could clarify for me that it’s the intention next week for the House leaders to prorogue the Legislature. Could I be confident in saying to the media today that none of these bills will be on the order paper as of next Thursday and all of these bills will be cancelled?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): That’s not a point of order for the Speaker to be concerned with. I suggest you speak with your House leader or the government House leader.

All matters relating to private members’ public business having been completed, I do now call orders of the day.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until next Monday at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1603.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
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 Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
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 Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	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
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
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 Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough–Centre	Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
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

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB) Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Oakville Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP) Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Nickel Belt Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP) Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Kenora–Rainy River Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB) Hudak, Tim (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex 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) Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB) Jones, Sylvia (PC) Klees, Frank (PC) Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock Dufferin–Caledon Newmarket–Aurora Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB) Kwinter, Monte (LIB) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB) Leal, Jeff (LIB) Levac, Dave (LIB) MacLeod, Lisa (PC) Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton York Centre / York-Centre Glengarry–Prescott–Russell Peterborough Brant Nepean–Carleton Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP) Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina Cambridge London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB) McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB) Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans 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) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka 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, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB) Munro, Julia (PC)	Richmond Hill York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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Murray, Glen R (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
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 Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
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	
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 Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
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	
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 Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
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Vacant	Leeds–Grenville	
Vacant	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	

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Michael Prue, Tony Ruprecht
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Cheri DiNovo, Linda Jeffrey
Sylvia Jones, Jean-Marc Lalonde
Carol Mitchell, Shafiq Qaadri
Elizabeth Witmer
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spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances**

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Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas
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Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

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