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of Ontario
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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
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(Hansard)**

Thursday 1 April 2010

Jeudi 1^{er} avril 2010

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 1 April 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 1^{er} avril 2010

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2010 ONTARIO BUDGET

BUDGET DE L'ONTARIO DE 2010

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 31, 2010, on the amendment to the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

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

Mr. Michael Prue: It's a delight to stand up here and talk about this budget. In the time allotted to me today, only 20 minutes, I want to concentrate on three aspects of the budget which I find troubling and somewhat puzzling, those three aspects being transit, poverty and hospitals.

Interjection: It's an April Fool's joke.

Mr. Michael Prue: I'm hearing something about an April Fool's joke. I want to remind everyone that what I'm going to be saying is not an April Fool's joke.

First of all, in terms of transit, I have lived my whole life in the city of Toronto, or the megacity of Toronto as it now is, with the exception of one year in Ottawa. I am a city boy, I freely admit that, and I have a great and abiding sense of the need for proper transit. Now, in the last couple of years, I watched as the Premier went around Toronto, was in all of the Toronto newspapers, was on the radio and on the television speaking again and again about the monies that were going to be put into transit in this city. I saw what he promised in Ottawa and other major cities across this province, and I have to tell you I was somewhat impressed.

I didn't think that the government was up on the transit file when they were first elected, but I was somewhat impressed over that period of time that the Premier put a real emphasis and a real understanding about getting people out of cars and getting on to public transit. He seemed to understand the problems of gridlock.

We've all seen in this last week or so the reports coming from around the world, highlighting different cities and the problems they have with gridlock. It should be of no surprise to Torontonians that we are dead last, that it

takes 80 minutes for the average commute for people to come in to go to work or to go to school everyday.

The whole idea of building proper and sustainable transit is one which the people of the greater Toronto area, and particularly in the city of Toronto, embraced. When the Premier stood up there and announced the \$9-billion plan, he was joined by Mayor Miller, who so many times effused about the Premier understanding Toronto, and understanding and promising and saying that we're on track to spend this money, to build transit that we have not done in a decade.

I looked at the places where it was going to be built, knowing this city very well. I looked out into Scarborough and the light rapid transit and the extension along Sheppard. I looked into Downsview and what was going to be built there. I looked out into the GTA and the Viva system and what was going to be built there. And all of them were plans that were meticulous, well-thought-out, important, and they were going to help.

So for the last year or so, I've been saying very little in this House on the transit file, because I don't think I had anything to be critical of. What was being planned and what was being promised seemed reasonable and rational, and if I was on that side of the House, I would hope that I would promise much the same thing.

You can imagine the dismay of the people of Toronto, you can imagine the anger that was palpable from the mayor when he saw that in the budget this government determined that it was no longer the priority that it had been, that all of those stage presences and all of those announcements with the mayor were for naught, because at the first sign of any trouble, the first sign of any difficulty, the government retreats from their major promise.

They say now, "Oh, it's okay. It's simply put off for a few years, and maybe a few years down the road we'll be able to get back onto the transit file and do what we promised to do." Well, that has been the problem all along from successive governments—this one and the one before, I'm sure. That has been the problem. As soon as the times get tough, the people back off and the governments back off. I'm saying to this government that you ought not to be doing that. I'm saying to this government that a promise made should be a promise kept. I know these are difficult economic times, I know that you have priorities, but I always thought that transit was one of them.

When you travel around the city, you cannot help but note the gridlock. You cannot help but note in rush hours, particularly after about 7 or 7:15 in the morning, the traf-

fic starts to tie up at the intersections. You cannot help but note that it is very difficult to do commerce, and when a truck stops to unload at any of our stores along major arterial routes, the cars get tied up behind it. There's virtually no possibility for the trucks and the delivery people to do the commerce they are required to do other than to park, unload and do what they need to do 24 hours a day. The lineup of cars behind them is certainly noticeable, and the backup keeps getting worse and worse and worse.

0910

We know from economic studies that in the Toronto area we are losing billions of dollars a year in terms of gridlock. We also have to think of the waste in terms of human lives; 80 minutes' commute a day to come to work certainly has to be hard on personal time, family time and everything else. So I have to state that I am very disappointed with this government and very disappointed with the answers around this entire issue that have come from the Premier and the finance minister in question period in the last several days. I'm very disappointed because there are alternatives, and alternatives are not being looked at.

One of the alternatives, of course, is to try to find the money to do this. Other provinces are saying, end the tax cuts. Just yesterday and the day before, I looked at Quebec and their budget, and they have simply ended tax cuts to corporations. That's what they did; they looked at what was going to help. And many of the corporations will tell you that if you can get rid of gridlock, they can save money and do a better job. So I think that getting rid of that tax cut and keeping the promise to transit would have been a far better idea of this government.

Although it is not my community, I also look at what this wrong-headed decision is going to do to the people at Bombardier in Thunder Bay. That factory, which produces streetcars, subway cars, rail cars and the like, was geared up to produce a lot of streetcars and subway cars under this \$9-billion transit plan. They have now been told that this is all going to be put on hold, and because it's going to be put on hold, the economic planning is not going to be there, the people who were going to be hired and who will continue to work are not going to be there, and it is going to cause some considerable economic difficulty for the people of Thunder Bay, as well as, of course, the people of Toronto and Ottawa and Hamilton and London and every other major city across this province that has public transit.

I ask the government to think about this. It's not too late—we're in the middle of debate—to come back and do something else. It is not too late for you to take the idea that transit should be at the top of the list instead of something that can be fluffed off for later, for later, for never. That's what I'm worried about and exactly what I see is going to happen.

The second issue I want to talk about is hospitals. I've stood up in this House and asked questions over the last couple of weeks about what is happening in our hospitals. Today is April 1, and on this date, Toronto East

General Hospital has closed its physiotherapy unit. They have closed down a unit that has been there for a long time, and they have done so because of the budget cut-backs.

When I met with the CEO, Mr. Rob Devitt, a decent and good man, he told me that he wished he could have kept it open. He said that he understood the need for a physiotherapy unit within our community—this is provided only to those people who require physiotherapy as a result of operations and medical procedures that have taken place at Toronto East General Hospital. He understood the need for continuing that service, but what could he do? He had been told by this government to expect a 1% or 2% increase in the hospital's funding, and he had to determine, given that his costs were going up 5%, how he could make cuts in areas where the impact, in his view, might be minimized. He looked to those things that are required for a hospital to do, and he saw that one of the things that could be cut, or had to be cut and that he was reluctant to cut but had to, was the physiotherapy unit. So today, my community has a hospital with no physiotherapy unit, and the government, in its wisdom, came forward with 1.5%.

That is causing grief at Toronto East General Hospital but also in other hospitals in the Toronto area. Most of the people I represent do use Toronto East General Hospital as their community hospital, but there is another hospital in close proximity that people often go to, particularly if they are war veterans, and that is Sunnybrook, because Sunnybrook has specialized services and is a veterans' hospital as well. So, many of the people in Beaches—East York, particularly veterans, go to Sunnybrook Hospital.

I received a letter from a nurse. The nurse asked me to be confidential and not to use the name. I'm not going to use the name, but I would like to read, in part, from the letter that the nurse sent me about what is happening at Sunnybrook Hospital. This letter was written in advance of the budget but certainly in anticipation of what was going to happen when hospital budgets were allowed only 1.5%.

This nurse writes:

"I can almost guarantee you that on a daily basis, our nurses will be working short which will in turn, further increase our fatigue and 'burn out' rates and thus sick calls. It is unacceptable to expect this of us and put our practice and the safety of our patients at risk.

"Our hospital has adopted the practice of routinely placing stable admitted patients into the hallway in front of desks to await for the next available beds. This practice is degrading and embarrassing in a foundation such as ours that prides ourselves in the care that we provide. Stripping a sick patient of the privacy of even a curtain, forcing them to be toileted and sleep in a noisy hallway because there are no beds available on the ward due to closed units from, once again, 'budget restraints' is unacceptable.

"Please review this process and allow more funding for ward beds, to decongest the emerg and remove the

practice of hallway admissions. I'm sure that you would not want your family member lying on a hard stretcher in front of a desk in the hallway for three days."

If you look at the budget, the budget contained only 1.5% for hospitals, and the 1.5% is certainly not adequate to maintain the hospitals at any kind of level that Ontarians have come to expect, which leads me to another very puzzling strategy of this government.

This government has announced a diabetes strategy, that they want to invest \$8.5 million in the coming year for the diabetes strategy going to as many as 14 regional coordination centres, and they want to expand chronic-kidney-condition services. Now, ordinarily I would think this was a wonderful thing. Ordinarily, I would be standing up and applauding the government for its foresight, for what you're doing and what you're thinking and how you're hoping to help people. But as it relates to the diet supplement, I wonder why this government is taking action to fund diabetes and to help the diabetes strategy and at the same time hurting those people who are diabetics.

I would like to quote from another letter. This letter was not sent directly to me, although I did get a carbon copy of it. It was sent to Glen Murray, MPP, 514 Parliament Street, from one of his constituents, with carbon copies to the Premier and Madeleine Meilleur, Minister of Community and Social Services. I think this letter says it all in terms of a real diabetes strategy and what this government, in announcing that they're giving \$8.5 million for a diabetes strategy, is really not doing to help people who are diabetic. I quote this letter:

"I have diabetes and have had it for the past 30 years. My diabetes is not insulin dependent and part of that is because I work very hard to manage my illness. This means monitoring my blood sugar daily and controlling it through my diet. Diabetics, as you may know, are very limited in what they can eat. We need to be eating fresh vegetables and fruit and lean protein to ensure that our blood sugar remains stable. Diabetics cannot eat junk food or fast food. We need to eat real food. We can't eat empty calories like pasta and rice because these, even though they are cheap, raise our blood sugar quickly. It is a lot of work to manage your diet when you have diabetes. When I can't eat properly I get dizzy, headaches and I may shake all over and have to lie down immediately. My vision gets very blurry and it is hard to see anything because I get black spots in front of my eyes. I have cataracts and glaucoma that are a result of my diabetes, as well as arthritis, which is also made much worse by my diabetes.

0920

"When I shop at supermarkets, I buy from the 'seconds rack,' where the vegetables are cheaper because they are not quite as fresh. If I can get a ride, I go to the Chinese vegetable markets because they are more affordable. Even though I live in rent-geared-to-income housing so I don't have to use any of my food money to pay rent, I still struggle when it comes to my groceries and other basic needs. Sometimes I go and stay with my

daughter when my food money runs out at the end of the month. I don't know how people without children manage. The food bank near me does not have fresh food. The food it has is very bad for diabetes. I do not drink or smoke and I still find it very hard to afford my basic needs each month. Each week, I spend \$25 on incontinence supplies. Needles for my blood tests aren't covered so that is another cost I must absorb.

"The subsidy I get each month is very small"—by the way, elsewhere in the letter, it says it's \$80 a month. "It is difficult enough to live in dignity when you live on a disability. It will be much harder if the government gets rid of this supplement."

But in fact, that's exactly what this government has done. They are getting rid of the special diet supplement. This woman, who suffers from diabetes, is going to suffer in the long term, because I've read what the government has to say—and I see my friend from Brant shaking his head. I see what the government is saying, because they're going to provide it only for "severe" cases—read the budget speech—severe cases only. I doubt very much that this woman is a severe case. I can see full well what is going to happen to her diabetes, and I can see full well what is going to happen when this government finishes the special diet supplement.

I would like to just conclude, in the last minute, and talk about the special diet supplement. It is one of the meanest, cruelest things I have ever seen a government do: getting rid of a diet supplement and putting people at risk and full of fear because nobody understands what this government is going to do in the weeks and months ahead.

When you phone up, as we have—and I trust the member from Brantford has phoned up his local ODSP office as well—and ask them, "When is the diet supplement ending?" you will get somebody on the end who says, "We don't know. We haven't been instructed." "Well, how much is going to be ending, and when can people expect their last payment?" "We don't know. The government hasn't instructed us when to do that."

When you ask in the House, to the minister, "When is the diet supplement going to end?" she says, "I don't know." I think she's waiting to see the special report at the end of the month by the hand-picked Liberal panel, and nothing is there.

But I will tell you that when you get rid of the special diet supplement, which 160,000 people in this province rely upon in order to be healthy, there are going to be casualties. There are going to be people who suffer, and the government has not made any commitment, in removing it and putting it into the health department, that they will fund it in any way near the same.

I have to say, this is a disappointing budget to me, at least in these three areas and others as well, and I ask the government to rethink their wrong-headed policies.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's always very enjoyable to listen to the member for East York—the last mayor of

East York, I believe, before he was honoured with election to this fine chamber.

I always appreciate the passion with which he speaks on the issues that matter so much to him and his constituency, and the way that he stands up for the people who he sees being ignored by the government. We don't always agree on matters of principle or philosophy or politics, but I certainly do admire the way that he brings those issues to the House.

He talked a lot about how one of the challenges for him and for all of us is when the government fails to live up to the commitments that it makes. When you start something, when you start something in motion, it forces something else or it gets something else rolling in motion. When the government says something or does something, people react to it. It's not a static world. When people react to those things, they make commitments as a result of government commitments. What happens then is, when government pulls the rug out from under those people who have made those commitments, the challenges that were large before become insurmountable.

That is why we have always believed on this side of the House that when you make a commitment, you have to follow through. The other day, the Premier was talking about how important it is to keep his word. All across the province of Ontario every day, people are reminding this Premier that he has to learn how to keep his word.

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

Mr. Dave Levac: For the sake of Hansard, I'm the member from Brant not Brantford, so I have to remember—

Mr. Michael Prue: I did say that.

Mr. Dave Levac: He said it the first time, and then the second time he said "the member from Brantford." He does know that I represent Brantford, Brant, Six Nations and the Mississaugas of the New Credit. But he also knows that I realize that he is the member from Beaches—with an "S"—East York, not Beach-East York, as we had that debate before.

He engaged me in my comments about shaking my head, so I will describe shaking my head. I was saying no because he never touched on, inside of the budget, the fact that in 2001, the budget for the special diet was \$6 million, and today it's \$250 million. I'm wondering if he could comment on whether or not he believes that all of the people that he said are seriously in need of all of that special diet budget, from \$6 million to \$250 million—can you explain to me some of the clinics that were run on how to have people get that? I'd like to hear that.

As pointed out in the budget, there's going to be a new form of having this special diet accounted for by medical doctors who will analyze to ensure that everyone who deserves to get it will get it. The circumstance which he describes is that if this person is in the medical need that they deserve, they will be getting that special diet. If they need that special diet for their health purposes, they're going to get it.

If he can tell me how a budget can go from \$6 million to \$250 million in that period of time, what kind of

restraint, what kind of sustaining can we do with that kind of budget. That is only that special budget inside of the ODSP that he's talking about. Maybe he can explain to us exactly how that happened and where that came from, and maybe we can get to the bottom of this. I know both of us would agree that people who have those health needs will get them.

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

Mr. Frank Klees: I want to thank the member from Beaches—East York for his very careful analysis of the budget before us.

I want to focus particularly on his reference to the cuts that were made to probably one of the most important budgets in this province, namely the Metrolinx budget, to which this government had committed some \$9.3 billion of resources and then mandated Metrolinx to do transportation and transit planning for the greater Toronto and Hamilton areas. Many of us read with interest the many announcements that this government made about the billions of dollars that would be committed to transportation and transit projects that were begun as a result of that.

Then to see in this budget \$4 billion cut from that budget—although it's characterized by the Premier and by the Minister of Transportation as simply a deferral, we cannot afford to defer any longer the work that has to be done to bring our transit up to speed, if I can use that term, in this province, particularly when in the same budget, what we saw was a confirmation of an additional \$7 billion to essentially subsidize a behind-the-scenes-negotiated contract with an offshore company, the Samsung company, that we question will bring any benefit to the province of Ontario. It's about wrong priority setting, and that's the issue that we have before us: a government that fails to see what the real priorities are in the province of Ontario.

0930

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

Hon. Carol Mitchell: I'm very pleased to rise today, just for a short time, to speak about the budget. I do want to thank the member from Beaches—East York for his comments. I really do feel that this budget was a budget for its time. It's a very balanced approach. It speaks to jobs. It speaks to economic growth. It speaks to an investment in the people of Ontario.

That's one of the things that I want to talk about for just a minute. I look at the retraining dollars. I know how difficult it is in a community when you lose a large employer. I can tell you, what I'm hearing from my constituents is how much they appreciate the Second Career training. It really does make a difference. It really does give them an opportunity to refocus and to have the resources to move into another career. So by making an investment back into the career training, it really does help the people of Ontario to transform to the new economy.

Then, the investment in full-day learning: For a representative from a rural area like myself, child care is a

problem, it's very difficult, so making an investment in full-day learning really does give our rural children help. It gives them the opportunity to be much more advanced when they go into school. It's a difficult curriculum, and they have so much to learn. So anything we can do to help our children with assistance through full-day learning really does give them the ability to have much greater resources to deal with a very difficult curriculum.

Just in the few seconds I have left: When I see the members stand in the House and talk about infrastructure—especially from the other side of the House—and I look at the insignificant amounts that they ever spent on infrastructure, the voices—I don't think they ever heard them: \$32 billion—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. The honourable member from Beaches–East York has up to two minutes for his response.

Mr. Michael Prue: Thank you to my colleagues from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Brant, Newmarket–Aurora and the Minister of Agriculture. The Minister of Agriculture, I thank you for your comments, but I didn't speak about any of the things that you commented on, so I don't know. I guess you just wanted your two minutes.

The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, I thank you. He is absolutely right: People react to commitments, and people expect the commitments to be kept. The people of Toronto, particularly, have reacted to the commitments on Metrolinx with some considerable anticipation. There is no doubt there is palpable disappointment throughout our city today, when that has been delayed or perhaps reduced forever.

In terms of the member from Newmarket–Aurora, he too is absolutely right: The whole issue around Metrolinx cannot be deferred. The government has, in choosing other priorities, not done justice to the people of this city.

I saved most of my comments to the member from Brant: This is entirely the government attitude. What he said today is entirely the government attitude: that this is an abused system and that the people are abusing the system. This is not in fact the reality. In order to get a special diet allowance, you are required to have a letter from a doctor. You are required to go to the doctor and have the doctor tick off the boxes, and it is in fact vetted by people who work within the bureaucracy. If you've ever tried to help anyone get a special diet allowance, you will know how difficult it is, and that many people are unable to get it. Do people aspire to get some additional money? It is no wonder they aspire to get it, when the maximum you're allowed is the \$1,003 a month when you're on ODSP as a single person. Then, it is impossible to eat unless you get a special diet allowance. That's why they go out to get it, and they need it.

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I'm delighted to stand up and speak on the budget motion. It's important to enter the debate, and I've been listening to many different speakers from both sides of the House talking about this budget.

We are facing a difficult time that's not like five years ago or 10 years ago, when we had the privilege of having

a lot of jobs, a surplus budget and a strong economy. As you know, for the last two years the province of Ontario, the nation of Canada and the whole world have faced tough economic times. Our partner, our neighbour to the south, had a huge economic meltdown. As you and many people in this province know, Mr. Speaker, they are our strong partner in trade, so when they face difficulties, no doubt it's going to affect us, positively and negatively. For a long time, we know that those traditional jobs we have in the province of Ontario would exist in the future due to the progress of the technology. That's why we are facing a difficult time, and I believe we have to work together to pass that difficult time.

Nous rencontrons un temps économiquement difficile, et nous devons travailler ensemble pour surmonter ce temps difficile.

That's what we're all about in this province: working together to pass difficult times in order to restore our economy and to find jobs for the people who live in this beautiful province.

That's why we put a lot of emphasis on education since we got elected in 2003. We know that education is the most important and most fundamental element in order to build a strong economy, in order to build a strong future for the people of this province. That's why our Premier, Dalton McGuinty, put a lot of emphasis on early childhood education. Building the colleges and universities across this province allows our students to be educated, to learn and to be able to compete locally, provincially and globally.

That's why, when the federal government neglected their responsibility for child care in this province, our province came with \$63 million in this budget to support our child care spaces across this province, because we know it's fundamentally important for many families across the province of Ontario to see their kids go to a safe place to be looked after when they go to work.

It's important to us to create a chance for many families who want to work. We thought the most important thing was to create full-day early learning. I think it's a very important step toward a brighter future and a stronger future for our kids, for our families and for our province. That's why I believe that this proposal being debated right now in committee—we listened to many different deputations from stakeholders, school boards, teachers, parents, families and child care providers who came and voiced their concerns and support about this important step toward full-day early learning for almost 35,000 students in 600 schools across the province of Ontario, which I think is a very important step. Hopefully, if this bill passes in this House, we'll see 35,000 students entering school in September. The benefit of this important step would be at 600 schools across this beautiful province.

I know we face a lot of difficulties. We know it's important to educate our people and to invest in colleges and universities. That's why more than \$310 million in this budget is going to colleges and universities, to open them up for our bright students to be educated, to be able

to study and learn, and to obtain good skills to be able to fight globally and nationally to find a good job.

0940

We know the importance of our colleges and universities. I get the chance, every once in a while, to visit different nations. Every single time, when I go to those nations, I go to the colleges and universities to see what their education is all about. Do you know the first thing I hear? “We want to come to Canada to study. We want to come to Canada to learn,” because they know that we have a good—the best—education system on the whole globe. That’s why it’s important to invest in the colleges and universities: to open our capacity to both host our domestic students and allow students from around the globe to come to Canada to study, to learn about our education; to give them the tools they need to be successful in their nations.

I think this is important for our economy. When we open our schools to foreign students, it doesn’t just mean that we’re going to obtain students who come to this province. We will also get friends who, when they get good jobs in government or whatever they do, will have a good connection with Canada and will start business and trade with Canada. So I think this is an incredible approach—and the right approach—toward a brighter future for this province and this nation.

Before this budget was announced, I had the chance, like many others in this chamber, to be lobbied and to receive many different requests from different stakeholders, whether in health care, education or infrastructure. Many different elements of our society came to us and asked us to pay attention to our investments. They asked us to maintain the services we have in Ontario. So when this budget came, I was so happy because this budget creates a balance between what we are facing as a government, as a nation, and our responsibilities as a province toward our people: toward health care, education, infrastructure and our children. This budget came as a result of responsibility.

It is a creative engine of economics that came to the people of Ontario and told them, “Despite our difficulties, we’re going to continue our investments in health care and maintain it in the public domain; keep it open and accessible to all.” This budget told the people who want to go to our colleges and universities, be educated and obtain special skills, “The universities and colleges will be open for you if you are ready, technically and scientifically, to enter those schools.” We also told the people of Ontario, “We want to share your knowledge and skills with the rest of the world. We’re going to invite students from across the globe to come to Ontario. We’re going to increase our international students by 50%.” I thought that was a very important step toward opening up Ontario for business and education for the whole globe.

This budget came to tell people, tell families, “Yes, we’ll support you by providing child care for your kids.” We also said to the people, “Full-day learning is coming up in September”—hopefully, if this bill passes in the

House—“to host 35,000 students in 600 schools across the province of Ontario.”

We also maintain our commitment toward the infrastructure which many different communities across Ontario enjoy. I think it’s a great investment, because when I go to London on Highway 401 or enter my city of London, Ontario, I see infrastructure everywhere: people building bridges, roads, parks, schools and colleges. Everything is taking place, in every community across Ontario, as a result of our investment of \$32 billion, which went to infrastructure for the next two years to tell the people of Ontario, “Yes, we are here. We’ll update your infrastructure and stimulate the economy by investing in your community, allowing people to find jobs and allowing factories to produce more products.” This is our commitment to the people of Ontario: not just in education, not just in health care, but also infrastructure.

The world is not as we experienced in the past. It is becoming more complicated and sophisticated. Technology is progressing on a daily basis. As you know, if you buy a computer today, the next day it will be obsolete because more advanced computers are coming. If we buy a car today, in a month or two or a year our car also becomes obsolete. It gets old because of technology passing us on a daily basis.

That’s why we have to invest in research and innovation. We have to continue our movement toward providing our community, our province, with a bright future and with the skills we need, because we cannot succeed in the future without updating ourselves on a regular basis, without educating our students to maintain our prosperity and our structure in this province.

With Open Ontario, we can share our technology with the whole world, especially the green technologies, purifications for our systems, which many people in this province are talking about.

Water is very important for communities across the globe. In this province, we enjoy a big wealth of water. As you know, we’re surrounded by five huge lakes. We have the biggest reservoir of fresh water around the globe, even though we have the best technology to purify our water. This technology is going to be a very important element to stimulate our economy and allow people from every part of the globe to come to Ontario, to learn from us and to buy our technology.

When I speak about water technology, I cannot help speaking about London, especially about two important, big companies that have proven themselves over the years. Purifics, a company I’ve spoken about many times, has incredible technology. They have the ability to purify water and air. They had the chance to get a contract with NASA one time to purify the water and the air for the people who go to the moon. So this technology has existed in London for many years. We also have a great company called Trojan Technologies, which gets the chance to get contracts with many different nations to treat their water systems, their sewer systems, and purify their drinking water. Those technologies are important not just for Canadians, but for every nation around the globe.

That's why when we open Ontario for business, when we open Ontario for education, when we open Ontario for health care, we're telling people, "Yes, we're open for you. Come share with us our technology, our knowledge." It's important in this day and age to share because we are in a small global village. Everybody can know what's going on from one end of the world to the other within a second. That's why we cannot live in isolation now. We cannot live alone. We have to share. We have to work together. Sharing and working together is going to create an economic engine for us as a province and give us the ability to maintain our prosperity.

Our government works very hard to protect the vulnerable people among us because we believe strongly that it's our responsibility to look after our vulnerable people, our sick people, our children, our disabled, our people who for some reason are not able to function in this life. We believe strongly that we cannot do it alone. In order to grow and prosper, we all have to work collectively in this province. The working poor among us need our support and a small lift to give them the ability to walk with us and to walk with the rest of the province of Ontario. That's our commitment. Notre gouvernement a travaillé dur pour protéger les gens vulnérables, assurant une bonne éducation et les soins médicaux nécessaires. Everyone needs medical support and medical assistance, and it's our obligation to give it to them and to support every person who lives in the province of Ontario.

This budget came to speak to this reality. It came as a result of the difficult time all of us are facing in this province—instead of standing up and hitting each other and accusing each other, from one side to the other. We can do that for political gain, but do you know what the most important thing is for leadership? To speak the truth and be able to support the move we are taking as a government to reduce and eradicate poverty, to fix our economy and, in the meantime, to create jobs for people who are looking for jobs in the province of Ontario.

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When the financial situation hit this province, we didn't panic as a government. We took the right approach.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh, yeah?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: We took the right approach. What did we do? We created Second Career, and the Honourable Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities announced yesterday in those House about 28,000 people being trained and retrained across the province of Ontario, and most of them have obtained jobs they love, jobs they trained for. This is a responsible government. Also in this budget we have spots for 30,000 more to be retrained in order to find new jobs.

Our responsibility, as I mentioned, because the economy changed and the technology changed, is also to update ourselves. Some of those companies, some of those factories, some of those jobs are not going to come back. We've lost them; they're not coming back again. Do you know why? Because those are part of the past. Those traditional jobs are gone and are not going to come back. Therefore, our responsibility as a government is to create

an environment for people to be retrained, to find new jobs in their new domain, in a new technology, in a new life. That's why Second Career is going to play a pivotal role to retrain 30,000 workers who lost jobs that will never exist in the future because they're part of the past.

This is a responsible government. That's why we come into this place and speak on a regular basis, to convince the opposite side to come in our direction, and to tell the people of Ontario about our responsibility as a government to continue our investment in education, health care and infrastructure, and in the meantime look after balancing the books and balancing the budget, because we don't want to mortgage our kids. We don't want to mortgage our generations: our responsibility to spend and our responsibility to invest, and in the meantime, our responsibility to make sure our budget and our books will be balanced in the future.

That's the approach we're taking as a government. This approach, I think, will mean a lot to many people across this province. We have 13 million people. We have millions of workers across this province looking to us, as the government, to create an opportunity for them, to create jobs, to create opportunities to find jobs.

When we take this approach, we think on a regular basis about our people, our workers, our seniors, our children and our families, because it's our responsibility. As a result of our measures, the economy is progressing and doing a lot better. I was listening to CBC yesterday and today, and I guess our productivity is increasing and doing excellent. I get pleased and happy when I hear that GM rehired 700 people. Also, CAMI will have a second shift and Alliston is hiring people. In Woodstock, the Toyota plant announced a couple of weeks ago that 800 new jobs are going to be opened. All these jobs are coming back to the province of Ontario because we provide the environment for them. They can prosper, and they can provide good work.

That's why people from across the globe want to come to Canada to study, to learn and to open companies and factories. It's good for us as a province, good for us as a government and good for us as communities across the province, because we cannot maintain our tax base without jobs. We cannot maintain our infrastructure without good working people across the province, without collecting taxes from many good men and women who work on a daily basis to provide for themselves and provide for us as a government, as a community and as a province.

That's why I'm standing in my place, on behalf of my constituents of London–Fanshawe, to support the budget we produced in this House a week ago, and telling the people of Ontario that we're going to continue working for you, because it's our obligation and duty to support you.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: I listened attentively, as I always do when members of the government speak, and particularly the member from London–Fanshawe. I've got to tell you: Had my only involvement in listening to

what has been said about this budget been the address from the member from London–Fanshawe, I would just say, “Mail in my ballot for McGuinty for the rest of my life. Oh, my goodness gracious, this has to be the greatest budget from the greatest government in the history of mankind.”

Applause.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes, they’re going to report that in the partial Hansard, I know. I’ll correct it; don’t worry.

Interruption.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Get that phone: That’s somebody calling me to say, “I listened to it, and I think it’s nothing but a load of you-know-what.” But answer that phone: It could be the Premier himself saying, “I wouldn’t even vote for me.”

Anyway, if you listen to the whole budget and you actually understand what’s being done and not being done, you’ve got to ask yourself: Are we only getting half of the story? I didn’t hear him mention the \$21.3-billion deficit. I didn’t hear him mention that his government is going to double—that’s right; double—the debt of this province by 2012-13, an albatross around the neck of every man, woman and child in this province, and for those who are children today, they’re going to be the ones who are forced to deal with that.

As every prognosticator worth an ounce of salt says, interest rates are going up. What is going to happen to the cost of servicing that debt? We didn’t hear that from the member from London–Fanshawe. They need to be telling both sides of the story.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I was really looking forward to getting a chance to respond to some of the comments because I think this member lives with what they call rose-coloured glasses. If you listen to the speech by the member, as my friend from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke said, there has never been a budget so great that hasn’t gone as far and did so much for so few people. You would think that he’s Winston Churchill, for God’s sake.

I’ve got to say, I acknowledge that every government does some good. Every government that has sat in this House has tried to do the right thing. But the tone of this particular speech, I believe, was way over the top when it comes to the rose-coloured look at what goes on.

I just use one example. In his speech, he talks about how this government does things in a measured way; they don’t panic whatsoever. Well, I’ve been watching this government as it has been developing its policies on the Far North, and up until the throne speech, as a result of legislation that they have before this House, they had a position that 50% of the territory in the Far North would be protected in perpetuity from any development, including the lands of the Ring of Fire—or at least some of them. All of a sudden, in the throne speech—because the government recognizes that they’ve got a political problem in northern Ontario in places like Sudbury, Timmins,

Thunder Bay and others, where the government is not seen too well because of its inaction on the economic front—“Ho, the Ring of Fire: Let ’er rip. It’s going to happen tomorrow; it’s coming to a neighbourhood near you.” If that isn’t panic, my friends, I don’t know what is. So I say to my friend across the way, I think a measured response to the budget would have been a far more interesting one.

To say that you’re working with all people in order to deal with the economic problems of this province—go talk to the workers at Siemens. Go talk to the workers at Xstrata. Go talk to the workers at Vale Inco in Sudbury, who have been on a picket line for nine months. I can tell you, people don’t feel as if this government is working with them in order to meet the challenges that this province faces and the jobs that they’re about to lose.

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

Mr. Jeff Leal: I too listened very carefully to the comments from my colleague from London–Fanshawe. It’s interesting: During these discussions about budget, there’s give and take on both sides, but there are some interesting statistics that I just want to quote this morning, and I think the member from London–Fanshawe touched upon them this morning. What is happening? The finance section of this morning’s Toronto Star says, “The Canadian dollar rose more than one third of a cent Wednesday after the ... report from Statistics Canada showed” that the nation’s economy, led by manufacturing and mining, are making healthy gains in January.

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What they’re saying on the GDP is, “It’s the fifth-straight monthly gain—and the biggest one month gain since December, 2006. Economists had been expecting GDP to rise by 0.5 per cent.

“We’re seeing a remarkable resilience and recovery up to now in the Canadian economy,” said Craig Wright, chief economist for RBC Economics.

“December was a strong finish and January is off to a strong start. That adds up to a strong first quarter,” on the heels of strong fourth-quarter growth.

So there’s no question there are still many challenges out there, but we are seeing very positive signs that the economy is starting to move in the right direction.

I also note that in today’s Toronto Star we hear about the challenges, I believe, in Welland, Ontario. A small article on page B5 indicates that Lakeside Steel, which is located in the wonderful community of Welland, Ontario, is about to add new shifts because of new demands for the product that they are producing.

My friend from London–Fanshawe’s riding is now the home of Trojan Technologies, which is the standard for water and waste water municipal operation across Ontario, to use that technology that’s state-of-the-art, and we welcome that he is so positive about developments in London and area.

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

Mr. Frank Klees: I always find the member from London–Fanshawe to be nothing but supportive of his

government, and rightfully so. But it's our job to provide some balance to what is being said. There are some good provisions in this budget. The fact that there is a recognition to some degree of some of the social costs of the economic downturn and the fact that there are some very minor supports in this budget for some of the vulnerable people in our province are indeed positive.

But here is my concern: This government, this year, admits it will spend some \$23 billion more than it takes in. That is a deficit. Try that at home, spending so much more every year than you're taking in. That's the definition of a deficit.

It will continue to do that for another eight years, which means that by the time we reach 2013, this government will have doubled the debt of this province from the time it took office in 2003. It's a matter of responsible government. This government has shown none of that. It has spent. It is taxing. At the end of the day, they continue to talk about things at the 30,000-foot level, in terms of billions of dollars. What they are not talking about is how individuals and businesses across this province are hurting as a result of their mismanagement. It's our responsibility to point that out.

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I want to thank all the members who spoke in response to my speech.

I want to say to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and also to the member from Newmarket–Aurora, yes, we had the chance not to spend and not to create a deficit. But what would be the result of that? We're not going to stimulate our economy. We're not going to create jobs. Our roads, our bridges, our infrastructure, our hospitals and our recreation facilities, all of it would be gone. That's why we took that road. We know we're going to create a deficit as a result of our actions, but we thought it was important to continue to invest in our infrastructure because our infrastructure needs investment badly.

Also, it's the best way to stimulate our economy. As the member from Peterborough outlined and mentioned, as a result of our measures, the economy is progressing, and our productivity is growing on a regular basis. All the indications from CIBC to TD Canada Trust and all the economic experts in this province say about our strategy that it's the best approach and the best strategy, and it's the only way to stimulate our economy.

To the member from Timmins–James Bay, I listened to you, and I want to say something very important. We're not panicked. That's why we continue to invest in our infrastructure. We continue our commitment to the people of Ontario. In the meantime, we know the north is facing difficult times. That's why in this budget there was a huge section and also a huge element to support the people in the north, because we know on this side of the House it's important that the province of Ontario, from the north to the west to the east and Toronto, all work together to create and maintain that engine which feeds the province of Ontario and the whole nation.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: A pleasure to join the debate and always a pleasure to follow my friend from London–Fanshawe. I didn't get to finish about his speech, but I understand a little better now. When I was looking at the headlines from the newspaper, I realized why he was going on like he was about the budget. I had forgotten in fact, Mr. Speaker, that it was April Fool's Day and perhaps he's just telling us his usual stories and not really concerning himself with the facts. So that could be the issue that's affecting—

Mr. Dave Levac: I'm using your other quote.

Mr. John Yakabuski: You like the other one better, eh? Yeah, I know that. I know that Mr. Levac will be sending that out in his householder to my riding.

Let's start talking about the real issues in the budget and where the government failed—and I realize I'm on a short clock here today, which is unfortunate because I'd like to have more time. Perhaps we can have a unanimous consent motion or something.

Mr. Jeff Leal: We'll see what we can do.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yeah, I understand that. But let's talk about what the government failed to do.

I know the member for Peterborough was talking about some good economic news across Canada. Perhaps he was talking about some of the good work the Harper government has been doing, but the job situation in Ontario is, quite frankly, desperate—the highest unemployment rate in the country. In this budget, the government failed to take on the responsibility for any real meaningful job creation program.

Our leader, Tim Hudak, put out our 10-point plan called 10for2010.ca, which speaks about 10 different ways we could actually help the economy and create jobs today. I'll just touch on a couple of them here.

Suspend the new payroll tax on new jobs: When an employer hires somebody, if they were able to be freed of the burden of the employee tax for a period in that transition period, they'd create more jobs. They'll be able to hire more people because that cost will be lifted from that employer.

Another thing that Tim Hudak talked about was killing red tape and regulations. This government is a red tape machine, a regulatory machine—I should say “regime.” They love to create obstacles to business so that they can create more empires for bureaucrats. That is how this government works. That's why the best job program in this government has been to get a job in the government, because they love to hire people who are paid for out of the taxpayers' pockets.

Another one we talked about was a suspension of the land transfer tax. One of the dreams in this country and in this province, indeed, is for people to own their own home. A suspension of the land transfer tax, which would average the savings of \$3,000, would encourage home ownership. That is something that all people aspire to, and for those who are in that position, this would make it that much more affordable and would be a significant

boon to the construction industry at a time when the economy is challenged, to say the least.

I want to challenge the government—to use that word again—on some of the things they've been talking about. The finance minister made this sound like it was some amazing—you know, the Premier was going on about fun with numbers. If you want to talk about fun with numbers, we'll talk about some numbers here. The finance minister, in this speech—and I kind of thought to myself, “Do you even know what you're saying here?” He was talking about the \$32-billion infrastructure investment and saying what a great effect it had. We recognize that infrastructure needs to be built in this province, but he used the quote from the Conference Board of Canada, saying that the \$32-billion investment had a 1% impact on the GDP, and he sold that as something tremendous.

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The GDP of Ontario is around \$600 billion. A 1% impact on that is, of course, \$6 billion. So if you make a \$32-billion investment and it has a \$6-billion effect, I think you can all see where we're going here. But what they were trying to purport to the public was somehow that this had a great return on investment. No, it didn't have a great return on investment. It had its impacts, and many of them were positive, but don't try and sell something as something that it isn't. What it was not was a return on investment. But those are the kinds of games that they play with the numbers, and that is what Minister Duncan was doing in the budget speech.

You would have to have a 5% impact on the GDP for \$32 billion to have even been a wash. So I think it's important that the government understands that you should not be going out there and trying to deceive people with having fun with numbers.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Order. I'd just ask the honourable member to be careful with his language. You don't want to be accusing the government of some of that stuff.

Mr. Bob Delaney: “Deceptive” and “deceitful” are over the line.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Understood, Mr. Speaker, and I'll do my best to be careful. I appreciate the warning.

Let's talk about the Second Career program. They're bragging about the Second Career program, and we understand that you have to have some kind of a program to assist people in transition, but what you also have to have is—you can't just train people. They didn't train astronauts before they found the moon. You don't start training people for something that isn't there. You've got to have a plan; if you're going to train people, you also have to have a place to put them. So you're training people for jobs, but you have no jobs for them.

This government talks about making great investments, but there's no accountability. What should be absolutely tied to it are how many jobs we've actually created for those people that we're retraining, but that's not what they talk about. That's their fun with numbers and that's the messaging they like to get out there. They

just think that, “Somehow people are going to believe we're doing wonderful things.” But how sad for the person who gets retraining and then is told, “Your retraining dollars have dried up. The program is over. You're on your own, and we never said you would have a job. In fact, there are no jobs.” That's what's happening. We're retraining people but we have no place to send them to a job. Shame on the government.

Talk about accountability—on page 164 of the budget there's a short little note in there which translates to, “We made a promise to do a public review of the LHINs”—the local health integration networks—and on page 164: “No. We're not going to do that.” This is about accountability. Budgets are about accountability. They don't want to be accountable for the problems that they have created with their unaccountable LHINs. What does the Premier do? After telling everybody how you've got to keep your word, and he stood up in the House and said, “It's so important that if you make a deal, you stick with the deal; you keep your word.”

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Tell De Beers that.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yeah, tell De Beers that—a 15% surcharge, right; a diamond tax.

He made those comments in here. What about his word to the people who are paying their taxes dutifully every day on every paycheque who want to know whether a bureaucracy that was the creation of George Smitherman is actually paying dividends, is actually making health care more efficient or working better? According to all the numbers, we'd have to say that they're not working. If the government wants to dispute that—and they have every right to do so—then let's proceed with the review. Even their own member, the member from Niagara Falls, says this is a mess and they should be reviewed. He's in the paper this morning. I don't believe he is going to be on the Premier's dinner list this weekend. But a lot of people across Ontario are nodding their heads and saying, “Yes, Kim Craitor is actually standing up against his government, which is wrong for breaking their word and not proceeding with the review of the LHINs.” Your word is important, and I think the Premier has to understand that the people expect him to keep his word.

How much time have I got?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Just a couple of minutes.

Ms. M. Aileen Carroll: You should have been finished a long time ago.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The member for Barrie says that I should have been finished a long time ago. I hate to disappoint her.

I just don't want to get too deeply into a thought without being able to finish it, and this one could take an hour.

The other thing that the member for London–Fanshawe never talked about was the doubling of the debt. The finance minister says we're going to eliminate the deficit in eight years, and then he's having a luncheon the other day and he says we could go faster. But his budget document will tell you that he's predicating that on pro-

gram spending not going up by more than 1.9% or 1.8% per year. Well, that has never happened under this government. They're not even close to that. This government, in seven years, has raised program spending over 70%. How do they think the public is going to believe for one second that they're going to hold program spending to under 2% in order to eliminate this deficit in eight years? They can't do it, and they don't want to do it; they just want to tell everybody they're going to do it, and they are wrong.

Debate deemed adjourned.

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

The House recessed from 1017 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: It's my privilege to introduce the parents of one of the pages here, Torin Hills: his father, Trevor Hills, and his mother, Mary Hills, are in the members' gallery over here. I just wanted to welcome them to Queen's Park and to enjoy today's question period.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I'd like to welcome two of my Etobicoke-Lakeshore constituents who are here at Queen's Park joining me today: Mr. Barry Horosko and Ms. Maureen Flanagan Pool. Both are active in the community. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Michael Prue: It's a pleasure to welcome the Centennial journalism students visiting the Legislature under the auspices of the legislative press gallery and Ms. Blizzard. They're right behind you there. They include—I'd better put my glasses on for this—Aleksejs Nesterins, Kerry Prunskus, Ozman Omar and Vick Polatian.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I'd like to welcome two of my constituents who came here today to watch the democratic process. They are in the west gallery. They are Bassam Abdullah and Khooleer Abdullah.

Mr. Paul Miller: It's my privilege to introduce the president of my Steelworkers local. Rolf Gerstenberger is joining us from Hamilton, and retired member Paul Lane.

Mr. Charles Sousa: I'd like to welcome to the House today three individuals: Mr. Louis Louro, who is past president of the Federation of Portuguese Canadian Business and Professionals and a merchant here in Yorkville for the past 25 years; Mr. Carlos Teixeira, also a past president of the Federation of Portuguese Canadian Business and Professionals and DS Teixeira and Associates; and Mr. Gus Costa, a retired police officer as well as a paralegal who owns Global paralegal services. Welcome, gentlemen, to the House.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I notice that Connie Neilipovitz is with us again today, mother of our page Ben Neilipovitz from Thunder Bay-Superior North. Welcome again, Connie.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'd like to welcome Mayor Roger Sigouin along with Clerk Claude Laflamme, who were here early this morning for an 8:30 meeting with the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, and soon

to be meeting with the Minister of Infrastructure, Mr. Duguid. I would like to welcome them to the assembly.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm delighted to welcome to the Legislature today the mother of page Leah Kelly. Loraine Kelly is with us today. Loraine is not only the mother of Leah, but she's a former staffer for Attorney General Ian Scott. Welcome, Loraine.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the member from Vaughan and page Catia Marceau, to welcome her mother, Giulia Marceau, and her father, Stephan Marceau, to the Legislature today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

As well, on behalf of the member from Niagara West-Glanbrook, leader of the official opposition, and page Neale Taylor, I welcome his mother, Nancy Taylor, and his aunt Laura Kmety to the west members' gallery today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

ORAL QUESTIONS

LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is for the Premier. The member for Niagara Falls is quoted as saying, "Here in my riding the LHIN has been tarnished by what's transpired over at the Niagara Health System." He's talking about the growth of executive salaries at the LHINs while you cut \$15 million from front-line care and closed emergency rooms in Fort Erie and Port Colborne.

Now that your own caucus is joining the Ontario PCs in calling for a public review of your unaccountable, unelected, anonymous bureaucracies, will you stop breaking the law and call for a review of the LHINs?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am delighted to have this opportunity to talk about some of the really exceptional things the LHINs are doing. As we've talked about at great length in the House, the role of the LHIN is really to integrate the services available within their boundaries for the people who live there. Their job is to knit together the health services that are available.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant LHIN for the work they've done. They've brokered an unprecedented level of involvement of primary care providers and specialists in local health planning. I look forward to the supplementary to talk about more of the accomplishments of the LHIN in Niagara region.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Clearly, Ontario patients and families don't agree with this government's decision to divert valuable health dollars away from front-line care and into the fat salaries of top bureaucrats and sole-sourced contracts at the LHINs. Neither does your own member, by the way, who says, "I believe in transparency. I don't have a problem with LHINs being reviewed now...."

The question is, why doesn't the Premier share his caucus member's commitment to transparency and accountability, and stop blocking a public review of these unelected, unaccountable health bureaucracies?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We welcome a review of the LHINs, and that will happen by members of all parties of this Legislature once the LHINs have achieved the full suite of services they will be providing in our communities.

The LHINs provide an invaluable service. I must say, I'm wondering now whether the members of the opposition actually understand the work that LHINs do. In the Central East region, for example, where the member for Whitby–Oshawa is from, here's just one example of the work they do: They announced funding for 32 supportive housing units in the Central East LHIN to help people living with addictions increase stability and security in their lives and to reduce pressure on hospital emergency rooms. That is just one example of the work that is done by LHINs in this province.

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

Mrs. Christine Elliott: We all know who's really making health care decisions in this province. The Premier's line that Queen's Park isn't involved in making them just isn't credible. Even the Minister of Health admitted that Premier McGuinty bowed to political pressure and injected \$15 million into Grace Hospital during the Toronto Centre by-election. You can see in the eyes of the McGuinty Liberal caucus that they know the public isn't buying what the Premier is saying, but only the member for Niagara Falls is willing to admit that the Premier has to stop protecting whatever it is he's hiding and take accountability for cutting health care and closing emergency rooms.

Are you cancelling the public review of the LHINs because you don't want to confirm that consulting contracts and bureaucrats' salaries are diverting money directly away from front-line health care?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Again, I'd like to invite the member opposite to come with me for a visit to the LHIN in her community. I think she will actually learn about the value of the LHINs.

The member opposite knows, although she doesn't really want to say it, that when we brought in that community voice in the decision-making around health care, we actually replaced two levels of health care: We had the district health councils, and we had the regional offices in the health department. What the member opposite wants to do is recentralize power for health right here at Queen's Park in Toronto, so that they can make the decisions they will need to make if they in fact do freeze spending on health care. That would mean cuts to service across the province. We do not want to do that.

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LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Again, my question is to the Premier. Premier, you created the local health integration

networks in 2006. Since then, the number of senior bureaucrats at the LHINs who earn over \$100,000 has tripled.

Are you breaking the law and cancelling the public review of the LHINs so you don't have to account for cutting money from front-line service while bureaucrat salaries are ballooning?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think there's something in there about the sunshine list, and I want to say that we welcome transparency and accountability. In fact, there are 63,000 Ontarians—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. I'd ask the honourable guests here to please remove the photographs. I'm going to have to ask that they be removed from the chamber. Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I was saying about the sunshine list that we welcome transparency and accountability. We think it's important information for Ontarians to have and to consider.

There would be two additional facts that are important for them to consider as they review their sunshine list. Point number one: If we had taken inflation into account, 70% of the people who are on that list would not be there today. Secondly, we have expanded the sunshine list to cover off OPG and Hydro One employees who had been sheltered by the previous government. Employees in those two companies alone account for over 10,000 people on the sunshine list; that's about one in six. We believe in transparency and openness.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Ontario families know that millions of valuable health dollars are not going into the front-line care as they should. People haven't forgotten the money wasted on the billion-dollar eHealth boondoggle or the latest slush fund for insiders and Liberal-friendly consultants at the LHINs.

Last year, Ontario families were in the worst depths of the recession, trying to make ends meet. How do you explain giving CEOs of the LHINs raises of \$15,000 each on average, while they were fighting to save their jobs and emergency rooms in their communities?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: With respect to LHINs and the sunshine list, the list this year went up by 19 people. I would note that the average salary has dropped. I would also note that the list would shrink by 60% had it been tied to inflation. Again, I would ask Ontarians to keep all of that in mind as they consider what has happened.

We've made a specific decision, notwithstanding the urging of the Conservative Party, to hold the line at \$100,000 when it comes to the sunshine list. We think that for the average Ontarian family, \$100,000 is a lot of money, so we will continue to uphold the sanctity of that commitment. We will also insist on ensuring that OPG and Hydro One employees are covered off even though the Conservative Party stands opposed to that.

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

Mrs. Christine Elliott: The only things growing faster than the sunshine list are the six-figure salaries of the

LHIN executives. This year alone, over \$17 million was diverted from front-line care to the salaries of Premier McGuinty's unelected, unaccountable health bureaucrats. That doesn't even include what's being handed out to consultants. The slush fund for consultants is attractive enough to have lured Barry Monaghan from his \$351,000-a-year post as CEO of the Toronto Central LHIN, but there is no sunshine list for consultants.

Premier, are you breaking the law and cancelling the public review of the LHINs so you won't have to account for the money meant for front-line care that's now being diverted to consultants?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We have been made privy to an ongoing and concerted effort on the part of the Conservative Party to demean LHINs and those who commit to working on behalf of better health care in their community. That is an approach that we do not accept, that we will not adopt.

We continue to believe that instead of putting representatives of the ministry in the community, it's better for the community itself to represent its own interests when it comes to determining the best way to make investments of public dollars. We just have a tremendous amount of faith in people in their communities. We have a tremendous amount of faith in our LHINs and, working together, we will ensure that we can continue to find ways to improve the quality of care that's available to our families in their communities.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Premier. Connie Harrison is a downtown Toronto resident who is here in the gallery today. Connie is a cancer survivor, and today she suffers from diabetes and high blood pressure. She barely gets enough money through her ODSP payment of \$710 a month. Because of her measly income, she counts on a \$72-a-month special diet allowance so she can afford the food she needs to manage her conditions.

I'm asking this question on Connie's behalf: Will he explain to her why his government is about to make her life much harder by scrapping the special diet allowance?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I appreciate the question; I really do. I think it's important for my honourable colleague to understand, as well as those who are receiving the special diet allowance—I'm not an expert when it comes to this particular matter. I'm not a doctor; I have not been trained in medicine, but it sounds to me like this particular individual would continue to benefit under the new nutritional supplement.

Our intention is to ensure that those who are in need of special support when it comes to their diet in fact receive that special support. The program as it exists right now is doing more than that, to the point where—when this started off I think it was costing us some \$6 million—it's up to \$250 million on an annual basis. They tell us it could rise up to \$750 million. That's three quarters of a billion dollars. We want to make sure we get the program

right; we want to make sure those who are entitled to receive this are in fact receiving it.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Prue: Since the McGuinty government announced its intention to replace the special diet allowance, Connie has been living with fear and anxiety. She doesn't know when her allowance will be terminated or if it will be terminated, and she doesn't know how she will make ends meet if it is cut. Why is the Premier doing this to Connie and countless other vulnerable Ontarians like her who rely on the special diet allowance to stay healthy? Why haven't you announced concrete plans on exactly what you are going to do?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: This is a great question that is being asked by the member from the NDP. Yes, there is a lot of concern out there in the community, but what I can say is that there is a transition period. Nobody will be cut off before the next program is in place, I want to reassure everyone. This being said, not everyone on the program now will be transferred to the new program. Because this new program is a nutritional supplement program, it's going to be developed in consultation with our partners in the medical community and the Ministry of Health.

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

Mr. Michael Prue: The minister has already said this will be for severe conditions, and it's already administered by the medical community. You have to get a doctor's letter to get the supplement today.

Connie isn't alone here today. Kyle Vose is a diabetic living with HIV. He's here in the audience as well. He is also worried about the cuts. So is Fiona Blair, who lives with post-traumatic stress disorder. Connie, Kyle and Fiona are just three of 170,000 Ontarians who rely on the special diet allowance to deal with their serious medical conditions.

I want the minister and/or the Premier to assure all of these Ontarians, each and every one of them, that they will not see a reduction in their benefits as a result of the cancellation of the allowance. Will the minister make that assurance?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: As I have explained, this new program will be developed in consultation with our partners in the poverty community and in the medical community, along with the Minister of Health. Will everyone who is receiving the special diet now be receiving it in the future? My answer is no.

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SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Michael Prue: We've just heard the minister, so back to the Premier. This government claims the special diet program is not meeting its objectives, but it provides not one iota of evidence: no report, no study, no analysis. Its own expert social assistance review panel says the

program shouldn't be cut, and they are not due to report until the end of this month.

Why is the government in such a rush to end the special diet allowance before it has been properly evaluated by your own panel?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I know that my honourable colleague is aware of the concerns that the auditor has expressed about this government program of ours. We think we have a responsibility not only to those individuals who are in need of special nutritional support and supplements, but we also have accountability to taxpayers to make sure that it is running as efficiently and effectively as it can.

On page 264 of the 2009 auditor's report—one passage—he says a doctor “diagnosed celiac disease in 99% of the applications” brought before him, “which we feel is unreasonably high given that the nationwide incidence of this disease is estimated at 1% of the population.” That's a legitimate concern. That's just one reason why we feel a sense of responsibility to review the program and to find a better replacement.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Prue: What the government has done is not a review, Mr. Premier. What the government has done is unilaterally cut this program in favour of some unannounced program in the future.

This government is desperate to save money—that's the real reason it's cancelling the special diet allowance—not by cutting six- and seven-figure salaries of hospital and government agency executives, but by slashing the benefits to Ontario's poorest and sickest citizens.

Why is the McGuinty government willing to balance the budget on the backs of struggling people like Connie, Kyle and Fiona, but not on its high-flying Liberal friends and big seven-figure earners?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: That's an interesting and exciting way to put it, but obviously I can't agree.

I think one of the responsibilities that we have, all of us, is to give expression to Ontarians at their best, and I think at their best they are kind, caring, considerate and compassionate. They also expect that their government will treat their hard-earned tax dollars respectfully.

What we're trying to do is strike the balance. We don't believe we have struck that balance in the best way possible with the existing program, so we're going to develop a successor program that strikes that balance, that ensures that through their government, the people of Ontario do lend a hand to those folks who need special help when it comes to their diet. But at the same time, they expect that we will be responsible when it comes to dealing with their money. That's what motivates this: We want to better strike that balance.

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

Mr. Michael Prue: There are words to describe this government's actions. “Cruel” and “heartless” and “mean” come to mind.

Back in 2007, when this Premier was looking for votes, he said over and over and over again that reducing poverty was his top priority. But three years later, with-

out any consultation, his government is cutting a basic allowance that provides up to 30% of the income for hundreds of thousands of social assistance recipients struggling with medical conditions.

Will the Premier look at the people here today—Connie, Kyle, and Fiona—display some courage and immediately reverse his decision—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just would like to remind our guests that you are very welcome to observe but not participate in the proceedings.

Please finish.

Mr. Michael Prue: Will the Premier display some courage and immediately reverse his decision to scrap the special diet allowance?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I just want to remind my honourable colleague—I know that for purposes of simplicity, you want to pigeonhole and you want to caricature the government: They're either profligate spenders or hard-hearted and mean-spirited.

The fact is that we struggle to get that balance. The fact that we are continuing to move ahead with the Ontario child benefit, a program that wasn't there before and that will provide \$1,310 for our families when it's fully implemented, notwithstanding difficult economic times, I think speaks to where our heart is found. The fact that we've found permanent funding for 8,500 more child care spaces speaks to where our heart is. The fact that we are now determined to find a better program to help people who find themselves in difficult circumstances, who need additional support for their nutritional requirements, speaks again to where our heart is. But we've got to balance that with our responsibility to taxpayers to get this right.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Steve Clark: My question is for the Premier. Premier, the sunshine list reveals that you have diverted over half a million dollars from the Hamilton Health Sciences budget to pay Ron Sapsford while the billion-dollar eHealth boondoggle was happening right under his nose. You also poached \$300,000 from the University Health Network budget to pay your hand-picked climate change advisor Hugh MacLeod before he skipped out the back door when the Environmental Commissioner exposed that you weren't getting the results for the money.

Why do the McGuinty Liberals continue to rob hospital budgets to pay these bureaucrats' salaries when the money should be going to front-line care?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I welcome the opportunity to talk about how pleased I was to see in the budget that we are continuing to increase support for our hospitals and for our health care sector.

There is a party represented by the member who asked the question that actually has in their platform the position of freezing funding for our hospitals. We know that means cutting services; there is no way around that.

What we are committed to doing is continuing to build on the work we have done over the first six and a half years, restoring the health care system. We are increasingly looking to improve quality and value, and the LHINs play a very important role in that process.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Steve Clark: Minister, in my own riding, you know that 15 beds will close and 17 staff will be cut at Brockville General Hospital. Millions have been diverted from hospitals to pay the salaries of bureaucrats hand-picked by the Premier for his pet projects, some of whom are complicit in this government's biggest scandals and waste.

Take the \$506,000 that Premier McGuinty is robbing from the London Health Sciences Centre to pay Ken Deane. It's bad enough an assistant deputy minister is making over half a—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would just ask the honourable member to withdraw the comment and be conscious of impugning any motive on another member.

Mr. Steve Clark: I withdraw.

It's bad enough that an assistant deputy minister is making over half a million dollars, but Ken Deane approved untendered deals to Liberal consultants in the eHealth feeding frenzy.

Minister, why did the Premier block a public inquiry into eHealth and cancel the public review of the LHINs?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: As I have said many times now in this place, we are committed to a review of the LHINs; we are committed to an all-party review of the LHINs. We think that's an important part of improving how we deliver health care in this province.

The question is when is the right time to do that review. We think the right time to do that review is when the LHINs have achieved their full mandate and are actually doing what we had in mind when we set up the LHINs in the first place, and that is to include long-term-care homes. They will not actually be getting responsibility for long-term-care homes until later this summer. We want to give them time to take that responsibility and have a couple of years of experience with that responsibility before we take a good hard look at the act.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Peter Tabuns: A question to the Premier. Here are the facts about your hydro strategy in Ontario: Your smart meter program has meant higher bills for Toronto Hydro users and no reduction in power demand. Ontario Power Generation, operating an unaffordable nuclear fleet, is applying for a 9.6% increase for its portion of the bill.

Premier, at a time when Ontario residents are struggling to recover from the worst recession in a generation, you're giving them a lot of pain and very little gain. When are you actually going to make the deep conservation investments that are needed to make hydro affordable in this province?

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

Hon. Brad Duguid: So far, over 3.4 million smart meters have been installed across the province. That's a significant achievement, and there's more to come. I would think the honourable member, with his background, would recognize the importance of moving toward that culture of conservation. The time-of-use initiative will provide every resident in this province with that opportunity to engage in that movement. It's important. It's important that every Ontarian engage in conservation. It saves them money in the long run and it ensures that as they shift their use, they'll have opportunities to save. At the same time, it ensures that we don't have to build more nuclear capacity, that we don't have to build more supply. It just makes sense. I would have thought the member opposite, given his background on environmental issues, would understand that.

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The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Well, if you spend a billion dollars on a program and it doesn't actually reduce consumption, then that doesn't help; that's a waste of public money.

But let's go on to another part of your program, executive salaries. Yesterday, we found out that former OPG CEO James Hankinson's salary—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I hope you're going to tie that in to the original question.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I am indeed, Mr. Speaker. We found out that his salary and bonus totalled over \$2.1 million. His successor, Tom Mitchell, is over a million. Hydro One CEO Laura Formosa earns \$978,000. That's not going to help hydro ratepayers or the environment. When are you going to help ratepayers and the environment by making the investments that we need in deep conservation and stop wasting money on these inflated salaries?

Hon. Brad Duguid: One of the things that this government takes pride in is the fact that, prior to us coming into office, the sunshine list wasn't accessible for OPG employees and Hydro One. It's very important that we did that because it ensures that Ontarians have access to that kind of information. I think that's important. It's something we're very proud of. The person he was referring to is actually making less than his predecessor was.

Now, the Premier is absolutely right: To average Ontarians, \$100,000 is a sizable income. We understand that; we get that. Seventy per cent of these workers, as in all of government—and MEI is absolutely in line with that—would not have been on the sunshine list had there been inflationary pressures taken into consideration.

We think this is something all Ontarians should have access to—

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

PATIENT SAFETY

Mrs. Liz Sandals: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, my constituents

have heard about the surgical errors uncovered in a Windsor hospital. We were relieved to hear that the hospital took the appropriate steps and launched a formal review, both of the incident and the doctor in question. The minister's decision to appoint three highly regarded physicians to investigate and report on issues related to the quality of care and treatment of patients at three hospitals in Windsor also helped to reassure my constituents.

I understand, coming out of that, the surgical safety checklist is known to prevent errors in the operating room. Could the minister please tell this House about the surgical safety checklist and if our hospitals will actually be using it?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you for that very excellent question. I'm very happy to announce that the surgical safety checklist will be required for all operations in all hospitals in the province of Ontario starting today. The checklist is inspired by a pilot's checklist. It includes a mandatory review of pathology and biopsy results by the entire operating room team—that includes surgeons, anaesthetists and nurses—in the operating room before a patient is given the anaesthetic.

The results of a study published in a 2009 New England Journal of Medicine reported that consistent use of a checklist reduces the rates of death and complications associated with surgical care. A province-wide education program with a comprehensive toolkit was developed and delivered across the province. Starting July 30, they will—

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

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm relieved to hear that the checklist will now be adopted by all Ontario hospitals. My constituents will be happy to hear that this additional step will be taken to keep them safe when they undergo surgery, because, as we know, when a patient is admitted to hospital the only thing on their mind is their own health, safety and well-being. Patients and families don't need the added burden of worrying about the possibility of things like hospital-acquired infections. In addition to minimizing the surgical errors, it's also important to minimize infections in hospitals.

Could the minister please tell this House what the government is doing to keep patients safe in Ontario hospitals?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: That's another excellent question. Patient safety is a very high priority for this government, and we do have a plan to combat infectious diseases. We're turning expert advice into action. We've established a provincial infectious disease advisory committee for the best and most current advice on infectious diseases. We've created the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion to position Ontario as a world leader when it comes to public health.

We know that when you track it, you can improve it. It's the same principle we used to lower wait times. That's why we've made C. difficile outbreaks reportable to the public health units, and we're now seeing the lowest rates since we started reporting as a direct result of that reporting.

We're doing excellent work in this province to improve patient safety. Most recently our initiative is on hand hygiene compliance—

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

ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Mr. Ted Arnott: My question is for the Premier. Tomorrow is the one-year anniversary of our colleague the member for Kitchener–Waterloo asking the first questions about untendered contracts at eHealth. For three quarters of 2009, the Premier knew about the money that was being wasted in the eHealth scandal. What's worse, he defended it. As the sunshine list now shows, the McGuinty Liberals actually paid handsome raises to the people overseeing the billion-dollar eHealth scandal.

Now that an eHealth-style scandal is emerging at some of the LHINs, Ontario patients need to know why the Premier is once again defending the waste of health care dollars on consultants, bureaucrats' salaries and insider perks.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We know that the future viability of health care in this province depends on us moving forward with electronic health records for the people of Ontario. So much of what we can do to improve quality and value for money depends on that foundation of eHealth. We're making important strides to get to where we need to be when it comes to electronic health. One of the initiatives I am most pleased about is an initiative around ePrescribing. We've got a pilot study that's under way right now. We're seeing the results when doctors can electronically prescribe. The prescription goes right to the pharmacy, and the patient can pick it up there at the pharmacy. We're seeing much better results and fewer errors being made. That's just one example of what we are doing.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Ted Arnott: It's not surprising that the Premier sidestepped the question, and the minister's answer was not reassuring. The Premier could not only take a page from the government of British Columbia on how to transfer HST tax collectors without paying \$25 million in severance bonuses, but he could also learn something from them about accountability. When British Columbia had its own eHealth scandal, the government referred the matter to the police, and they have now pressed charges. In Ontario, this Premier has done nothing to discipline those who blocked the auditor's investigation. He has not turned evidence over to the police to investigate, and he continues to block a public inquiry into who got rich from the millions that could have been going to front-line care.

Did the Premier cancel the public review of the LHINs for the same reason he has blocked a public inquiry into the eHealth scandal?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'd like to take the opportunity to talk a little bit more about what we're doing on eHealth, because it really is a critically important piece of our health care system. Four million Ontarians now have electronic medical records. Physicians are already participating. We are expanding that: By 2012, 10 million out of 13 million Ontarians will have electronic medical records. Primary care providers have embraced the technology, and we will support them as they move to electronic health records. It's critically important for health care in this province.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le premier ministre. Yesterday revealed a new club: the \$700,000 club. This club is filled with hospital presidents and CEOs whose salaries have continued to grow by 7% in last year alone.

Does the Premier think that it is right for Fort Erie, Port Colborne, Welland, Thessalon, Picton, Cobourg, Burk's Falls, Oakville—and the list goes on—patients to be losing their health services while these CEOs, members of the \$700,000 club, are taking home skyrocketing salaries?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

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Hon. Deborah Matthews: We all, of course, understand the importance of having transparency when it comes to salaries. That's why the sunshine list is there: so that we can take a good, hard look at the salaries that are paid by the taxpayers. I think it's important to recognize that the number of hospital employees on the list did increase, but the average salary actually remains only \$90 more this year than last year.

We need to be able to attract competent people, we need to retain the health care providers we have here. I am concerned, however, about hospital CEO compensation. We will be introducing legislation that will make health care providers more accountable for quality in their institutions.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I agree with you that the health care providers did not cash in on the \$700,000 club. Since the government took office, it is the hospital executives who saw their salaries increase by 40%, not the workers. The government can talk about the boards of directors of the hospitals and all this, but at the end of the day, every Ontarian knows that it is our tax dollars that are paying for this excess. It is clear that your priorities are wrong.

People in London are set to lose 14,000 hours of nursing care because of layoffs due to funding issues. Does the minister think it is right that patients are losing the care while top executives' salaries continue to balloon?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I would like to assure the member opposite that I share her concern about hospital CEO compensation. I think Ontarians are concerned

about that as well, especially when so many of them are struggling to make ends meet. That is why we will be introducing legislation that will make those health care executives more accountable for improving the quality of the services in their institutions. We will link executive compensation to quality objectives to ensure that every dollar that we spend in health care does have the result of improving health care for people in this province.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Charles Sousa: My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, the great riding of Mississauga South is fortunate to be served by two outstanding school boards: the Peel District School Board and the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board.

As a parent of three children who have attended Catholic and public schools in Mississauga, I know first-hand about the high quality of education our students receive. However, when it comes to educating our kids, we should always strive to do better.

In a recent letter to the Mississauga News, PDSB chair Janet McDougald wrote about how our Peel schools are funded. She said that the students in the Peel public school system are the fourth-lowest funded in Ontario and that the funding gap has almost doubled in the past eight years.

Minister, why is per-pupil funding in Peel lower than in Ontario school boards?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: That's a very important question from the honourable member. I think it's important that I have the opportunity in this House, first of all, to identify that we recognize that in each board, in fact in each school community, the needs and demands of the students, the school and the community can vary.

We have a funding formula that, in large measure, provides funding to schools on a per-pupil basis, but there are other components that enable the government to flow dollars to schools to assist them to address some of the specific needs that they have within their school community. We have consulted with school boards, through the grants for student needs consultations, and I look forward in my supplementary to providing a little more information around some of the changes that we've made in the GSNs—

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

Mr. Charles Sousa: Minister, in the same letter, Ms. McDougald suggests that your ministry is using outdated data to determine funding for Peel boards. In fact, she says that 1991 and 1996 census data is being used to allocate funding. This data is more than a decade old. In fact, since 2001, over 33,000 additional students are now being educated in Peel boards and in Peel schools. Many of these students are newcomers to Canada who don't speak English or French as their first language. They depend on programs like ESL to succeed, but my community is concerned that because old data is being used, these programs are not being adequately funded.

Will the Ministry of Education commit to using the 2006 census data and funding Peel boards accordingly?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: As I indicated in my first response, we have worked and consulted—in fact, the member for Guelph had consultations with stakeholders to understand how we can better support schools. The issue of current data was a very important one that was raised.

I am happy to be able to report to this House that in fact the GSNs that have been released for this year, particularly the learning opportunities grant portion that does consider census, have been updated and this component of the GSN will now consider the census data of 2006.

Now, for the school board of the honourable member that he has identified, that means that will increase their funding in the neighbourhood of 4% to 5%.

We thank the honourable member —

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

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Peter Shurman: My question is for the Premier. This week, I learned that a plant run by Crown Metal Packaging Canada in my riding of Thornhill, employing 159 people, will shut down in December. Crown Metal Packaging operates in 41 countries around the world, but this particular plant is shutting down because it is no longer competitive—their words. I'm told that it's the jurisdiction that makes it uncompetitive—their assessment.

Premier, when are you going to acknowledge your role in making Ontario so uncompetitive that we continue to expel jobs and investment?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I am pleased to respond to this question. First of all, we're very concerned if we hear that there is a company that is going to consider not employing people in Ontario, and we have great concern for the people who may have lost a job or will lose a job. We'd like the particulars of this particular company, because we'd like to talk to them.

What we have been doing for the last three successive budgets in a row is making our tax environment in Ontario one of the most competitive in North America. What we can share with you is some of the influence that our tax policy has had in savings for companies very much like this, in particular those that are in manufacturing, as it sounds as if this company is. So I would like to have the details and the contacts. This member knows I'd be happy to call that company.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Shurman: The facts speak for themselves. What the minister continues to fail to acknowledge is that high taxes, a massive deficit and soaring energy costs give companies like Crown Metal Packaging more than enough reason to pack up and move to cheaper jurisdictions.

The Premier shouldn't bother spending any money on polling to gauge the reaction to his budget; the closure of this plant is all the reaction that's required. There was nothing in this budget that would convince Crown Metal Packaging that it could afford to keep this plant open any longer.

No one said economic recovery was easy, Premier. I'd like to know why this government is making it that much harder for companies like Crown Metal Packaging and the 159 people who work there?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: The reality is that there have been many studies done, especially over the last few years as we've come through a world recession. That last one, the KPMG study, ranks Canada as the second-most competitive place in the world. That's our reality. This member also knows that the IBM global study ranked Ontario as the leading jurisdiction for foreign direct investment anywhere in North America two years in a row, even when those two years were 2008 and 2009, in the face of a world recession. Those are the facts.

What concerns us greatly is that there is one company that may consider moving; that's a company that we need to speak to. We need to explain that we've eliminated the capital tax as of July this year—also an initiative that that member opposite voted against. We've also eliminated the surtax for small business, an initiative that that member voted against, and all of the—

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

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Premier. Hamilton-Niagara has taken another economic hit with the move of Lakeport beer operations to London. Our leader, Andrea Horwath, is in Hamilton this morning talking with the newest group of unemployed Hamilton workers who are facing extremely difficult times ahead. With the closure of Siemens a scant two weeks ago, this brings the total to over 700 more jobs lost in Hamilton-Niagara. Members of the government make faint claims of new jobs in the region, but I don't think a \$10.25 hourly minimum wage is going to sustain families who have relied on well-paying, permanent, full-time jobs. When will the McGuinty government's plan for good, well-paying jobs in Hamilton start?

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Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I am very pleased to respond to this, because we too are very concerned when we hear news about Lakeport Brewery. We know that there is a history in Ontario of very terrific manufacturing, and that is a message we continue to send to the world. When we have communities like Hamilton that have been hard hit by the recession—as have other regions of Ontario which have been largely manufacturing-based—we're concerned about that. We're reaching out to these companies to see what we can do to be helpful.

With Siemens, the example that this member offers, we brought not only the CAW into our office to talk about future opportunities, but we're engaging Siemens directly about what opportunities they may have in the future for work right here in Ontario. We are reaching out to Lakeport as well. They've made a decision to move manufacturing outside of Ontario. We think there could be other opportunities and we're determined to see if we can—

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

Mr. Paul Miller: You may be reaching out, but they're all leaving town. The Globe and Mail Report on Business, on March 30, said, "The brewery's closure also delivers another blow to the labour market in Hamilton, which has seen massive"—I repeat, massive—"layoffs in some key industries." Hamilton suffers an 8.9% unemployment rate while Niagara region suffers an 11.5% unemployment rate.

Recently, the minister from Hamilton said that the closure is a blow to Hamilton and the province "will help in any way we can."

Rather than help in any way you can, I ask again: Where are the well-paying new jobs? What are the real numbers of the new jobs? Where is the McGuinty government's new job plan to get the Hamilton-Niagara economy back on track?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I think there is no question that the significant representation that Hamilton has, in particular in the cabinet and in caucus here on this side of the government—they have been tireless in their support of Hamilton.

We have been on the phone with leadership in Hamilton for a number of years, whether it's through community and transition support programs or—I don't know if the member participated in the economic summit of last year, which we supported on this side of the House, but that was another initiative that member opposite actually voted against. All of the infrastructure being built in Hamilton and in the Niagara region, tens of millions of dollars—every one of these initiatives is something that that member opposite voted against.

When we talk to these manufacturers around the world, we want them in Hamilton. It behooves this member opposite to be supportive of our initiatives while we try to help Hamilton when it—

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

AUTISM TREATMENT

Mr. Ted McMeekin: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. On December 18, 2007, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution declaring April 2 to be World Autism Awareness Day. This UN resolution is one of only three official disease-specific United Nations days and is designed, obviously, to bring attention to the issue of autism spectrum disorder. This is an opportunity to raise awareness

about autism spectrum disorder and to encourage early diagnosis and early intervention. It's estimated that approximately 6% of people are diagnosed with ASD.

Minister, can you please tell this House what our government is doing to support children with autism spectrum disorder and their families?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I want to thank my friend the member for Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale for his advocacy on this important issue and for giving me the opportunity to speak to it today. I have had an opportunity, over the past many years, to meet with children with autism, their parents and service providers. I've listened and learned a great deal about the work that needs to be done to meet these kids' needs, and I want to thank those parents and children for sharing their experiences and stories with me.

We've made significant progress since 2003. More kids are getting support and we've broadened the range of services. We've removed the previous government's discriminatory age-six cut-off and almost quadrupled autism spending from \$44 million to almost \$165 million today. Now, almost 1,300 kids are getting IBI therapy and we have introduced a respite program which served almost 7,000 kids—

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

Mr. Ted McMeekin: Minister, outside of the traditional delivery of autism services, schools are increasingly dealing with cases of autism amongst their students. While it is crucial that we provide appropriate resources to those in need of services, we must also recognize the challenges that face these kids when they enter the school system. Upon entering the school system there are obstacles and challenges facing ASD students. Knowing the importance of integrating students with ASD in the educational system, what is our government doing to ensure that the transition is as smooth as possible?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: To the Minister of Education.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I'm happy to have the opportunity to speak to the work that we have done with our partners to ensure that there is an appropriate transition. As a result of that, we have implemented the Connections for Students model. This model is a school-based transition team that is established approximately six months before a child prepares to enter the school and will be in place for six months after the child is in the school. School boards have been instructed that transition teams must be in place no later than the spring of this year.

I think it's also important that members of the Legislature note that we have been working since 2006 to provide more than 13,000—

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

SENIORS' HEALTH SERVICES

Mrs. Julia Munro: My question is for the Minister of Health. A constituent of mine used to receive a monthly

B12 injection from a CCAC nurse in her home. She is a senior and she has been cut off. She has to find a friend or family member to take her, no matter the weather. She is 97 years old. One fall in an icy parking lot could put her in the hospital.

Minister, I cannot believe that cutting off a 97-year-old woman once a month will save you money overall. Do you believe it will?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I think the member opposite is speaking to the value of home care, and we completely agree that providing care in-home is what we have to do. That is why we have dramatically increased funding in the home care sector. We have dramatically increased the number of people receiving care. We've taken off some of the rules that limited the amount of care people could receive.

I, of course, cannot speak to this particular case. I would be happy to look into it. But what I can tell you is that we remain committed to home care and we remain committed to an enhanced role in home care.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I hear repeatedly from constituents and nurses in my riding of seniors losing their CCAC care. You know that seniors losing medical care at home will mean more of them ending up in the hospital. Every penny you save from home care will cost much more in dollars in the hospital. I cannot believe you are willing to risk someone's well-being by cutting corners on a budget.

Minister, why do you manage your ministry in silos?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I think the member opposite just made the very best argument for the value of the local health integration networks. It is their job to break down those silos.

This government is committed to improving health care in this province. The party opposite is committed to cutting health care in this province. When they were in office, this is what they did: They cut home care and community health care funding by \$21.7 million in 1995-96 and \$38 million in 2000-01. Nursing visits decreased 22%, while homemaking services decreased 30%.

I could go on about the record. What I will commit to is that we remain committed to improving home care in this province. The party opposite is committed to cutting.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Rosario Marchese: A question to the Minister of Education. Minister, last week, in response to my question, you said you were listening very carefully to the deputations on Bill 242. As a result, you would know that many concerns have been expressed about the fact that the government has chosen to cherry-pick the full-day kindergarten program rather than implement the entire Pascal report. As a result, child care centres are facing a loss of revenue from the movement of the four- and five-year-olds to schools. This may force many centres to close. Many of them told us that, and you heard that.

What is the government going to do to support child care centres so that the kindergarten program doesn't result in fewer child care spaces for parents next year?

1130

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: What I can say to the honourable member right now is that I'm sure the honourable member appreciates that we have had second reading debate and we have heard the public presentations in committee, but we still have a good deal of work to do when we consider amendments that would be proposed and all of the information that we've heard at the committee level. We're still in the process of sifting through all of that.

What I can say is that we are absolutely committed to investing in our earliest learners. What we have told the people of Ontario and the parents of four- and five-year-old children is that we are looking to implement an integrated, full-day kindergarten program. That is the goal; that is what Bill 242 is all about.

I think it's always important, when we ask questions about what we're going to do, to remember—

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

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You don't have much time. Clause-by-clause will happen next week. Amendments have to be submitted very soon. In order to ease the worry, my feeling is that you've got to present something.

I'm not sure whether you've listened carefully, because there's more: The fact that the government has chosen to implement only one component of the Pascal report has raised serious questions about the before- and after-school part of the early learning program.

How are school boards supposed to find qualified people to staff a stand-alone program to care for four- and five-year-olds for a few hours in the morning and a few hours in the afternoon? How are they going to do that?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: Again, the honourable member would know that we have announced the first—almost 600 schools will have this program in place.

That's not all. We are taking a very measured approach. We've asked boards to work co-operatively with their coterminous boards and child care providers, because we understand that there are going to be some impacts.

With respect to the work that we are doing with Bill 242, I'm not going to presume to understand what the outcome will be of the very good work that is still under way on that bill. What I can say is that we have been listening very carefully to all of the people who have taken the time to bring their very best advice to us.

This is an important investment in our youngest learners. We are committed to building the strongest students in this province so that we can build the strongest economy in the world.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. David Zimmer: My question is for the Minister of Consumer Services. It has come to my attention

through the media, and indeed from a number of constituents in Willowdale, that there is some very ugly stuff going on in the small mover business—some really nasty business practices. I understand that what some of these practices revolve around is involving extra charges for stuff not quoted in the original price to the consumers.

There are all sorts of variations of this scam, but here's just one, to give you the flavour: I've been advised that in some cases, moving companies are asking for extra money to remove the furniture from the back of the moving van once it has reached its destination. What they say is that that's not included in the original quoting price. They're just charging for moving from A to B, not to unload the stuff. Minister, what are we doing—

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

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: That was a great question. Thank you to the honourable member from Willowdale, who is a great advocate for consumer protection in his riding.

The ministry has a great deal of information to help Ontarians make informed decisions when choosing a moving company. It's important to help consumers to know their rights before entering into an agreement with a moving company, and we have some great tips for them.

First, the final cost cannot be more than 10% above the original estimate. Second, if the consumer agreement for the move took place in their home, you can cancel the agreement within 10 days of signing that contract. Thirdly, a mover cannot hold your goods to pressure you to renegotiate the price.

I urge any consumer—

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

Mr. David Zimmer: I'm just appalled that this kind of activity is going on. I hear from seniors in Willowdale who are regularly getting ripped off on this. Obviously, the ministry must have had some knowledge that this kind of stuff was going on. There must be penalties to crack down and to impose on these unscrupulous companies.

Minister, what kind of charges can you levy against these bandits?

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: Again, that's a very good question, and I thank the member for that. The member is correct. In 2009, the ministry received over 230 inquiries and 109 written complaints about movers. Since 2008, the ministry has assisted in obtaining more than \$17,000 in refunds for consumers who have been mistreated by moving companies.

An individual who is convicted under the Consumer Protection Act, including unscrupulous movers, may receive a maximum sentence of two years less a day in jail and a maximum in fines of up to \$50,000. The Ministry of Consumer Services is here to help.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I ask all members to join me as we take this opportunity to thank this

wonderful group of pages for the hard work they've done on our behalf. We wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

I would welcome unanimous consent that we continue on next week.

GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On Tuesday, March 23, 2010, the member for Oshawa, Mr. Ouellette, rose on a point of order to indicate that an announcement made in the March 8 speech from the throne had circumvented the parliamentary process. Specifically, the member indicated that, despite the fact that Bill 242, which, according to the member, deals with all-day kindergarten, is still before the Legislature, the speech from the throne announced that starting this fall, full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds will begin in schools across our province. The government House leader, Ms. Smith, made a written submission on the point. On Thursday, March 25, 2010, the member rose again, this time on a point of privilege concerning the implementation of this program, and the government House leader responded.

Having had the opportunity to review the speech from the throne, our Hansard, the materials provided by the member from Oshawa, the written submission of the government House leader and the relevant precedents and authorities, I will now rule on the matters.

Let me begin by confirming that the speech from the throne contains the statement quoted by the member. In addition, at the time that the statement was read in the chamber as part of the speech from the throne, the House had not passed Bill 242, which is entitled 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. In today's Orders and Notices paper, I note that the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

Members will know that the speech from the throne is a ceremonial occasion when the Lieutenant Governor typically outlines the government's view on the conditions of the province and indicates what measures and programs the government intends to implement. I have reviewed other speeches from the throne in recent Parliaments, and I note that they often contain declaratory announcements that are similar in tone as the one in the case at hand. In addition, there was nothing procedurally deficient about the delivery of the speech from the throne. I therefore rule that the member's concerns do not raise a matter of order.

I now turn to consideration of the separate but related point of privilege raised by the same member on March 25. According to the member, members' privileges were circumvented when the government funded and distributed literature announcing the implementation of full-day learning for September well before Bill 242 was introduced in this House. The member objected that this literature did not mention that implementation of this program

was contingent on a parliamentary process, in particular, the passage of legislation. The member also requested that the Speaker review the authority by which the Ministry of Education can implement this program before the passage of legislation.

My review of the relevant precedents and authorities reveals that Speakers normally address such points of privilege as a matter of contempt as opposed to a matter involving a breach of one of the specific privileges belonging to an individual member or this House. Therefore, I will consider whether the concerns raised by the member for Oshawa raise a matter of contempt.

1140

I begin the exercise referring to the February 22, 2005 Speaker's ruling mentioned by the member for Oshawa. That ruling considered whether a government announcement was a matter of contempt in circumstances where the government had written letters on matters relating to education to various stakeholders; the government also had distributed a related press release and made an announcement that anticipated the introduction of a bill and a budgetary measure.

The ruling contains the following statement:

"The minister appears to have made an announcement outside the House that anticipates a bill and a budgetary measure. But there is nothing wrong with anticipation per se—it happens a lot; the issue is whether the announcement goes further and reflects adversely on the parliamentary process."

I've also reviewed rulings for the period between 1997 and 2001, when Speaker Stockwell and Speaker Carr ruled on several allegations that the government of the day had taken some action that reflected adversely on the parliamentary process.

For example, on January 22, 1997, Speaker Stockwell ruled on government advertising that made definitive statements concerning the government's program for reforms to municipal government. The advertising was distributed publicly on the same day that a bill implementing the reforms was introduced in the House. In ruling that a prima facie case of contempt was established, Speaker Stockwell made the following statement:

"The ads convey the impression that the passage of the requisite legislation was not necessary or was a foregone conclusion, or that the assembly and the Legislature had a pro forma, tangential, even inferior role in the legislative and law-making process, and in doing so, they appear to diminish the respect that is due to this House. I would not have come to this view had these claims or proposals—and that is all they are—been qualified by a statement that they would only become law if and when the Legislature gave its stamp of approval to them."

That was Speaker Stockwell in 1997.

There are similarities to the case at hand. None of the materials complained of and provided to me by the member for Oshawa refer to the passage of a bill. Therefore, the role of the Legislature is not acknowledged or deferred to. However, this in itself has been a significant problem for me in preparing this ruling, for it

is ultimately not clear that legislation is required to implement this program. If the sanction of the Legislature is already in place through another statute or by delegated legislation, then the steps the government has taken to put full-day learning in place do not produce the same level of concern in me that the 1997 circumstances aroused in Speaker Stockwell, for in effect, the House has already spoken and given prior authority for it to happen.

On the other hand, the House does have Bill 242 before it. On its face, Bill 242 seems to have the objective of establishing the necessary legal basis for this program to be fully implemented. A reading of the bill, its explanatory notes and the second reading debate leadoff speech given by the Minister of Education and her parliamentary assistant could certainly leave someone who is not an insider in the education system with the impression that the program cannot be set up without the passage of Bill 242.

It is therefore not surprising that, like me, the member for Oshawa and perhaps many others are labouring under some confusion as to the necessity of Bill 242 to the program's implementation, and whether or not the government will have the full statutory authority it requires until the legislative process has been completed and the bill passed. In other words, if the bill isn't needed, why is it being introduced and entitled in such a way as to suggest the opposite? I don't think that is an unfair question, but to get that question properly answered would take the legal analysis of the legislation and statutes, something many previous Speakers indicated in similar situations is not for the Speaker to undertake.

I am left with the explanation provided by the government House leader. She has written to me and on March 25 addressed this matter orally in the House. She asserts that there is prior existing authority in the Education Act for implementation and funding of full-day learning, and that while Bill 242 provides a fuller long-term framework for this program, the bill is not necessary to authorize it.

As the Speaker is always bound to respect the word of an honourable member of this assembly, I have no reason not to accept the government House leader's contention in this regard. I therefore rule that this matter raised by the member for Oshawa does not amount to a prima facie case of contempt.

In closing, however, I will tell the House that the Speaker is left feeling somewhat unsatisfied in this matter. When the government's legislative agenda is being actively carried out in the way all-day learning is currently being done across the province at the same time as this House is addressing a nominally connected bill, it certainly leaves some room for unwelcome ambiguity about the role of the Legislature. Surely it is not necessary to have to remind the government that in our system it is they who are answerable to the Legislature and not the other way around.

I thank the member for Oshawa for raising his concerns. I thank the government House leader and the NDP leader for their contributions.

The member for Oshawa.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: Speaker, I just wish to thank yourself and the table for your timely consideration in this matter, as it does affect us all.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member from Welland.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Thank you, Speaker.

The Speaker makes reference to written arguments that have been delivered to the Speaker, and I'm not suggesting there's anything at all improper in that. The problem is that that written argument appears to be critical to the Speaker's ruling today. I'm not quarrelling with that.

That then takes us to—and I'm not seeking some sort of adjudication on whether or not there should be written submissions, but how do those written submissions then become part of the public record when one is analyzing this particular ruling? Without the written submission, the ruling could be perceived as broad, whereas—and I may well be wrong; I understand that—my sense is that the Speaker has based the ruling very much on the facts of this case rather than making a broad ruling.

I hope the Speaker understands my concern and why I raise this point of order. It seems to me important that written submissions somehow become part of the public record. I appreciate they could be tabled and therefore be accessible through the Clerk, but they are still not then part of Hansard, and that's the difficulty.

So I look for some clarity in there—or clarification, at least, in that regard. I hope the Speaker understands my concern.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I thank the honourable member for raising the point. It is actually an issue that I have had discussions with the table about. It's an issue I'd actually like to see addressed by the House leaders, not just on the point that you have raised here, but I'll use the example of points of privilege.

The Speaker receives the necessary notice from an honourable member one day in advance, but there is no mechanism that allows the Speaker the opportunity to share that with the government House leader or the House leader from the third party, as in the most recent case with the point of privilege raised by the member from Whitby–Oshawa. So I would very much like to have this opportunity, to have the ability to discuss amongst the House leaders how I, as Speaker, continue to do my impartial job, but at the same time properly share information with all members so that they can have that opportunity to make their representation to me. I look forward at the earliest convenience to meeting with the House leaders to have further discussion in this regard.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Thank you, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1149 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Monte Kwinter: It's my pleasure to reintroduce Inna Dubrovsky, mother of page Diana, who is here to

see her daughter on her last day as a page. I personally want to thank Diana for her services and wish her well in the future.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I would like to introduce Wilbert and Corinne Groskleg, the grandparents of page Giselle, who are visiting us today in the members' gallery west. I want to thank them for coming to see Giselle on her last day and thank Giselle for her wonderful service here as page.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

AMBULANCE SERVICES

Mr. Ted Arnott: Yesterday, I spoke with the Minister of Health and asked her to meet with representatives of the county of Wellington. Here's why: For years, the city of Guelph and the county of Wellington have worked in partnership on a joint land ambulance committee. With the city as the designated provider of ambulance service, the county and city each have had four members on this committee to represent the interests of their respective residents. Unfortunately, the relationship of the city of Guelph and the county of Wellington has become very strained in recent months. Two months ago, in a move that can only be described as provocative, the city took the extraordinary step of unilaterally disbanding the land ambulance committee. This has left the county taxpayers unrepresented when it comes to the governance of this important local service. The ambulance can literally mean the difference between life and death.

It is my hope that all areas of conflict between the city and the county can be resolved through negotiation, because we all need to try to get along with our neighbours.

As the MPP for Wellington–Halton Hills, I side with my constituents, and I believe that the Minister of Health has it within her power to broker a solution to the ambulance impasse.

The warden of Wellington county, Joanne Ross-Zuj, puts it well: "Our request is simple: Direct the re-establishment of the land ambulance committee, complete with equal representation by Wellington county councillors, in the form which existed prior to January 26."

I urge the minister to convene a meeting with the county without delay.

FASHION INDUSTRY

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Yesterday, Cheri DiNovo, the member from Parkdale–High Park, and Christine Elliott, the member from Whitby–Oshawa, held a news conference to call on the culture minister, Michael Chan, to include fashion under the province's mandate. I support them. It is a great idea.

Canadian designer Robin Kay says the Ontario government's failure to declare the fashion business a cultural industry like filmmaking or book publishing is simply out of style. She's absolutely right.

This place could use a little style. This place, men and women here, could use a little fashion.

I just don't understand it. I've been here for close to 20 years, and there is so much resistance to initiatives of this sort. I just don't get it. Quebec understands it, because in Quebec, where they did this, employment in the fashion industry doubled in less than a year. They know. In France, Italy, Germany, all over the world, ministers of culture are the most important things you can have in government. Here, they're the least important. I don't get it.

We know that there are 50,000 people in the GTA alone who are in the fashion industry. Ontario exported \$688 million in apparel in 2006, according to some designers. It's a great industry to support.

I'm looking forward to the minister saying, "We're finally going to include them under the mandate of the cultural ministry."

INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM FUNDING

Mr. Joe Dickson: I rise in the House today with good news from my riding of Ajax–Pickering. Over the past year, our provincial government has provided over \$170 million for 104 municipal infrastructure projects throughout the region of Durham. Here is just a brief update on a few provincially funded projects.

First: \$850,000 of provincial funding for the \$2.5-million redevelopment of the 139-year-old original St. Francis de Sales Church—where my parents were married, by the way. I think Rosario got me all confused here when I started talking about churches. The parish itself will be 150 years old this year. It will become the first arts and culture facility in Ajax. The town is hoping to give residents and visitors a sneak preview of this facility during Doors Open Ontario on September 18.

Second: almost \$700,000 for the \$2-million three-way funding of the Memorial Outdoor Pool retrofit at the town of Ajax municipal complex. This project will start in the next couple of days.

Third: \$70,000 dollars to the town of Ajax to fund two after-school programs at Terry Fox Public School and Bolton C. Falby Public School.

We, the people of Ajax, are very sincerely appreciative of what the Ontario government and the Premier have done for our municipality. A very sincere thank you.

DEMENTIA CARE

Mrs. Christine Elliott: On March 24, the Alzheimer Society of Ontario released their 10-step plan to reduce the economic and social toll of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias in Ontario.

The report is entitled 10 by 20: Ontario Action Plan for Dementia. The plan sets out a number of ways for dealing with dementias within our health care system. They are: (1) to encourage brain health via early diag-

nosis and intervention; (2) to establish equitable and accessible caregiver supports; (3) to build a more coordinated, seamless and better-trained dementia workforce; (4) to invest in research towards treatment and a cure; and (5) to establish the Ontario government as a leader in making a national dementia policy.

The economic burden of dementias is expected to increase by over \$770 million each year until 2020, and the number of those being diagnosed is expected to increase by 40%. Yet only about one third of our LHINs have specifically included dementia as an issue in their plans for elder care. Speaker, 65% or more residents in Ontario's long-term-care homes have dementia, yet there have been no new investments in dementia training for their staff.

In closing, I would like to urge the McGuinty government to consider renewing Ontario's leadership in the treatment of those with dementia. It is something that affects far too many Ontarians for us to continue to ignore.

LONDON DISTRICT CHRISTIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I would like to commend the students and teachers from London District Christian Secondary School for raising over \$6,000 to support a small school in Nairobi, Kenya.

The school provides Sudanese refugees with an education and, ultimately, a better quality of life. These funds are so pivotal for the day-to-day functioning of this school since it's not eligible for Kenyan government funding.

The students and teachers from London District Christian Secondary School returned last week from their visit, and I am sure it was an eye-opening experience. I cannot stress enough how important it is to build bridges into different communities, foster dialogue and help those in need.

The students were able to develop lasting friendships through playing sports and sharing their stories. It also opened their eyes to the kinds of struggles that people their age in different parts of the world face.

I commend these teachers and students for their hard work and efforts in fundraising and hope these acts of generosity and goodwill continue over the years.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to say this statement. I also want to echo my colleague the member from Trinity–Spadina and support his statement. I see in this House so many fashionable members, always dressed well and walking beautifully in this chamber.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Jim Wilson: Yesterday, the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations released a report that confirms what the Ontario PC caucus has said for years: Ontario students are paying more to get less from the McGuinty government.

Ontario already has the highest tuition fees in all of Canada, and this week the Liberal government announced another 10% hike over the next two years. The Liberals use one hand to reach deeper into the pockets of students and they use their other hand to pull back on the quality of post-secondary education. The government is doing nothing to sustain or improve quality.

According to the National Survey of Student Engagement, when it comes to enriching educational experiences, active and collaborative learning, and student-to-faculty interactions, Ontario students are less positive about their experiences compared to other jurisdictions. In those three factors, Ontario's students are in the bottom third of the ratings in North America.

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According to the Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity, the student-to-faculty ratio at comparable schools in the United States is 13.7 to 1. In Ontario, it's 22.3 to 1. OCUFA reports even worse statistics. They say the ratio is 16 to 1 in the US, and 27 to 1 in Ontario. Either way you cut it, Ontario has the worst student-to-faculty ratio in all of Canada. This is leading to a decline of quality in post-secondary education in Ontario. A university degree is in danger of becoming just another piece of paper. It's not about training qualified people for today's economy; it's about cramming more students into the system so that the government can brag about higher participation rates. Shame on the government.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: As we move forward in the 21st century, the difference between prosperity and just getting by can be summed up in a single word: education. More than seven in 10 new jobs now require some post-secondary training, and an educated workforce is a competitive workforce. That is why education means an investment in the jobs of the future.

Ontario's goal is to raise our province's post-secondary attainment rate to at least 70%. To that end, this province is investing \$310 million to create 20,000 new post-secondary education spaces across Ontario. This funding will be in addition to the \$155 million invested to support growth and enrolment in colleges and universities. This will help ensure that there is a place in Ontario for every qualified Ontarian who wants to attend college or university. More importantly, our province will move to attract the world's best and brightest to study here and to participate in our Ontario economy when they graduate and work here or return to their countries of origin. When you study here and learn how people do business here, you are more able to connect products and services produced in Ontario with what people need in other parts of the world, and that means jobs.

HEALTHY LIVING

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: I would like to thank the Anti-Aging Society of Canada, who co-sponsored a seminar in

my riding, and they have a fascinating message. The message is this: that for the first time in human history, you can slow down the aging process. You can age faster or you can age slower. You can go through life with basic health or with excellent health. Then is health passive? Or, the question was at that meeting, what can you bring to the healing process?

There are lifestyle changes, of course. You can bring them to the healing process.

Exercise: The University of Toronto, for instance, says that can you expand your life, extend it between 10 and 20 years, if you exercise. **Food:** Watch Canada's Food Guide. Get enough sleep, especially deep sleep. And watch what you take for supplements, and especially antioxidants.

Even more important, though, the idea there was that we should also watch what we think, what we call toxic thoughts. So what they encourage is thoughts of forgiveness, thoughts of love. Why is that important? Because they say that every thought, especially an emotive thought, leaves a trace on your body. If it's an embarrassing thought, it leads you to blush; with a scary thought, you get goosebumps; an exotic thought—you know what happens there.

So I want to thank Dr. Tam for pointing out that we can lift our thoughts and practise meditation and prayer, and that will certainly help the healing process.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Well, I have to say to the honourable member from Davenport that you look exactly the same today as you did when I arrived here in 1999.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

EASTER

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I rise today to speak about Easter, a very important event in Christianity which is celebrated by millions of Ontarians every year.

In Western Christianity, Easter marks the end of Lent, a period of fasting and penitence which begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts 40 days. The week before Easter, known as Holy Week, is very special to Christians. Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday, the Sunday before Easter. The last three days before Easter are known as Maundy Thursday or Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday, which respectively commemorate Jesus's entry in Jerusalem, the last supper and the crucifixion.

The week beginning with Easter Sunday is called Easter Week. Many churches begin celebrating Easter late in the evening on Holy Saturday at a service called the Easter Vigil. In some ways the service is similar to Christmas Eve midnight mass.

Easter is one of the most important annual religious festivals in the Christian year. According to Christian scripture, Jesus was resurrected from the dead on the third day after his crucifixion. Some Christians celebrate the resurrection on Easter Day or Easter Sunday.

Easter is linked to the Jewish Passover by much of its symbolism as well as by its position on the calendar. In most European languages, the feast called Easter in English is termed by words for Passover for those languages and in older versions of bibles elsewhere in the world.

Relatively newer elements such as the Easter Bunny and Easter egg hunts have become part of the holiday's modern celebrations, and those aspects are often celebrated by many Christians and non-Christians alike.

On behalf of all my colleagues I wish to extend happy Easter greetings to all in this House and throughout Ontario.

LEGISLATIVE STAFF

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity and ask all members join me as we congratulate Wayne Butt for 30 years' service as access coordinator for the Legislature. But many of us in the chamber better know him as the stage manager in here, the eagle eye, the champion finger-snapper, the bouncer and, of course, the electronic device confiscator.

Congratulations on your 30th anniversary and thanks for your service to the Legislature.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (IGNITION INTERLOCK DEVICES IN SCHOOL VEHICLES), 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (DISPOSITIFS DE VERROUILLAGE DU SYSTÈME DE DÉMARRAGE DANS LES VÉHICULES SCOLAIRES)

Mr. Levac moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 26, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to require school vehicles in Ontario to be equipped with ignition interlock devices / *Projet de loi 26, Loi modifiant le Code de la route afin d'exiger que les véhicules scolaires en Ontario soient munis d'un dispositif de verrouillage du système de démarrage.*

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Dave Levac: The bill amends the Highway Traffic Act to require school bus vehicles to be equipped with ignition interlock devices to prevent anyone from getting behind the wheel to have alcohol on them ever again.

PEACE OFFICERS' MEMORIAL DAY AND MEMORIAL ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE JOUR DE COMMÉMORATION DES AGENTS DE LA PAIX ET LE MONUMENT COMMÉMORATIF À LEUR MÉMOIRE

Mr. Levac moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 27, An Act to proclaim Peace Officers' Memorial Day and to honour peace officers who have died in the line of duty / *Projet de loi 27, Loi proclamant le Jour de commémoration des agents de la paix et rendant hommage aux agents de la paix décédés dans l'exercice de leurs fonctions.*

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Dave Levac: The bill establishes the third Sunday in September in each year as Peace Officers' Memorial Day. The bill also requires that a memorial be established in or adjacent to the legislative precinct of the Legislative Assembly to honour the memory of peace officers who have died in the line of duty beyond police, beyond fire and including all of those in all of the other ministries who put their lives on the line.

CIGARETTE AND CIGAR BUTT LITTER PREVENTION ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 CONTRE LA POLLUTION PAR LES MÉGOTS

Mr. Levac moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 28, An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act and the Highway Traffic Act to prevent littering with cigarette butts / *Projet de loi 28, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection de l'environnement et le Code de la route afin d'interdire la pollution par les mégots.*

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

First reading agreed to.

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

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Mr. Dave Levac: The bill amends the Environmental Protection Act to increase the fine payable by any person who fails to comply with the provisions of part IX of the act, which deals with littering. The bill also re-enacts section 180 of the Highway Traffic Act to prohibit throwing, tossing, dropping, depositing or causing to be dropped or deposited litter, including cigarette butts, cigarettes, cigar butts or cigars upon or adjacent to highways. This, in the long run, saves millions of dollars of lost forestry in the north and anywhere else where fires are caught, putting our firefighters in jeopardy, in danger simply because we decide to throw a cigarette out the window.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY JOURNÉE MONDIALE DE SENSIBILISATION À L'AUTISME

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: It's a privilege to rise today to mark United Nations World Autism Awareness Day, which takes place tomorrow and every year on April 2.

C'est un honneur de prendre la parole aujourd'hui à l'occasion de la Journée mondiale de sensibilisation à l'autisme des Nations Unies, qui a lieu chaque année le 2 avril.

It's a day to recognize people with autism and salute their unique talents. Autism spectrum disorders, or ASD, affect at least 1 in 150 children, with more boys diagnosed than girls.

Since I became Minister of Children and Youth Services last fall, I have met many children and youth with autism and their families, as well as the dedicated people who work with them. I have listened and learned a great deal about the challenges they face every day.

Just this week, I had the opportunity to meet with Autism Parents Talking, or APTALK. I'm very pleased to be joined in the gallery by the chair of APTALK, Katherine Webster. I want to thank her and her son Jack, Elizabeth Laswick and her daughter Brooklyn, Suzanne Jacobson and her grandchildren Alexander and Nathan, and Tammy Kliewer and her son Tavish. They have shared their success, their struggles, their hopes and their dreams with me. I want to thank Tammy for the necklace that I'm wearing today in recognition of autism awareness.

Our government understands the challenges, and that is why we are determined to continue to make progress for these kids and their families. One of the most important things we have done is to improve the transition to school for children with autism who are leaving intensive behaviour intervention services funded by the province's autism intervention program. Working with the Ministry of Education, this spring we will have transition teams available in all publicly funded school boards. These multidisciplinary teams provide support for six months before and six months after a child leaves IBI services.

L'une des choses les plus importantes que ayons accomplies a été d'améliorer la transition vers l'école des enfants autistes qui quittent les services d'intervention comportementale intensive financés par le biais du programme d'intervention en autisme de la province.

A great example is 10-year-old Eric, who took part in phase one of the pilot project for transition teams at a school in Petrolia. Eric finds transitions like the one from home to school a real challenge. One activity that really helps him is taking attendance every day. This acts as a trigger point for him to make the transition from home to school. His mom, Sarah, says Eric's environment at

school is positive, and he feels comfortable being there. He is learning and enjoying it. Sarah says that that is so encouraging as a parent. These transition teams are a significant step forward, one that will help more kids with autism to succeed in school with their peers.

Ces équipes de transition sont un grand pas en avant, qui permettra à un plus grand nombre d'enfants autistes de réussir à l'école auprès de leurs pairs.

We're also helping kids with autism to attend seasonal camps in the summer and during March break, and other respite programs. At these camps they can make new friends and learn new skills.

I keep hearing from parents how thrilled they are that their kids are having fun with other kids in a caring, safe environment.

Eight-year-old Erin was a camper this past March break at Kerry's Place in Brampton. Her mom, Laura, said that the camp was important to Erin because she doesn't get involved in a lot, and it gave her an opportunity to be with a group of kids. Laura said that having the camp was a relief for both daughter and parents.

We're also looking at ways to promote consistency and transparency in clinical decision-making and assessment for IBI services delivered through the province's autism intervention program, because we want parents to feel confident that their children are receiving the right support at the right time.

We know that other approaches based on applied behaviour analysis can be very successful.

Nous nous penchons également sur des moyens de favoriser la cohérence et la transparence des évaluations et prises de décisions cliniques dans le cadre des services d'ICI offerts par l'intermédiaire du programme d'intervention en autisme de la province.

We will expand the range of ABA-based supports and services in communities and schools, including behaviour management and skills development programs, to help young people with autism become more independent and the best they can be.

Over the next several months we will continue the discussions we began last December with parents, service providers and other experts on the best ways to continue to broaden our autism supports and services. We will carefully weigh the advice we receive as we take a thoughtful and measured approach.

In recognition of World Autism Awareness Day, I want to reiterate our commitment to continuing working together as we make progress for children and youth with autism, and their families.

À l'occasion de la Journée mondiale de sensibilisation à l'autisme, je tiens à renouveler notre engagement à continuer d'œuvrer de concert, tandis que nous faisons des progrès en faveur des enfants et des jeunes atteints d'autisme, ainsi que de leur famille, car nous croyons fermement que tous ces enfants méritent un avenir radieux.

We do all of this because we believe that all kids deserve a bright future.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm pleased to have this opportunity, on behalf of the official opposition, the Progressive Conservative caucus, and our leader, Tim Hudak, to acknowledge World Autism Awareness Day.

Each year on this day we raise awareness about autism, encourage early diagnosis and early intervention, and recognize the high rate of autism in children and adults in all regions of the world, and the consequent developmental challenges.

I also want to recognize our caucus's critic for the Minister of Children and Youth Services and the Minister of Community Services, the MPP for Dufferin-Caledon, Sylvia Jones. Sylvia does an excellent job and is an outstanding advocate for all people with special needs.

Autism is a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first few years of a child's life. It is the result of a neurological disorder that affects the functioning of the brain. Autism affects typical development of the brain in the areas of social interaction and communication skills. Children and adults with autism typically have difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication, social interactions, and leisure or play activities. They find it hard to communicate with others and relate to the outside world. In some cases, aggressive and/or self-injurious behaviour may also be present.

Persons with autism may exhibit repeated body movements, unusual responses to people or attachments to objects, and resistance to changes in routines. Individuals may also experience sensitivities in sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste.

Autism spectrum disorder is one of the most common developmental disabilities. Based on recent studies by Canadian researchers, the prevalence rate of autism spectrum disorder, or ASD, as it's known, is 1 in 165.

In Ontario there are approximately 70,000 individuals with ASD, yet most of the public, including many professionals in the medical, educational and vocational fields, are still unaware of how autism affects people and how they can effectively work with individuals who have autism. However, treatments like intensive behavioural intervention, or IBI, as it's known, can provide structured, rigorous and labour-intensive treatment for children with autism.

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This therapy helps young children to develop their verbal and motor skills, and it helps older children learn life skills such as bathing, washing dishes and doing laundry. This treatment helps children and adults with autism function at a higher level in school and participate in other events in their community.

While this therapy sounds helpful to families across the province, it is not helpful to the over 1,500 children who are on wait-lists for provincially funded IBI therapy or the almost 400 children who are still waiting for assessments.

While children sit on wait-lists for funding, I'm told that some families are paying \$60,000 per year out of their own pockets for IBI therapy. Families are selling

their homes, cashing in their savings and mortgaging their futures to ensure that their children have access to this treatment.

Autism Ontario called the McGuinty Liberal government's 2010 budget a no-news budget. For the third year, autism had not received mention in the provincial budget; it was not mentioned at all. Autism Ontario expressed displeasure with the lack of action or acknowledgment by the McGuinty government, expressing that it is not apparent that they will see any improvements to the currently unacceptable situations of service wait-lists and insufficient supports for those living with autism. I'm also informed that the McGuinty Liberals have yet to clarify whether their harmonized sales tax will be applied to IBI therapies. We don't know whether it will apply or not.

Applying the HST to families who are paying out of pocket for IBI treatment just throws salt on the wounds of parents who have given up so much to provide this therapy for their children. It is quite possible that the HST will in fact apply to IBI therapies. According to the Canada Revenue Agency, whether or not HST will be charged on IBI therapy will depend on the person providing the service and whether that person was referred by a medical practitioner.

While psychological services, when provided by a practitioner who is registered in the Canadian Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology, will be exempt, there are many private providers, who are not registered psychology service providers, who will be forced to charge an additional 8% to families who are already shelling out in the range of \$60,000 to pay for IBI therapy.

On World Autism Awareness Day, I think it is our role as legislators not only to acknowledge the facts of autism, but that families in Ontario are out there fighting every day for fair access to services and supports for their children. We salute them today.

Mr. Michael Prue: I too rise to speak to this very important day, April 2, World Autism Awareness Day. I listened intently to my two colleagues and what they had to say, and some of the numbers and some of the facts I have are a little different. I guess that's whatever the history or whoever you're listening to. My facts are that one out of 91 children has some form of autism—perhaps not the severest types, but some form of autism disorder that affects their ability to communicate, to socialize and to learn.

I remember when I was a rookie in this House eight and a half years ago, I came in and I started to hear the very first passionate speeches about autism and what we should be doing as a society and as a government. I remember my colleague at that time Shelley Martel, who spent hours and hours on this file, talking about autism and going to meet with parents. I remember the then minister of the day, who was one John Baird, who has gone on to do other things in Ottawa. One of the responses he gave one day, which I will never forget, was that the Conservative government was not going to go

there because it was too expensive. I still remember the day that he made that statement here in this House, that it was too expensive, and wondering in my own heart of hearts, is it not more expensive to do nothing? Is it not more expensive to leave a child without a future and without hope? Is it not more expensive to the families who are forced to mortgage everything and do what they have to do?

Thankfully, the incoming government, the Liberal government, promised to do something, and I do take my hat off: In the first couple of years, you did do so. You did do some things, and I'm saying that is absolutely true. But I want to say that the situation in the last year or two has not gotten better. In fact, I believe it has actually gotten worse because this government now has put in a program which they call "benchmarking" of children. I think that this is a backwards step. I know that in other jurisdictions in North America, particularly in California, the benchmarking of children is illegal. You cannot do it, and they consider it morally reprehensible to do so. What happens when a child is benchmarked? It means that the treatment of that child is not progressing as quickly as the government would like so they deem the child to be not eligible for IBI/ABA therapy and force them into the school program. We know from parents that many of them believe that these programs are not adequate. We know from parents that they reluctantly take their sons and daughters to the school program because they believe that centres like the Geneva Centre provide better one-on-one IBI/ABA treatment and that's really what they want for their children.

Ontario is benchmarking at an increasing rate, and this means that the parents cannot access what they want for their own children. We believe that early intervention is necessary and that the very best service needs to be given. If a child is deprived of the chance to reach his or her potential to be productive and contributing, then society loses a lot. If the parents want to do something about it in the absence of government funding, we know it costs \$50,000 or \$60,000 a year, and most parents and most families cannot afford that.

Autism is in fact a puzzle. I've listened to scientists and I've listened to doctors, and although they're starting to make inroads in how to treat it, they don't know what causes it. But yesterday Sudbury New Democrat MP Glenn Thibeault introduced Bill C-504 calling for the establishment of a national strategy for autism spectrum disorder. I welcome that here in Ontario.

Parents are the experts. They know that the waiting times are two to five years. They know that the government is slow to update the quarterly numbers. The most recent statistics, for the quarter ending September 2009, show there are 1,286 children receiving IBI, but sadly, and I think horribly, 1,555 are on the waiting list, 383 are waiting to be assessed and 208 children have been benchmarked.

Parents will tell you how they've had to relocate, go to other provinces, change jobs and do a thousand things. We have had parents here who are trying to do the best

they can. They are talking today about court actions, hunger strikes, sit-ins, advocacies and rallies. Some even got removed from the Legislature today by showing signs and pictures of their children. Family after family is reaching out. We believe that no child should be benchmarked. The government needs to do more.

PETITIONS

FIREARMS CONTROL

Mr. Mike Colle: I have a petition from the people in the Vaughan-Oakwood area in regard to saying no to illegal guns in licensed premises.

"Whereas unlawful weapons have no place in our community and especially in licensed bars and clubs;

"Whereas we need to give the police more tools to deal with the growing number of shootings in and around licensed bars and clubs;

"Whereas suspending the liquor licence of bar owners who do not co-operate with the police in ensuring there are no illegal weapons in their place of business is one way of protecting the community from gun-carrying criminals;

"Whereas at present our liquor laws need to be amended to better support the police and the community in ensuring there are no unlawful firearms tolerated in licensed bars and clubs;

"We, the undersigned, support MPP Mike Colle's bill, the Liquor Licence Amendment Act (Unlawful Weapons in Bars), 2009, to suspect the liquor licence of bars and clubs where the police find unlawful weapons."

I support this petition and affix my name to it.

WATER QUALITY

Mr. Dave Levac: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the worldwide demand for water"—clean water—"is expected to be 40% greater than the current supply in the next 20 years; and

"Whereas Ontario has developed many new clean water technologies and practices since the Walkerton water contamination, which resulted from the poor water regulation practices of the former Conservative government; and

"Whereas Ontario has now implemented many new, improved practices for clean water regulation, developed better policies and fostered new clean water technologies; and

"Whereas the Ontario government's Open Ontario plan includes strategies to increase our province's ability to develop and sell clean water expertise and products to the rest of the world;

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

“That all parties of the provincial Legislature support the government’s plan to introduce a new Water Opportunities Act to take advantage of the province’s expertise in clean water technology, create jobs and new economic opportunities for our province and help communities around the world access clean water,” as we should all have.

I affix my name to this petition and pass it to Anthony, our page.

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CHILD PROTECTION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario signed by a great number of my constituents and constituents from ridings surrounding the great riding of Oxford:

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

“Whereas Ontario is one of the few provinces that does not have independent oversight of child welfare administration; and

“Whereas eight provinces now have independent oversight of child welfare issues, including child protection; and

“Whereas all provincial Ombudsmen first identified child protection as a priority issue in 1986 and still Ontario does not allow the Ombudsman to investigate people’s complaints about children’s aid societies’ (CAS) decisions; and

“Whereas people wronged by CAS decisions concerning placement, access, custody or care are not allowed to appeal those decisions to the Ontario Ombudsman’s office;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we support the Ombudsman having the power to probe decisions and investigate complaints concerning the province’s children’s aid societies (CAS).”

Thank you very much for allowing me to present this petition.

WATER QUALITY

Mr. Reza Moridi: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas we never want to see another tragedy like Walkerton ever again. The health and safety of Ontarians can never come second to profit and greed. Clean, safe drinking water is a right all Ontarians should be able to enjoy.

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

“To continue to upgrade our current water filtration system;

“To continue to monitor and test our water systems;

“To continue to strengthen Ontario’s trust in the safety of our drinking water;

“To continue to invest in new systems and personnel to monitor and test our water;

“To never forget the mistakes of the past and always hold our water supply to the highest standard;

“To continue to invest in the health and safety of Ontarians through our water supply.”

I fully agree with this. I will sign it and pass it on to page Leah.

ELMVALE DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. Jim Wilson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Elmvale District High School is an important part of the community of Elmvale and surrounding area; and

“Whereas the school is widely recognized as having high educational standards and is well known for producing exceptional graduates who have gone on to work as professionals in health care, agriculture, community safety, the trades and many other fields that give back to the community; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election that he would keep rural schools open when he declared that ‘Rural schools help keep communities strong, which is why we’re not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them’; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty found \$12 million to keep school swimming pools open in Toronto but hasn’t found any money to keep an actual rural school open in Elmvale;

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

“That the Minister of Education support the citizens of Elmvale and flow funding to the local school board so that Elmvale District High School can remain open to serve the vibrant community of Elmvale and surrounding area.”

I agree with this petition, and I’ll sign it. Thank you.

FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

Mr. Kuldip Kular: This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas early childhood learning is a fundamental program in the development and education of Ontario’s youth;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

“To continue to expand full-day learning across the province;

“To continue to make our children a priority for this government;

“To continue investments in the infrastructure of our education system;

“To continue to support Ontario’s families through these initiatives; and

“To never go back to the days of forgotten children and mismanagement of schools we saw in the 1990s. We applaud the new investments in full-day learning and

look forward to their continued growth across the province.”

I agree with the petitioners, so I've put my signature on the petition as well.

TAXATION

Mr. Jim Wilson: “Whereas the hard-working residents of Simcoe–Grey do not want a harmonized sales tax (HST) that will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

“Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for, to name just a few, gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, house sales over \$400,000, fast food under \$4, electricity, newspapers, magazines, stamps, theatre admissions, footwear less than \$30, home renovations, gym fees, audio books for the blind, funeral services, snowplowing, air conditioning repairs, commercial property rentals, real estate commissions, dry cleaning, car washes, manicures, Energy Star appliances, vet bills, bus fares, golf fees, arena ice rentals, moving vans, grass cutting, furnace repairs, domestic air travel, train fares, tobacco, bicycles and legal services; and

“Whereas the blended sales tax will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families and low-income Ontarians;

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

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

I agree with this petition, and I will sign it.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: The subject of this petition is to try to stop the violence on public transit systems. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas too many innocent people are being victimized by acts of violence while using public transit; and

“Whereas too many public transit employees are being victimized by acts of violence while working to serve the public; and

“Whereas we need to send a strong message of zero tolerance for violence on public transit; and

“Whereas anyone harming or carrying a weapon on public transit should be dealt with by the full force of the law; and

“Whereas public transit riders and workers have the right to ride and work on public transit free of violence, intimidation and harm;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to put an end to violence on public transit and totally support” Bill 151 drafted by the member from Eglinton–Lawrence “to crack down on violence on public transit.”

Since I agree, I'm delighted to sign this petition.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Ted McMeekin: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads:

“Whereas there is a unique opportunity to develop the Ring of Fire in northern Ontario and the Legislative Assembly” knows this, they should “ensure that this valuable resource is used to advantage all Ontarians while respecting the environment and rights of the First Nations people;

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

“To develop the natural resources in the Ring of Fire for economic benefit for Ontario;

“To ensure that the development of the Ring of Fire does so only within the guidelines of an EPA report;

“To respect the rights of the First Nations people and their communities; and

“To work with local industry to bring employment to northern Ontario communities.”

I, of course, will sign that and have it sent up.

ABORIGINAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

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

“Whereas the health of the First Nations youth in Ontario is of growing concern;

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

“To continue the partnership with the Right To Play partnership with the Moose Cree First Nation;

“To expand the Right To Play program to other First Nations communities; and

“To follow up these programs to ensure that other initiatives continue to promote the health of First Nations youth in Ontario.”

I agree, I affix my signature to this and I will pass it to Sabrina.

TAXATION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

I affix my signature, as I totally agree with this petition.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr. Khalil Ramal: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas violent crime and gangs have been a problem in our communities; children require safe schools and safe streets in order to thrive;

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

“To continue with their support of the guns and gangs program;

“To continue to recognize the importance of a strong and educated police force;

“To continue to support rehabilitation programs;

“To continue to keep education as a top priority; and

“To continue to make our streets and schools safe places to be.”

I agree with the petition, will affix my signature to it and give it to page Anne-Marie.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Mike Colle: I petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in support of the Eglinton LRT.

“Whereas investing in public transit and infrastructure is important to Toronto and to Ontario”—to keep Ontario working;

“Whereas the Eglinton rapid transit line is a much-needed link that will travel along Eglinton Avenue, from Kennedy station in the east to Pearson airport in the west;

“Whereas the Eglinton rapid transit line would create 10,000 green jobs in construction, engineering and public transit;

“Whereas the Eglinton rapid transit line would be a boost for neighbourhood improvement, promoting local business and increasing property values for current retailers and homeowners; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario has found it necessary to phase in the public transit projects due to the current” economic situations;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make the Eglinton LRT line a priority when developing the plan to phase in the public transit projects.”

I support this petition and affix my name to it.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’
PUBLIC BUSINESSBILL OF RIGHTS FOR PUPILS
WITH DIABETES, 2010
CHARTRE DES DROITS DES ÉLÈVES
DIABÉTIQUES DE 2010

Mr. Levac moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 5, An Act to establish a bill of rights for pupils with diabetes / Projet de loi 5, Loi établissant une charte des droits pour les élèves diabétiques.

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

Mr. Dave Levac: I want to start first by offering my thanks and gratitude to a number of people and organizations that stepped forward when I first introduced this bill. Let me review those for you and actually introduce some of those people who have joined us today.

The Canadian Diabetes Association wants to say that they are very supportive of any efforts that we make in this Legislature and that any school board makes to help with diabetic children in schools, as there have been some stories coming out that it is not consistent in the province. I want to say thank you to the Canadian Diabetes Association.

I want to say thank you to the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario, which has sent me a letter indicating full support for Bill 5 and understands the very important need to protect children with diabetes. Diabetes in Ontario Schools organization supports the bill, and we will be discussing in further detail even more work that can be done at committee, where I hope we do send this bill.

In the gallery today we have, from Diabetes in Ontario Schools, Shana Betz, Penni Gunby, Mandy Conlon and her daughter Ashley Conlon, who has diabetes, and from the diabetes association, Gabriella Simo, manager of public programs and services advocacy. They’re with us in the gallery, and I’d like to welcome them and thank them for being here.

Next, I would like to thank two people who have worked very hard on this. Behind the scenes, as we all know as members in this place, there are staff here who help us do research and put it together and make sure we’re on the right track with all the information that we have coming at us. That is Aviva Levy, the intern who is working in my office. Thank you very much for the work that you’ve done; you’ve grabbed hold of this and we’ll call this your bill. To Chris Yaccato, my EA here at Queen’s Park, thank you for the work that you’ve done.

I want to thank Diabetes in Ontario Schools. They have worked tirelessly with parents of kids with diabetes across the province and with schools and school boards across the province. This is a dedicated activist and parent group that compiled the results of a survey of over

250 parents whose kids have diabetes and attend schools in Ontario.

I admire Shana's commitment and can truly say that her work on this issue is greatly appreciated. The grassroots are speaking for us today. I know that we all want to listen. Sabrina's Law was written very much in the same way. Sabrina's Law is another private member's bill I introduced a while ago, that eventually got passed, that said that anyone with anaphylaxis would receive a consistent and standard expectation of behaviour at schools. Particularly when you think about it: We're not talking about just the kids themselves; we're talking about very loving parents who, when they give us in the education system their children, the gift of their child, hope that they're turning those children over to a system that keeps them safe and secure.

For today, I would like to say—I've already introduced them—a large thank you to all those people who have helped put us together, from the grassroots to here.

Let me also make an opening part of my statement that simply says that I've spoken to the Minister of Education. I'm not after punishing anybody; I'm just after changing a culture. I'd like the members opposite and all my colleagues to know that I'm interested in getting this bill to committee. I'm interested in hearing from other people. I'm interested in hearing from the Minister of Education. I'm interested in hearing whether there are other things that we can be doing in order to help protect these children.

Very similar in nature with what we went through with some students with anaphylaxis, it's life-threatening. We want to ensure that we're taking the right steps to ensure that the children, when given to us—as I said, a loving gift from parents—and they show up in our schools, we are doing the first and foremost thing that we're charged with. As a former principal in an elementary system and a teacher for 25 years, I defined my first role as keeping those kids safe. That's the first role, the number-one role: to keep those kids safe.

Let me describe for you what I believe the bill is asking us to do, if it's passed. This bill would allow students with diabetes, while in school and on extra-curricular activities and excursions outside of the school that are sanctioned by the school, to complete the following:

- do a blood sugar check;
- treat hypoglycemia with emergency sugar;
- inject insulin when necessary;
- eat snacks when necessary;
- eat an appropriate lunch at an appropriate time, and have enough time to finish that meal;
- have free and unrestricted access to water and a washroom; and
- participate fully in physical education classes, gym classes and other extracurricular activities, including field trips.

Why phys ed, you ask? Simple. I'll give you one example—a shining example that most of the people in this room and in this generation would know: Bobby

Clarke. He had diabetes for a long time. NHL hockey player: You don't get to that level of athleticism if you are held back from taking phys ed class. You need to be a full participant in school.

Bill 5 specifies that the duty of every district school board and school authority is to ensure that this bill of rights is respected and enforced. Unfortunately, I believe this bill is required, as some pupils with diabetes are denied the opportunity to undertake many of the actions I've just outlined that should be commonplace for somebody with diabetes.

This bill is modelled after an American school bill of rights for children with diabetes, part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The diabetes bill of rights in the States is a law that affects all schools in the entire country receiving any federal money. Because education is a provincial jurisdiction in Canada, we're unable to have federal legislation similar to that in the States. However, if Bill 5 passes, it would undoubtedly help all diabetic students across Ontario and would set the standard for other provinces to follow, I'm sure.

With a bill of rights for pupils with diabetes, parents can be comfortable, and comforted, that their children's medical needs are cared for while the students still participate in school activities. The kids might not feel so bad, but I can guarantee you that the parents—and most of us being parents, we understand what it means to feel about your child when you don't have control of the situation. Hence, we would probably reduce the anxiety. Hence, we would probably reduce the anticipation and expectation that parents have to show up at the door on a daily basis to ensure that their children have those rightfully needed circumstances to deal with their diabetes.

Most kids I've dealt with over the years who have either anaphylaxis or diabetes were already pre-trained and prepared to take on the task of doing the things that they need to do medically. We just have to make sure that there's no door closed to them by a system that keeps them in school for a long period of time, and they have to be there. If left untreated, diabetes can cause serious complications to one's health.

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In addition, this bill is all the more important as we roll out full-day learning. Children will be in school for a longer period of time; therefore, kids with diabetes need to know that our support now is there for them more than ever.

I want to share with you a basic outline of type 1 diabetes. Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease. Basically, your body gets energy by making glucose from foods. The use of glucose for your body needs insulin. If an individual has type 1 diabetes, their pancreas does not produce insulin. Instead of being used for energy, glucose builds up in their blood. Unfortunately, the cause of type 1 diabetes is unknown. Why it happens we still don't know yet, but science is working on that.

We do know that people are usually diagnosed with type 1 diabetes before the age of 30 and often during

their childhood or teenage years. Hence, why we need to have Bill 5 is that the very large majority of those students end up in school, and if schools have a standardized policy across the province, we can be assured that those kids will be taken care of in a way that makes the stress level for the parents come down. They will be more than placated; they will be enthusiastically supporting a school that adheres to the outline in this bill.

Let me explain to you why the bill is important. The diabetic pupils across Ontario are not treated equally, unfortunately. We're hearing of schools that are treating students with diabetes beautifully. They get it. They get it, in a term I'll refer to in a moment. The teachers, the lunch monitors, the secretary, the caretaker, the principal, the school, the kids and the visitors—they get it. But that's inconsistent in the province. We need to standardize that expectation. We need to ensure that the horror stories that will be referenced by all members of this House will go away once and for all. Once we become standard in our expectation, education and understanding of how students should be treated with diabetes, we no longer have to worry—not only the students, not only the teachers or the school community, but the parents as well.

While local CCACs have worked too provide nurses in some schools at specific times during the day, that's just not good enough. In the meantime, let's take a look at what Bill 5 can provide for us.

I want to quote somebody—I'm going too slow here. I want to make sure I make points. There's one point that I definitely want to get to. This is a quote by Shana, who's with us in the gallery today. She says that children “require other accommodations such as being allowed to test their blood sugar in class or being permitted to treat low blood sugar. It sounds simple; however, it is just not happening. We have many stories of children not being permitted to treat low blood sugar with a simple juice box or granola bar in a classroom.” Ashley was “centred out and asked to leave my classroom to drink a much-needed juice box because it wasn't fair to other students.” Ashley faces this and it has been echoed by the Canadian Diabetes Association.

Someone like Ashley is no better a spokesperson than anyone else. As a matter of fact, I find her to be an extremely intelligent and well-articulated person who tells it as it is. You'll notice clearly that she did not speak just about herself. What she was talking about is that any kind of treatment of this type that she's had to go through is unacceptable in the province of Ontario today.

I encourage all of our members to get behind this bill. I encourage all of us to listen to Dr. Denis Daneman, the pediatrician-in-chief at Sick Kids, who said that there are 7,000 to 8,000 children under the age of 18 in Ontario with type 1 diabetes, with a 3% to 5% increase every year. As well, over 300,000 Canadians live with type 1 diabetes, according to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation Canada. What he wants to know is why we aren't setting a standard.

Thank you to all of those people, including the grass-roots organizations, who have brought attention to the

fact that we need to have a standard of expectation and behaviour in our schools across the province of Ontario. I want to thank the doctor. I want to thank the organization. I want to thank Ashley. I want to thank all of those who understand that what we're looking for today is simply a way in which the students with diabetes can find a better way to be safe and secure in the schools that they attend.

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

Mr. Frank Klees: I'm pleased to rise in support of this legislation. The member from Brant has a habit of bringing very practical private member's bills before the House, and I think this is just one more example of that.

I am pleased to not only support the bill but also to encourage my colleagues to do so as well. I want to express my appreciation to a constituent, Mr. James King, who has written me on a number of occasions on the issue of diabetes. He and his wife, Heather, have a son Zachary, who is 11 years old, who was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. He facilitates a support group for parents with children with diabetes. As he tells me, he hears horror stories from parents as well as very positive stories. I think it's important for us to keep this in balance because there are many schools that, as the member from Brant indicated, really do understand. They understand the challenges that students have and the role and responsibility that the school has to ensure that children are kept safe and have the support that they require. But Mr. King also told me that there are far too many stories that he hears from parents that are very, very troubling.

I also want to thank Shana Betz, with whom I had the opportunity to speak on the telephone. She was kind enough to share with me some of the results of the survey that her group, the Diabetes in Ontario Schools group, conducted. Again, the experience of this survey, which includes more than 250 results, confirmed the inconsistency that the member is trying to address. There is no reason why one school or one set of staff or one principal really understands and does what has to be done, and then there are others that don't. This is a responsibility not only of the Ministry of Health; I believe it is a responsibility of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to get it together.

I want to read into the record just very briefly some of the comments that came from this survey. It goes to the heart of why we're debating this bill today. I quote: “Our son on many instances has asked to use the washroom facilities during a hyperglycemic state and has been refused, even with extensive diabetic teaching provided to classroom and office staff.”

The second quote: “Our son has been denied low sugar snacks during a hypoglycemic state by school support staff that were not updated on his condition and as a result almost losing consciousness.”

The third quote: “The school refuses to follow the guidelines set out for them. More than once they have refused to treat a low before a meal as my child will be eating. When I pick up my child from school the teacher

tells me that he was perfect with his blood sugar levels ... only when I get home and check the memory button do I find out the truth.” That’s unacceptable.

We understand that teachers today are busy, that they have a great deal on their plate, and perhaps it’s time that we look at resourcing our schools more appropriately. There are many challenges, and whether it ranges from autism to diabetes to other issues, the day of having a nurse in that school facility may be something that we should be looking at. I’m not suggesting that every teacher should be a nurse, but I am suggesting that we have a responsibility to ensure that our schools are properly resourced so that someone is there to meet the kinds of needs that we’re discussing today.

My executive assistant, Alex Roman, is not in the office today as he is every day—he doesn’t miss a time—he is at home. I didn’t even realize this until just a few days ago, but he is a diabetic. I shared with him what we would be debating today, I asked him to give me a letter, and I’d like to conclude my remarks by reading into the record Alex’s letter to us.

“As a diabetic of more than eight years, I would like to voice my strongest support for private member’s Bill 5, Bill of Rights for Pupils with Diabetes, which has been brought forward by Mr. Dave Levac.

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“Diabetes is a multi-variable disease that affects many organs at once and has a lasting impact on the quality of one’s life. I wanted to share my own current experience with a diabetic-related condition to illustrate how pernicious a disease it truly is.

“Last Thursday, in the course of fulfilling my duties in the office of my member, Mr. Frank Klees, MPP, I felt a sharp pain in my right foot that lingered throughout the morning. Deciding to visit a walk-in clinic nearby, I was told to report to the hospital emergency department. Once there, an infected ulcer in the sole of my foot was surgically removed. Further X-rays revealed two more ulcers that had been growing undetected around the large toe. The infection had spread into the foot bone.

“Left untreated, the condition would have certainly led to amputation. I still face that possibility. I am currently connected to a PICC line where a thin tube has been surgically inserted into a vein close to my heart for the purpose of directly pumping intravenous antibiotic into my system. The PICC line and accompanying bag will be my constant companions for the next month, reminders to me about the horrific nature of diabetes.

“Make no mistake about it—I did this to myself by my unwillingness to take diabetes as the very serious disease that it is. What is most annoying and difficult about diabetes management, however, is the daily routine of glucose testing, regular and proper diet together with exercise and adequate medical supervision of one’s health to catch problems before they are able to do severe damage.

“In school, as in the workplace and society in general, all this ‘bother’ is compounded and is made more difficult by our natural desire not to stand out and have

our diabetic condition made visible to our peers so as to avoid being socially stigmatized by the disease.

“A bill of rights for diabetic students would give their condition and its daily management a certain legitimacy of acceptance by schools. It would also help establish a ‘culture of diabetic management’ that would support pupils so that their sense of being different does not turn into an experience of social estrangement.

“Diabetics need to test their sugar levels, they need to eat more frequently and avoid the ever-present temptations of sugary snacks. They need additional bathroom trips and may require insulin. Skipping meals or else feeling guilty about taking too long to finish lunch can be lethal to diabetics. In fact, the balanced healthy lifestyle diabetics must nurture should also be part of a wider culture of good health that needs to be much more widespread in our society if we are to effectively combat the runaway growth of diabetes at all ages.

“It is with a sense of urgency born of personal experience that I lend my voice of support to this important legislation.

“Alexander Roman, Ph.D., executive assistant to Mr. Frank Klees, MPP for Newmarket–Aurora.”

Speaker, I leave that with you and with members of this House.

This is important. I thank the member for bringing it forward. We look forward to supporting it.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: New Democrats are going to vote for the bill. We hope that the bill goes to committee, and we wish Mr. Levac well with the bill. We know that the committee hearings, if indeed they’re adequate, are going to attract a great deal of attention.

As I understand it, diabetes is one of the growth diseases and it’s one of those diseases that’s impacting more and more people. In many respects, for many persons—not all—it’s no doubt part of a lifestyle phenomenon. That’s why our member from Nickel Belt, France Gélinas, is so enthusiastic and zealous about her legislation about food labelling and fast food restaurant food labelling: because diet, for many, is a large contributing factor to diabetes.

As I understand it, as well, for people the age of Mr. Levac and me, once we acquire the paunch—interestingly, a couple of years ago, I was reading that in old American slang a paunch is referred to as an “alderman”; in other words, “Take a look at the alderman that fellow is sporting.” Of course, the connection wasn’t inappropriate, because you’re talking about, in the American context, Tammany Hall-type of so-called elected officials—Chicago-style politics, if you will—who would be well-fed, well-wined, well-dined, and would be sporting their aldermen, their paunches. Fortunately, I’ve lost mine over the last few months. I just hope I don’t regain it. I’ll then be one of those rare people who come here and get skinnier, because most people come here and inevitably get fatter because of the lifestyle and things that you’re subjected to on Friday and Saturday

nights and Sunday afternoons when you're back in your riding and the Hungarian Catholic Church wants you for lunch and then the Croatian hall wants you for dinner. It's never-ending.

We're going to support this. Again, for the life of me, I can't imagine how a kid copes with this type of condition. Knowing that kids being kids and kids should live without fear of falling unconscious and going into shock, diabetic comas, without fear of dying, kids who live with this are pretty admirable kids, as are all kids—all of us have had any number of experiences in our own communities working with organizations that work with kids with any number of conditions, diseases, what have you. Kids who endure these things are remarkable young people in their own right.

It is a bill of rights, and that's an interesting observation as well. It's in our culture. We're a rights-based society. Lord knows one wishes that it could just be called a statute demanding common sense. At the end of the day, I suspect that that's what Mr. Levac is really referring to. But having said that, let's all of us be very careful, because this imposes—if there are rights, then other people have duties. This bill imposes duties upon educational staff.

I'm loath to make private members' public business on Thursday afternoon a partisan matter. But you know as well as I do, Speaker; you've been around for a long time. You know as well as I do that teachers and other educational staff in our schools are struggling as it is with the loads that are imposed upon them, the responsibilities, the duties that are already imposed upon them. I would find it very interesting to talk to teachers, teachers' assistants and teachers' aides, all those people in the educational community about how you give effect to the rights that are guaranteed in this legislation. Because you can pass the bill, you can turn it into law—and I was pleased to support, and New Democrats to the final one supported the bill that brought anaphylactic shock education, care and understanding into the schools. I know that the local community down in Niagara where I come from was pleased as punch when that bill finally became law, and I was pleased to have spoken in support of that bill in its day and on behalf of New Democrats who supported it.

But almost immediately one of the observations made to me was by parents of kids who were at risk of anaphylactic shock, who had this condition where a bee sting or peanuts could put them into a life-threatening condition. It was the fact there was a bill that was well intentioned, that was well drafted, that talked about education and so on, but there weren't resources being delegated, being committed to ensure that the bill had effect.

So we can pass this bill. What good do rights do? It's sort of like the right to proceed on a green light. That right doesn't mean a tinker's damn if some damn fool on your right is going through a red. You can have all the rights in the world. It doesn't stop you from being T-boned by a drunk driver—end of story.

So you see, this bill, in and of itself, at the end of the day won't necessarily—I'm sure it will start to change the culture. I suspect very strongly that one of Mr. Levac's motives here, and I am imputing motive, is to try to heighten the level of awareness of youth diabetes and responsibilities adults have—it's really not about teachers or educational professionals; it's about adults' responsibility to kids, isn't it? Isn't that the bottom line? That's really what it's all about. I admire that motive, and that is, heightening awareness of this, making us all more conscious of the fact that kids live with this and that kids have special needs when they do live with it. But I'm concerned, and I suspect that Mr. Levac is as well, about imposing burdens on education professionals when they are already overburdened up to here.

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Mr. Klees talks about the restoration of the school nurse. What a novel idea. It's peculiar that when you think you have a community of 100, 200, 300, 400 or 500 kids engaging in high-risk behaviour—kids do that; they engage in high-risk behaviour. They're out there playing on the tarmac and in fields. They believe they're omnipotent and incapable of being injured, never mind being killed. You've got kids living with all sorts of conditions and disorders; theoretically you'd have communities of 400, 500, 600, if not larger, without an on-site, attendant, health care professional. I don't want to hearken back to old days, but in the old days for a whole lot of people who went to elementary or high school, you had those health professionals in the school system. It was part of the public health process.

I know that Mr. Hampton, the member from Kenora—Rainy River, is eager to speak to this bill as well. I suspect it will be Mr. Marchese, who's our education critic, and/or France Gélinas, who's our health critic, who will be walking this bill with Mr. Levac through committee. But I look forward to seeing the committee and the commentary, and I look forward to seeing this bill refined. I look forward to seeing this government stand up for kids and investing the resources that are going to be necessary to make this bill meaningful.

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

Mr. Ted McMeekin: I'm pleased to rise and support my colleague and to piggyback on yet another one of his creative, pragmatic, child-safety-oriented pieces of legislation. He does that regularly, with the admiration of most, if not all, of his colleagues in this House.

Many of us in this place have found ways to advocate for issues impacting children, particularly child health over the years. The member articulating his arguments read out a list of those issues that need to be addressed for the 8,000 children who are afflicted with diabetes 1. He made the point that no child should feel stigmatized because of their illness. I suspect the member from Brant was alluding to the requested removal of the child from the school as being a classic example of how one might inadvertently and unintentionally add a little bit of further darkness to what, for the child, is a night already devoid of stars. So I offer that up for what it's worth.

I know that there's a real advantage to having the tools that one needs to meaningfully combat diabetes. I know that from personal experience. I'm a diabetic. I'm also an adult who fortunately is married to a medical doctor who's always on my case about making sure I do the right things, and I strive as hard as I can to do that. But it does impact your life. There are consequences to doing the things that one ought not to have done, as they say in my local church, but that is something that we have to deal with.

If we can create a learning environment, one where children are accepted and the fact of their illness is used maybe even as an educational tool for their peers, we can all together move forward in helping to enhance one's quality of life.

Recently, my wife and I were away with another couple out of country. We were away for a week and we tried very, very hard to have a great holiday away, but the couple we were away with have a teenage son, a high school student who's a juvenile diabetic. It was interesting—three, four phone calls home a day: "How are you doing?" They were very, very worried. I suspect that they didn't have anywhere near as good a time as they and we would have liked to have seen them have because of their anxiety related to their child—who, by the way, has an insulin pump thanks to what this Legislative Assembly did two years ago when we debated and passed the resolution calling for the provision of insulin pumps.

But even with that, to these parents, it was scary. Even though they had made arrangements to provide care and support for their teenage son, it was scary, and it can be scary. Whatever we can do to make lives a bit more liveable and to educate, particularly at a young age, our children about both the benefits of preventive health as well as supporting those of their peers who have diabetes is good.

I applaud the member from Brant—he's a good friend, but more importantly than that, he's one who cares passionately, perhaps because of his educational experience and the fact that he's a father with his own children who has had to go through some of these things—for his initiative today. I would urge all members of this assembly to stand in solidarity with the good member from Brant and support this legislation. Let's move it forward.

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

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm pleased to have this opportunity to speak briefly to Bill 5, brought forward by the member for Brant, the bill that he calls the Bill of Rights for Pupils with Diabetes. I understand that this bill was first introduced in this House in March—on March 10, it looks like—and I'm pleased that we're having this opportunity on a Thursday afternoon before Easter to discuss it at second reading.

From the outset, I want to indicate that it's my intention to support this bill at second reading. I would say to the member for Brant, congratulations on bringing forward a bill and congratulations on the non-partisan way that you're bringing it forward in an effort to reach

out to the other side of the House. I was glad to have the opportunity to speak to you about some of the issues that you're bringing forward.

I understand the bill is intended to ensure that students with diabetes have certain rights. For example, while at school, a pupil with diabetes would have the right to do regular blood sugar checks; treat hypoglycemia with emergency sugar; inject insulin when necessary; eat a snack when necessary; eat lunch at an appropriate time and have enough time to finish the meal; have free and unrestricted access to water and the bathroom; and participate fully in physical education classes, gym classes and other extracurricular activities, including field trips.

I know the member from Brant has a great deal of professional expertise from his educational background and I know that he is sincere in terms of bringing this forward. He has urged the government to support it, to send it to committee, and I would hope that it will go to committee. I would hope that it will get on the committee's agenda and not just sit there for a long time, as unfortunately some private members' bills do. I would suggest to the member that, in my experience in government, there were times when my private members' bills had gone to committee and I had to forcefully push for them to get considered.

Interjection.

Mr. Ted Arnott: The member opposite probably knows what I'm talking about: It was the double-hatters bill, for example. It did not have the support of the government, but by the efforts that we took, we had an opportunity to have hearings on that bill and get it brought back to the House. But I certainly would hope that his bill will succeed at committee and be brought back to the House for third reading.

If my good friend and colleague Alex Roman is watching today—I'm pleased that my colleague Frank Klees mentioned Alex's situation, although I wasn't aware that Alex was ill—Alex, we wish you all the best for a speedy recovery and look forward to seeing you back here again.

The remarks that Mr. Klees brought into the House on behalf of Alex Roman I think were ones that we should all listen to. What Alex has suggested is, "A bill of rights for diabetic students would give their condition and its daily management a certain legitimacy of acceptance by schools. It would also help establish a 'culture of diabetic management' that would support pupils so that their sense of being different does not turn into an experience of social estrangement." That is good advice, and again, Alex, if you're watching, I hope you're back soon, and God bless for a speedy recovery.

I've appreciated the chance to speak briefly to this bill this afternoon. I look forward to further debate on it, but I encourage all members to give it their support this afternoon at second reading.

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: I intend to support this bill, and I know that my New Democrat colleagues intend to support it as well. But I want to use my time to raise some questions about why this bill is even necessary.

I want to make this point: It's necessary because diabetes is not taken seriously enough in Ontario today by the Ministry of Health. In fact, just 10 months ago there was an active campaign under way in the Ministry of Health to essentially transfer the whole diabetes program to Cancer Care Ontario and in effect diminish the importance of the diabetes program.

I want to read a letter—I could read dozens of letters on this issue—from someone who is in the know. This is dated July 10, 2009:

“Dear Minister:

“I was recently reviewing the Cancer Care Ontario ... website and happened upon some information which I find extremely disturbing and feel warrants comment to you, as minister. From the website, it seems apparent that” the Ministry of Health “has a strategic plan in place to transfer diabetes care in the province to Cancer Care Ontario and/or the Ontario Renal Network. As a diabetes care advocate, I find it shocking that the ministry, having identified diabetes as a priority, would think it appropriate to place the responsibility for it under an organization with a mandate for cancer care. If this is in fact the case, I have grave concerns for the future of diabetes care in this province....

“Which leads me to question why the ministry would contemplate such a significant and unnecessary transfer. It definitely will not be a cost saving, and with the current escalating epidemic of diabetes, this can only be a strategy for disaster, both economically and health-wise.

“When I noticed the change on the” Cancer Care Ontario “website, I contacted the” Northern Diabetes Health Network “office to obtain additional details on the transfer. Sadly, I was told that the” Northern Diabetes Health Network “had few details and could tell me very little. It would seem to me they were never invited to the discussion table regarding this ministry transfer. What else am I to believe, given that they were unable to provide any information and yet” Cancer Care Ontario “representatives are now publicly advertising diabetes-related job positions? Is this democracy? Is this efficiency? Is this accountability? Is this in the ... best interests of the Ontario diabetic population? Is this truly what the voters of Ontario want? Certainly not, if my information is correct....

“I would sincerely and strongly hope that you would quickly re-examine this flawed strategy before it is too late. Too many lives and too many families and too many extra tax dollars are at stake here. Diabetics will take notice of being undermined in this way.”

Now, as we know, after this torrent of letters, this plan to basically submerge the diabetes program under Cancer Care Ontario was reversed, and well that it was reversed.

But this is an illustration. Diabetes care is not taken seriously enough by the government currently. If it was taking diabetes care seriously, it would never have entertained the idea of submerging diabetes care under

Cancer Care Ontario. That's what we really need: serious attention to diabetes as a health issue in Ontario.

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: First, I want to thank the member from Brant, who is always bringing very important issues. As the member from Newmarket–Aurora mentioned, he brings practical issues to this House to be debated.

I also want to thank the family, the students who came, and Mr. Levac's staff for putting in all the effort to build this debate.

It's an important debate, as has been mentioned. This issue is very important for students across the province of Ontario who have diabetes. It's important also, as was mentioned, for the families who, every single morning, worry about their loved ones when they go to school. Are they going to be in trouble? Are they going to be treated well?

The most important thing: Mr. Levac in Bill 5 is not asking much. He's asking just to give the students some time or some kind of flexibility to eat if they have to eat, to drink when they have to drink or to go outside if they have to go outside. The most important thing is that most of the time teachers and principals block those students with diabetes from participating in normal life—like he mentioned, from sports activities. I think it's important to construct that right. If this bill passes and goes to the committee, I think it would benefit all of us in this place and all the communities across the province of Ontario, because they have a right and a chance to have input to enhance this bill and make it an important one to serve our communities, to serve our students and to serve our families in the province of Ontario.

I'm not here to respond to the member from the third party. We have a strategy for diabetes. We invested millions of dollars to create a diabetes strategy to serve all the diabetics across the province of Ontario, because it's in our best interest to serve people with diabetes. It is important to save our health dollars, utilize them and invest them in the right spot.

It's important to support this bill. I want to congratulate the member from Brant for bringing, as always, important issues to this House. I know this bill is going to get the support, hopefully, of the Minister of Education and the Minister of Health. It already has the support of the diabetes associations and of many teachers across the province of Ontario. It means a lot to the people of Ontario and means a lot to many different families who have their loved ones facing this difficult time when they go to school.

So I want to support this bill, because it's important to us. It's important for the future generation of this province. Again, thank you for allowing me to speak.

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

Mr. David Ramsay: I'd like to congratulate my colleague and my friend Dave Levac, the member from Brant, for being the advocate that he is. We could see

today with his other interests in public issues in this province that he's a very strong advocate for Ontarians and, in this case, for people who are very vulnerable.

I was certainly taken by my colleague Frank Klees's situation with the staffer and that letter that he read into the record from his staffer.

Those of us who aren't all that aware of the disease, who haven't had as much direct contact with it, probably aren't as aware of how fragile people with it are. I think most of us understand that it's critical to manage the disease well, and that takes a lot of discipline. Potentially, it can be a life-shortening disease if you don't manage it well. But I was quite taken aback by the letter that was read into the record about a young staffer in this precinct who, all of a sudden, starts getting what appears to be a kind of minor trouble that potentially could be quite complicated and maybe debilitating. So, Mr. Klees, I wish your staffer well and hope he pulls through there.

What Mr. Levac is trying to do I think is very, very important. It's really—I guess I'd describe it as what we need to do with a lot of people in society, and that's accommodate. We need to accommodate people who have special needs. I suppose that over time we begin to understand and appreciate what may be special needs that all of us might have. In this case, we're talking about a very serious disease, a disease that seems to be on the uptick, unfortunately. I first had really great awareness as a northern member of the spread of this disease in the aboriginal community in this province and in this country. Now we're seeing right across North America a large increase in this disease.

For type 2 diabetics, it would appear that for many of us in society, the way we eat can contribute to this. We're all going to have to watch that. The irony is that half the world is hurting themselves by eating too much, and the other half doesn't get enough, and they're being hurt by that. We're going to have to find that balance in our lives and control a disease like this.

I very much appreciate what David Levac is trying to do with the school boards and schools, which brings awareness for this accommodation so that we can work with people and provide the opportunity they need to properly manage their disease. We're just going to have to be more flexible. We don't all fit in the same mould. We all have varying needs. I very much appreciate the motion and the bill that's coming forward this afternoon.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate? The Liberals have about one more minute. Seeing none, Mr. Levac, you have up to two minutes for your response.

Mr. Ted McMeekin: Take three.

Mr. Dave Levac: I'll take three.

I want to thank the members from Newmarket–Aurora, Welland, Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale, Wellington–Halton Hills, Kenora–Rainy River, London–Fanshawe, and Timiskaming–Cochrane for lending their voice to the bill.

Let me make a couple of quick comments. For over 25 years, 12 of them as a principal in the education system, I

was quite astutely aware of the Education Act, and the Education Act is relatively silent when it comes to specifics behind children and their care.

Here's what the Education Act says: care and control and safety of the children. That's basically what it is. We never anticipated, back when it was written, drilling down to life-threatening situations. That's precisely why I introduced the anaphylaxis bill and now I'm introducing the same bill for diabetes: because they can be life-threatening.

I think we need to speak better. We need to have a better understanding of what it is that children and parents face when we're dealing with this issue. That's the reason I'm here. It's not to do anything else other than to bring attention, to educate and to work together with all of the stakeholders. That's why I want to get it to committee. I want everyone to have a voice. I want us to design a bill or a change to the Education Act, or however it gets done, and I need this to be done for the sake of those kids. That's why I'm bringing it forward.

I've seen good teachers turn it into math lessons; I've seen good teachers turn it into social skills lessons; I've seen good teachers turn this into an opportunity to be positive and inclusive, but that's not the standard. We need to make that the standard. That's precisely why we're doing it.

To Mr. Kormos's concerns: Yes, I did raise this, and the teachers are willing to work together as one of those stakeholders; and no, we're not trying to hoist something on to it. I had that discussion with the Minister of Education.

As far as the member from Kenora–Rainy River, I think your support was accepted, I think you're on to something, but I want to remind you of one thing: The parents were here to deal with their kids in schools, not about the bigger issues. So I'm hoping that you understand. I did hear you say that you support this—because it is not a small deal; it's a very big deal.

Thank you for your support, thank you to all the people who are here to hear this, and I know we'll get this to committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We'll vote on Mr. Levac's ballot item in about 100 minutes.

CONSUMER REPORTING AMENDMENT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES RENSEIGNEMENTS CONCERNANT LE CONSOMMATEUR

Mr. Ruprecht moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 7, An Act to amend the Consumer Reporting Act /
Projet de loi 7, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les
renseignements concernant le consommateur.

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

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: The intent of this bill is to protect the consumer against identity theft and, second, to protect the consumer against unfair credit practices.

Let's begin from the very first day that I got interested in this. I received from MBNA a statement saying that I owed \$866. I was nonplussed about this because I don't own, to my knowledge, an MBNA credit card, and here I was being asked to pay this kind of money. What was I supposed to have purchased in North York and then in the United States? There are two items on here: I was supposed to have purchased some Dell computers and then some clothing in Houston, Texas. So I just called up and said that I was totally unhappy about this, because why should I pay for someone else's purchase? Well, I did not exactly receive a good reception, and it took me many, many hours to straighten this out. Then I thought, what would have happened if I had not been an MPP, or if I were a person who didn't speak English very well, or if I was a senior in a home who receives many of these credit cards that most of us receive?

Look at this. I have with me a number of offers of credit cards. All these credit cards were received in one home with four persons in it over the period of one year. Imagine that. It says right here, "All you have to do, Mr. Tony Ruprecht, is call this number and here's your card." "Here's your card"; in fact, not just only one card but as soon as you graduate, you get two cards, three cards or four cards.

In fact, I have some statistics here that blew my mind after I looked at them. I'll get this to you later, but there are some statistics that are very, very perturbing. It says simply this—and I'll give you the quote in a minute. But apparently there are over—and get this—50 million credit cards out there in Canada just by—

Mr. David Ramsay: Unsolicited?

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: No, no. They could be unsolicited—but just by Visa and MasterCard. Two credit-informing agencies, credit-granting institutions: over 50 million credit cards. Our population in Canada is not 50 million. What is it? Thirty-two million or maybe 33 million right now. That's all.

Now, just two credit-granting institutions—50 million. I wonder how many there are of all the other institutions. There must be millions hanging around everywhere. Is it any wonder that we, the consumer, you and I, need protection? We have to have protection, not just against fraud but against this onslaught of pushing credit down our throats. Yeah, sure, we are society that depends on credit, there's no doubt about that, but this, my friends, is too much. Imagine young people getting a bunch of cards and going out on a spending trip and then, later on, having to pay it back, and who knows how long it takes to do that?

So I was not happy when I received this, because basically what happened here is, I was subject to identity theft. Someone else took my card that I didn't even have and apparently bought all kinds of things with it.

Let's have a look at how many other people are being affected by this. Here are the statistics. In 2009—just a

few months ago—KPMG e-crime survey reports that user passwords, PKI credentials, tokens and smart cards do not protect the consumer. All this is sensitive data that cannot be protected from sophisticated hackers and organized crime.

It was indicated in the survey that 6.5% of Canadian adults, or almost 1.7 million people, were victims of some kind of identity fraud in the last year alone. Imagine that—1.7 million people being subject to identity fraud. Wow. We've got a crime wave. No wonder everybody knows that identity theft is the biggest crime in North America and still growing. These victims spent over 20 million hours and more than \$150 million to do what? To resolve the problems, just to ensure that their credit rating is back to normal. They're spending \$150 million just on that. So we've got a problem here.

The 2009 report on organized crime in Canada released in August 2009 by CISC outlines the state of organized criminal activity in Canada. In the report, CISC says that it expects to see more credit and debit card fraud in the future and that hackers are targeting on-line sites and using various methods to steal credit card information. Wow, of course they do that.

Here is another example: The Privacy Commissioner of Canada doesn't have a secured site apparently because for just a few bucks, a few dollars, I can get personal information about the Privacy Commission in Canada. Can you imagine that? In other words, what information could people get about me? It's all out there in cyberspace; it's all out there to be had for a few short dollars.

The report goes on to say that the growth in Internet banking has caused criminal activity to become more lucrative and more common. As one of my colleagues indicated here, it is an epidemic, and how can we possibly help our poor consumers? How do we start to protect them? But it isn't all that easy either.

Let me start by saying, first, it is important that our credit rating is protected. Why is that? Why is it so important that your credit is protected? It is important because the consumer cannot survive without credit. We're all indebted to credit. We need credit. The Canadian Bankers Association website shows that the Visa and MasterCard are really into the millions, as I said earlier. Since we're living now in a credit-dependent world, we need to help our citizens to understand its dangers and its pitfalls.

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Let's take a good look at the credit reporting system as it is provided by the Public Interest Advocacy Centre. They say that credit reporting agencies, and we have two big ones, as most of us know—Equifax and Trans-Union—are private companies that collect information about the consumer's credit history and transactions and then sell this information in the form of a consumer report. Since we've become an increasingly credit-dependent society, the credit reporting system can have a major impact on all aspects of your life. It is one means by which credit grantors obtain information that they use

as part of the credit decision process to determine your ability to get a bank loan, a bank account, a mortgage, a credit card, even employment and rental accommodation. Everybody checks our credit. Knowledge about the credit reporting system as well as the accuracy and reliability of such reports is therefore critical to us as consumers, and critical to us as MPPs, for that matter. It is also critical to understand that credit reporting agencies have a file, a financial profile, on literally every breathing Canadian. Every breathing Canadian has an albatross around their neck if it should ever become a matter of identity theft, if it ever should become a matter of your file being compromised.

Only 17% of Canadians adults 18 and over have checked their credit rating in the last three years. I ask all of you, have you checked your credit rating in the last year? You know what? When you look at your credit rating, wow, big surprise: Over 18% of those who checked their credit rating found serious, significant inaccuracies, to the point where they would have been denied credit for a mortgage or buying a car; 25% of people report serious problems and serious errors in their credit files. Imagine this mind-boggling statistic. As I say, it's 18% in Canada, and 25% in the United States. It's even worse there. And 79%, almost 80%—wow—found minor errors in their credit files. So there are major errors that can stop you from getting credit, and minor errors that can also cause a problem later on for you.

It is our job as guardians of our political and economic culture to ensure that Canadians understand this credit-granting system in order for them not to be taken advantage of.

I have more, but I have to speak on various items in the bill. I can't spend all my time on one because I will be running out soon.

Second, this bill also provides for truncating vital information. Here we are. Look at this: "Laptop Theft Highlights Risk to Personal Data"—8,600 teachers. How long ago? This was January 29, when 8,600 teachers' identities were stolen from the teachers' office. Imagine that. That's just one item. There are many. In fact, I've got lists upon lists upon lists of these files that were stolen. Here, a bank loses how many files? It loses 470,000 files. It's just amazing.

Consequently, what do we do? If you lose the files, shouldn't you be protected? Shouldn't you have some security in your system of credit reporting? Why not truncate that? Why not mesh out or give you another number for your birthdate, your address, your social insurance number or your driver's licence number? All of that is in the credit reporting system. Everybody's got access to it, apparently. Apparently, there is no safeguard here. It's all out on Internet sites. So why are we not insisting that the credit-granting and credit-reporting institutions, when they are sending out mail to everybody and sending out credit cards that you can just sign or just call—why not have them truncate out with different numbers and have a new system in place so that we would be protected?

A major writer, financial writer—look what I've got here from the Toronto Sun. The money editor says:

"Dear Tony:

Please, please, reintroduce your bill to protect consumers, their identity and their credit rating."

More than that, we've got the Financial Post, we've got Tyler Hamilton, we've got James Daw, we previously had Linda Leatherdale, all writing and saying, "Please do something about it. The consumer needs protection."

We're here today to do it.

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm really pleased to be able to make a few comments today on Bill 7, An Act to amend the Consumer Reporting Act. I can tell you that I understand this is around the fifth time the member has introduced this bill. I'd like to make some comments similar to those our party has agreed to in the past, the same type of comments. I want to, first of all, compliment the member from Davenport. I know that he has brought this bill forward, I believe this is the fifth time.

On behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party and the official opposition, it is important, we feel, that this legislation is for consumer protection, and we're interested in working with the Legislature and all three parties to ensure that there are greater consumer protections in the province of Ontario.

I'd like to note at this point that the last time there were sweeping introductions of consumer protection in the province of Ontario was in 2002, under a previous, Progressive Conservative administration in which my leader today, the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook, was the minister of consumer protection at the time. He brought in sweeping reforms at that time.

I might add that I am disappointed that at this point in time there are still regulations from that piece of legislation that passed in 2002, regulatory regimes that have not yet been put into place by this current government, whether it's for the bereavement sector or the auto sector, or even the Ontario racing community.

That said, while I am proud of the achievements of our previous Conservative administration under Mr. Hudak's leadership, I must say that today protecting Ontario consumers is even more important when you're looking at identity theft or Internet fraud. I think the member spoke with some fairly interesting data on just how serious this is and how serious the police services in our country take Internet fraud and identity theft.

I might also add that this is the fifth time this bill has been introduced by the member, and I encourage him to continue to raise awareness on this very important issue.

I think it speaks to his insight into what happened to him, but also to his determination for change, and to the disappointment we have on this side of the chamber that a member from the governing party, who has direct experience of identity theft, actually introduced a bill that the former Minister of Economic Development, Joe Cordiano, brought before this house and that the Liberal government wouldn't adopt this legislation.

In fact, in 2005 there was unanimous consent to try and move this piece of legislation along so that it would be speedily passed. Here we are again, five years later, a new Parliament, and we're still debating a piece of legislation that is simply long overdue.

Just to summarize for those who are just joining the debate: As defined by the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada and Industry Canada, a credit report is a snapshot of your credit history. It's one of the main tools that lenders use to decide whether or not to give you credit. This is what the bill is about. It's actually improving consumer reporting to protect people against identity fraud.

A person's credit history is recorded in files maintained by at least one of Canada's three major credit reporting agencies: Equifax, TransUnion and Northern Credit Bureau. These consumer reporting agencies are private businesses that create, maintain and sell information about you to a business that has the right to have access to your file and has paid a fee to a consumer reporting agency.

There are two classes of information which you may file at a consumer reporting agency: credit information and personal information.

As outlined by this member, his private member's bill provides that if a consumer reporting agency and any other person, such as a bank, to whom a consumer report has been provided, discover that there has been an unlawful disclosure of consumer information, or that such consumer information has been lost or stolen, they shall immediately inform the affected consumer.

It also outlines the duty to shorten vital information so the consumer report does not provide information relating to a consumer's personal information such as address, date of birth, social insurance number and credit card account number.

Some other key provisions include—and I think that the member who has put this piece of legislation forward five times described this to the Legislature:

- the duty to delete unconfirmed information within 30 days;

- the duty not to penalize consumers for applying for credit;

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- the duty to provide disclosure if credit is denied;
- the duty to record only inquiries resulting from applications for credit;

- the duty to report in writing only;

- the duty to retain information that is not contested legally;

- the duty not to report debts vacated after bankruptcy proceedings;

- the duty to provide a true copy of the report; and

- the duty to store and safeguard information in accordance with the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act.

As many folks here know—and I know that there are a few members who are critics or part of the government in the consumer protection sector that we've got here in the

chamber who have been part of the general government committee that has put through Bill 48. I've spoken an awful lot about Ontario becoming a credit card economy. That is why we need this legislation in particular.

I highlight some of the complexities around this, and as a result, I believe it is imperative that Ontario consumers are well informed of the issues surrounding such a complex issue in this chamber, the credit reporting system, as it has such an important impact on each of our daily lives. I really am heartened that he has brought it forward, but I just can't reiterate enough that a senior member of the Liberal caucus has brought this forward. "I remember debating the former Minister of Government and Consumer Services"—that was the previous speaker saying that, Ms. MacLeod—"on Focus Ontario and talking about the same piece of legislation" over two and a half years ago, I believe, and how important this was and the promises that the government gave us that they were going to protect consumers.

What I am frightened about as I go into my concerns about this piece of legislation is this: What we're doing here today is important, but it will actually never become law unless it is a government cabinet minister who actually brings forward this legislation. What we're doing here today is nothing more than just an educational awareness campaign. Quite honestly, the member who brought this bill forward, Mr. Ruprecht, ought to be congratulated for his persistence for the five times that he has brought this forward.

I think this is what a lot of people are genuinely concerned about when we sit in this House every Thursday afternoon, talking or debating what I consider a lot of times very important and good legislation. As recently as March 4, all of those good bills, all of that debate was basically wasted. I know I lost my Bill 32, my township of Tiny site 41 act, as a result of that. I know that this is the fifth time that Mr. Ruprecht has had to bring this bill forward. I know the same sort of thing has happened with Mr. O'Toole with the cellphone bill.

The reality is that we carry some of the government bills forward and we've got this brand new throne speech centred on the future of Ontario, we have a new budget coming out, and yet all the legislation that the private members put forward is basically dropped. I'm very curious why members of the government who speak in favour of this bill would not, at cabinet or at caucus, demand that this type of bill move forward, at least brought as a private member's bill or as a government bill itself, because obviously the member is persistent in this and I think that the House would like to see, if not this bill, a government bill move forward and be taken to committee. Let all these different organizations that believe this bill has an impact on them come to committee and make their concerns known.

I hope the government will be supporting this bill. I assume they're going to vote for it. Whether it becomes law, who knows, but I think that it will probably pass here today. However, will the government allow it to go ahead?

The general public does not have a whole grasp on consumer reporting and we must do our best, in this Legislature, to make the information as accessible as possible. For that I commend the member.

We in the Progressive Conservative Party and official opposition are delighted to see this bill. As some of you may recall, when the member first produced the bill in 2005, our member of provincial Parliament for Barrie, Joe Tascona, debated this bill. He made a few excellent points and noted that we were and remained saddened by the fact again that it was brought forward by a private member and not by a minister. We hate to see this sort of abuse of a private member when it comes to something as important as consumer protection.

But as I've stated, the Progressive Conservative Party is looking forward to continued debate on the legislation, and we thank the member for bringing it forward. As I've said many times, we only wish the government would have listened and brought it forward as well.

It's essential that this legislation receive considerable and substantial consultation with stakeholders throughout the community, all throughout Ontario, but also to make sure we have public hearings into this legislation. It is an important issue and I urge the member to talk to his cabinet and caucus and tell them to put this piece of legislation as part of government legislation.

We must hear from the affected stakeholders, the people in the province who are being ripped off in many cases and who are being defrauded. We need to protect the people of Ontario who have sent us here, and I think one of the things we should add on to this point as we close is that if we move toward implementation of the harmonized sales tax, you can be sure, if something else is going to happen, we're going to drive so much of the economy underground. You can almost see it happening now, because that extra 8%, in a lot of small construction projects or automotive repairs, may have a very negative impact on the consumer, and they will be looking for any savings they can find. That means the underground economy will likely flourish after July 1 as we implement this new Liberal tax grab.

With that, we on this side of the House will be supporting Mr. Ruprecht's bill for the fifth time. We wish the government would listen to him. They will probably support it today, but let's see if they have the courage to move it forward, bring it to committee and actually try to protect consumers in the province of Ontario who are probably demanding it now more than ever. With the difficult economy, we can't have anybody being ripped off; the government is doing enough of that on their own. Let's all get behind Mr. Ruprecht's bill, support it and get it to committee as soon as possible.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: New Democrats are going to support this bill on second reading, with the hope that it goes to committee. Why wouldn't it?

Having said that, I'm nowhere near as excited about it as my friend from Simcoe North. I've sat here and

listened carefully, and I admire his zeal. But the bill, with all due respect to its author, just doesn't do it for me that way.

Let me say a couple of things. This bill is probably far less about consumer reporting agencies than it is about the safekeeping of sensitive, private information. That's the real scourge that's confronting folks in this province and across the world. I have advocated, and continue to—and not all New Democrats may agree with me—that anybody who takes it upon themselves or any body that takes it upon itself to store private information, the release of which could expose a person to harm—again, we're talking about this new phrase, "identity theft," and the prospect of somebody bilking you by accessing your bank account or selling your house on you with a fake deed or accessing your credit card information and so on. My view is very clear: Should that information be obtained by anybody else to the detriment of the source of that information—in order words, the person to whom that information applies—the person who took it upon himself, either a corporate body or otherwise, to store that information should be 100% liable for any of the losses. Quite frankly, it's the classic insurance principle—in the insurance industry, they've gone way beyond this point now, especially the auto sector, which of course is rife with thieves, scoundrels and bandits; they've gone well beyond the point where they do adequate risk management.

One of the things that insurance companies historically did, especially when you're talking about its very origins in seafaring trade and so on, was ensure that their interests were protected by insisting that the insured party used appropriate safeguards. One of the important functions of the tort system is to ensure that wrongdoers are deterred from engaging in risky behaviour for fear of being found liable.

As I say, I'm not certain I speak—New Democrats don't have a clear policy on this, but I suspect my colleagues would join me. I think we should be approaching this from a far more dramatic point of view, and that is to say that anybody—bank, credit union, consumer reporting agency or retailer—who wants to collect and store information, should that information somehow get out of their hands, out of their safekeeping to the detriment of the person whose information it is, and if there is any loss to that person, then the person who was responsible for safeguarding it—in other words, imposing a very high level of trust on the person wanting to store that information. I think that would go a long way to ensuring that everything from the bank of Ontario—Lord knows we don't have it any more, but you'll recall the hemorrhage of personal information that occurred there some few years ago now. But the recurrent—heck, just a year and a half ago, one of the banks called me up and said that they had to change two of my credit cards I had with that bank. I said "Why?" and they said "Well, there has been a breach." And I said, "Well, that's interesting. Tell me where the breach was. I want to know what retailer that I might use these cards at stole my information." But they're not going to tell that to me.

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Granted, I'm an elected politician, but I'm not that stupid. I know that something is going on when the bank proactively calls me and tells me that they're going to replace my credit cards with new numbers but that they can't tell me because the bank is investigating it. Of course, being somewhat suspicious at this point, the only conclusion I can logically reach is that the breach isn't with a retailer who has a scoundrel working for it who's ripping off credit card numbers or information off the black strip, the breach is the bank itself. That's why they don't want to tell you where the source of the problem is.

Then I have to reconsider whether I want to have any credit cards that are sponsored by that bank, because I don't want to expose myself. One, it's very expensive; two, many banks will try to wiggle their way out of any responsibility for identity theft and the financial loss associated with identity theft. They will inevitably try to pin the blame on the little guy: "Oh, you didn't safeguard your pin number."

I actually sat through a committee hearing with the Ombudsman—for the credit unions; I believe it was the credit unions. The Ombudsman, in his report, talked about how, at the end of the day, they held a defrauded party whose signature was forged on one of his cheques 50% liable for the value of that cheque because he didn't go to appropriate lengths to safeguard that chequebook, to secure it, even though it was in his own home. I don't buy that stuff.

Let's get back to consumer reporting agencies. This is the low-life of the financial sector. I think Mr. Ruprecht, the author of the bill, knows that. I'm not sure he wants to say it. This goes back to the era of collection agencies. Many of these consumer reporting agencies are also collection agencies or are associated with collection agencies. These are the people that do the dunning letters and the dunning calls and harassment. In a financial climate that we are in now, where people are losing jobs and families' economic hopes and foundations are collapsing, it becomes all that much more rife.

You see, one of the problems to begin with—because it's not only the world of collection agencies and consumer reporting agencies, it's also the world of the finance companies, the 28.9-percenters, the finance companies who buy the paper of furniture stores that advertise "One year, no interest." Because, you see, almost inevitably the retailer, even a large chain, doesn't hold that paper; they sell it for X number of cents on the dollar and they sell it to a company that's—be it Wells Fargo, any number of these companies. Back in days gone by, it used to be that Household Finance was the big one. Banks didn't give consumer credit, so families, little people had to go to the finance company if they wanted to buy some furniture or a car or do some repairs to their house. You couldn't go to the bank and get a loan.

One of the other problems here is, I suppose life is easier, life is a little more pleasant in small-town Ontario. It's a little harder to commit identity theft down where I come from: in Wainfleet or Port Colborne or Welland or Thorold.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Because everyone recognizes you, Peter.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Well, everybody knows who you are. You walk into the credit union, and people know who are you. People know each other: people have relationships. As a matter of fact, in these hard times right now, it's the credit union that is stepping up to the plate and protecting a lot of the interests of some of the families that have been hard hit by job losses and are being a little more flexible. Quite frankly, I shouldn't restrict it to the credit unions because in smaller-town Ontario the bank staff will do the same thing for you. You can cover a cheque with a telephone call.

And one of the things I used to remark on many years ago back when I used to practise law—and the operative word could be "practise"; I'm not sure. You'll have to talk to some former clients. Many clients who were charged with NSF cheques—the presumption at law was that an NSF cheque was a fraud. One of the things that used to bother me was that a whole lot of times it would be a single mother with no job, on mother's allowance, as we called it, who would do the NSF cheque. The retailer was—and, granted, in small-town Ontario it was usually a small retailer. They're the ones who took the cheques; the big chain stores didn't, by and large. It was basically using the criminal justice system as a collection agency. One of the things that bothered me was that the fact is, if I should bounce a cheque, inevitably—and it has happened from time to time—the retailer calls me apologetically and says, "Oh, Mr. Kormos, what happened here?" When a welfare mom bounces a cheque, they call the police, and the police proceed with criminal process. I've always found that to be a rather perverse sort of thing.

One of the things that we should be concerned about is what's going on here with the high-interest credit companies and the high-interest credit cards. The reason why you can be given a credit card on-site in any number of retail stores with just a 30-second wait is because they don't give a tinker's damn what your ability is to pay off your credit card balance. They're simply interested in getting the credit cards out there. The high interest rate is what covers them. People who are paying their accounts pay for the sins of the people who can't afford to pay for their accounts, but the company doesn't care, either at the onset or at the end, because it's covering its losses with the good payers, because it isn't doing adequate—and it's not a matter of checking credit, I say to the member for Davenport, it's a matter of checking capacity to pay, isn't it? And it's a matter of ensuring that people aren't given credit limits that are so high that they are lured into taking their card up to that limit, to the point where there's simply no capacity whatsoever.

It's the credit card issuer whose minimum payment is 3% of the total balance or less—which seems oh, so attractive, especially when you are in desperate straits, but takes you into a world of high interest and compounded interest that again would make the Tony Soprano loan sharks blush in terms of the way that they can ravage and savage a little person's income and life.

All I'm trying to indicate is that there's more here than meets the eye. We support the legislation. I look forward to it going to committee. I don't know whether the government is going to allow that to happen. The member who sponsored this bill, Mr. Ruprecht, is as faithful a caucus member as one could ever find, and he certainly deserves to have this bill move along into committee so the public can comment on it, after—what?—five tries, five efforts? His tenacity is worthy of note. After five efforts, you'd think the Premier's office would clear the path for him. I, for the life of me, couldn't see why not.

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

Mr. Glen R. Murray: Just before I get into my remarks, I want to thank my friend the member for Davenport for his relentless leadership on this very important issue and his very hard work, and our colleagues from Simcoe North and from Welland, both of whom I thought gave very intelligent and insightful comments on this proposal.

I would like to start, in the very few minutes I have, just to share with you my own personal story. I think it's indicative of all of the holes in the current system. I got a phone call one day from a collection agency saying I owed a large big-box retailer over \$5,000—a big-box retailer I'd never shopped at in a community I had never visited. So I decided, because I was a columnist with the Toronto Star at the time, to pretend I was applying to this retailer for one of their credit cards, and this is what happened:

"I called the Best Buy in Whitby because I couldn't believe that it would be that easy.

"The phone rang only twice and a crisp young voice answered, 'Best Buy. Can I help you?' I asked about how I could get a Best Buy credit card. The very chipper voice said that all I needed was a driver's licence and a major credit card. 'What if I don't have a driver's licence?' I asked. Don't worry. I was covered if I had my social insurance number ... and some proof of my home address.

I asked how long it would take to get the card, and she cheerfully said, "Two to four minutes." She assured me that, as she explained, I would also be issued a temporary account card I could use that same day. I sarcastically said, "How convenient."

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That explained how on October 2, 2006, it took just two to four minutes to become a victim of identity theft and credit card fraud. A person pretending to be me filled out a Best Buy credit card application with the wrong birth date. They offered two phone numbers; one phone number was the general number for the University of Toronto and the other one was not even in service.

Nothing was done to verify the person's identity beyond accepting the SIN. The application was sent to Wells Fargo, which handles Best Buy's credit cards. It used the SIN to check with the credit bureau. As I had a very good credit record, the card was authorized. No further steps were taken to ensure that the person applying was actually me.

Emboldened and now armed with one credit card, the impostor marched to the Whitby Home Depot and repeated the crime. Within a few hours, the Best Buy card was maxed out and the Home Depot one had a few thousand dollars charged against it. The cards require no down payment, and these retailers require no payments for months, sometimes up to three years. The better part of a year would go by before there would be any record of delinquency on any of these cards.

I only discovered the crime in August a year later, when the collection agency had called about overdue accounts. I then called the retailers to find out how this happened, and was told over and over by the people at Home Depot and Best Buy and their respective finance providers—Citi Cards Canada and Wells Fargo—that they would never give out a credit card based on a SIN and a home address. I spent hours investigating only to find out that that's indeed exactly what had happened.

Then I found out the credit card bureaus had been notified of these unpaid bills, and my credit rating was dramatically downgraded. The retailers who rush to give out easy credit require no payments for the better part of a year and ask for little proof of identity, and have made credit card fraud and identity theft one of the easiest crimes to commit in Ontario. No amount of evidence from me in the aftermath of this was sufficient to expunge my credit record.

The absurdity is that the victim of the crime has to rely on the same lax retailers and finance companies to clear their name with the credit bureau. There is no chipper voice from Best Buy telling you that they can clear this matter up in two to four minutes.

What makes me angry is that this could happen to you or me, any member of this House, our friends, our families, our constituents. As my friend from Davenport pointed out earlier, credit card fraud affects 270,000 accounts.

I'm just going to sum up. I'm going to take 30 seconds more, simply to say this: Because of the delay, when I went back, the only way I could expunge my record was to press charges. Two years later or a year later, any evidence was gone. All the tapes the companies keep had now been erased. The police officer investigating it at the Toronto Police Service had been turned down for four years in his applications to the Toronto Police Service because he had been twice the victim of credit fraud and couldn't join the police service because of his credit, actually.

We have to do something about this. I hope this will get rolled up into government legislation soon.

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

Mr. Frank Klees: I just wanted to say this: I sincerely hope this bill not only gets passed here but also, as my colleague indicated earlier, that it goes to committee. This entire industry, this business of keeping credit records, is what has to be investigated because therein lies the problem. I believe that the kind of personal information that's being kept is something that we as a

Legislature have to investigate. The way that information is used and released to merchants across this province is something that needs a second look. Let's get this bill to committee and let's do our work as a Legislature.

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

Mr. Dave Levac: I appreciate the opportunity.

The member from Davenport has been working on this, as pointed out by the member from Welland, for quite some time. I agree with the member from Newmarket–Aurora, who says, “Let's get this to committee and get to work.” I don't think there's anyone in here who hasn't heard one of these stories in their ridings about identity theft or the credit rating system or, “Something's going on here,” and I think we're on to something.

I think the member from Welland offers us some sound advice, and that is, we've got to dig deeper, peel the onion back even further to get to the bottom of this. But the member from Davenport deserves our credit, our thanks and our gratitude for telling us continually, on and on, about the horror stories that are out there and about finding a solution.

So here is what he wants to do. The act amends the Consumer Reporting Act and prescribes the following things:

You're required, as a duty, to inform about missing or stolen information. How many of you have not even been informed about stuff that's been stolen?

The duty to truncate vital information: That is in itself an important aspect of how much information is made available to be flipped around to so many people. So the proper, truncated information that does flow needs to be done.

The duty to delete unconfirmed information within 30 days: Do you realize that unconfirmed information can be provided and stays on that record if it's not been substantiated at all? What's with that?

There's a duty not to penalize customers for applying for credit; a duty to provide full disclosure if the credit is denied; a duty to record only inquiries resulting from applications for credit; a duty to report in writing only; a duty to retain information that is not contested legally; a duty to report debts vacated after bankruptcy proceedings; a duty to provide a true copy of the report; and a duty to store and safeguard information in accordance with the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act of Canada.

There's story after story of identity theft, of this credit issue. If you don't understand the credit system, you can be taken advantage of in a very serious way. We don't have the time to decide to read the fine print, which we know there is sometimes reams of, but we assume that these companies are looking out for our best interests, and in some cases they are not.

We have no law that says if the credit file has been compromised, an agency or a bank must inform the consumer. We have no existing safeguards against identity theft when it comes to credit files. People often lament that their credit scores are so inaccurate and false

that they are unable to get a loan. All of that would be taken care of to some degree. Why I want this to go to committee is precisely why the member has been asking us to do this time and time again. I'm hearing in this place that there is support for that. I too will add my voice to supporting getting this bill to committee and actually getting this bill to work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member from Davenport.

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Like many others who spoke before me, I want to lend my support and congratulate the member from Davenport for his determination in bringing this issue again and again to this House. Hopefully this time this bill will pass and see the light and also help and serve the people of Ontario.

It's just like many across the province of Ontario facing difficulties as a result of identity theft. We hear about it on a regular basis. It happened to me a long time ago. My wife looked after the account. One time, she came to me and asked me, “Hey, Khalil, since when do you gamble? You spent \$3,500 in gambling at a betting place in England.” I didn't know anything about it. I'd never been there. I don't know how to play the game. So I went and talked to the bank and they verified it; they returned my money. But many others lose their money.

I was talking to my colleague here, the member from Bramalea. He was telling me the same story. It's happened to him. Some people used his name, stole his identity and borrowed money and almost cost him \$8,000. The most important thing is, it's not about losing the money. Sometimes you don't know anything about it and you lose your credit rating. When you want to go buy a house or apply for a loan, you won't be eligible to buy or to get the loan because your credit has a black mark around it because you didn't pay back a loan which you didn't know anything about.

That's why it's important for all of us to continue to talk about this issue and to pass this bill: because it's important for all of us to create some kind of protection mechanism for the people of Ontario who are victims of identity theft, which happens on a regular basis.

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As the member from Davenport mentioned, you can receive a credit card in the mail and the company will tell you, “Just phone and activate your account,” and that's it—you have a credit card. They'll give you \$5,000, \$10,000. It could be you, it could be somebody else. As the member from Toronto Centre mentioned a few minutes ago, it happened to him. It happens to many others across the province of Ontario on a daily basis.

I think it's our obligation as elected officials, as the people who make the rules and laws in this province, to create a mechanism to protect the people who look to us to be protected and who seek some kind of support or regulations to regulate this industry.

I know it's difficult. I was listening to the member from Welland talking about the difficulties from a

technical and legal point of view. As a lawyer, he always looks to the legalities and technicalities, which are very difficult. Sometimes it's a federal jurisdiction, sometimes it's an international jurisdiction—because some of these are global companies. But the most important thing, from our point of view as Ontarians, is to regulate this industry in the province of Ontario and create a protection mechanism for many thousands and thousands of people who, on a regular basis, are losing their identity to others. It creates problems for them and for their families and for their credit.

Again, I want to congratulate the member from Davenport. I'm going to vote in support of his bill because it's important for all of us.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The honourable member for Davenport, Mr. Ruprecht, has up to two minutes for his response.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: Thank you very much to the members from London–Fanshawe, Brant and Newmarket–Aurora. Thank you to the member for Toronto Centre for sharing his experience with credit card fraud; and to the member for Welland for explaining the details of his own experience with credit cards; and to the member from Simcoe North for going deeper into the complexities of Bill 7.

Two points very quickly: One, I have three notices from three different banks here, and I don't have bank accounts there, yet they tell me that my banking is temporarily blocked, that my account has been suspended. I don't even bank with them, so something is out there that is very strange—Canada Trust, same thing; BMO Financial Group, same thing. Something is wrong. It's out there. It's in cyberspace.

Finally, let me make one important point, and that is the gall of it all. Here is Allstate. It says they're going to give us a one-year free identity theft guarantee of some kind, if we only pay. There are 1.5 million Canadians who are now paying for protection against identity theft when the very institutions that we trust to be the keepers of our financial records are supposed to give us that information free. Why are 1.5 million Canadians paying for identity theft guarantees—it really can't be guaranteed, but it sounds like it; it's right here.

So I find it very strange and I find it very informative that somehow insurance companies or banks or credit unions now have another way to gouge the public. This is nothing more than gouging the public, because we're all afraid of losing our credit rating, losing our protection. This cannot be right. That's why it is really very important that this bill see the light of day in committee so we can protect our consumers in Ontario.

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

MAIL DELIVERY

Mr. David Ramsay: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario calls upon the federal Minister of Transport to issue a directive

to the Canada Post Corp. to amend the Consumer Choice program to allow the delivery of unaddressed mail sent by provincial members of Parliament and municipal councillors, as is the case with federal members of Parliament.

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

Mr. David Ramsay: Compared to the other bills that were introduced today, this is really of quite small consequence. In fact, it really kind of involves just us here, in a great respect. But it's something that I just found out accidentally through going on with my duties as an MPP. It sort of stuck in my craw that there was a sense of injustice here for the duly elected officials across this country, whether you be at the federal level, the provincial level or the municipal level.

What I discovered was that there's a great program that Canada Post has that I certainly support called Consumer Choice that allows people to block unaddressed mail if they don't want to receive it. That's what we usually call in the vernacular “junk mail.” I happen to like this stuff myself. I'm a Canadian flyer guy, and I look forward to it every week. I check out what the tires are on sale for, and I look at everything else. I even do a lot of the food shopping at home, so I look at the grocery store flyers too. I happen to like it. But I understand there's a lot of it; in some cases, there's too much of it. Certainly people have the right to say, “I don't want to receive that.”

So it's good that Canada Post has that policy, and I certainly support that. I support people's right to have that stopped. In that Consumer Choice policy, though, Canada Post has some exemptions to it, ones that are very logical, like the returning officer, both federal and provincial. The returning officer has to be able to communicate with the resident at election time to get voting information. Maybe it's not addressed, and they just send out a general card, because you need to know where the voting place is and to alert people that elections are going on. That's very important.

The other exemption they have is for our federal members of Parliament's householders. They also get delivered to the households. But for the provincial members of Parliament and municipal councillors across the country, that is blocked. I just think that's patently unfair. If Canada Post feels that the federal members' information should get through, I think also that they should respect municipal councillors who are duly elected and work hard for their ratepayers and provincial members of Parliament, MLAs as they're called everywhere else across this country. I think their information should also get forwarded to the households.

Normally you wouldn't know about this. First of all, I would just say that I'm not a big householder person myself. I guess when I was first elected a long time ago, I'd send out quite a few. We have special budgets for this now. Then I really got more into direct mail with people. When people had issues, I certainly made note of their

address, and I kept them informed through letter about their issue and how it was developing. I found that was a more effective way of communicating.

But over time, I found that it is a good idea, from time to time, whether I'm asking people's opinion about policies or trying to make the householder informative. Probably in the last 10 years, I've maybe sent four or five out. I did one on energy conservation and told everybody about all the programs that are there.

I remember when the electricity and natural gas sales were changing about 10 years ago, I sent out a brochure of questions you needed to ask when somebody came to the door. It's interesting that this has all come back now, and I've been working on that issue from the other end after that policy.

Last year, I did something very unusual. We had a very big event in our riding: The International Plowing Match was held, for the first time, in northern Ontario. We had a small organization and a small budget. I went to them and said, "I can send out a householder to every household in the community, and I could put in information about the plowing match for you, so that would help you spread the word." We did that. I presumed everybody would have received it. I didn't know it at the time, but I guess they didn't.

Anyway, a few months back, an issue came up that somebody had asked me about. A historian in my area had asked me to look into why Timiskaming is spelled with an "i" by the provincial government, but the lake and the newspaper that's over 100 years old are Temiskaming with an "e." So we looked into it, and we saw that in the 1920s, there was a spelling error. It was a typo in the consolidated act that was made. Once I found that out, I thought, "You know what? Maybe I had better consult with the public before I just decide on my own we're just going to fix this." Even myself, for almost 25 years now, I've been the member for Timiskaming with an "i," and it's the Timiskaming Health Unit with an "i." A lot of people have that spelling. We have these two spellings up there.

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We found out what it was, so I decided, "Why don't I consult?" I thought that the best way to do that, the easiest way for me, is, I'll send out a postage reply card to every household in the geographic district of Timiskaming, about a third of my riding, to see what people thought. There was a lot of publicity about this. There were people writing in; everybody was interested; and people were discussing the history. I made it happen and sent the thing out.

Then I started to get a bunch of calls at my offices: "Hey, how come I didn't get one?" I said, "I don't know," because we had made sure every household was to get one. Then we found out about this consumer's choice policy of Canada Post, and that if you decide to block unaddressed mail, that also included any unaddressed mail from a municipal councillor and a provincial member of Parliament. So they didn't get that, either; in fact, they don't get some of the community news-

papers that are unaddressed that have flyers in them too. But that's their choice.

When I looked into that, I was kind of angry that the post office was doing that. I found out about the consumer's choice policy of Canada Post and how it had a few exemptions in it, including the federal members of Parliament.

I really thought that was unfair. I don't know the origins of that. I think it probably goes way back, so it's not to be blamed on any government or whatever; this is not a partisan issue. But what we'll have to do is just ask the federal government of the day to instruct Canada Post to amend that policy to also exempt, to be fair, MLAs across this country, and municipal councillors. I find the municipal mail I get here in Toronto very helpful. Usually the councillors talk about water conservation and energy conservation. There's a lot of useful information there.

I think it's important that we who are duly elected have free access to our voters, to pass on information. Some people want to send straight self-promotional material. That's their business. My experience is, most members of the House want to send useful information to people. Regardless of what it is, that's our choice as elected officials. And, to be fair, to be equitable, I think elected officials in all three levels of government across this country should have their mail received by their voters.

That's the case. I don't think I have to take all my time to make that argument. I would just ask all the members to support that.

I understand, because this involves another jurisdiction, that if this passes the House it will be up to me to write Minister Baird, whom I consider to be a friend. I know he stood over there five years ago and mentioned the birth of my grandson when he was born. My daughter and my grandson have a copy of that Hansard, when he mentioned that in the House. That's what I would do if this passes today, and I would hope that the federal government would listen and ask Canada Post to amend their policy so that elected officials at all three levels of government in this country are allowed to have their unaddressed mail delivered to ratepayers.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dave Levac): Further debate?

Mr. Frank Klees: I was speaking with my colleague here, wondering how the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane could fill 12 minutes, speaking to this profound resolution, but I do want to thank him for bringing it forward.

I must admit I struggled, when I first saw it, with what it meant and what the intention was. I wasn't even aware that there was a difference between provincial and municipal unaddressed mail and federal mail.

Knowing Minister Baird as I do, I couldn't for one minute accuse him of doing this intentionally, of leaving out the provincial Legislatures or the municipal—because if he had done that intentionally, I think he would have gone the distance to, say, just allow Conservative

MPs' unaddressed mail to go through. We know that that's not in the nature of Minister Baird. I'm sure that, should this House agree to pass this resolution, when he gets the letter from Mr. Ramsay, his reaction will probably be similar to mine: "I can't believe that this is actually happening." He'll waste no time whatsoever. He'll send the directive and Mr. Ramsay will be getting all of his unaddressed mail that he so enjoys reading.

In all seriousness, I think this is very similar to the rights that we have as individuals who seek public office. During a writ period, we will often come up against a condominium or an apartment building, and of course, it says "No soliciting." None of would put ourselves into the category of a solicitor. In fact, I got a standing ovation in my first public meeting when I was asked back in 1995, "Are you a lawyer?" and I said no. I got a standing ovation. The last thing we want to be accused of is being just mere solicitors. Of course, we know that because it's an important message that we're carrying as public servants, that's the reason that we are then given access to apartments. And we know we're not soliciting; we're actually bringing the good news of what it is the Progressive Conservative Party is going to do for the people of this province—or those of you who think that there is good news that maybe the NDP or the Liberal Party would bring forward. It's a matter of public service.

I really do think in terms of the importance of getting the message out, especially today. Many, many years ago, you could communicate very effectively, for example, in a newspaper. I know some of my colleagues still have the privilege of having a regular column in small community newspapers. They don't have to pay for that. In fact, the newspaper welcomes that, it's printed on a regular basis, and it's a way for members to get their message out. In the urban areas, that's something that isn't available to us in the same way.

I'm very fortunate in Newmarket–Aurora. I represent the municipality of Newmarket as well as the municipality of Aurora. Aurora has a weekly newspaper called *The Auroran*. Its owner, publisher and editor is a friend—he has been for many years—by the name of Ron Wallace. Ron Wallace ran a headline when I first sought the nomination for what was then the York–Mackenzie riding. Ron found out that this guy, Frank Klees, was running for the nomination, so the headline in the paper that he was associated with at the time was "Frank Who?" He went on to say, "Who is this guy to think that he would actually win a nomination in this riding? No one really knows who he is. He doesn't have any political experience." He went on to basically tear me to shreds. How wrong he was.

It was actually that column that gave me my start in politics, because people said, "Frank who?" And from that point on, when people asked who I was, I just said "Frank Who."

Mr. Jeff Leal: The next line: "Frank, that's who."

Mr. Frank Klees: Frank, that's who.

Here's the point: My good friend Ron, being the responsible editor and publisher that he is, actually does

invite me to write columns, and they are important public service columns; the other newspaper in my riding doesn't. In fact, just for the exercise I went through this. I took the column and I asked my staff to find out how much it would cost me to run the same column in the *Newmarket Era Banner*, because they won't take it as a free column. The response was \$1,500 for one edition. So there's something else. I mean, I can't afford to pay \$1,500 to run one column. I think if my constituents found out that that's how I was spending my communications budget, which is tax dollars, they wouldn't think that that is a good use of that money.

1550

So I have to rely on *The Auroran* to get that message out, and I'm grateful to Ron Wallace and *The Auroran* for the opportunity they give me to communicate important messages about what's happening in the Legislature that is of public interest. Again, to Mr. Ramsay's point, these flyers or these direct mail pieces we put out that we use to get important information about what is happening in the Legislature, are one of the ways we have of reaching out to the more than 100,000 residents we have in our various ridings.

I think this is simply common sense. It's a good measure. I wish you good luck with Minister Baird. As I said, knowing him, and knowing his sense of what is right and his support for democracy, he will respond immediately.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: I'm going to take a somewhat contrary view about this. I know the federal Parliament just voted to eliminate their so-called ten-percenters. You see, this motion would be a lot more appealing to me if it called upon the federal government not to exclude federal government politicians' materials from the ban. I don't know about you, Speaker, but it's incredibly frustrating to get home on a Thursday evening or a Friday morning—sometimes a Saturday morning—and find that the grey box in front of the house—it's up on the porch, and the neighbours take care of this stuff—full of really cheesy, cheap paper stuff from obscure federally elected Conservative people from northern British Columbia.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: The Liberals have them too.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Well, no, the cheesy ones. They've got the burglar breaking into houses with one of those little cat burglar masks on, one of those Zorro masks. They use "Crime" with three exclamation marks. They have all the finesse of a National Inquirer headline. These things end up in the grey box. Down on Bald Street, in this little community of Bald Street people where I am blessed to live between Ms. Rosie and Ms. Cheel, they're very conscientious about the blue box and grey box, and take care of my blue box and grey box.

This stuff is just stupid. I suppose I should put myself on the "do not drop off" list, but then I'm torn, because of course we want to support postal workers and the job they do, at least for most of the community.

I'm surprised that the motion wouldn't express some concern about subdivision after subdivision being built

where people are buying expensive homes, paying huge municipal taxes and not getting any mail delivery at all. It boggles the mind. You've got them in your community too. Why these people aren't surrounding federal government offices with their pitchforks boggles the mind. They buy nice, new houses—I like my old house, but I get my mail delivered to my door once a day five days a week. These people have to go to crummy little post boxes out in the middle of a field with the wind blowing in the wintertime and snow drifts as high as the box and keys that break off because it's cold out. Why the motion wouldn't call upon the federal government to bring proper postal delivery service—I'm not talking rural routes. Heck, rural routes do better, because at least you've got the mail person coming by in a car with right-hand drive and dropping off the mail in the box and swinging your box out so that the snowplow can knock it off the post once the snow gets high enough.

For the life of me, I say to the author of this motion, why would you want somebody who is concerned about getting junk mail to have to get your mail when you expect their vote? If somebody doesn't want unaddressed mail, I don't want my householder delivered to them, because I'm going to operate on the assumption that they may not like me, but at least they don't dislike me. But once they start getting the householder in their mail slot after they thought they had banned unaddressed mail, they're going to despise me.

Now, you may have different goals in your career than I do. I suppose if one wants a graceful exit from this life, to simply get defeated in the next provincial election is one of the ways of doing it. But I don't begrudge you, notwithstanding that you belong to your party and I belong to mine, the right to maintain as healthy a relationship as you possibly can in your community with the voters. It seems to me that by forcing your junk mail on them you're not helping.

Our householders are far more restrained than federal householders. You've noticed that the federal government's householders are the most partisan things you could ever encounter. It seems that from time to time maybe Mr. Ramsay is slipping the occasional partisan content through as well. I'm not sure; I don't know how you can possibly do it. But the federal stuff is just incredibly partisan. Have you ever tested your market? Because people get so much stuff now that unless they're so socially inept that they haven't got anybody live to talk to and they spend whole Saturday mornings poring through the—look, I know people who are coupon clippers, but they're selective. They know where to go, and then the rest, boom, gets grey-boxed. I'm not averse to a Canadian Tire special either. But you pick out Canadian Tire from the bundle, and the other stuff is grey-boxed, in any event. If politicians think this is effective communication with constituents, they've got another think coming.

Mr. Frank Klees: Let them keep thinking that.

Mr. Peter Kormos: They obviously do. They're going to shove these pamphlets down people's throats

whether they want them or not, whether they read them or not.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: “Oh,” Mr. Ramsay says. Your brother-in-law and your sister and their kids don't count. I'm talking about the general public, because you can send out a mailing like this—and they're not cheap; the taxpayer pays for them—and at the end of the day, if you tested your community—let's say you raised a new issue. I'm not talking about reinforcing a local issue that's already hot. For instance, if I sent out a door-to-door piece down in the east end of Welland where the government is trying to shut down Crowland Central school—you know, Crowland is the east-end rural part of Welland, Lyons Creek, a historic community. You've got Crowland Central school that has been there for decades and decades. It's also a community centre. Now you've got this government trying to shut it down and bus these kids from this very unique, traditional rural community, bus them for hours each day to and from an urban school because somehow somebody's got the impression that these kids aren't being well served out in the country. I beg to differ.

If I were to send a householder out there talking about how mischievous Mr. McGuinty was being and how delinquent he was, and how Mr. McGuinty and the Liberals were abandoning families in rural Ontario, and if the householder were to mention the fact that the Minister of Education won't come to the support of those families and their kids in those communities that are losing their small-town schools, there would be a great response. But that's not the test. The test is to generate a new issue and just see how many people actually bother reading it. I don't think there are a whole lot of folks who read this stuff, but tell you what: Don't rely upon the junk mail process. Mr. Ramsay, I think that when you've got a householder like that, and if you feel you're being—I'll tell you what happens down in Welland.

As you know, people canvass during election times. I was just telling Mr. Klees that I've got some canvassers who, heck, were working for Mel Swart before me, and that was 24, 25 and 26 years ago. They know enough that if they knock on a door and wait, and knock again a little harder, and a guy shows up dripping wet with a towel around his waist and a miserable look on his face, my canvassers know enough to say, “Hi. I'm here on behalf of the Liberal candidate.” That's called talent, skill. You don't pick it up the first day out canvassing, but you pick it up in relatively short order. If you want your folks to get your junk mail, deliver it yourself.

But I'm going to stand up for the people who don't like the piles and piles and piles of junk mail. I'm going to stand up for the folks who don't like being interrupted in the middle of their dinner hour with a phone call from—again, where's Mr. Ruprecht?—obscure credit card companies or companies that want to consolidate their debt or sell them an electricity source or a natural gas source. Or the people who work shifts, if they are working at all—down where I come from, there aren't a

whole lot of people working shifts any more, because of course there are no jobs, and that's a problem. But the people who work shifts—and never mind working shifts. What about the single mom who works two jobs and is in bed by 7:30 at night because she has to be up at 4:30 or 5 in the morning? That phone call at 8 o'clock or 8:30, which is still considered prime calling time by the telephone solicitors, is the most irritating thing in the world. I think she has a right to have herself put on a do-not-call list, and I think folks have a right to have themselves put on a do-not-mail list.

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You're not going to see me voting for the motion. I'm not going to make a big deal out of it. I'm not going to send a letter that opposes yours to John Baird, because, quite frankly, I think at this point John Baird, with his new salary, with a pensionable job, with a position in cabinet, isn't going to be moved by a resolution of this chamber. It's just unlikely to happen, but I admire the effort.

I suppose there are going to be people here who are grateful for what you're doing for them, other MPPs, but from electoral perspectives they don't live in your ridings. There are going to be municipal councillors across the province, although most municipal councillors don't do this because, at least where I come from, they don't have the kinds of budgets that allow them to do householders. That's George Smitherman's turf now with those huge discretionary budgets that allow city councillors to—down where I come from, city councillors don't do householders. Down where I come from, you go to the market square on Saturday morning, you go to the church hall on Saturday evening and on Sunday afternoon, and you talk with people. You don't send out 10%-percenters.

I appreciate—well, I'm not sure of the motive; that's the problem. I was going to say I appreciate the motive, but I'm not sure of the motive. I'm not sure whose interest is being represented here. The interest of democracy? I don't think so. You've got a constituency office. Presumably it's open at least four days a week, four and a half days a week, maybe five. You've got staff who probably work a lot harder than their elected members. I think that's fair to say about most of our staffs. I know Alex Roman—I've known him for a good chunk of time—certainly does, and with great talent. I'm envious of Mr. Klees for having him. I've got good staff of my own, but Alex Roman's a great staff person. So you've got staff who answer and take care of people's problems ticking people off with yet more paper.

The Welland Tribune, now owned by Sun Media, gives away the Friday paper on Saturday, because they simply can't sell them. They wedge it between the storm door and the wood door, and all it does is cause drafts in the wintertime. Enough of that.

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: It's an enjoyable debate and it seems like this afternoon is a wonderful afternoon. Most of the members agreed on the topic being debated and discussed in this place.

I want to support the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane for his motion, because it's important. All of us want to communicate with our constituents. We're not talking about forcing people to take our information; we're talking about equal opportunity. When we deliver any piece of communication from our provincial side, it always has to be non-partisan; otherwise the assembly won't pay for it, unlike our federal cousins, who can include in their communications a lot of partisan issues and it still passes and is still delivered to every household.

You have to appreciate, when you live in cities like London and Toronto, that sometimes when we use those local StarMail companies or local distributors, they're not allowed to go into buildings. That's why, I guess, to send our information, to communicate with our constituents, we have to use Canada Post. Sometimes, as the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane mentioned, we're excluded; we're being considered as junk mail. It's not like a piece of information that deserves to go to the end user, which is our constituent. That's why I think it's important to talk about equal opportunity. It's not abusing the system.

The member from Welland was mentioning that if I need to communicate with my constituents, I have to go and knock on their doors. We do that every once in a while. We do that when we get a chance to go back to our ridings. We knock on doors, we take our information with us, but sometimes, as the author of this motion said, you have to discuss very important issues concerning all the residents. It's impossible to visit 45,000 households, which is the number of households in my riding—to go to every door and talk to everyone. That is why we use Canada Post. We send them the information and we expect an answer back from our constituents. There are many different issues concerning their ridings and the issues we debate in this House. That is why the most important thing is to allow us, as elected officials on the provincial side, alongside our friends on the council side—city members—to send information to our constituents and seek their opinions on those important matters.

I think the member from Newmarket–Aurora mentioned that he's going to write the federal member to seek his opinion and hopefully approval to allow us, as members, to send communications to our constituents—not being stopped, not being considered junk mail.

I want to congratulate the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane for bringing to us very important information and important issues, because I didn't know that before. Most of the time my constituents tell me, "How come I didn't receive this information from you? How come you didn't ask my opinion? I want to participate." I didn't know that until you brought this issue to our attention. I think it's very important in order to communicate with our constituents in a professional and efficient and timely manner. I think we should be allowed to send our information to our constituents and not be considered junk mail. I think it's fair to have equal opportunity, like our federal partners.

As I said, and I'll repeat again, when we send our communications, they're empty of any partisan issue and any partisan titles or descriptions because the assembly of Ontario won't pay for it. So unlike the federal members—it's full of partisan stuff and it still goes through and it is still received by our constituents.

Congratulations to the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane for bringing this very important issue to us. I want to support your motion.

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

Mr. Dave Levac: I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane's resolution. Let me make a comment about the member from Welland first, before I come to what your concerns are.

The member from Welland offers us some divergent logic behind his non-support for the motion, but I will acknowledge to him the logic that it is only but one tool. I think he diminishes the tool. I'm going to respectfully differ with his opinion. I think it's one of the tools that if you don't use it you may be avoiding some opportunities to communicate with some people who do like the tool. So not so quick to throw it out the door.

I will correct him on one thing. I don't think he meant to say this because I think he realizes that the 10-percenter was not removed. The 10-percenter—throwing it out of your riding—has been removed at the federal level, because there was that practice that particularly the present government was using, telling members from Alberta to send to Brant—to use their 10-percenter. So I think he knows that's a little bit different than what the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane is talking about, because he's talking about individually, in our own ridings, the capacity for all three levels of government to have a level playing field when it comes to the delivery of these pieces of information.

My intention would be to—except to extend to the member from Kenora–Rainy River the opportunity to send him some love mail whenever I get a chance, to see if he can respond to the government standing from a very respectful way.

The member from Timiskaming–Cochrane has often offered us the opportunity to right what—I think the member from Newmarket–Aurora indicated that he believed that Minister Baird would not knowingly do this and it would not be a tactic but an oversight. I'm looking forward to not only supporting this resolution and seeing it pass, but, if it passes, to see if a letter will correct that oversight. I think it's fair that both the federal, provincial and municipal level of politicians be provided an opportunity to communicate using that one tool because, as has been pointed out, there are many other tools to communicate.

1610

I agree with the member from Welland that going to the market, going to the events, going to the weekend festivals and talking to people first-hand is probably, first and foremost, the most personal, but the other tools—email, websites, all of those things, plus the mailers—are

an important tool of the communication with the community.

The member has my support. The member has touched on something that he fell upon, I would hazard a guess, that absolutely none of us knew was part of the regulatory stream, and with a letter, if we can get it corrected, I'm in favour of it. So I want to thank the member for bringing this forward.

One differential between the federal, provincial and municipal levels is that at the provincial and the municipal levels, we have to take that out of our own personal budgets. They get a budget set aside for them to use that 10-percenter, as it's called. But having said that, it's our choice to spend that money, and if we do, we want to make sure we're getting a bang for our buck and that it doesn't get delivered into the recycling box without us even knowing. So I think the member's on to something that I support 100%.

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

Mr. Joe Dickson: First of all, I should mention that our good friend Mr. Kormos was referencing the 10-percenters. This is simply not applicable today. We trust the federal government to do what is right, and we leave those concerns with them and it's inappropriate for me to speak to them.

I'm very pleased that the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, David Ramsay, has given us, the Legislature, the opportunity to debate this issue. As provincial elected representatives, we have the same basic goals as other levels of government, and that's to communicate with the residents of our riding.

Under the federal consumer choice program, lovingly known as junk mail, elected representatives' mail is the only unaddressed mail that Canada Post will continue to fully deliver. Among the few exemptions are the federal members of Parliament, but not mailings from provincial legislators or municipal councillors. I should note that Canada Post's website doesn't even warn you that provincial members' mail isn't going through.

Like most members in this House, one way that I communicate with my constituents in Ajax–Pickering is through regular newsletters. My MPP newsletter delivers news of joint effort, provincial, federal and municipal infrastructure projects that are under way and also promotes community groups in our riding, as well as event listings and various environmental and community initiatives.

Like all Ontarians, residents of Ajax and Pickering hold health care as a high priority. My newsletter continually announces the hospital expansions that are continually taking place in Ajax–Pickering, including the just-opened emergency room expansion, the first in 25 years, and the opening of the complex continuing care unit, which happened this past week with 30 new beds.

Ajax and Pickering residents would want to know that their hospital just got better and where their provincial tax dollars are going. Unfortunately, I have no way of knowing who will actually get this information, although

we assume that our provincial correspondence is in capable hands with Canada Post.

What MPP Ramsay is asking for is the federal government to reconsider, under Canada Post, a part of the Consumer Choice program that would allow us as provincially elected representatives to have our unaddressed newsletters, calendars and other correspondence to get to all of our constituents.

Last year, I had a problem involving a good friend in Ajax–Pickering. This constituent had not received two previous unaddressed mail pieces from me. He hadn't received either and wondered why I had skipped him. It was only recently that we discovered he was on the federal government's Consumer Choice list opting out of certain mail. He still received mail from my federal member and good friend Mark Holland, so he assumed that if I sent out correspondence, he would receive it also. Not so. The problem here was, my good friend thought Canada Post's policy did not apply to his elected members.

I, like David Ramsay, wonder how many more constituents are inadvertently severing vital communication with their provincial representatives.

Hypothetically, imagine my federal counterpart and I both release 45,000 newsletters to our householders in our riding. Let's presume that there are 6,000 individuals listed on Canada Post's Consumer Choice list. That means 45,000 federal mailings get delivered; 39,000 provincial newsletters get delivered. That's a waste of 6,000 newsletters. That's taxpayers' money, and you and I are paying for it.

I strongly believe that elected representatives from all three levels of government should have the same rights when they communicate with their constituents.

I strongly support this motion. I turn the floor over to the next speaking member, the originator of this bill, Mr. Ramsay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The Progressive Conservative caucus has indicated that they won't use up all their time. The honourable member for Timiskaming–Cochrane, Mr. Ramsay, has up to two minutes for his response.

Mr. David Ramsay: I'd like to thank the members from Newmarket–Aurora, Welland, London–Fanshawe, Brant and Ajax–Pickering for their comments today.

Because there have been some interesting comments made and some criticism about this and the whole idea of unaddressed mail, in this case why I got a little upset about it is that people wanted to have this. Their elected official said he wanted to consult with them and they were denied that opportunity. In this particular mailing it was a two-way exercise; it was a two-way piece of communication. They had the ability to respond to something they wanted to voice an opinion on, and they were frustrated by that and wanted to have the opportunity to have done that. I thought the only fair way to distribute these cards was one per household, to basically survey the opinions of my constituents.

I don't use this very often. As I said, maybe four or five times in the last 10 years I've put out a householder. When I think there's something important, and people want to have a say or need to know some very important information, I think it's a good tool to have. We certainly budget for it, and I think it's important for our ratepayers and our voters to be well-informed as to what their elected officials are doing.

Many use it and max it out, and some of us use it very sparingly. But however we choose to do that, that will be up to the voters to say if we're bombarding them with useless information or not. As the member from Welland says, if you're going to be annoying people with it, they might not vote for you. Obviously, that's a choice that we, as elected officials, would have to make.

If we pass this today, all I'm asking for is that support, that I would write Minister Baird and ask him to correct that. I don't think it's a policy he initiated. In fact, I think it was there before his time. Let's hope that he would do the right thing, if we pass it here.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

BILL OF RIGHTS FOR PUPILS
WITH DIABETES, 2010
CHARTRE DES DROITS DES ÉLÈVES
DIABÉTIQUES DE 2010

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We're ready to vote. We'll first deal with ballot item number 4, standing in the name of Mr. Levac.

Mr. Levac has moved second reading of Bill 5, An Act to establish a bill of rights for pupils with diabetes. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Levac.

Mr. Dave Levac: I would like the bill to be sent, if it's the pleasure of the House, to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Is it agreed that the bill be sent to the standing committee? So ordered.

CONSUMER REPORTING
AMENDMENT ACT, 2010
LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES RENSEIGNEMENTS
CONCERNANT LE CONSOMMATEUR

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will now deal with ballot item number 5.

Mr. Ruprecht has moved second reading of Bill 7, An Act to amend the Consumer Reporting Act. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Ruprecht.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: Could I have Bill 7 moved to the general government committee, please?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Is it agreed that it will go to the general government committee? So ordered.

MAIL DELIVERY

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will now deal with the final ballot item, standing in the name of Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay has moved private member's notice of motion number 15. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Just before we call orders of the day, I just want to remind all members again that this is the pages' last day, and we wish them luck in their lives.

Applause.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, I do now call orders of the day.

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Phillips has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until Monday, April 12, at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1620.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, 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
Chiarelli, Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
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

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	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)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, 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)	Richmond Hill	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
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
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Garfield Dunlop
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Robert Bailey
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson
Jim Brownell, Kim Craiton
Bob Delaney, Garfield Dunlop
Amrit Mangat, Phil McNeely
John O'Toole
Clerks / Greffiers: William Short (pro tem.), Sylwia Przewdziecki

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

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laura Albanese
Laura Albanese, Wayne Arthurs
Toby Barrett, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Pat Hoy, Norm Miller
Glen R Murray, Charles Sousa
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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

Chair / Président: David Oraziotti
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Helena Jaczek
Bob Chiarelli, Steve Clark
Helena Jaczek, Kuldip Kular
Dave Levac, Rosario Marchese
Bill Mauro, David Oraziotti
Joyce Savoline
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Laura Albanese, Michael A. Brown
Donna H. Cansfield, M. Aileen Carroll
Howard Hampton, Ernie Hardeman
Lisa MacLeod, Leeanna Pendergast
Jim Wilson
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Ted Chudleigh
Mike Colle, Christine Elliott
Peter Kormos, Reza Moridi
Leeanna Pendergast, Lou Rinaldi
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Yasir Naqvi
Bas Balkissoon, Bob Delaney
Joe Dickson, Sylvia Jones
Amrit Mangat, Norm Miller
Yasir Naqvi, Michael Prue
Mario Sergio
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Shurman
M. Aileen Carroll, France Gélinas
Jerry J. Ouellette, David Ramsay
Liz Sandals, Peter Shurman
Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Michael Prue
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller
David Caplan, Kim Craiton
Jeff Leal, Gerry Martiniuk
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch
Michael Prue, Lou Rinaldi
Tony Ruprecht
Clerks / Greffiers: Trevor Day (pro tem.), Sylwia Przewdziecki

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

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin
Shafiq Qadri, Khalil Ramal
Elizabeth Witmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott
Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott
Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas
Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones
Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

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