



Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario  
Second Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament

Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario  
Deuxième session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 21 April 2010**

**Mercredi 21 avril 2010**

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430  
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



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Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO**

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**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO**

Mercredi 21 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**

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

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

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 20, 2010, on the motion for third reading of Bill 242, An Act to amend the Education Act and certain other Acts in relation to early childhood educators, junior kindergarten and kindergarten, extended day programs and certain other matters / *Projet de loi 242, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation et d'autres lois en ce qui concerne les éducateurs de la petite enfance, la maternelle et le jardin d'enfants, les programmes de jour prolongé et d'autres questions.*

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

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I am pleased to continue the debate we embarked upon yesterday concerning Bill 242, the Full Day Early Learning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010. This bill, of course, was introduced—first reading took place—on February 17 this year, and we've had our social policy standing committee meetings and had input from stakeholders. But again, I do want to make the point that there were three days of hearings; however, it was not enough to accommodate all the people and groups throughout the province who obviously had concerns with the bill and wanted to make recommendations in order to strengthen the bill on behalf of families and children in the province of Ontario.

I also want to reiterate the fact that, despite the many organizations and individuals who did appear before us, the amendments that were introduced were not ones that were put forward by either of the two opposition parties. We tried to introduce amendments that reflected the input of those who did appear. Regrettably, none of our amendments were accepted, and the only changes that were made were changes that were made by the government. At the end of the day, much of the input that was received wasn't taken into consideration, and, as a result,

the bill is probably not the best it can be on behalf of children and families in the province of Ontario.

As you know, this bill amends the Education Act. It's going to provide for the operation of junior kindergarten and kindergarten on a full-day basis. It's also going to provide for the operation by boards of education of extended day programs for four- and five-year-olds outside the hours of junior kindergarten and kindergarten. This was probably the most contentious issue, because unfortunately, once the transition period is finished, it's going to eliminate the provision of those services by private, not-for-profit child care providers, one of whom has been doing this in Ontario for 150 years; so there is a great deal of concern about the livelihood of those providers—those small businesses—and the fact that they will no longer be in a position to provide services for four- and five-year-olds in the province of Ontario.

Of course, the third part of the bill allows for the appointment of early childhood educators to positions in junior kindergarten, kindergarten and extended day programs. That is certainly new.

Anyway, I've expressed my concerns about Bill 242. Many people who came said that the bill was a good idea. They did support it, and they liked the direction it was heading. This information came from the private, not-for-profit providers as well. In fact, I have a quote from the London Bridge Child Care Services Inc. They are a not-for-profit organization currently dedicated to the care of children aged zero to five years. They have 14 child care centres in London, Sarnia and Exeter—of course, that's my hometown—they currently serve over 1,200 children and they have a staff of 286 educators. They are very proud of the services they have been able to provide for infants, toddlers and children.

Their response is that they support the Ontario government's vision for full-day early learning for four- and five-year-olds, as recommended in the Pascal report entitled *With Our Best Future in Mind*. However, they are concerned about the fact that they will no longer be in a position to provide services to four- and five-year-olds, and of course there's a concern that the child care systems in the province that currently have been providing care for children zero to four in particular could break down with the elimination of their eligibility to continue to provide care for those four- and five-year-olds. Again, this is a concern.

They also point out that Pascal did recommend that community partnerships and collaboration were important. It appears that this government has chosen to ignore those components of the Pascal report, just as the govern-

ment chose to ignore the part that talked about parental choice. My colleague Lisa MacLeod has pointed out that she received a message from the board in Ottawa indicating that if full-day kindergarten is offered at her daughter's school and they don't want it, they need to move to another school.

I think there is a lot of concern about the fact that there was a little bit of cherry-picking when it came to what the government decided to do as far as the Pascal report was concerned. The one component they have conveniently decided to abandon is the approach he recommended concerning community partnerships and collaboration. That, of course, is going to have an impact on the entire child care sector, and I am concerned that many of our children will not have providers, because some of these people did depend upon the fees that were paid by the four- and five-year-olds to subsidize the infants and toddlers. It's much more expensive, of course, to provide for care at a younger age, because your ratio of provider to child is smaller and you have to accommodate infants and toddlers; their needs are quite different than those of the four- and five-year-olds. There are people who have expressed concern about what the government is doing.

**0910**

The other issue that has arisen is the whole issue of fees. The government has stated repeatedly that the issue surrounding the fees charged by boards—and this is for the care that's offered to the four- and five-year-olds outside of the school day—is an issue that is yet to be determined, so we have no idea what the cost is going to be. The government says it is going to be determined by regulation. That is a big part of the problem with this legislation: It was introduced in haste. We know that education basically comes to a halt at the end of June, so we have about two more months to go and, really, the implementation plan is non-existent. There's very little information available about what type of curriculum; how all of this will roll out; who's going to be providing the extended daycare; who's going to be providing the daycare for the four- and five-year-olds; and how long the private, not-for-profit people will be allowed to continue to offer these programs in the schools until such time as the boards of education assume responsibility for the four- and five-year-olds' daycare outside of the school day.

That means that if the boards are now going to have to offer this daycare outside of the school day, there are going to be fees. The government says they aren't going to introduce a standard province-wide fee for service. They've indicated instead that they're going to leave these fees to the discretion of each individual school board. Of course, all this information that I'm putting on the public record isn't information that I've decided is of concern; I'm standing here today trying to reflect the input of all of those who made a verbal presentation to the committee or gave us a written submission. Somebody indicated that this could result in a race "to the bottom."

School boards, people have said to us, may end up competing with the not-for-profits as well as the other boards. Remember, we have four boards in the province

of Ontario: We have our English public, English Catholic, French public and French Catholic. They're afraid there may be competition between the boards; there may be competition between the boards and the not-for-profits, and if there's a race to the bottom, it could end up with rates that are unaffordable in order to operate this program. So there are some concerns about the fees. The issue hasn't been addressed, and here we have a program that's supposed to be up and running by September.

The other big issue—you know what? I've referred to it before. We have a government that has the highest deficit in the history of the province of Ontario—it's over \$21 billion—and no plan to balance the budget. They've indicated that it will probably happen over eight years, but without a plan, we don't know if that, indeed, is even possible, because they're not going to reduce their spending this year. In fact, they're introducing a very expensive new program. There are concerns that this is going to impact on other educational programs—in particular, special education. Having been a teacher myself, a school board chair and Minister of Education, I know full well that there are many, many children who have special education needs whose needs have not yet been addressed. Unfortunately, this can, again, take money away from those areas.

We also have a lot of students who need a lot of support—English as a second language. They move here from other countries. I understand that too, because I started kindergarten midway through the year when I came here from Holland. I can remember that my language skills obviously weren't adequate. I was fortunate to have some outstanding teachers—as I did throughout my entire education in the elementary and secondary school system—who supported me. I can remember, if I look back at my kindergarten and grade 1 marks, gradually the marks that weren't quite so good did become good once I had proficiency in the English language. So there are many needs in our educational system that need to be addressed. Hopefully, this won't take dollars away. We've heard that expression of concern as well.

We have a program that's going to cost at least \$1.5 billion when it's fully operational. However, we know that the majority of schools don't have the physical capacity to accommodate the students. As a result, there's going to be a lot of money that needs to be made available for either renovations to facilities to make them appropriate for the four- and five-year-olds in junior full-day kindergarten, or we're going to have to add additions to schools. The Institute of Marriage and Family Canada has estimated that the cost of the program will be beyond the \$1.5 billion—which I suspect it will, too. They're saying it will cost at least \$1.8 billion annually.

Cost was a concern that was pointed out by many of the presenters, and of course if I go back to the fact that the schools in years one and two are going to be chosen based on the fact that they probably have the physical capacity for the program, then once you get into years three, four and five, those schools will obviously need considerable renovations and additions. So far, the

government has only announced \$250 million, but I do anticipate, and certainly people who made presentations indicated, that those costs are going to be much higher. It will be over \$1 billion there, of course, as well.

One of the other things that we did hear from trustees and certainly from those who made representations was a lack of an implementation plan, and concern about that. Of course, Irene Atkinson, a long-serving trustee in the Toronto District School Board, said that she and other trustees thought this was “one of the most ill-conceived and badly thought-through programs the province has ever announced.”

*Interjection.*

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I don't think she is a Conservative.

*Interjections.*

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** She might be, but I can assure you—I would say to you that Irene, who I know vaguely, is a person who has always expressed an interest—obviously, if you're a trustee for that long, your primary interest is students in the classroom, and that is the comment that she made.

I can also quote from a Durham District School Board trustee, Michael Barrett. I don't know Michael. He says, “The funding is not adequate to roll out the program as prescribed by the province.” In fact, there were trustees in the GTA who were quite concerned about the program and the lack of detail coming from the province. They got together, I believe, on April 12—it's quoted in the Toronto Star: There was a meeting of trustees on Saturday from “Toronto, York region, Durham region and several other smaller boards.” He goes on to say, “There will be some very difficult choices to make. We will have to take out dollars from other” programs. I think that's what I have just talked about.

Then we have trustee Howard Goodman, vice-president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, who says, “With an issue this complex, with all the nuances of the relationship between daycares and schools, it's not humanly possible to get it right on the first cut, so we hope the legislation will be flexible.” He goes on to urge the province to put the nitty-gritty details of implementation into regulations that can be tweaked on short notice if needed.

Again, we have Catherine Fife, vice-president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, saying some school boards are “really struggling with the transition to the full-day model,” and the need to focus on that. Of course she raises the fact that school boards have never charged fees before—they don't have a structure in place—and points out that many boards have groups like the Y and the Boys and Girls Clubs running child care centres in their schools, so there is an established relationship there. I can tell you, Mr. Bradley, that she's not of the party.

**0920**

I would say that trustees throughout the province of Ontario are raising concerns. I was a chair and a trustee, and do you know what? They have a responsibility to do

that. It doesn't mean that they disagree with the program, but it's a major educational initiative—probably the most major reform I've seen for many, many years—and we need to get it right the first time. There is a lot of anxiety out there on the part of trustees, administrators, teachers, parents and, obviously, organizations whose livelihood could well disappear. That's important, and I need to get this on the record, because all these people have spent time making representations and we need to know that there are concerns out there.

I want to quote an editorial in my paper, the Kitchener-Waterloo Record, on April 3. It's John Haddock, chief executive officer of the YMCA of Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge. Everybody knows that the YMCA has delivered high-quality programs for children up to age 12 in our schools in the province of Ontario. He says: “Now imagine Ontario's 72 school boards spending time and money to establish and administer extended day programs. It would be duplication on a massive scale, needlessly using precious resources and resulting in increased costs for school boards, and ultimately, taxpayers. The fees that parents pay now for this care—to the YMCA or other providers—will almost certainly rise.”

I want to quote Jamie Gunn, superintendent of business, Grand Erie District School Board. This appeared in the Brantford Expositor on March 12: “The Grand Erie District School Board could be looking at a \$500,000 shortfall in funding for the first year of full-day kindergarten.

“And, according to cost estimates released this week, the board would be forced to charge parents significantly more than current daycare providers for before- and after-school care to make the program break even.”

He also says, “The program leaves us with some concerns, and we're not alone.”

This is important. Then, a trustee on the Grand Erie board goes on to say: “We don't know where we are going to get half a million dollars.... We are going to have to take money out of other programming to fund this. I don't think that's good for kids or good for the system.”

There are other quotes like that, and I raise them because, despite the fact that people are not necessarily opposed to this initiative, certainly there are some legitimate concerns about the implementation process, the haste with which the program is being rolled out.

I think that one of the greatest concerns is probably going to focus on the four- and five-year-olds for whom, I guess if you have the program in your school, the day-care outside of the school day will need to be provided by the school. But what happens to all those other children who don't have full-day care available? And what happens once full-day care is made available? What's going to happen during the summer and on holidays? There are a lot of questions that are left. I would say that the responses we got in clause-by-clause were not very reassuring as to giving some certainty to parents and providers about what is going to happen.

Fees and partnerships are other issues. I think that parents are left wondering about funding, about fees, about

access. Obviously, boards are left wondering how they're going to be able to pay for this program and how they're going to make sure that they roll it out in a way that really is responsive to the needs of the children in their community.

I would say to the government that, despite the fact that many people support the initiative, if you had given it an additional year before you rolled it out, people would probably have been a little bit happier. Maybe you should have tried to pilot the program. We used to do this quite often, I think, in the province of Ontario, if there were initiatives, in order to get it right, in order to identify some of the consequences, some of them quite unintended. If you have some pilot programs in boards throughout the province of Ontario, in different geographical locations, you can also identify some of the problems.

Cost is a big issue, but personally, having been in a leadership position in education, my personal biggest concern is that the program has been rolled out in haste. There hasn't been a plan of implementation, and there are far too many questions that remain to be answered. Certainly we heard the government say in clause-by-clause, "That's going to be in regulation." Well, I would just point out to you again that the educational system shuts down after the end of June. We have two months to get the facts out to school boards and to parents in order that parents will have some certainty when September rolls around.

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

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I want to congratulate the member for Kitchener–Waterloo for a number of things. She does raise many good questions that I will speak to in about eight minutes, questions that many parents have raised, and others in the child care field, that have not been adequately addressed by this government in spite of the assurances that they will. I have no security that they indeed will do that.

I congratulate her for listening to some of the deputations because she introduced some amendments that connected very clearly to what the deputants had to say, unlike the government that pretended they did, that says they did. They claim they made amendments after listening to the deputations, and have done absolutely nothing. But to her credit, she did introduce a couple of amendments that reflected what people were saying.

I was alarmed because I took the liberty of reviewing the comments of the minister and the parliamentary assistant. The parliamentary assistant said, "We listened" to what people had to say. It was "valuable input." "Their feedback led our government to propose several amendments to Bill 242 to the standing committee which considered the legislation before referring it to today's third reading." She says as well, "The bill before us today is a stronger piece of legislation thanks to their input, and I'm pleased, of course, to be standing here today to speak in favour of Bill 242."

Thanks to their input? I and the member for Kitchener–Waterloo were the only ones who introduced amendments

because of the input. They introduced absolutely nothing, and the amendments they introduced were utterly inconsequential.

To the member, thank you for some of the amendments you introduced and for listening to the deputations.

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

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** I'd like to thank the members from Kitchener–Waterloo and from Trinity–Spadina for their comments, especially the member from Kitchener–Waterloo. I had the pleasure of working with her when she was the education minister several years ago.

Investing in early learning is good for the children in this province, it's good for parents and it's good for Ontario. By implementing it next year, up to 35,000 four- and five-year-olds in nearly 1,400 classes in almost 600 schools will benefit from the first phase of full-day learning in September. To delay would mean another year that our children are without full-day learning.

**0930**

You talked about doing pilot programs and having it available for boards. In 2002, my former school board, Trillium Lakelands, introduced full-day learning in 18 of our schools. We called it the RACE program, Reading and Counting Every Day. We had the same type of discussion and push-back as we were moving to implement this program. What happened after a year was that the concerns were unfounded. In fact, daycare spaces were opened up within the community, people had more access to it and it was very successful. Unfortunately, at that time, we did not have the funding to continue this program to do it long-term.

Regarding special education, if there's one thing that children in this province will benefit from, it's early identification. This has been talked about in reports for years: that the earlier a child is identified with special needs, the better chance that child has with success. By having the children in these programs, we will be able to have teachers come in and assess children earlier, find out if they have special needs and address those special needs. Ultimately, that will be great for the children.

As for timing, we're in a severe period of declining enrolment in the province. Many school boards in this province currently have the room to implement this.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I want to commend the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, who explained in her remarks her contribution to education from parent to teacher to board chair and, I think, educator of the year at one time, as well as Minister of Education. I think we should all listen and learn.

She raises a number of very important points, that there really are more questions than answers. In fact, she points out very importantly that the legislation does not follow the recommendations of Dr. Pascal. The early implementation is being questioned across the board, certainly in my area of Durham, as she did mention.

I can only say that the issue that I see is, basically, the school year, and the question of: What do parents do on

those times in late June, July and August? What do they do on professional development days? What do they do during Christmas break and March break?

So it is inconsistent, but it actually dismantles the current regulated daycare system that does exist because the articles I've read is that this is one of the problems, where they've acquiesced to the powerful teachers' unions and, primarily, without causing a conflict here, they didn't even recognize the legitimacy of the early childhood educators who actually do the job today, who are regulated professionals, who are trained, competent and capable. There is a growing conflict, there's no question there, about who's in charge.

If you look at the article that I'm going to refer to, it says here, "Grand Erie trustee Don Werden called the plan to have school boards provide before- and after-care a 'disaster waiting to happen.'"

"Jim Wibberley, Grand Erie's education director, has complained that 'we are not only going to be a board of education, but a board of child care.'"

"Child care centre operators say the children in their programs"—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you. The member for Beaches–East York.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I listened intently to the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, as I always do. She speaks with some considerable knowledge. She always speaks in a very balanced tone, is not accusatory and is simply making very good sense.

She talks about the program for all-day learning, which New Democrats support. She talked about some of the concerns that have been raised by educators, by school trustees and by parents, and largely they're financial. She is right to key in upon the financial aspect, because it's one thing to pass laws in this Legislature and it's quite another, when it comes to budget time, to properly fund them.

We have seen this over and over again with well-meaning legislation that has been passed in this place that goes for naught. I think the finest example of that, although she didn't speak to it, is clearly when we talked about helping disabled adults and the Passport funding and the Passport dollars, and the whole program that was supposed to make families and adults independent. When we talked in the Legislature, it seemed like a good thing to do, but I remember standing, as she has today, in the Legislature and saying, "This program will not work unless it is properly funded."

She is raising the same concern here around all-day learning. Will it work? Yes, it will, but only if it is properly funded and only if the program is set out to meet the expectations of the schools, the trustees, the parents and the children. They have to be the priority. I'm simply saying to the government, listen to what she has to say and make sure that in this budget and in the budget that follows, as this program rolls out, the money is there to do it properly, because unless you do, the program will fail.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Kitchener–Waterloo, you have up to two minutes to respond.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I do appreciate the comments that have been made by the member from Trinity–Spadina, the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, my colleague from Durham and the member from Beaches–East York.

Do you know what? I personally agree, and I've always been a firm believer that if we can identify problems early and if we can give our children the best start in life, it's important. In fact, that's one of the reasons, when I was Minister of Health, we introduced the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program—that was the Harris government—that government today does an evaluation of all children at birth to identify whether or not those children are at risk. It may be physical, mental, psychological, whatever it might be. Then, of course, we try to support those children and those families, because you've got to work with the families if you're going to make a difference in the lives of children.

We also set up a preschool speech and language program to identify early those children who might have challenges. I'm a big supporter of the KidsAbility type of programs as well. That is so, so important. But for all of these programs, you need to make sure that they are properly funded. You need to listen to the concerns of the people in the province of Ontario, particularly the families and those with knowledge of the issue.

I just want to go back to what my colleague Mr. Marchese said. I think, at the end of the day, it was disappointing to have so many deputants appear before us, either in person or through written submissions, and then to see the government not accept their recommendations.

We have a bill, and we hope that we'll see more details soon.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I have to tell you that it's a real pleasure to speak to Bill 242.

I want to say that we had many deputations—two Mondays, one Tuesday; from 2 to 6 on the Monday, 2 to 6 on the other Monday and 4 to 6 on the Tuesday. We were able to fit in a lot of people because we knew it was going to be a big concern. Originally, the government thought two days might accommodate it, and we said that we should leave it open because we think there are going to be more people who want to speak to it. There were, and that's why we had a third day.

We listened to a whole lot of people who came to us from the non-profit-sector child care, some private sector as well—not many, but some. We had a lot of YMCAs and a whole lot of folks who provide early childhood education who had a lot of concerns about what the bill would do or wouldn't do.

I want to begin by saying that I think Petr Varmuza framed it in a way that I believe was rather poetic. He said three things: Is it the right thing to do? Are we doing it right? Are we giving the right resources to this pro-

gram? I thought those three Rs were just perfect for the debate, and I want to speak to those three Rs.

Is it the right thing to do? New Democrats say yes, it is. We are going to always have cycles in our economy where we're going to have ups and downs. We can't use every downward cycle as an excuse to deprive our children of the programs they need.

Is there unanimity around this program? No, there is no—

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** The sky's the limit to the NDP.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Sorry?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Darrell Dexter understands the limitations of public office.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I thought we were on the same team on the right thing to do.

0940

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I don't want to feel left out here.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Through you, Speaker, let me go over the right thing to do, and then we can talk about where we find ourselves with some problems.

There is no unanimity with respect to this program. In fact, I did a Goldhawk program and we had call-ins. There were a number of people who just opposed the idea of having full-time JK and full-time kindergarten. They believe—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Everybody said New Democrats support it, right? Listen to me. You've got to listen.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Listen to him.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Yes. Put down the papers and the other reading and listen to the debate.

There are a number of parents who actually believe—men and women who have children—they should be responsible for the care of their children, and they believe in that strongly. I don't want to deprive them of the right, or indeed the privilege to do that, if that is what they choose. But I know there are men and women in this society who would love to take care of their children. I know many men who would love to stay at home and watch their children, and many women who would love to do that as well. What we know is that many of them cannot afford to do that; they can't. If you live in downtown Toronto, in my riding, or Beaches—East York, housing is inaccessible to ordinary human beings. There are people who come and spend indeed \$700,000, \$800,000, and yes, spend another \$100,000 to renovate. God bless. I don't know how they do it; God bless. I don't know that they are human or at a different echelon; I think they are up there somewhere. But they're not the norm. They can't afford a home in Toronto. Those who do have the pecunia to do so—God bless. But even outside of Toronto, in the GTA and beyond, housing is becoming inaccessible. They can't afford to stay at home and watch the little children; they can't. So you've got families, large families, working and living in the same home to pay this mortgage that is never going to be paid. It's not like the old days, when my father was able to pay our house, in

1962, in three years, with my older brother. My father and older brother—

**Mr. Mike Colle:** And the house only cost \$10,000.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** But it was a whole lot of money then, Michael.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** How much was it?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** It was \$14,000, a whole lot of money. My father was very afraid to have bought that house. You say, "How much was it?" but in those times it was a lot. And he was afraid. But they worked hard and they invested all their earnings into that mortgage, and people are doing the same today, except mortgages are so high today, relative to the earnings, that I don't know how they do it.

So you have men and women calling on that program saying, "We can't afford it. We want to watch our own children. It's not right that we institutionalize our children in these programs." I don't agree with them. And I believe that's a minority of people; I really do. But I acknowledge that that's what they feel and that's what they want. But I also want to make the point that there are a whole lot of people who can't afford to do that, and there are a whole lot of people who want their kids to have the socialization of involvement with other children, the interaction with other children. From a social, psychological, intellectual point of view, it is a good thing. This is not to say that those who stay at home and are watched by grandmothers is a bad thing. But they do not get that intellectual stimulation, intelligent play, that they would have in a child care, or indeed this program, that we believe is a good thing to have—good for children, good for families, good for our economy, good for society.

We're currently spending over \$2 billion in special education and not meeting their needs. The member from Kitchener—Waterloo said we should be spending money there. Well, she's right. We could and should be spending adequately on special education, because it's a growing problem. Between mental illness and a whole lot of other physiological problems that we are unluckily given by birth, we have to be able to be given the resources to help. More and more children are coming into our educational system with problems. We've got to help. And we have to prevent problems from setting in that become unalterable, by way of our ability to change them.

So we say, should we be spending more on special ed? Yes. But it's not either-or. This program, we believe, as New Democrats, can identify problems early and can change that problem early on, to the extent that their problems will be resolved by the time they're in grade 1. And if we've done that, this is good for that child, good for their families, good for the educational system. It's a saving for the school system and for those families if we're able to identify and deal with problems with children at an early age. There will always be some excuse not to do this. In our view, it's long overdue. We should do it now, of course, but we have to do it right, and I'm going to get to that in a moment.

Nova Scotia and New Brunswick offer full-day programs for five-year-olds. British Columbia and PEI are



about to offer full-day programs for five-year-olds. We currently have 200 full-day kindergarten classes in Ontario's public system. Eight Catholic boards offer full-day kindergarten, and the French school boards have offered it for some time. So we are growing in our experience with these programs, and this will bring it to another level, absolutely.

The question for me, then, becomes: Are we doing it right? This is where I have had strong disagreement with the government, because I believe we're not doing it right. The government claims in its language to be doing so. The government claims and says, "We want to do this right." They say it, but they're not doing it in deeds, in actions. That's where I believe we're going to see problems in the implementation of this program, starting this coming September. Some of those problems are resolvable. It is a question of whether the government will commit to dealing with it, providing the adequate resources or not, or will simply use the government line that says, "We're taking our time. There are going to be wrinkles, as you know. We will get it right. It may take some time. Indeed, it may take another election for us to get it right." And if we elect the Liberals again, they will commit the resources to getting it right. That's what you're going to get.

I guarantee that come this September, when the government realizes all the many problems, they will start announcing, for their election of 2011, a greater commitment of resources in order to be able to do this right. They will say, "Elect us, and we will do it right." Guaranteed it's coming.

We don't think they're doing this well. By not doing it well, it feeds into those who do not want this program to succeed, and that, in my view, is unfortunate. We are literally arming the enemy against this program by the inadequate preparation of it, and I find that deplorable. I want to get to some of those questions.

The minister in her remarks yesterday said, "Our stakeholders, including members of the education sector"—no, no, that's the parliamentary assistant. Let's see what the minister had to say: "As a result of their input"—meaning deputations—"we have made amendments to clarify the role that third party providers may play going forward. I want to make it clear: Third party providers currently operating programs on school premises can continue to provide care and offer programs for children in other age groups, such as children six to 12 years of age, and to operate programs in schools for children of all ages beyond the regular school year. In addition, we intend to allow supporting regulations that would allow, on a transitional basis, those school boards that currently have third party operators providing programs on school premises to continue to offer before- and after-school programs for four- and five-year-olds."

**0950**

I want to say briefly to this point: The providers may have been worried about not being able to provide programs beyond JK and SK, but we don't believe that they were under threat. So the government and the minister

present it as if somehow, "We've listened to them, and we've protected those particular program providers from some taking away of a program that they have been doing for some time." It was never under threat, that I am aware of. So they moved an amendment saying yes, clarifying, "Don't worry; you'll be able to provide that."

But to the amendment that the member for Kitchener-Waterloo moved that would allow those providers to continue to provide programs for the four- and five-year-olds—they rejected that. So did I. I have reasons for that, as soon as I get to those amendments. But the government rejected the only amendment that would have responded to a genuine concern that various deputants made. So she says, "We intend to allow supporting regulations that would allow, on a transitional basis, those school boards that currently have third party operators." We made amendments that spoke to that, and they rejected our amendments. So now we are led to the belief or the conclusion that they have listened to the opposition party and listened to the deputants, but it will not be done in legislation; it will be done in regulation. Well, why could they not have supported an amendment that allows for that and give us the assurance and the security that that indeed would happen? They rejected all of our amendments. But if you listened to the minister and the parliamentary assistant, you would think that they were listening attentively to all of the deputants and what they had to say and that, indeed, because of their listening to these folks, they would support amendments offered by the opposition, were they themselves inclined to do so. In my view, they did not listen at all, and I have absolutely no faith that they will do so in regulation.

I was disappointed in my colleague from Kitchener-Conestoga, who said the valuable input and feedback of those who came to depute—the education sector, child care sector folks—"led our government to propose several amendments to Bill 242 to the standing committee, which considered the legislation before referring it to today's third reading." I want to say to the member from Kitchener-Conestoga, she was there. I debated it with her quite intensely, in fact. They made no amendments that had any value. They were inconsequential and administrative in nature. But if you read Hansard, for those specialists who read Hansard, you would think they did something. Indeed, they did not.

So I say to the good people of Ontario who are watching this program at 9:50 this morning—I'm sure that many of you are excited to watch this place so early in the morning, with your coffee in hand. Those of you who are watching, good citizens, these are the amendments, that I'm holding here. If you call us—you'll find us on the Web: the critic for the NDP, Rosario Marchese—you'll find the amendments. And you will see that the government had very little to say. In fact, if you're interested we can send you the transcript of the dialogue I had with the member from Kitchener-Conestoga. You will be somewhat enlightened, or surprised, to see the kind of dialogue that she and I had. I can send you the copy of that exchange we had, and I'd love to send you a

copy of the amendments so that you can see for yourselves what the government did by way of amendments. I repeat: They are irrelevant; inconsequential, if not useless. They didn't listen.

What they're saying is, "We listened to you, but we're going to make changes in regulation." As you know, regulations are up to the civil servants. We don't know when that's going to happen. We are about four and a half or five months away from September, and we don't know what our civil servants are going to do to solve fundamental questions connected to this bill. It is my view that it's not going to be dealt with very well. We have lots of questions with respect to, "Are we doing it right?"

We have waited a long time for this, and many families will wait another five years. That will put many children behind, assuming that it will be rolled out fully in five years. Charles Pascal said that we should do the rollout of full-time JK and SK in three years—not five, not 10, not 20, but three years. Charles Pascal is the author of the report from which these Liberals took—cherry-picked—some of those recommendations, and did not do the whole report as recommended by Charles Pascal. So the Liberals say now, "We are not going to do full-time JK and SK, including preschool and after-school programs, in three years. It'll be five." Guaranteed, it's not going to be done in five. It's likely to take longer. I don't think this is good.

Parents who have been waiting, parents and educators and early childhood educators and many others who wanted the full implementation of Charles Pascal are not getting that. They're only getting a couple of those recommendations that he made, and Charles Pascal said, "Do not cherry-pick. Do it all," because it was intended to deal with all of the programs, from birth to age 12. I think he had it right and I think his consultations led him to a very good conclusion. So the many families who have been waiting are going to have to wait a whole five years, and for that time a whole lot of mothers and fathers are going to be without a program that they could have and could enjoy and could benefit from.

Will the funding for the initial rollout be distributed equitably across the province, or will it go where there is space? Will the first programs be needs-based or just space-based? An important question, because we believe that government is going to find an easy way out to provide these programs. They're going to put them in schools where there is space, as opposed to where there is a need. That, to us, is an important distinction to make. Space, available space, is not about providing a program where the needs are great, but the government wants to show that this is an incredible program, that there is an incredible take-up in the first year, and, "Lo and behold, look how many have taken advantage of this," so they can say before an election that this program is working really, really well.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Not in East York. There's not one; not one space.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** The member from Beaches–East York says there's not going to be one program

available in his riding. It remains to be seen where the programs are going to be, because we don't have that data yet. But it is my view that they will be where there is space, not where there is a need, and we should be addressing the needs of those kids who deserve to have a better head start. Because of social and economic inequality, those kids who desperately need a head start may not be getting this program; indeed, they will not be getting this program. And as soon as we get those numbers, I won't have to prove it; you will see for yourselves that we are not dealing with this on the basis of need, but rather providing it where there's space so you can look good in your first year.

**1000**

We are concerned that the class size of 26 is an average, and we are concerned the class sizes may become too large, like many of our current grade 4 to grade 8 classes, where there is no cap. I will get to this as I get through my amendments.

It was a curious thing. The member from Kitchener–Conestoga and my good friend Rick Johnson from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock simply said, "No, we shouldn't cap class sizes." He argued that from his experience with capping the primary grades, they have learned that it creates problems. I said to him, "That's a strange contradiction. Do you support capping in the early grades: Yes or no? And if you support capping in the early grades, is it not consistent to support capping for full-time JK and SK?" In my view, it would be. In their view, it wasn't.

The member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock—it's a big riding—had a different argument, which I'm sure in his two minutes he will respond to. But if you want to cap and you believe philosophically, from a program point of view, that it's important, then you should also cap the full-time JK and full-time SK classes. And if you need to make some adjustments, member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock—it's a big riding—then you make those adjustments. But why have two inconsistent philosophies around two programs in the primary grades? It makes no sense—

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** It's 13 to one.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** It's 12 to one. Make your case. They say it's 13 to one; I say it's 12 to one. And I say to the member from this large riding that it's an average of 26: an average, Rick from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. I say to you that the average of 26—Michael is a former teacher. "Average" means it's an average.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Some are up; some are down.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Yes. Some are up; some are down. My suspicion, Michael, is it will be up most of the time. And you know why? You want to save some money. I know that and I understand that, but say that. Say, "I want to save some money because we're broke as a government." If you said that, I'd say, "Okay." I could make a case against it, which I will and could, but say that. Don't tell me, "But what would you do if you had one child over the capping? Then you'd have to have a

separate class over the cap.” You dealt with that little problemo in the early primary grades.

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** Split grades.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Okay. If Rick Johnson from the large riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock is against split grades, he should say so, because half of our system is in split grades, and I agree with him. Half of our system—

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** I’m opposed to split grades.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Are you opposed to it?

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I’m feeling left out again.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** The dialogue gets longer, so it’s hard. We have to do it through the Speaker, you understand. It’s complicated.

So I don’t know. He has his own arguments, but I don’t agree with him, and this is why we love debates. I believe that we should cap those numbers because, I’ve got to tell you, an average of 26, which could go to 30, teacher from the north, which would go to 31, 32, 33—it could go to 33, because there’s no cap. You understand. If there is no cap, they could go to any number that the school system deems acceptable, because what are you going to do? If you’ve got 33, you’ve got 33. Think about it, Speaker, because you’re a father. You were a father to little kids at one point, four-year-olds. Michael, you too—indeed, so many of you. Think about it.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Are you still speaking?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Jim, you too. You were a teacher.

Four-year-olds in a classroom that was designed for 20 kids: Let’s say, maybe squeeze in 22. Okay; you want to push it a little more: Squeeze in 23. Classrooms that were designed for 20, 21, 22: We’re going to squeeze in 26, on average, and maybe 30 and more. Little kiddies, four-year-olds, who have to sleep, because you know that four-year-olds sleep from time to time—

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** They’re almost your height now.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** And your height, too.

They get tired, because it’s a long day. They get dropped off at 7:30 a.m., when the parents can afford it—and I’ll get to that—and they get to go home at 6 o’clock in the evening—little four-year-olds. I think they have more energy than some of the MPPs; this is true. I understand that. But still, in spite of the energy that some of the four-year-olds might have, they get tired and they want to sleep. Where are we going to put these little kiddies to sleep in that little classroom?

By the way, they’ll want to eat at some point. Lunchtime—

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Snacks.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Snacks. Nutritious, Michael. I think you supported that the other day when you spoke about the terrible foods that kids are eating, right?

So you want to have nutritious foods. Where are we going to accommodate that? By the way, little kids need to go to the washroom. Some of those classrooms don’t have washrooms self-contained. They’ve got to go some-

where, and someone has to take them. There’s one teacher and one early childhood educator in the classroom. They have to sleep; they whine and cry for mama, usually, sometimes papa but less so; usually mama. They cry and they need attention, and you’ve got an average of 26, and it could be 30 or 33, four-year-olds. They say, “It’s okay not to have any caps. Just let ’er rip. Bring them in.” Four-year-olds: 7:30 a.m. to 6 o’clock in the evening in a little classroom—inadequate space. I’ve got to tell you, I was a bit incensed.

By the way, did the government members support my amendment, which I will get to, perhaps, tomorrow? They didn’t. No. And every now and then I look for some Liberal to break ranks, because I did that in opposition many years ago. I’m still very careful about how we do that with opposition members because I think we should throw them a few crumbs every now and then, and just say, “Yeah, that’s a good amendment. We can do that.” Every now and then—think about it—throw a few crumbs to the opposition.

The member from Oakville has done that on a couple of bills that we have dealt with, and I think he made a serious effort. I think it’s due to him that we were able to get some changes. He couldn’t get them all, of course, because you’re up against ministers and others. So it’s hard; I understand that. But I think, where possible, members should accommodate the opposition because sometimes we have some good things to say—of course, not always, but sometimes. So don’t forget: Throw a little generosity across the table from time to time.

On the capping, there was no generosity bestowed upon me on this one, or indeed any other amendment I made.

Other questions: Charles Pascal called for an early-years division in the Ministry of Education to develop and implement a coordinated policy around child care—coordinated policy. We know that what the government has announced falls short of the complete integrated child care plan that Pascal put forward. Sadly, because we have not implemented his recommendations, we are going to find ourselves with many, many problemos in September; I guarantee it. Charles Pascal knew this. He knew it then; he knows it today. I wish he had the freedom to come forward and talk about what he feels about what the government has done by way of cherry-picking. It would be nice if he were given the freedom to come and speak freely on this matter.

**1010**

We are still awaiting the details of the actual form the typical class will take. We want to see the actual distribution of the workload between the teacher and the early childhood educator. We don’t know what that distribution is going to be. We’ve got one teacher, one early childhood educator. We’ve got a seamless day, presumably, from the preschool to the after-school programs, which Charles Pascal recommended. He said it has to be provided by the school board and it should be seamless. Pascal said those programs before school and after school should be provided by those who have the skill to do it.

Jim, how can one teacher—you've been there—and one early childhood educator provide this seamless day from 7:30 in the morning to 6 o'clock in the evening? It can't be done, right? It can't be done.

You have a teacher who's obligated to be there 15 minutes earlier but is not in charge of the preschool programs. That is not her or his responsibility. He or she is not responsible for the after-school programs. Take the teacher out, and who is left? One early childhood educator. It stands to reason, Michael, that one person can't do that program, right?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** That's right.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** If one teacher can't do it, how can one early childhood educator provide the preschool, during-school-day-hours and after-school programs? It can't be done.

So what is the government going to do? They haven't told us. What are boards going to do, the poor boards that have to take on the responsibility of resolving their problems? I'll tell you what they're going to do. They're just going to hire any person who is available to come into the classroom: a grandmother, perhaps; a mother who is at home, who might have the time to be able to do that, possibly.

I do not think that it's a bad thing to have a grandmother do this or some person who is available, male or female, to come and do this. I don't think it's a problem, except they will not have what Pascal recommended, and that is having an early childhood education background so that you provide an intelligent program that works for kids before and after school. You will not get that.

That's what boards will do. They will hire cheap labour and anyone that they can find. Whether they are adequate or not will be irrelevant to them, because they will be obligated, as a board, to find someone.

The minister says, "You shall do that," and boards will do it in the best way they can. They will not have the resources to do it, but they must do it by law, whether they like it or not. That's the problem that we are faced with when a government introduces a program that is good in principle and will fail in practice because they're not putting the thought to it and the resources to it.

Consideration must be given to the potential loss of revenue for daycares, which may put them at risk or drive up costs to parents whose children remain in daycares. When you pull out the four- and the five-year-olds from those child care centres, they will lose important revenue that allows them to maintain an adequate program that they provide for all those kids in all the different ages. You take the JK, the four- and the five-year-olds, out, and you immediately leave those child care centres without the adequate resources to do so. It means rates are likely to go up. Parents can't afford the fee now. Imagine when rates shoot up through the roof. Some child care centres may close.

I offered an amendment that would offer transitional support, stabilization funds, that would have taken care of those concerns that Charles Pascal knew would happen if you don't implement the whole of the implemen-

tation of the report that he gave to this government. He knew that. My amendment was defeated by the government. The minister says, "Don't worry. We will do this in regulation." Okay; I feel better already.

You see, I don't trust the government, whether they be Liberals or somebody else—I don't. Because if they wanted to do what the minister said that she would do—

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** O ye of little faith.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Exactly—and Jim was the same when he was in opposition.

If the minister claims that she wants to do it in regulation, then guarantee it in the bill. Then you make me feel better. It might not happen, but you'll make me feel better, because it's in the bill; it's law.

So if she can say it—oh, my God, it's 10:15 already. See how time passes? Speaker, I thank you. We'll resume the debate another day.

*Third reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Pursuant to standing order 8, this House is in recess until 10:30 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 1016 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to welcome John Craven and his daughter Julie Craven, of Brantford, to the chamber today. Julie is our leader's nominee as a 2010 recipient of the Victim Services Award of Distinction. We congratulate Julie and all the recipients. And I want all the members to have a look at her necklace. Mother's Day is coming.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** In addition to Julie Craven, I want to introduce Gwendolyn Broadmore, Sylvie Huntley, Penny Fisher, the Family Violence Project of Waterloo Region, Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis, and the Sexual Assault Centre for Quinte and District. Those individuals and organizations are represented here in the gallery, or will be, to observe the proceedings. They were all recipients of Victim Services Awards of Distinction.

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I'm pleased to introduce to you my friend of over 50 years, Joan McGavin. Joan lives in Burlington now and has some interest in hearing question period live. Welcome, Joan.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I trust the members will co-operate so that she can hear question period. The member for Parkdale-High Park.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I'd like to introduce Reverend Judy Shand of the United Church of Canada, visiting for the day.

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** I'd like to introduce two guests who are here with me today: John Ekins, who runs the "youth success through employment" program, and one of his students, Matt daSilva, who has been helping out at my office in the beautiful city of Lindsay.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's my pleasure today to welcome one of the bravest people I know, and that is

seven-year-old Jack Yeilding. He's the founder of Jack's Lemonade Stand. It has raised more than \$150,000 in the last year for the SickKids Foundation, and Jack is with us in the west members' gallery.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** It's going to be very difficult to top Jack. But, Jack, congratulations, my little buddy.

I would also like to introduce, or reintroduce, my constituents from the riding of Brant, tremendous advocates for victims' services: Julie Craven and John Craven, who were instrumental in having Bill 89 passed. I appreciate their presence here today.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** It is my pleasure to introduce members of the family of Max Silverberg, who is one of the highly competent pages here today. They are Aaron Silverberg, father; Jeffery Joseph and Irene Joseph, grandparents; Jerry Silverberg and Iona Silverberg, grandparents; and David Silverberg, uncle. There's a full delegation here today. If they're in, we should get them to rise and we'll all applaud.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** On behalf of Tudor Mititelu, a page from my riding of Ottawa South, I'm pleased to welcome his mother, Corina Mititelu, to Queen's Park today. Welcome.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'd like to introduce individually the folks who are here from Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis, who are here today to receive an award: Sly Castaldi, who is the executive director; Anthea Milliken, who is on the board; and their nominator, Jennifer MacLeod from public health in Guelph.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Walking through those doors, I know about 50-some-odd people from the Probus Club of Port Hope are here to visit Queen's Park. They're going to buy me lunch.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I take this opportunity on behalf of the member from Welland and page Darcy Feagan to welcome her mother, Mary Anne Feagan, and her father, Mike Feagan, to the gallery today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

#### WEARING OF RIBBONS

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** This week is Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week. I would like to seek unanimous consent for members to wear a green ribbon to display our commitment to saving lives and raising awareness for organ and tissue donation.

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

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### PHARMACISTS

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question to the Premier: Can Premier McGuinty guarantee that no pharmacies will close as a result of his proposed cuts to services at neighbourhood pharmacies across our province?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** No, I can't offer that kind of a guarantee, and I think my honourable colleague understands that. But what we can guarantee is that we will reduce the price of drugs for the people of Ontario. That's a benefit not just to taxpayers who pay for drugs through the public plan, but for private plans as well, and for people who have families who are paying out of pocket.

What I can guarantee as well is that all the savings that we generate through lower-cost drugs we will reinvest into covering more drugs. We have covered 177 more so far. We'll use savings to cover still more drugs. We'll reinvest other parts into other parts of the health care system. It's about ensuring that every precious health care dollar goes as far as we can possibly make it go.

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The Premier refuses to guarantee to Ontario seniors and Ontario families that pharmacies will not close as a result of his plans to reduce pharmacy front-line services across our province. It is no surprise that in their recent consultations in Ontario, the McGuinty Liberals are quoted as saying in a presentation on pharmacare that Ontario has "more pharmacies per capita than many other developed countries in the world." That's not even fine print from the fine-print Premier. This is very clear: The McGuinty government thinks we have too many pharmacies in our province, probably too many pharmacists in our province, and has a plan to reduce the number of neighbourhood pharmacies in our province.

Premier, will you come clean? How many pharmacies is too many, how many are you going to close, and in what parts of the province will you be closing neighbourhood pharmacies?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I think Ontarians should be disappointed that the leader of the official opposition is not prepared to stand up for lower drug costs for all Ontarians.

There's a new part to the change that we're proposing and we'd like to have adopted in Ontario. I think there's some really good news in this for Ontario's pharmacists. We think that they can play an ever-greater role in helping us to deliver ever-better health care to our families. We think that they can take on more professional responsibilities, quite apart from preparing medication and providing that to Ontarians. We want to pay them, for example, to refill prescriptions. We want to pay them, for the first time, to provide inoculations. We want to pay them to take consultations with their patients—and there are other things, undoubtedly, that they can do on behalf of our families. We see an exciting new role that our pharmacists can expand upon here in Ontario.

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, I'll tell you where the Ontario PC caucus stands: It stands with Ontario families. It stands with Ontario seniors. It stands with Ontario's worried moms and dads who are going to fight Dalton McGuinty's plans to close down neighbourhood pharma-

cies in the province of Ontario each and every step of the way.

And, Premier, it's not just us, and it's not just Ontario families. In addition, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business wrote to your health minister. Ontario's director, Satinder Chera, said that your plans to cut health costs on the backs of pharmacists "will make it nearly impossible for an independent pharmacist to provide for their families, patients and the local community."

**1040**

Premier, will you finally come clean? How many pharmacies are you closing down and in what part of our province do you plan to close neighbourhood pharmacies?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I want to say that we're heartened to have the support of Ontario's nurses when it comes to this initiative, heartened to have the support of the people at the Heart and Stroke Foundation and at the cancer foundation, where we're happy to have that support as well. The Canadian Association of Retired Persons: We're very pleased to have their support as well.

Fundamentally, this is all about ensuring that we can do more to make our health care dollar go further. The fact of the matter is, we're paying too much for drugs in Ontario—25% to 75% more than they are in other parts of the world. I think my honourable colleague understands that we need to do something to come to grips with the rapid growth of costs of the health care system, and we think that a very good place for us to turn our attention is the fact that we're paying too much for drugs.

#### PHARMACISTS

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Premier: Sadly, the Premier refuses to disclose any information he has on how many pharmacies in our province will close down and where they will be. But there is some information I know the Premier does have.

Premier, you have forced Ontario pharmacists into a gag order. They have brought forward proposals to lower drug costs and improve services to Ontario patients as part of negotiations. You forced them to sign a confidentiality agreement—a nondisclosure clause. So, Premier, since you won't let the pharmacists tell their story, could you please tell us what the pharmacists put on the table and what you had against their ideas to improve—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The members on the government side will please come to order. Stop the clock.

Start the clock.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Start the clock, stop the clock.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Excuse me, member from Renfrew. The clock management works both ways for all members in the House.

Premier.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I think the pharmacies are very capable of getting out their message and the infor-

mation that they want to convey. We in government have a responsibility to get out our perspective on this as well.

I think it's important to bring it down to something that we can all understand. Our most common blood pressure medication here in Ontario: Ontarians are paying 50 cents for a dose. In the US, they pay 10 cents for the same pill, one dose. In New Zealand, they pay two cents for that dose.

As a parent, I recall picking up amoxicillin many times over for my kids. The cost today in Ontario is \$10.25. After the reform, it will be \$5.13. For type II diabetes, there is a drug with a cost of \$177 today; after the reforms, it will be \$70.

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, here's what Ontario families also understand: that they cannot access those drugs and those services when Dalton McGuinty is closing down neighbourhood pharmacies in the province of Ontario.

Premier, you have put a gag order on Ontario pharmacists, and instead of bringing forward into the public debate good ideas to help reduce drug costs and improve front-line services, you've gone on YouTube with a propaganda campaign attacking neighbourhood pharmacists in our province and disrupting services to Ontario patients.

Premier, I will ask: Will you rescind your gag order and let Ontario families decide for themselves whether to believe the pharmacists or to believe the Premier, well-known for saying one thing and doing the opposite?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, the pharmacists and the pharmacies are free to provide whatever information they think is appropriate to Ontarians as we engage in a very important public debate.

My colleague says that he's concerned about access. To the best of my knowledge, in New Zealand, where that particular medication costs two cents per dose, New Zealanders are getting access to that medication. To the best of my knowledge, in the US, where they're paying 10 cents for the same medication for which we're paying 50 cents in Ontario, they're getting access to that medication.

My concern is not ensuring that we have access. I'm absolutely confident that we will continue to have access to all the medication we need. My concern is the cost associated with the drugs we're paying for in Ontario. It's time we got those costs down. That's what this initiative is all about.

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** We know that the Dalton McGuinty government believes that there are too many pharmacies in the province of Ontario. We know you must believe, then, that there are too many pharmacists in the province of Ontario.

Premier, it sounds like you're saying—and I hope you did say this—that you will rescind the gag order on Ontario pharmacists so Ontario patients can hear the full story. I hope we've accomplished that in question period today.

And let me ask you this, Premier: Will you set aside your plan to close down neighbourhood pharmacies in our great province? Will you set aside your plan to reduce front-line pharmacy services, and get back to the table today to come up with a good plan to reduce drug costs and improve front-line services to Ontario seniors and worried moms and dads?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** There's one thing we know with absolute certainty: that the status quo is a non-starter. When I was first elected 20 years ago, 32 cents of every program dollar went into health care; today it's 46 cents. They tell us that in 12 years, if we allow things to keep on going the way we have been, we'll be paying 70 cents of every program dollar on health care. That will crowd out the funding that we need for our schools, for our roads, for supports for our vulnerable and the like.

The last time we brought forward this kind of initiative, in 2006, the pharmacies claimed that it would compromise the viability of their stores. Since 2006 and those reforms, we now have 144 more pharmacies in the province of Ontario. By the way, we've expanded drug coverage to 177 more drugs with the savings that we have.

It's about getting drug costs down. We think we owe that to the people of Ontario.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** This question is to the Premier. The people of Ontario's First Nations live under some of the lowest-income conditions in the province, and the Premier's decision to implement the HST with respect to First Nations will make their lives even more difficult. A study released today shows that the HST will take at least \$120 million a year out of First Nation communities.

My question: Why didn't the Premier consult with First Nations before hitting them with this unfair new tax, the HST?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** First of all, I want to take the opportunity to welcome some of the leaders of our First Nations communities, who I understand are visiting Queen's Park today. I want to reassure them once again that we are on the same side on this particular issue.

We've had a standing practice in Ontario, since forever, I believe, which exempts our First Nation communities from the PST in certain circumstances. We think that exemption ought to be extended now and have full application under the HST. That's our position. That's why we are working with our First Nations communities in urging the federal government to adopt the practice, which we think is fair, and which we'd like to have maintained under the new regime.

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

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** The Premier says that he's doing all he can. When the McGuinty Liberals faced anti-HST backlash from the real estate industry, the Premier very quickly exempted homes that cost up to \$400,000 from the HST. When Tim Hortons protested against the

HST on the coffee and muffin lunch, the McGuinty Liberals very quickly exempted restaurant meals up to \$4 in value from the HST.

**1050**

If you care about the plight of First Nations, why will you not act just as quickly to exempt First Nations from the HST?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** My honourable colleague is comparing apples to oranges. In the example that he has raised, those are circumstances over which we had complete control. When it comes to this particular circumstance, it's something over which the federal government ultimately has control. That's why we are working with our First Nations communities to encourage the federal government to adopt the practice that we've had here in Ontario, which we think is very fair and is one that we'd like to see extended into the future.

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

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Again, the Premier tries to confuse the issue. The Premier didn't have to consult with the federal government when the McGuinty Liberals decided to exempt homes under \$400,000 from the HST, you didn't have to consult with the federal government when you decided to exempt the Tim Hortons under-\$4 lunch from the HST and you don't have to consult with the federal government now. You have the capacity now to say that under the room that Ontario has for exemptions, you could exempt First Nations across Ontario from the HST. Why won't you do it, Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I've already given this answer, and I'll restate it to my honourable colleague: It is not a matter over which we have control. It's something that the federal government has control over. It's how they pay the tax.

We provided a point-of-sale exemption. What the federal government is insisting is that the First Nation communities in fact make that payment, and they're talking about reimbursing it subsequently. What the First Nations communities are seeking is the same arrangement that we had with them, so they didn't have to pay it in the first place. We think that's simpler, we think it's more cost-effective from a regulatory perspective, and that's why we'd like to have it continued in the future.

Again, we will continue to work with the federal government to have them adopt a practice that we had in place.

#### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. The McGuinty government has broken another promise and ripped \$4 billion out of Toronto's Transit City over the next five years. We know whom these cuts will hurt: the million-plus modest-income families in Toronto who can't afford to live near subway lines. Why is the government making them bear the burden of the deficit?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Thank you to the member opposite for the question. I know that she gathered some folks last night to stir the pot on this issue once again.

The fact is that we have not cut the funding from these projects. We are going to be continuing these projects. What we did was that we delayed some of the cash flow. We are working with Metrolinx right now. When the plan comes out—and there is going to be a plan; we are going to be demonstrating the plan—my guess is that the members opposite will be opposed to the plan as well. But the reality is that we have had to put a delay in place. The cash will flow. It will stretch over a bit longer period of time, but those projects will go ahead.

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

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I would ask that the Minister of Transportation table the exact date that that money will be delivered to the city of Toronto.

The McGuinty government is the only Ontario government ever, other than Harris's, that has refused to put one dime towards the Toronto transit budget this year. In fact, transit cuts made up three quarters of cuts to infrastructure spending in the recent budget—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The Minister of Municipal Affairs. Members will please come to order.

Please continue.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I repeat: the only Ontario government other than Harris that has refused to put one dime towards the Toronto transit budget this year. In fact, transit cuts made up three quarters of the cuts to infrastructure spending in the recent budget. Why is the lack of affordable transit and increasing smog so absolutely unimportant to this government?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm just going to read out some of the investments that we have made in the city of Toronto in previous years and in this year.

Since 2003, we've invested \$172 million to revitalize Union Station, which last time I looked was in the city of Toronto. We committed \$416 million towards the replacement of 204 TTC streetcars. We're moving ahead on the Sheppard East LRT. We're moving on our \$874-million investment in expanding the Georgetown South corridor, which will serve thousands of Ontarians, which the member opposite has opposed at every single turn.

On top of that, \$870 million in funding to support the extension of the Toronto-York-Spadina subway from Downsview to the Vaughan corporate centre—

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

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Our information comes directly from the mayor's office and the offices of the TTC, and we're talking about this year. I would love to hear the transportation minister engage with the mayor.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Oh, this year.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** That's what I said.

Toronto transit riders will be packing Toronto city hall—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I think one of the reasons some of you couldn't hear her supplementary question was because of the noise coming from the government side.

Members will please come to order.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Peterborough.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Sorry.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Please continue.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Toronto transit riders will be packing Toronto city hall tonight to say no to rising transit fares, no to delays to new light rail lines, no to aging buses prone to breakdowns and delay and no to broken transit promises from the McGuinty government.

Will the minister attend the meeting, listen to the concerns of transit riders first-hand and finally acknowledge the serious harm this government is doing by cutting Transit City funding?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Let me just comment on gas tax money, which is ongoing, permanent funding since 2004: \$687.7 million has gone into the city of Toronto for gas tax, \$164 million last year. That money is ongoing.

I think the point needs to be made, because the member opposite is talking about working with Toronto: What we need is the mayor of Toronto, councillors in Toronto and the city of Toronto to be working with us and to be working with Metrolinx. Unless we have that kind of collaborative process, we will not be able to make the best decisions for Toronto. We welcome that kind of co-operation. We look forward to that kind of co-operation as Metrolinx develops a plan to build the projects that I am absolutely confident the member opposite will absolutely support.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** My question is for the Premier. Because the McGuinty Liberals are bad planners, you took a billion dollars that could have gone to front-line health care and handed it to Liberal-friendly eHealth consultants who didn't deliver.

Because of bad planning, you let local health integration networks take money from front-line care and hand it out to consultants after you said the practice was banned.

Because of bad planning, you're now looking to find money through cuts to front-line care for seniors and people with chronic illnesses.

Premier, how do you plan to deal with pressures on emergency rooms that will see more seniors and people with chronic illnesses as a result of your cuts to front-line health care and pharmacare?

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

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I welcome this opportunity to talk about how important these changes are to our health care system. The changes that we are proposing,



when it comes to drug prices, will lower the cost of drugs for people. That will improve our ability to fund more drugs for more people. It will also allow us to invest more in our health care system.

I think it's important the member opposite understands that this practice of so-called professional allowances is something that we started looking at back in 2006, through Bill 102. Through Bill 102, we have the actual power to understand how the money that was given to pharmacists was being invested. Only 30% of the money being received by pharmacies in professional allowances has actually been spent on that kind of care.

1100

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

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** What the minister fails to mention when she talks about the so-called professional allowances is the fact that they were set up by this government in the first place.

Back to the question: If the McGuinty Liberals had been more interested in delivering eHealth than in delivering a series of contracts to their Liberal-friendly consultants, then ePrescribing would have been up and running, and if their priority was patients rather than wasteful bureaucracy to give them political cover for the Premier's cuts to nurses and emergency rooms, they would scrap the LHINs, use the money and put it back into front-line health care, including pharmacy.

Because Premier McGuinty closed emergency rooms in Fort Erie and Port Colborne, seniors and patients with chronic illnesses can't afford to lose the one-on-one counselling they get from pharmacists. Premier, why are you making seniors and patients with chronic illness suffer from your own failure to plan and deliver—

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

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** These reforms are all about getting better access to better care for the people of Ontario. The people of Ontario are paying far more for drugs than people in other parts of the world. When people start to understand how much more they're paying, I think they would say that it's up to their MPPs to actually bring those prices down, and that's what we are doing.

I have many examples of what drug prices are today and what they will be after the reform. There's a drug for diabetes—and I apologize for my difficulty with the pronunciation—called Pioglitazone. Currently, someone would pay \$1,253 for that drug. Once our reforms are complete, they will pay \$313, for a savings of \$940. This—

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

#### FOREST INDUSTRY

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** My question is for the Premier. AbitibiBowater intends to sell its value-added Fort William division paper mill for scrap metal. Three hundred and fifty-three people lost good jobs when the

mill shut down three years ago. Two years ago, the union worked with a prospective buyer and even hammered out a collective agreement, but the takeover fell through. I would argue that it's in Ontario's interest for the mill to be making value-added paper, not sold off for scrap metal. My question: Has the Premier actively sought buyers and operators for this value-added paper mill?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I appreciate the question. Certainly I very much empathize with the workers and their families, who were obviously hoping that this operation would get back up and running. I think the actions that were taken by AbitibiBowater demonstrate the challenges that are faced by a company that's in CCAA protection. This was a tough business decision.

The member made reference to some efforts that were made to have a value-added operation up and running. We made many efforts to work with them as well. Ultimately, that was not able to happen. But our government continues to work very closely with the forestry sector in terms of increasing competitiveness, in terms of providing those opportunities. We will continue to do that with all aspects of the forestry sector.

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

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** The minister says that the government is actively working. We released freedom-of-information details yesterday that show that most of the money you boast is available to help re-establish and reposition forest industry jobs is sitting in a Toronto bank account; it hasn't been used. In fact, in this particular case, Abitibi is saying that they will sell the mill, but it can't be used to produce paper.

I ask again: When half of the money that the government promised to help re-establish forest industry jobs is sitting in a bank account in Toronto, and when Abitibi is saying, "Oh, we'll sell the mill, but it can't be used to produce value-added paper," has the government really done anything to help these workers in this community?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** We very much have. We've provided significant support to a number of companies, including AbitibiBowater over the years, as you know, through the electricity rebate program, providing significant funds to all their operations in Ontario. I think it is important to remind the member that, indeed, our measures have flowed over \$600 million through our incentives to the forestry sector—and over \$870 million through our loan guarantee prosperity programs that has been leveraged as a result of our programs as well.

The fact is, we continue to support the industry in a significant way. That is why we are so keen to put Ontario's wood to work. That's why we put forward a competitive wood supply process. That's why, indeed, we're reviewing the forest tenure process in the province as well, because we recognize more companies need opportunities, new entrants to get back to work. That's our goal. That's what we're working on. You can expect some good announcements soon.

## DIABETES TREATMENT

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. We know that too many Ontarians are being diagnosed with type 1 and type 2 diabetes every year. In your last response to a question from the member from Whitby–Oshawa, you had a chance just to begin expressing some of those concerns. Diabetes management has been one of the major areas of health spending for this government. I have constituents wondering how the new drug reform policy is going to affect their ability to pay for diabetes drugs. These important drugs allow them to continue living a lifestyle to which they've become accustomed.

We know that this drug reform is a much-needed change that will help lower the cost of generic drugs throughout the province. However, my constituents wonder how this reform will affect their family members who have diabetes and already pay large sums of money for purchasing proper medication, as well as blood sugar strips, needles and other important tools that go along with monitoring diabetes.

Will the minister please explain to the House—

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

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Diabetes is a disease that affects many Ontario families. It's a disease that should be manageable with the right drugs. We want to make sure that those drugs are available at a fair price. That's why our drug reform policy is the right thing to do. It's the most important initiative our government has taken to bring down the cost of drugs in Ontario.

Today, a patient would pay an out-of-pocket price of \$177 for metformin, a commonly used drug for diabetes patients. After our proposed reforms, the price would drop to \$70. This would save diabetes patients, on this one drug alone, \$107. This is a savings we can pass on to Ontarians. It's absolutely the right thing to do for the people of Ontario, including people with diabetes.

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

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I appreciate the minister's response, and I know that my constituents will be extremely supportive of the increased savings of the drug reform plan.

In my riding, constituents ask me about our plan for diabetes and what we're doing as a government to help their family members who are living with this disease. I know our diabetes strategy has been extremely effective in improving the lives of Ontarians with diabetes. However, there's always room for improvement.

Could the minister please tell this House and the people of Ontario what this government is doing to help Ontarians who are living with diabetes?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We're working very hard to make sure that Ontarians with diabetes get access to the best supports that will delay or prevent the onset of complications related to diabetes. We've nearly tripled funding for diabetes since we were elected in 2003. We've created 204 diabetes education teams across the

province in family health teams, community health centres and hospitals, helping patients with diabetes to manage their disease effectively. We became the first province to fully fund insulin pumps for children and youth with type 1 diabetes, and we've expanded the program to include adults with type 1 diabetes. We're investing \$741 million into a diabetes strategy that includes public education, expanded services, a diabetes registry, the expansion of bariatric surgery, expansion of the insulin pump—

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

## CURRICULUM

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** My question is to the Premier. The McGuinty Liberals have been caught making changes to the elementary school curriculum that will see a new sex education curriculum introduced beginning in grade 1. When the Minister of Education was asked about this change, she said, "I am not a teacher, but we have worked very hard with experts to understand best what age-appropriate language and topics are." It appears the only group you didn't consult with were parents.

Why were parents not included in consultations and decision-making about these changes to the sexual education curriculum?

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**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** It's very important that I'm able to state in this Legislature for the people of Ontario that in fact we have been consulting extensively since September 2007 in our process to review the curriculum. We have consulted with dozens of groups, including parent groups, faculties of education, universities and colleges. We have consulted with the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association, with the Ontario Healthy Schools Coalition—made up of parents, I might add—and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

I would say that the draft curriculum was revised in both English and in French. Educators, parents and all stakeholders from across the province had the opportunity to provide feedback on the—

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

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Again, my question is to the Premier because I do believe this is a very important issue for parents in the province of Ontario.

It has now become abundantly clear to parents—and these are parents across the whole province; we are seeing emails coming in, once they have been alerted to the fact this is happening—that it looks like you tried to bury this when you publicize everything else. In fact, this past week the government announced the third annual ChangeTheWorld campaign, an anti-smoking campaign, the opening of an OPP detachment, the launch of the health minister's YouTube; you made education an-

nouncements, the EcoSchools partnership and honouring youth role models.

If this is so important and necessary, why was there no huge public announcement telling parents what you were going to do in September?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I'm very happy that the honourable member acknowledges all of the great work that's being done by the government. That is one way that we get the information out.

With respect to the consultation, we have consulted with parents. As a result of our consultations we have received some 2,400 responses. I would also say to the honourable member, yes, there's no question that it's an issue that generates a great deal of discussion and debate. I think it's important that parents continue to be aware and involved in what their children are learning. We encourage them to be engaged at the school with the teachers. If, for whatever reason, parents do not feel comfortable with what is in the curriculum, they can say to their child's teacher that they do not want them to be a part of that particular strand.

#### LABOUR DISPUTE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts. People in Sudbury are all talking about the escalating conflict in the labour dispute between Vale Inco and USW since Vale has announced that it will resume full production in Sudbury using replacement workers.

This government has been completely hands-off during this nine-month-long labour dispute. But the minister sets the rule for mining; the province has a constitutional right to oversee mining. When is the minister going to take notice of what is happening in Sudbury? When is he going to get involved? Because right now, by his indifference, he is in fact saying that it is perfectly acceptable for multinational corporations to engage in this kind of economic blackmail.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** To the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** To the member's question, the Ministry of Labour has been there all along assisting with the parties, focusing on resolving the differences. That's where the focus has to stay: The focus has to stay with the parties so that they can understand each other, so that they can work towards common ground so that they can get a collective agreement done.

The collective agreement process is something that we highly respect. I can tell the member that our ministry will do all that we can to help the parties address those differences that they have so that the workers can get back to work and we can move on beyond this dispute.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Well, I've said it before and I'll say it again: How is it going so far? It's been nine months and one week.

People in Sudbury are saying that Vale Inco is using its economic powers to do economic violence to the

people of Sudbury, and the McGuinty government is standing by, letting it happen.

When corporations like GM and Chrysler come to this government and say that they're in trouble, they get front-row seats. The government listens to them, helps them out. They even hand out hundreds of millions of dollars. But when workers come to this government and say that they are in trouble, they are completely ignored.

Why does this government lend its ears to other groups, corporations, professional organizations, but when it comes to workers on strike in Sudbury, they continue to get ignored?

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** We do have a deep understanding of how this is affecting the community, affecting the workers, affecting that business. I've gotten that deep understanding from Rick Bartolucci, who has been a tremendous advocate for everyone, all sides in the community. My focus will continue to be to assist and work with the parties.

The member's question speaks to not respecting the collective bargaining process. On this side of the House we do respect the collective bargaining process. As well, through the Ministry of Labour, our mediation and conciliation team, we are always there to assist the parties to overcome whatever differences they may have and help get those workers back onto the job site and working.

#### VICTIMS OF CRIME

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** My question is for the Attorney General. It's important that victims of crime in Ontario receive the supports and services they need, when and where they need them most. We are particularly aware this week, which is National Victims of Crime Awareness Week, during which we recognize the effort of thousands of professionals, volunteers and community organizations that offer victims of crime their time, assistance, guidance and advice.

Those who deliver these services must be given the tools they need to carry out this vital work. Can the Attorney General tell this House what the government is doing to ensure that victims of crime and their families receive the support they need and are treated with compassion as they overcome trauma and begin to rebuild their lives?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** The member for Guelph asks a very important question and asks us all to see that the services for victims are available in the way that victims require them. So, when the first horrific incident happens, the victims' quick-response program will be there to provide immediate financial assistance, and the victims' crisis assistance and referral service will be there for them, to refer them to the service they need in that very crucial, immediate aftermath of the horrific incident. Every year thousands benefit from that.

The victim witness assistance program helps take them through the court process, which can be very challenging even for some lawyers, but for those who aren't experts in the law, very challenging.

I would like to specifically thank the police, the ministry staff, government staff and all those community agencies that support victims every single day of the year, for the great work that they do.

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

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'm pleased to hear that our government is funding initiatives to provide the necessary support to victims of crime. It's important that we support the dedicated individuals and community organizations that are working each day to provide this support. I know that this work is benefiting people throughout the province. I'm particularly proud of the work being done by Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis, where vital support services are being delivered by truly admirable volunteers and professionals.

One of the keys to providing the right support at the right time is listening to the victims as well as community groups and individuals who deal directly with victims. They can give us the best advice and help us to provide the most meaningful services and supports. Can the Attorney General tell us what the government is doing to recognize the people who are making such a real difference on the front lines?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** This morning, my colleague from Guelph and I and a number of members of the Legislature stood with the recipients of the Victim Services Awards of Distinction, given out by the Attorney General on behalf of all members of the Legislature to say thank you, to recognize, for this day, in a special way, the extraordinary contributions that have been made through their courage, their perseverance, their drive, in ways that have changed for the better the lives of the system of justice, of different communities in coping with the needs of victims, and of the services available to victims throughout the province of Ontario.

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I want to say thank you specifically on behalf of all to these recipients of distinction. If I could just take a second and thank again Julie Craven, Gwendolyn Broadmore, Sylvie Huntley, Penny Fisher, the Family Violence Project of Waterloo region, the Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis, and the Sexual Assault Centre for Quinte and District.

## WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** My question is for the Premier. This government's flawed and undemocratic Green Energy Act has ignited a surge of wind farm proposals, pitting neighbour against neighbour and tearing communities apart. The government's policy is uncoordinated and will lead to a massive increase in our hydro bills for years to come. There are legitimate concerns about the potential risk to human health, the economic cost and the denial of real opportunity for public input.

Today in the chamber we have residents of the Bellwood area in Centre Wellington township who want an answer to a simple question: Why won't the government place a moratorium on wind farm approvals until

they complete a comprehensive and credible epidemiological study on their health effects?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I thank the honourable member for his question. We took a long, hard look at the experience in other parts of the world—not only their experience in terms of how they sited and their setback requirements with respect to wind turbines, for example, but at any medical evidence or knowledge that might have been developed in connection with wind turbines. We have come to the conclusion that there is nothing that indicates that—given what we have done and the setback requirements we've put in place, which are the most aggressive in North America and some of the most aggressive in the world.

What we have done, out of a sense of responsibility, is we're also funding ongoing research. We are funding a new research chair to take a look at these things so that we can begin to collect, on our own, data specific to Ontario.

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

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** When the Premier is doing all that deep studying perhaps he should be looking at where France and Germany are actually ramping back their wind turbine developments because they are finding that there are issues with it.

So far, 50 municipalities in Ontario have passed resolutions asking the provincial government to return the planning power for wind energy to them. Last week, I introduced a private member's bill, Bill 29, that would do just that. The Minister of Energy and Infrastructure has already been quoted in the newspaper that he will not be supporting my bill. Premier, will you be instructing your Liberal caucus to vote against my bill or will you allow them to vote on behalf of their communities and return planning power for wind energy projects back to municipalities?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** It's up to members to make up their own minds when it comes to private members' issues. But what I can say is that while I'm very confident of the safety standards that we're putting in place with respect to how and where we put up our wind turbines, I'm also—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** There have been a number of personal attacks that aren't directed at government policy but are directed at individual members, coming from this corner back here. I'd just ask members to be more conscious of not directing a personal attack at a member. It's one thing to do it to a policy.

Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** The other thing that is important to keep in mind here is that while we continue to have a growing demand and certainly over the longer term a growing demand for more energy in Ontario, we've got to come to grips with one of the best sources of that energy. We have made a decision as a government to eliminate coal-fired generation. There is no doubt whatsoever about the harm and dangers associated with coal-fired generation. On the other hand, harnessing the

power of the wind and harnessing the power of the sun are important new initiatives and new opportunities that create jobs and help provide us with electricity that we are going to need in the future.

### MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Minister of Consumer Services. Lakeport Brewery was a local success story, providing good jobs for more than 140 Hamiltonians. Labatt purchased the brewery and is now shutting it down, killing these good jobs just to eliminate competition. Now they're removing all equipment from the plant and are refusing to sell to brewers who would keep the plant running. Will the minister use the powers of her office to investigate Labatt's attempts to establish a monopoly and kill off good jobs in Hamilton?

**Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis:** Do you really want to answer this? To the Minister of Economic Development.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** We do appreciate the question. The member from Hamilton Mountain has been relentless in support of the Hamilton community and this issue around Lakeport is not lost on the member from Hamilton Mountain.

Let's just be clear about this. We understand what the role of government can be, and what it is today in Ontario is to make it one of the best and most competitive environments for businesses to flourish in. We understand that Labatt has made a change—they've actually made a purchase—and as an entity, an incorporation, they do have a right to choose their business. We know that. We know that we can't run rampant over that right that they have.

What we do know is that in conversations with Hamilton for the last seven years, we have worked diligently for Hamilton to have the kind of infrastructure and skilled trades in its workforce to be a very attractive part of Ontario. We will continue to do that, whether it's at Lakeport or whatever facility that may—

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

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I don't know why that minister is answering for the other minister, but anyway—

Labatt has tried to engage the city of Hamilton in their efforts to eliminate competition. They've offered the city \$2 million on the condition that Lakeport not—I repeat, not—be sold to any other beer maker. There are 143 skilled people who make good beer and there are people out there who want to buy that beer, but that would cut into the profits of the Premier's friends at Labatt. What is this minister or the other minister going to do to protect consumers from Labatt's attempting to establish a monopoly and killing good jobs in Hamilton?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** Just for the record, our Premier is a big fan of the microbreweries, especially those in Ontario—and they are very good.

Let me say this: The people in Hamilton must be concerned. They are part of Ontario, which has suffered greatly in this last world recession. We are doing every-

thing we can to help Hamilton recover. When we have episodes like this with Labatt, which has a right to make a purchase of another business—and they did do that—we want to work with Hamilton. We believe that if that site can be useful to another manufacturer or another business opportunity in that facility, we want to play a role in helping to facilitate that. And just for the record, that is exactly the role that my ministry is playing. That is exactly the role that we have played in the past, and we will do so again, with or without the help of the members in opposition, who so far have been completely unhelpful when it comes to—

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

### DOCTORS

**Mr. Glen R. Murray:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Many of my constituents have worried about access to family physicians in Ontario. They want good-quality care for their loved ones, close to where they live and where they need it. I understand that the College of Physicians and Surgeons releases an annual report about its registration statistics each year. They track the total number of licences issued. With the increase in chronic diseases over the years, it is important that these numbers go up so that Ontarians have an adequate supply of family doctors to treat their conditions. Could the minister please update this House on the results of the physicians' report?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm very pleased to talk about some of the highlights from the CPSO's report. In 2009, the CPSO issued over 3,600 licences in Ontario. That includes medical students and doctors who are prepared to practise. This is the highest-ever total. In fact, it's 1,000 more than in 2004 and 2,000 more than in 1997. For the independent practice category—those are the doctors who can go out and set up their own practice—1,200 licences were issued, the highest number since 1985.

**1130**

This government is committed to improving access to health care. That's why we've got 2,300 more doctors practising medicine today than in 2003. The numbers speak for themselves: 900,000 more Ontarians have access to primary care today—

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

**Mr. Glen R. Murray:** I think we have as many physicians in my constituency as we have pharmacies. This will reserve for them access to primary care as an important issue for our government.

Another area of importance to my constituents is international medical graduates. The constituents in my riding of Toronto Centre come from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds. Several have medical degrees from other countries and are looking to start work as physicians in Ontario.

I understand that the post-graduate return of service program opens the door to international medical graduates who agree to practise for five years in any Ontario community except the Toronto and Ottawa areas, in exchange for post-graduate training opportunities.

My constituents want to know if any of the government's initiatives are actually resulting in rising numbers of IMGs. Can the minister please tell this House about the number of IMGs in Ontario?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We are absolutely committed to giving international medical graduates the opportunity to put those valuable skills to work right here in Ontario.

According to the CPSO's report, the number of IMGs who have received independent practice certificates has more than doubled, from 169 in 2003 to 345 in 2009. They come from all over the world—105 different countries. The top countries are India, Pakistan, Egypt, the United Kingdom, Iran, Ireland, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Romania and Russia.

These doctors, new to Ontario, are putting their skills to work. They're creating a much richer environment for all Ontarians. We're building on the success, and we're committed to adding 100 more spots for medical students going forward. We're going to continue working with physicians and communities to improve access to care in this province.

#### CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. We have recently learned about three London area group homes run by the London children's aid society who will be forced to close their doors. This is following three other CAS group homes in London that have already closed their doors.

Minister, what is your plan to serve these children who are battling addictions, and who have special needs and mental health challenges?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm pleased to have a chance to talk about all the work that's being done across the province to better support kids and their families and to find a pathway to ensure that these services will be available in the long term.

With respect to the efforts made by children's aid societies, we've been working very closely with children's aid societies across the province to help them look at the services they are providing in their communities. In fact, I've had the opportunity on more than one occasion to speak to the board and the executive director of the London CAS, who I know is doing great work to really take a hard look at the services that are being provided to youth.

There are many innovations taking place across the province. We look to working with communities, taking up the leadership from those communities and taking their advice on how to deliver services in every community across the province, including in London.

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

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** We all know that children's aid societies across Ontario are doing great work, but what you are doing by forcing the London CAS to close the doors of their three group homes is putting their hands behind their backs.

A CAS official has said that these children have many needs and cannot be placed in foster home environments. CAS workers in London have already admitted that the children who were forced out of the last group home closures have struggled and have been bounced from foster home to foster home since those closures. Now, 18 more children will be forced into that same uncertainty.

Minister, how can you justify this group home closure to the families and children in London when the sunshine list in your ministry went up by 44%?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I can tell you that one other thing that went up is the budget of the London CAS. It went up by \$1.1 million when we released additional funding to stabilize that children's aid society. In fact, the budget of the London CAS has gone up 34.9% since 2003.

We continue to invest in children in CASs across the province. These children will continue to be served in their communities. The query, the innovation that is being examined in London, is what is the methodology? How will we serve these children, and who will be the deliverer of that service?

I'm proud of the work that the London CAS is doing. We continue to invest in that CAS. We look to stabilize it, and then we look toward the conversation that we're having across the province with our commissioners to find a new pathway forward for the service of children in this province.

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

#### ANTI-SMOKING PROGRAMS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour la ministre de la Promotion de la santé.

Yesterday, the Ontario Medical Association released a new study on the state of smoking in Ontario. The results were qualified as disappointing. There are more smokers today than there were 40 years ago. The cost to the health care system is \$1.6 billion, the economic cost is \$6.1 billion, and there are 13,000 deaths annually.

They made four valid recommendations. Does the minister support the Ontario Medical Association's recommendations? Will her ministry be implementing this report?

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** I'm certainly pleased to be able to discuss this issue in the Legislature. It's an important issue for me, the government of Ontario and for the people of the province.

We thank the OMA for their work on highlighting the dangers of smoking. We are currently reviewing the report, and we remain committed to the smoke-free Ontario strategy, which is one of the most comprehensive strategies to attack tobacco in North America.

Since 2003, our government has provided approximately \$300 million toward the smoke-free Ontario strategy. In 2009-10, our funding for smoke-free Ontario is over 400% higher than in 2003.

We have invested \$29 million in smoking cessation programs, training and research initiatives—

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

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** One of the key recommendations is focused on contraband tobacco. The OMA is only one of many, many agencies that have come to you and said that the government has to show progress on contraband. There are serious solutions that have been put forward, put to your government, but the government keeps avoiding the issue of contraband tobacco.

How much longer is this government prepared to stand by as lives are taken away and health care dollars are sacrificed to an insufficient tobacco control strategy and a lack of action on contraband?

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** I'll refer the supplementary to the Minister of Revenue.

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I thank the member for the question.

We take the issue of contraband tobacco very seriously. A person who manufactures, sells or purchases contraband tobacco is stealing from their neighbours by not paying their taxes. It forces those of us who are law-abiding to pay more.

I can tell you that we take the issue seriously, and we are receiving results. I can tell you that convictions under the Tobacco Tax Act have more than tripled in the last year. I can tell you that seizures of illegal cigarettes have been increasing by more than 50% year over year as we work with our partners to prevent the scourge of contraband tobacco. I can also tell you that the penalties that people have been paying for breaking the law have now exceeded some \$14.2 million.

But I say to the member that we take the recommendations from the Ontario Medical Association, and so many other people who have supported our vision of a smoke-free Ontario, very seriously. We'll continue to work—

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

## DEFERRED VOTES

### TIME ALLOCATION

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** We have a deferred vote on a motion for allocation of time on Bill 16.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1139 to 1144.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Mr. Milloy has moved government notice of motion number 4. All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

### Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Fonseca, Peter	Naqvi, Yasir
Albanese, Laura	Gerretsen, John	Oraziotti, David
Arthurs, Wayne	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoskins, Eric	Pupatello, Sandra
Bartolucci, Rick	Hoy, Pat	Ramal, Khalil
Bentley, Christopher	Jaczek, Helena	Rinaldi, Lou
Best, Margaret	Jeffrey, Linda	Ruprecht, Tony
Bradley, James J.	Johnson, Rick	Sandals, Liz
Brotten, Laurel C.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Smith, Monique
Brown, Michael A.	Leal, Jeff	Sorbara, Greg
Brownell, Jim	Levac, Dave	Sousa, Charles
Cansfield, Donna H.	Matthews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Carroll, Aileen	Mauro, Bill	Van Bommel, Maria
Chan, Michael	McGuinty, Dalton	Wilkinson, John
Colle, Mike	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Crozier, Bruce	Milloy, John	Zimmer, David
Dombrowsky, Leona	Mitchell, Carol	
Duncan, Dwight	Murray, Glen R.	

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

### Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	O'Toole, John
Bailey, Robert	Hillier, Randy	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Barrett, Toby	Hudak, Tim	Prue, Michael
Chudleigh, Ted	Jones, Sylvia	Savoline, Joyce
Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa	Shurman, Peter
DiNovo, Cheri	Marchese, Rosario	Wilson, Jim
Dunlop, Garfield	Martiniuk, Gerry	Witmer, Elizabeth
Elliott, Christine	Miller, Norm	Yakabuski, John
Gélinas, France	Munro, Julia	
Hampton, Howard	Murdoch, Bill	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 52; the nays are 28.

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

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** There being no further deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1147 to 1500.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Il me fait extrêmement plaisir de vous dire que j'ai de la visite de Nickel Belt. Cela n'arrive pas souvent, mais ça me fait très plaisir.

Je commence avec M<sup>me</sup> Gisèle Chrétien, qui est récipiendaire de l'Ordre de la Pléiade. Elle est ici avec son mari, André, qui l'accompagne. J'ai également M. Denis Hubert-Dutrisac qui est ici, accompagné de sa femme, Francine. J'ai aussi Renée Champagne et son époux Gary qui sont ici. Ça me fait extrêmement plaisir de les accueillir à Queen's Park.

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** I'm exceptionally pleased to introduce two special guests this afternoon: the sons of one of our elite members of Parliament, Vince Kerrio Sr., who was MPP for my riding of Niagara Falls for 15 years. I'm pleased to introduce Michael Kerrio and Vince Kerrio Jr.

Shortly after 3 o'clock today, all three parties in the House will have a special tribute to remember Vince Kerrio, who passed away last year.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** With your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce Richard Smith, as well as Peter Meraw, two pharmacists from Minden, Ontario. More

interestingly, they grew up on the same street and my wife taught them in grade 1. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I would like to welcome four representatives from the Trillium Gift of Life Network: Sandra Fawcett, Aroon Maathoor, Versha Prakaash and Janet MacLean. I know that I speak for all members when I say thank you for the very important work they do for organ and tissue donation awareness in Ontario.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Very soon, I'll have three people from my riding in attendance: Katherine Christensen, executive director of Thousand Islands Accommodation Partners; Anne-Marie Forcier, executive director of the Rideau Heritage Route; and Kim Barr, tourism manager for the Brockville and District Chamber of Commerce.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Introduction of visitors.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Here, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Are you trying to put me on?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I would like to introduce a visitor.

It's my pleasure to introduce Mr. Vincenzo Ruso, who is just finishing his studies to become a lawyer and expressed to me today that he really would like to spend the rest of his career in public life, preferably in this place.

So, I want to say to members here: If you need someone with a good education, you're looking at the man right now. My advice to him is that it's even okay to work for a member of the Liberal government, as long as you don't lose your principles while you're doing it.

**M. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** Il me fait plaisir de souhaiter la bienvenue aux conjoints et aux conjointes, aux amis et aux enfants de nos récipiendaires de l'Ordre de la Pléiade qui vont être honorés cet après-midi. Bienvenue ici même à Queen's Park.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I know this has been covered a bit, but I will add to the introductions.

We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today a group of Ontarians who have been selected by an all-party panel of members to receive the internationally recognized medal of Francophonie: l'Ordre de la Pléiade. These individuals are being recognized for their outstanding contributions to French-speaking communities in the province.

The recipients are M<sup>me</sup> Gisèle Chrétien, M. Denis Hubert-Dutrisac, M. Gilles LeVasseur, M. Guy Mignault, M. Marius Ouellette, M<sup>me</sup> Lise Routhier Boudreau, M<sup>me</sup> Gisèle Séguin.

Please join me in welcoming these honoured guests to Queen's Park.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### BOTTLE RECYCLING

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Members' statements. The member for—

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Dufferin-Caledon.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** — Dufferin-Caledon. I always have trouble with that, and I apologize.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Dufferin-Caledon.

I'm pleased to rise today to congratulate Ice River Springs in my riding of Dufferin-Caledon for their commitment to opening a plastics recycling plant in the town of Shelburne.

Recycling PET, the resin used to make water bottles and other plastics into food-grade plastics, is a very innovative process. Ice River Springs will be the first bottled water company in North America to manufacture resin for its own use.

The Shelburne facility will take bales of used plastic from municipal recycling projects and recycle it into food-grade plastic. The material will then be sent to the company's main facility in Feversham and converted into bottles.

Currently, resin to make water bottles is shipped in from the United States. This new Shelburne plant will eliminate their need to purchase resin, and will produce enough resin to supply other food companies across Ontario. This will result in a plastic water bottle that is made of 100% recycled PET with the lowest weight of plastic required, the lightest cap and the smallest label.

Once the plant is fully operational, Ice River Springs is expected to create 60 new full-time jobs. The company has pledged to hire and train local residents to fill the positions.

The plant opening in July will prove not only to be good for the environment but good for the economy. Ice River Springs is investing \$15 million to open their plant in Shelburne. I want to thank owners Jamie and Sandy Gott for their commitment to preserving the environment and creating jobs at their newest business in Shelburne.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you to the member from Dufferin-Caledon.

### EVENT IN CHATHAM-KENT-ESSEX

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** Last Saturday, I attended the Blenheim BIA's and the chamber of commerce's annual dinner to honour and celebrate the contributions and successes of our community's outstanding individuals and businesses.

Congratulations to the award winners in all categories. They are the Thibert Farm, Mill and Bakery, agricultural award; White Wolf Marketing, entrepreneur award; DPM Insurance Group, heritage award; Katharine Smyth, good neighbour award; CarQuest, retail award; Til-Mech Enterprises, industry award; Tilbury Lions Club, service club award; and Christopher Beausoleil, youth involvement award.

The citizen of the year award went to Bob Thibert. Bob served as a volunteer firefighter for 35 years and was the Tilbury fire chief. Sadly, he passed away in December 2009 at the age of 55 from a heart attack while directing the response to a fire.



**1510**

Chief Thibert had a wealth of knowledge and skill. His peers described him as being masterful at the scene of an emergency. His volunteer activities included everything from fire-prevention education to service clubs. One year, he worked 24-7 with a team from his station to receive donations for a family who lost their home in a fire near Christmastime. He was a caring leader, role model and generous person.

These award winners were being recognized for their exemplary leadership, vision and generosity of spirit. They are an inspiration for others to also get involved.

**TAXATION**

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Yesterday, I introduced my private member's bill, now numbered Bill 40, which will be debated in this Legislature on May 6. This is not the first time I have made an attempt on this. This is a gas-tax fairness bill. It is at least the fourth time that I've introduced it. It is also a position that our leader Tim Hudak supports, and he has made it officially part of our party policy.

It is an issue of fundamental fairness. The federal government recognizes it; why won't the provincial government and the members opposite do the same? The federal government recognizes that gas tax that is paid by each and every person purchasing gas should be shared with the communities in which they live. That's what this bill would ensure: that all communities, not just those with a public transportation system, would share in the revenue from gas taxes in this province.

Unfortunately, the McGuinty government has a different view of rural Ontario. We're seeing it again with this attack on rural pharmacists, where rural pharmacists who provide front-line health care to people all across Ontario are under attack by this government because they don't recognize the tremendous service that they provide to people in the communities. I'm asking for fairness on that; I'm asking for rural members in this House to support my gas tax bill on May 6.

*Interruption.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Our visitors are welcome to the Legislature. You're welcome to watch the proceedings, but you aren't allowed to participate. Any other outburst like that and I may have to reconsider having you as our guests in the gallery.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** But you can always come back.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I don't need your help. I can handle it.

**SAULT COLLEGE**

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** I'm pleased today to comment on the progress we're making at Sault College in my riding of Sault Ste. Marie. Recently, our government provided over \$2.6 million in infrastructure and equipment funding for Sault College. This announcement was comprised of contributions through the Northern Ontario

Heritage Fund Corp. and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. The funding will be used for capital development costs associated with completing phase 1 of the campus redevelopment project. There will also be upgrades to teaching equipment and machinery as well as increased resources to help accommodate the growing enrolment at Sault College and Algoma University.

Investing in new infrastructure and improving teaching equipment and facilities helps our schools increase enrolment and prepares our students for the next generation of jobs. Sault College and Algoma University are also receiving additional combined funding under the Open Ontario plan, which is helping to build a highly skilled and educated workforce. Enrolment at Sault College is expected to grow by 700 students in the fall of 2011.

I want to congratulate, on behalf of our community, board chair Ben Pascuzzi for his dedication and commitment to Sault College, and also recognize the tremendous efforts of president Ron Common, who said that "as a result of this generous contribution, we can look forward to continued growth and success. The funds will also ensure that Sault College students continue to train on the most modern resources and equipment available, thus making our graduates even more desirable in the workforce."

Our government recognizes that by investing in post-secondary education we're also strengthening our economy by creating local jobs and ensuring that students can learn in the most modern, state-of-the-art facilities.

**THOUSAND ISLANDS  
ACCOMMODATION PARTNERS**

**Mr. Steve Clark:** The Thousand Islands Accommodation Partners is an innovative group that was born of local business men and women to market the world-famous Thousand Islands region, located in my riding. Their primary source of funds to showcase this area is by a destination marketing fee. This fee is an add-on to room rates at many of our local hotels and included on tickets at the Thousand Islands Playhouse and on tours by the Gananoque Boat Lines. The boat lines have 250,000 people go through their turnstiles each season, and the playhouse itself has over 50,000 visits per season.

The destination marketing fee, or DMF, is currently 3% and provides \$300,000 to TIAP for use in the community for local events, to help market worthwhile initiatives that include jazz in the Thousand Islands, Ribfest, the Chalk Art Festival, and also the War of 1812 celebration's improvements at Joel Stone Park.

The partnership's local success is now in jeopardy. The Ministry of Tourism has told Gananoque it can no longer charge a DMF. While the government will continue to give the town what it has raised through the DMF for the next two years, it excludes the almost one third contributed by the boat line and theatre because they are attractions and not accommodations. This

government is meddling with a proven successful tourism partnership.

Chair Cliff Edwards and his committee should be commended for their efforts in bringing people to the Thousand Islands. I call on the Minister of Tourism to allow the partners to continue to collect money under the existing DMF model.

#### LABOUR DISPUTE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** The labour dispute between Vale Inco and USW 6500 in Sudbury and USW 6200 in Port Colborne has now dragged on for over nine months, nine days and 15 hours. Over 3,000 people are out walking the picket lines, and I've got to say that you can see the effect of the strike everywhere in Nickel Belt. People, families and small businesses are all being hurt financially.

People in Sudbury are also talking about the escalating tension in the labour dispute ever since Vale Inco announced that they will resume full production by using replacement workers. Meanwhile, the McGuinty government is standing by and staying away from the entire situation. When business asked for help, the government listened. But when the workers ask for help, the government ignores them.

Next Thursday, I will be reintroducing a bill that would ban replacement workers in this province. It used to be the law in Ontario. Labour disputes were settled quicker and it reduced tensions on the picket line. But the Harris government did away with the anti-scab labour laws.

When we voted last session on the exact same bill, I was defeated by the Liberal government.

Next Thursday at about 1:15, members of this Legislature will have a chance to vote on the bill in first reading. I hope this time you will listen to the workers. You have an opportunity to help people throughout Ontario—

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

#### JER'S VISION

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I'm very pleased to rise today to talk about Jer's Vision: Canada's Youth Diversity Initiative, a really great organization based in my riding of Ottawa Centre that I'm proud to support.

Last Wednesday, April 14, you may remember that many members in this House wore articles of pink for the International Day of Pink to support diversity in our schools and communities. The first Day of Pink was a grassroots demonstration of support for diversity and to stop discrimination, bullying and homophobia that had befallen a student in Nova Scotia. Jer's Vision was instrumental in taking this local grassroots opposition to discrimination and turning it into an international day of action to support diversity and oppose hatred.

I was pleased to offer my support last Wednesday in Ottawa at the fifth-anniversary gala for Jer's Vision and

the Day of Pink. At that gala, the organization also honoured Elder William Commanda for his work in creating a harmonious community in Ottawa.

The Day of Pink is but one example of how Jer's Vision has succeeded tremendously in their first five years. They are clearly succeeding because not only are they an organization of compassion, openness and awareness, but of purpose. Jer's Vision is Canada's national organization to support and encourage the work of youth to address discrimination in their schools and communities. Today, Jer's Vision runs over 40 initiatives using the talents of 800 volunteers and serving 60,000 people annually.

My thanks and best wishes go out to founder Jeremy Dias for his tremendous and dedicated work, and to the many volunteers and supporters who make this good work possible.

#### GEORGE JEFFREY CHILDREN'S CENTRE

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I'm fortunate to have within my riding the George Jeffrey Children's Centre. The centre, funded by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, offers programs and services that help to meet the physical, developmental and social needs of children of all ages and abilities in northwestern Ontario.

#### 1520

On December 12, 2008, which was the centre's 60th anniversary, they held the official grand opening of their spectacular newly constructed facility. This 34,000-square-foot centre was an \$11-million project, and I'm very proud to say that our government contributed roughly \$7.3 million toward the construction of this spectacular facility. I want to congratulate CEO Eiji Tsubouchi; Bob Speer, the president of the board; and all of the staff and board members for their efforts related to the fundraising and building campaign.

In addition to the roughly \$7.3 million for the new building, our government also contributed approximately \$500,000 toward the base budget of this centre. And just last month, in our budget, we announced another increase into the operating budget for children's centres in Ontario. For the centre in my riding, this recent announcement was around \$280,000 annually, making the overall increased operating funding for the centre almost \$800,000 higher every year than it was just a few short years ago. The George Jeffrey Children's Centre is now extremely well positioned to serve the needs of the children of northwestern Ontario for decades to come.

I want to thank the community of Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario for their support of the new building, and the staff and the board of directors for their commitment to the children of northwestern Ontario.

#### JACK YEILDING

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Earlier today, I had the pleasure of introducing seven-year-old Jack Yeilding to

the Ontario Legislature, and he received a standing ovation. For those of you who don't know, Jack's life has been an incredible example of courage and overcoming obstacles.

Before he turned one, Jack started having seizures, and he was diagnosed with intractable epilepsy, an illness that will not respond to medication. He has suffered literally thousands of seizures, and recently underwent three very risky brain surgeries in order to stop them. Despite the medical challenges, Jack has become a community hero for his bravery, his strength and his vision of a world where children help other children.

In 2007, Jack began hosting an annual lemonade stand at his home in Oakville to raise funds for the SickKids Foundation. In three years, his stand has already raised more than \$150,000, and it grows every year. It has become a full-fledged street festival with entertainment, food, prizes and special guests.

Jack has been dubbed Canada's youngest philanthropist by Maclean's magazine. He's a patient ambassador for Sick Kids and one of the world's Huggable Heroes.

In my community, Jack's leadership, dedication and bravery make him an inspiration to us all. I'd like to thank young Jack for visiting us today, for his commitment, even at his young age, to improving the lives of others.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### DEFIBRILLATOR ACCESS ACT, 2010

#### LOI DE 2010 SUR L'ACCÈS AUX DÉFIBRILLATEURS

Mr. McMeekin moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 41, An Act to provide for defibrillators in premises accessed by members of the public / Projet de loi 41, Loi prévoyant la présence de défibrillateurs dans les lieux accessibles au public.

**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. Ted McMeekin:** Each year approximately 7,000 Ontarians will experience cardiac arrest. Up to 85% of cardiac arrests occur at home and in public places. When used with CPR in the first few minutes after a cardiac arrest, defibrillation can improve cardiac arrest survival rates by more than 50%.

Premises such as schools, fitness centres and hockey arenas are prime targets for the placement of automated external defibrillators. Ensuring that automated external defibrillators are available to members of the public may prevent many tragedies from occurring.

### VINCE KERRIO

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allotted to each party to speak in remembrance of the late Vince Kerrio.

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

The member from Niagara Falls.

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** I'll be sharing my time with the member from St. Catharines.

Today we're here to pay tribute to a great member of provincial Parliament for the riding of Niagara Falls who passed away, sadly, last year, Vince Kerrio Sr. I'm pleased that his two sons, Vince Jr. and Mike, are here in attendance and that his lovely wife, Rose, is watching on TV. Rose, we love you. I'm pleased to wish her well.

Vince Kerrio was a giant of a man who was elected in five consecutive elections to serve this Parliament for 15 fabulous years. He increased his margin of victory each and every election. He was politically and personally very popular. He had a friendly style that served him both at home and here in the House.

So it is no wonder, when I was first asked to represent the great riding of Niagara Falls, that the first person that I turned to for advice and guidance was Vince Kerrio Sr., my mentor. I asked him why he was so successful. He had a very simple explanation. He said, "You work hard, you campaign even harder, you be a friend to all, and you don't ever forget who elected you in the first place"—good words that continually challenged and informed me, and I never forgot those for the elections that I have run through as a provincial member of Parliament. Vince and Rose became very close to me as family and friends, and more importantly, I learned to rely on Vince Kerrio's wise advice and accurate political information that he shared with me.

Vince served this province, and I'm proud to say it, well as a member, and then as the Minister of Natural Resources and later as the Minister of Energy. He was a friend to the environment and an avid sportsman. Vince Kerrio prohibited mining in Ontario provincial parks, prohibited the exportation of water, restocked fish back into our depleted lakes and traded away some of Ontario's moose to Minnesota to introduce wild turkeys back into our province. He had so much energy that he was appointed to head the ministry and became a powerful advocate for the third Beck tunnel.

On a personal note, Vince was an amazing man. He wanted to fly, so he built his own plane. He wanted to sail, so he built his own boat. He wanted to be an engineer, so he built his own railway—a perfect model for his children. He put his skills together, I am told, by ensuring that his children were successful at the soapbox derby in Niagara. He wanted to be a politician, so he put together a truly awesome and stronger election campaign with every election.

Vince returned to Niagara with great gusto. He wanted to help Niagara grow into a booming industry, so he became a great entrepreneur and a hotelier.

While Vince no longer walks these halls, I expect that one day one of his sons will. In the meantime, he will be remembered by all of us on all sides of the House as one who served so well in Niagara.

As Vince would always say to me—every time I saw him, he'd start out by saying, "Brother Craitor, are you

doing good for the province of Ontario? I want to know.” That’s the way he greeted me, and I’ll always remember him that way.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from St. Catharines.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I’m pleased to share the time with my colleague from Niagara Falls in paying tribute to a person who was a very close personal friend to me, and not just to me but to so many members in the Ontario Legislature who served during the time he did.

An interesting fact, in looking at the demographics of Ontario: Vince was the first Italian-Canadian cabinet minister in the history of the province of Ontario, which is rather fascinating. Today we see a much different complexion to Ontario than we would have then in terms of demographics.

Vince brought a different approach to it. He brought a very businesslike approach to politics. He was a small business person, although I would characterize it as a medium-sized business, and always lectured us on the fact that small business people actually had to have a sharp pencil. They couldn’t pass it on in higher prices. They couldn’t pass it on in the fact that they were large operations. They had to make a profit. Vince approached so many of the challenges that we have to meet as a province in that way.

He was a perfect natural resources minister because he was actually an outdoors person. He actually understood it and he was very popular with the crowd who fished and hunted, because Vince did that as well.

He was also a good energy minister because he understood the importance of small water projects and the role they could play in the future of the province. He was very much a conservationist, very dedicated to the city of Niagara Falls, very dedicated to his family. Vince Jr. is here today and Mike. Of course, he and his wife, Rose, were very close.

You can tell when you go to someone’s funeral, and see who’s at the funeral, just how popular and respected that person was. There were people of all political affiliations there. There were people who knew him locally, the local folks who were his personal friends and friends of the family, but there were also people from all across the province who paid tribute to Vince Kerrio.

The city of Niagara Falls, the regional municipality of Niagara and the province of Ontario are all better places because Vince Kerrio served in this House.

1530

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** It is an honour to rise today and to pay tribute to Vince Kerrio, whose contributions to public life touched so many here at Queen’s Park and in my home area of Niagara and across our great province. Also, my best to Vince Jr. and Mike, and Rose watching from home today.

Coming from Niagara, and just up river from where Vince lived, we all knew the political legend of Vince Kerrio. Being a fan of politics, I followed his career

closely and with admiration, and then when I was elected myself, I had the unique benefit of getting to know Vince, even though we came from different parties, and particularly when I had the honour of serving as the tourism minister or consumer minister, benefiting from his trusted advice and good counsel, just as Kim indicated a few minutes ago.

You could always say that Vince’s impression in Niagara Falls was carved in stone, or at least the concrete sidewalk slabs that bear the Kerrio-Germano construction company stamp to this day. But it’s not just the sidewalks that pay reverence to Vince each and every day. He was an entrepreneur in the tourism and hotel business during some tough times and long before the casinos and the big hotels came to town. He was a trailblazer in the tourism industry and invested his resources, personal time and money in the community he believed in, both in public life and private business alike.

Like all of us from down on the Niagara River, Vince knew the breathtaking beauty of the Falls and that the Niagara Peninsula would make it as a premier tourism destination the world over. He was right, and he was justifiably proud of it.

Something else he should be proud of: His company was started by his Italian immigrant father, thrived under his leadership and today is run by his two sons, Mike and Vince.

In some ways, Vince and I shared a bit of a kinship ourselves. Much like Vince, I was first elected to a Niagara riding, despite unfavourable odds. Vince’s reputation, conduct and accomplishments helped me understand that dedication to your community was the most important part of representing it. A big part of that job is to sell our province and local communities, and Vince was dedicated to Niagara in the sense of where he lived and where he came from. Recognizing his heritage, his company hired thousands of Italian immigrants between the 1950s and 1970s.

When Vince Kerrio became the Minister of Energy and Minister of Natural Resources under David Peterson, he bore the distinction, as my colleague Minister Bradley just said, of being the first Italian-Canadian named to the Ontario cabinet, an achievement that his family and the Italian-Canadian community are rightfully proud of to this very day.

His work in Ontario is still evident in 2010. Vince had a very admirable dedication to conservation. His love of fishing and hunting led him, as the MNR minister, to bring fishing licences into the province of Ontario. He was dedicated to replenishing our wildlife throughout our province. He took a tough stand and fought to maintain our province’s water supply and protect the beauty of Ontario’s provincial parks.

Back home and as energy minister, he was a strong proponent of the important value of hydroelectricity, the mighty cataract in his home riding, small projects across the province, and he was a ceaseless champion of the idea of Beck 3, which would bring a third generating station on the Niagara River.

We all know that Vince left politics after the 1990 election, but the respect people had for the work Vince Kerrio did transcended political lines. A rarity in politics: a statesman respected on all sides of the House. To that end, people who faced off from Vince in this Legislature during question period—Premier Mike Harris counted him as a good friend and counsel. I know that Premier Bill Davis was at Vince Kerrio's prayer service last October.

The family he left behind still live in Niagara Falls. His son Vince has followed his father's footsteps into public life, where he serves as a Niagara Falls councillor. On behalf of the community of Niagara Falls and the people who meant so much to Vince Kerrio and my constituents in Niagara West—Glanbrook, I am sorry for their loss and our loss.

As a member of this Legislature, let me repeat the words from the tribute Vince once gave to another former legendary member from Niagara Falls, George Bukator, following Mr. Bukator's passing in 1987. Vince said of Mr. Bukator, "In my city, his name is also synonymous with dedication to the good of our community." Far be it from me to try and say it any better than you did, Vince, but in Niagara Falls, the name Vince Kerrio holds that same dedication, that same reputation: dedication to the community and dedication to our great province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Parkdale—High Park.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's an honour and a privilege to rise for the New Democratic Party and our leader, Andrea Horwath, and to offer condolences and prayers to the family of Vince Kerrio. I wasn't here when Vince was. I wasn't elected at that time. I didn't know him personally. But, like him, in a sense, I'm the daughter of an Italian immigrant, and I remember what my father went through.

I want to particularly focus on Vince as a politician here and Vince as the first Italian cabinet minister in the province of Ontario because, through the stories of my father, I remember very well what it was like to be an Italian in Vince's generation. My father talked about walking in the back door; not being allowed in the front door of various clubs that will go unnamed in the city as a semi-pro boxer. I remember the difficult time my father had dealing with racism directed at the Italian community in this province. I remember my father speaking about all of that, and it giving him a perspective of a new immigrant, particularly a new immigrant in business and all the hurdles that it took to be successful, to make an impact. So in a sense, like all the offspring of Italian immigrants, I in a way knew Vince. I knew of many Vinces in my upbringing.

I particularly pay homage to the sons, to Vince and to Mike, who carry on the family tradition, obviously. To you as well, a great thank you from the province of Ontario and from the New Democratic Party. Thank you because, also as a politician, I know what you've lived with growing up. I know that your father probably wasn't around for some of the events in your life the way you

would have wanted him to be, and I know he wasn't around in those events because he was here, because he was serving the people of Ontario.

When I was first elected four years ago, I had no idea of the workload of this position, and like many Ontarians I had an image of politicians and the role of our MPPs that was absolutely off the mark. In fact, I know your father also because of the work that we do here. We work hard and we work long hours, all of us, all political parties do, particularly cabinet ministers, whose day really never ends. And you know this. You know this as his family, and you know this because you shared him with us. You, in a sense, did a wonderful service to the people of Ontario, not only the people of Niagara Falls but all the people of Ontario, in sharing your father with us.

Rose, who's watching at home: Thank you, Rose, because my husband would ring with your experience of what it's like to be married to somebody who plays this role here, of the nights that you don't see them, the events you go to solo because they're not there. Your family has gifted us with all of that. Thank you so much for that.

**1540**

Really, just a hymn, if this is one in some small way, to all of those who have served this Legislature, because it's too often said that we are at partisan war here and there's too little said that, in fact, we share a great tradition—all parties do; everyone here does—and that is the tradition of full-time service to the people in our constituencies and the people across Ontario.

This is an honourable profession. You shared your father with the people of Ontario in an honourable profession, one of the most honourable professions. Thank you for doing that.

Quite frankly, if you are planning—well, you're already serving in a sense in a political role. We hope to see you here one day perhaps, or perhaps in Ottawa. Who knows? What I would suggest is that, then, you truly carry on one of the most honourable professions for anybody to do and for anybody to perform.

Thank you also for being the family of, again, the first Italian cabinet minister. That's saying a great deal—Italian-Canadian cabinet minister—particularly because of the times in which Vince lived.

Again, condolences, prayers, a hymn to your family and a thank you for sharing your father with us, surely, and for sharing your father with all Ontarians in this noble profession.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** On behalf of all members, I offer our condolences to Mrs. Kerrio at home, and to his sons, Vince and Mike, who are joining us today. A copy of the Hansard and a DVD of the proceedings today will be forwarded to your family.

I'd ask that all members and our guests please rise as we observe a moment of silence and tribute to the career of Mr. Vince Kerrio, MPP.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** This week, we celebrate National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week in Canada. We've provided green ribbons for all MPPs to wear this week to remind Ontarians of the crucial importance of registering their consent to donate organs and tissues for transplantation.

I'm asking MPPs to do more than just wear a ribbon; I'm asking MPPs to register as donors. So pull out your health cards, look on the back and see if you're a donor. If you are a donor, terrific. If not, I'm asking MPPs to visit ServiceOntario to register and ask them to do it today. Giving the gift of life is more important now than ever before.

The need for organ and tissue donations for transplantation continues to be a major concern for many Ontarians. Technological and pharmaceutical advances, an aging population and increasing rates of end-stage organ disease have all created an increased opportunity for organ transplantation.

While Ontario has made solid progress in increasing organ and tissue donations for transplant, with a record-breaking year in 2009, we need more Ontarians to register their consent to donate in order to save and enhance more lives.

Let me share some sobering statistics with you. Currently, there are 1,615 Ontarians waiting for organ transplants, and only 17% of OHIP-eligible Ontarians over 16 years of age are currently registered as willing to donate. We're determined to turn this situation around. That's why we've been working hard to improve the way we collect and share organ and tissue donation-related data.

Our 24/7 look-up program now allows family members of prospective donors to be made aware of their loved one's recorded donation preferences at that very difficult time when they have such an important decision to make.

We're also working to engage faith groups on a three-part strategy: multi-faith services in remembrance of donors, strengthened core activities to engage key faith leaders in communities, and through hospital chaplain training and education.

Pro-donation information has been made available to diverse cultures and different faiths through culturally specific brochures.

Last year, we launched a compelling, engaging and interactive campaign with a new website called recycleme.org, aimed specifically at youth. We've also introduced One Life ... Many Gifts, aimed at raising the level of understanding about organ and tissue donation and transplantation in secondary school classrooms right across the province.

While we've been working hard to improve the situation in Ontario, we know there's more to be done. We want to do all we can to make maximize donations and

increase the number of life-saving organ and tissue transplants. By working hard together, by encouraging people to register their consent to donate, as I have done, and to share their wishes with their families, we can make a huge difference—in fact, a life-saving difference. One donor can save up to eight lives and enhance as many as 75 others.

I urge all members to take the opportunity and remind Ontarians about the urgent need to register their consent to donate their organs or tissue to help people waiting for transplants.

### EARTH DAY

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** This week, we celebrate Earth Week, and tomorrow, April 22, marks Earth Day. While we have reason to celebrate, it is also a good time to reflect on the environmental challenges that we face today.

We've come a long way since that first Earth Day some 40 years ago. As a matter of fact, going on the Earth Day Canada website today, I noticed that there are 174 registered events taking place all across this province and many others besides those that have not been registered.

We simply must go further, and with greater urgency. It will not be our generation who will live with the results of our actions or our failure to act; it will be our children and their children. Our government is deeply committed to ensuring that we leave this province in a better environmental shape than we found it. We know that by fostering a cleaner, more sustainable province, we will help build a stronger, lower-carbon economy.

With our Open Ontario plan, we are making Ontario the place to come to for the environmental solutions and innovations that will create jobs—good jobs—and help transition our economy into one that is more competitive, sustainable, restorative and a better environment for all.

We are showing real leadership and making real progress, and let me just enumerate a number of different areas.

Ontario is the only North American jurisdiction to commit to phasing out coal-fired electricity, the single largest action on greenhouse gas reductions in Canada, by the year 2014.

Our landmark Green Energy and Green Economy Act is making Ontario a North American leader in clean, renewable energy and bringing investment and good jobs to this province.

We also passed a Toxics Reduction Act to prevent sources of pollution at the front end of industrial processes by forcing companies to plan and, as a result, reduce the amount of toxic chemical materials that they use in the manufacturing process.

We've also introduced new or updated air standards for over 50 harmful pollutants over the past five years to help clean the air we breathe.

**1550**

Our cosmetic pesticides ban, which came into force last year on Earth Day, is one of the toughest in the world

and extremely well received by one and all in this province.

We continue to make protecting our water a key priority. Through the Lake Simcoe protection plan, the Clean Water Act, the Canada-Ontario agreement on the Great Lakes and the source water protection work that is being done by 17 different committees around this province, we are making sure our water is the absolute best in the world.

We are moving forward to make Ontario a global leader in the water technology sector as well. As part of our Open Ontario plan, our proposed new water strategy will protect Ontario's water resources and promote good green-economy jobs. We are also committed to increasing diversion and recycling through a review of the Waste Diversion Act, based on the philosophy of zero waste.

During the past couple of years, we have introduced three new waste diversion programs based on extended producer responsibility—if you make it, you take it at the end of its usefulness in life—for municipal hazardous or special waste, such as paints, antifreeze and batteries; a program for used tires to make sure that they don't end up in our landfill sites; and for waste electronics and electrical devices to make sure that they are recycled, reutilized or made into new products effectively.

This Earth Week, I had the opportunity, along with my colleague the Minister of Education, to visit St. Monica Catholic School and see what the boys and girls in an elementary school setting are doing as part of the EcoSchools program that is growing and growing in the province of Ontario to more and more schools—the imaginative work that these young students are doing to help clean up our environment—and also a young lady I met today, Bridget Graham, who is involved with the Renfrew County Youth for the Environment with an organization called EcoPulse at the high school level. Those are the kinds of young people whom we need in order to help us meet our environmental goals.

To me, there's a great way to celebrate Earth Day: By recognizing what our young people are doing to make the world a cleaner and a healthier place to live. They are, after all, tomorrow's leaders. For their sake, on Earth Day and indeed every day, let's commit to taking actions that sustain our province and our planet. Let's create the kind of legacy we can be proud of to leave to the generations to come.

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

#### ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I'm pleased to rise this afternoon on behalf of the PC caucus, along with my colleague the member from Newmarket–Aurora, to respond to the minister's statement concerning National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week.

The minister has asked us to, among other things, wear green ribbons in order to remind all Ontarians of the need to register their consent to donate organs and tissue for transplantation. I am pleased to wear it, and I intend to do so the entire week because I, along with the min-

ister, recognize how critically important it is and how many lives can be saved as a result.

While some progress has been made, Ontario and in fact Canada continue to lag behind many other countries in organ donation. This is particularly frustrating for our health care professionals, who are really trying to save lives, and so poignant for the individuals and their families who know that the technology and expertise exists but in many cases can't be utilized. We can and we must do better, and I join the minister in calling on all Ontarians to rise to this very important challenge.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for Newmarket–Aurora.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I want to follow up on the minister's request for us to wear ribbons and to register as donors. What I would do is call on the minister to take this one step further and not only direct people to Ontario's service centres, but to do this: Provide, on the ServiceOntario websites, a place where people from across this province can go to register as donors, and that that link is directly linked to the Ontario health insurance plan's registry so that through a person's Ontario health insurance plan number, when they register, it will be immediately registered on that OHIP registry. That does not exist today. We can increase registrations by up to 50% simply by the government taking that one step.

We know that it's going to cost about \$1 million of the government's health care budget to ensure that we can increase the gift of life for so many others in the province of Ontario. Will the minister commit to that today?

#### EARTH DAY

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I welcome the opportunity to recognize Earth Week, or at least the last several days of Earth Week. As we know, Earth Week actually began on the 16th, so I'm not sure why it has taken us until midweek for the Legislature to acknowledge this.

I took the opportunity on Monday to discuss not only Earth Week but also the original Earth Day, April 22. I encourage all members to keep that in mind. That's tomorrow.

As we know, the legacy left by those original Earth Day participants—and that was 40 years ago, in 1970—has seen an environmental awareness campaign grow across the globe. Groups, clubs, companies, even governments organize activities to help clean up the landscape while reminding us of the need for continued work and awareness every day of the year.

In my neck of the woods, the Backus conservation area got a jump on Earth Day last Saturday afternoon with a hands-on experience. People gathered to plant trees. In a roughly one-acre area where corn was growing just a few months ago, small white pine and red oak went into the ground. Our local Long Point Region Conservation Authority purchased that land late last year, and they're going to turn it into a combination forestland/wetland and link it up to the rest of the well-known Backus woods. Children and parents were also involved in a pond study, catching frogs and other amphibians.

I'd like to read a quote from the local Simcoe Reformer. Janice Robinson, responsible for community relations with LPRCA, said, "Earth Day is about empowering people to make a difference to improving the environment. Small steps can lead to bigger ones and bigger projects."

That's the important part: ensuring that those steps don't stop on this most recently recognized environmental day. It does little good to dedicate oneself to one day or one hour or one week a year if you're going to forget about it during the other 51 weeks of the year. And, again, don't just focus on the headline-grabbing green targets, for example.

I remind the government: Celebrate Earth Day, continue to set goals, but remain steadfast and keep in mind the rest of the year.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** It's an honour to be able to address this House today about Earth Day, about Earth Week.

As everyone in this chamber is well aware, in the 1960s Rachel Carson wrote her groundbreaking book *Silent Spring*, recognizing the environmental and health impacts of the large-scale global use of pesticides—pesticides that hadn't been known before the 1940s.

In 1969, a river in Ohio burst into flames, and that fire was one whose images were circulated around the world as an image of what was going on.

For many of us in this chamber, we will remember in the 1960s a time of the atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons, and Voice of Women and other groups going out and collecting the teeth of children that had strontium 90 in them. That was a time that gave birth to Earth Day, a time when we were dealing with very visible, substantial and, in some ways, far more comprehensible threats.

Over the generations, people in a variety of ways have fought politically and organized to make a difference. Jim Bradley, who's sitting here in this chamber: His name is synonymous with the fight against acid rain. In the 1980s, his name—and I was active in the environmental movement at that time—was synonymous with that fight, and he used his political authority and power to move forward the cleanup of our environment. I give him credit for that.

We have moved forward on a number of very visible issues, but I have to say to you that even with that, what we face now is far more perilous than what we've seen in the past. Climate change, the almost unchecked growth of emissions into the atmosphere, threatens the stability of our society and frankly the environmental systems that we depend on.

**1600**

This government is moving backwards. This government, with the cuts to Transit City, is going to take its already weak climate action plan and weaken it further. That is not defensible. It is not taking the leap that it needs to take in the west end of Toronto from diesel technology to clean electric. This is a time to make those sorts of leaps, those sorts of changes.

Tonight at Toronto city hall at 6 p.m., people are rallying to save Transit City. I want to say that today, in honour of all those who organized politically in the 1960s,

1970s, 1980s and on and those who today are organizing politically to push, we owe all of them a great deal. They want this society to move forward. They don't want it to stand still; they don't want it to move backward. They want it to move forwards so we can actually deal with the fundamental problems that we face. Those are the people we need to honour in today's hearing.

#### ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's an honour to speak very briefly on national Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week. Let's get this straight: 100 Ontarians die every year because of lack of tissue and organ availability—100. These are preventable deaths. My seatmate and friend Peter Kormos has over and over again brought in a bill talking about presumed consent. Presumed consent means we assume your generosity; we assume you will donate your organs unless you specify otherwise.

Why is this necessary? Because only 17% of Ontarians have signed their health cards to indicate that they're willing to donate. It's not working; the system we have isn't working. Presumed consent does work in Israel, for over 10 years; in western Europe, in eastern Europe—all around the world. Presumed consent saves lives, but not in Ontario.

The question is, when is the McGuinty government going to do something tangible about this other than get up and talk about another week? When are those 100 Ontarians going to stop dying and when is the Ontario McGuinty government going to start acting?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Recognizing that the Speaker doesn't participate in debate and shouldn't have props, I just remind the members that some of us do have an old health card and there's nothing on your old health card. So fill out your little card like this, which you can pick up in a wide variety of locations, and put in it your wallet.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I wanted to bring mine out to show you, but I wasn't allowed to because it was a prop.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I would have allowed it today.

*Laughter.*

**Mr. Frank Klees:** On a point of order, Speaker, and this is only to be constructive: It is important for people to know that just to sign that card means nothing if you have not ensured that that has been registered with OHIP and that your family knows about it. That's why it's so important that the government take that important step to link that registration of those cards.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I thank the honourable member for that, and I will be following up.

#### PETITIONS

##### ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:



“Whereas Ontario families have already given Dalton McGuinty \$15 billion in health taxes, which was wasted on the \$1-billion eHealth scandal; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government is now cutting front-line public health care that will:

“—put independent pharmacies at risk;

“—increase the out-of-pocket fees people pay for their medication and its delivery; and

“—reduce critical patient health care services for seniors and people with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and breathing problems; and

“Whereas, less than a year ago, Premier McGuinty supported expanding the responsibilities of pharmacists as a more cost-effective way to shorten wait times and enhance access to care; and

“Whereas the loss of a pharmacy in rural communities will mean an increased dependence on emergency rooms and family doctors, resulting in longer wait times and reduced access to care;

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

“That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies.”

I support this petition, sign my name to it and send it down with Darcy.

*Interruption.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** It is my understanding that this side of the chamber has been warned that you are very welcome to observe the debate but not participate in the debate in any way. I extend that reminder to all sides.

Not knowing who my colleague warned previously, I will not ask the chambers to be cleared at this time. But if there are any more outbursts by our guests who are visiting us today, the chambers will have to be—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Durham, you know the rules. They apply to everyone.

I will just remind our guests who are here that they not participate.

## TAXATION

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas a duplicated tax system puts our businesses at a disadvantage by increasing the costs of doing business; and

“Whereas a single, unified tax system reduces the burden on businesses by removing the provincial sales tax on goods and reducing administrative costs; and

“Whereas both Conservative and Liberal members of the provincial and federal Legislatures have voiced their support of a single sales tax; and

“Whereas local chambers of commerce, economists and experts are also supporting the move to a single tax system; and

“Whereas the recent RBC Economics report found that the HST is improving the competitiveness of Ontario

businesses by lowering the cost of doing business in Ontario; and

“Whereas a harmonized sales tax is expected to create jobs for Ontario;

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

“That all parties of the provincial Legislature support the government of Ontario’s plan to implement the HST and other tax reforms to benefit Ontario businesses and consumers.”

I agree with this petition, I affix my signature and send it to the table via page Courtney.

## ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

**Mr. Frank Klees:** This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the McGuinty government has announced that it will impose substantial cuts to pharmacies; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty’s cuts will:

“—reduce pharmacy hours during evenings and weekends;

“—increase wait times and lineups for patients;

“—increase the out-of-pocket fees people pay for their medication and its delivery; and

“—reduce critical patient health care services for seniors and people with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and breathing problems; and

“Whereas these cuts will mean that some neighbourhood pharmacies will be forced out of business; and

“Whereas pharmacists are willing to work cooperatively with the government to find ways of reducing the cost of health care services and prescription drugs;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to call on Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Minister of Health to work with Ontario pharmacists to find a fair and reasonable solution to reduce the cost of drugs rather than impose their announced cuts that will have serious consequences to health care services in our community.”

Because I fully support calling on the government to get back to the table and to negotiate a reasonable settlement, I’m pleased to add my signature to this petition.

## FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I have a petition here 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 sign this petition and send it to the table with Andrea.

1610

#### ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

**Mr. Bill Murdoch:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from Shoppers Drug Mart on King Street in Brockville.

“Whereas Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus support public health care and protecting access to front-line care;

“Whereas Ontario families have already given Dalton McGuinty \$15 billion in health taxes, which was wasted on the \$1-billion eHealth scandal. Now the McGuinty Liberals are cutting front-line public health care and putting independent pharmacies at risk;

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty’s cuts will:

“—reduce pharmacy hours during evenings and weekends;

“—increase wait times and lineups for patients;

“—increase the out-of-pocket fees people pay for their medication and its delivery; and

“—reduce critical patient health care services for seniors and people with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and breathing problems;

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

“That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies.”

I have signed this and will give it to Harry.

#### CHRONIC PAIN CLINICS

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas St. Joseph’s Health Centre Toronto has closed four clinics on March 31, 2010. These clinics include after-hours clinics, hearing clinics, cardiac rehab and chronic pain clinics.

“These clinics were mainly serving the seniors, and now a lot of seniors in this area don’t have anywhere to go to find the services in the area which St. Joseph’s Health Centre Toronto is able to serve.

“The chronic pain clinic was closed, giving the patients only two months to find a clinic that would take them. There are approximately 790 patients that still, to this day, haven’t been able to find a clinic that does nerve blocks and epidurals. This is a very specialized field, and some of the large Toronto teaching hospitals don’t do nerve blocks and epidurals.

“These patients are now starting to have severe pain, because their last nerve block is wearing off. These patients will have to start over from the beginning, so that

nerve blocks will make them more comfortable. If they are on disability or covered by a work-related injury, they will have to be on the programs longer.

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to please make room for these clinics in the southwest area of Toronto and open a nerve block and epidural chronic pain clinic that can hold all of the 790 patients that are in severe pain right now.”

I agree with this petition, affix my signature and give it to Georgina to deliver.

#### TAXATION

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

“Whereas a duplicated tax system puts our businesses at a disadvantage by increasing the costs of doing business; and

“Whereas a single, unified tax system reduces the burden on businesses by removing the provincial sales tax on goods and reducing administrative costs; and

“Whereas both Conservative and Liberal members of the provincial and federal Legislatures have voiced their support of a single sales tax; and

“Whereas local chambers of commerce, economists and experts are also supporting the move to a single tax system; and

“Whereas the recent RBC Economics report found that the HST is improving the competitiveness of Ontario businesses by lowering the cost of doing business in Ontario; and

“Whereas a harmonized sales tax is expected to create jobs for Ontario;

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

“That all parties of the provincial Legislature support the government of Ontario’s plan to implement the HST and other tax reforms to benefit Ontario businesses and consumers.”

I have signed this petition.

#### ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

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

“Whereas the Ontario government is cutting front-line health care at pharmacies, which could mean higher prices, less service and even store closures for us,

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

“Stop the cuts to front-line health care at our pharmacies now.”

As I am in agreement, I have signed this and give it to page Darcy.

#### FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

**Mr. Pat Hoy:** “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....”

I too have signed this petition.

#### ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Petitions continue to come in from Haldimand–Norfolk.

“Whereas the Ontario government is cutting front-line health care at pharmacies, which could mean higher prices, less service and even store closures for us;

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

“Stop the cuts to front-line health care at our pharmacies now.”

I fully agree and affix my signature to this petition.

#### MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

“Whereas we currently have no psychiatric emergency service at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre in Thunder Bay, Ontario;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to support the creation of a psychiatric emergency service in emergency at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre in Thunder Bay, Ontario.”

I support this petition and will put my signature to it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Start the clock. I’d just remind members that photocopied petitions are not allowed. They need to be certified by the table, please.

#### ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

**Mr. John Yakubuski:** I can assure you these are not photocopied. I thank Sheila Kimberley of Aikenhead’s pharmacy in Renfrew for sending these down to me—a wonderful community pharmacist in my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario families have already given Dalton McGuinty \$15 billion in health taxes, which was wasted on the \$1-billion eHealth scandal; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government is now cutting front-line public health care that will:

“—put independent pharmacies at risk;

“—increase out-of-pocket fees people pay for their medication and its delivery; and

“—reduce critical patient health care services for seniors and people with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and breathing problems; and,

“Whereas, less than a year ago, Premier McGuinty supported expanding the responsibilities of pharmacists as a more cost-effective way ‘to shorten wait times and enhance access to care’; and

“Whereas the loss of a pharmacy in rural communities will mean an increased dependence on emergency rooms and family doctors, resulting in longer wait times and reduced access to care;

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

“That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies.”

I sign this petition in support of it and send it down with Mitchell.

#### EPILEPSY

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** “Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas more than 300,000 Canadians have epilepsy and some of the leading epilepsy organizations in Ontario have already proposed improvements in specialized care for those afflicted with epilepsy, and there is a need for improved access to these programs;

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

“Improve access to epilepsy care programs by developing and establishing highly specialized epilepsy treatment centres in Ontario.”

I agree with this petition, affix my signature and give it to Andrea to be delivered.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Glen R. Murray:** “Whereas a duplicated tax system puts our businesses at a disadvantage by increasing the costs of doing business; and

“Whereas a single, unified tax system reduces the burden on businesses by removing the provincial sales tax on goods and reducing administrative costs; and

“Whereas both Conservative and Liberal members of the provincial and federal Legislatures have voiced their support of a single sales tax; and

“Whereas local chambers of commerce, economists and experts are also supporting the move to a single” sales “tax system; and

“Whereas the recent” Royal Bank of Canada “Economics report found that the HST is improving the competitiveness of Ontario ... by lowering the cost of doing business in” this province; “and

“Whereas a harmonized sales tax is expected to create jobs for Ontario;

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

“That all parties of the provincial Legislature support the government of Ontario’s plan to implement the HST

and other tax reforms to benefit Ontario businesses and consumers.”

I add my name to the petition and give it to page Carrington.

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

## OPPOSITION DAY

### PHARMACISTS

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I move that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario calls upon the Premier of Ontario to guarantee that Ontario seniors will not have to pay increased prices or have services reduced as a result of cuts the McGuinty Liberals made to front-line health care delivered by independent local pharmacists, announced on April 7, 2010.

This is addressed to the Premier of Ontario.

1620

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Debate?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I'm pleased to rise today on behalf of the PC caucus to initiate debate on a matter of significant importance to Ontarians. I'm also pleased that a number of community pharmacists have joined us in the gallery today because they too are concerned about the cuts to front-line health care that will be achieved as a result of these changes.

In our view, the McGuinty government's proposed pharmacy reforms are a knee-jerk reaction to their sudden realization that our health care system is under siege. We all know that health care counts for approximately 46% of the Ontario budget and is growing rapidly, to the point that 70% of the budget will be taken up by health care costs within the next 10 years or so unless something changes. In the last decade, the Ontario government's health expenditure cost curve has grown by an average of 7.7% per year. According to a recent report entitled *Ideas and Opportunities for Bending the Health Care Cost Curve: Advice for the Government of Ontario*, which was prepared by the Ontario Hospital Association, the Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Programs and the Ontario Association of Community Care Access Centres, the major categories of expenditures have grown on average as follows: (1) hospital expenditures, 6.5% per year; (2) physician expenditures, 7.8% per year; (3) public health expenditures, 12.7% per year; (4) other institutions, including long-term-care homes, 7.2% per year; (5) drug expenditures, 9.2% per year.

Clearly, there is work to be done on a number of fronts in managing health care costs. But the report also notes, and this is significant, that “it must be recognized, however, that while there are pressures to find short-term solutions, there are few quick and easy” answers left. The PC caucus entirely agrees. There is no question that we need to reduce the cost of generic drugs, and we also agree that the system of professional allowances that was

put in place by this government, I should say, should be eliminated. The PC caucus does not dispute that, nor do the pharmacists. However, the changes proposed by the McGuinty Liberals are not a rational response to these issues.

The fact of the matter is that there is currently no overall pharma plan in Ontario. What we are seeing with these changes is nothing more than an attempt at a quick and easy fix to a complex problem so they can say to the people of Ontario, “Look, we were able to lower drug costs and save \$750 million.” They want us to believe that this can all be done with no harm to front-line health care in Ontario. If they really believe that, then they should be supporting this motion, but I rather doubt that they will. That's because the McGuinty Liberals know that these changes will only result in cutbacks to front-line care in Ontario, which will be particularly hard on seniors and people living with chronic illnesses.

The McGuinty Liberals are proposing to take \$750 million from our health care system and are forcing those costs onto the backs of Ontario's pharmacists. That's not good public policy, and it's grossly unfair. Pharmacists have repeatedly stated that the proposed changes will force them to dramatically scale back on the health care services they provide to people in communities across Ontario on a daily basis. These services include blood pressure monitoring, diabetes counselling, free prescription delivery and one-on-one counselling on drug interactions.

I've also been advised that many pharmacists work with seniors who are unable to make the copayment of \$200 per year and simply eat this cost in order to allow seniors to be able to access health care and medications. Other pharmacies—and the fact of the matter is that those pharmacies that can't survive by cutting back on their costs are simply going to have to close. In fact, it has been estimated that up to 300 community pharmacies will be forced to close their doors. The unfortunate part of all of this is that it didn't have to be this way. These changes didn't have to be brought forward and basically foisted on pharmacists and people in the province of Ontario. But the government didn't want to listen. Ontario's pharmacists brought forward a rational and comprehensive plan in the discussions leading up to this announcement that was made in April of this year, but their plans and proposals were simply dismissed out of hand by this government. The changes being made by the government now were a fait accompli. They didn't want to hear what the pharmacists had to say. No meaningful discussions ensued; therefore, we're left with the mess that we are in right now.

Had the McGuinty government listened, they would have realized that the pharmacists have a comprehensive plan to reduce the price of generic drugs, to phase out the professional allowances, and to deal with many other important issues affecting front-line health care, all without vilifying pharmacists, putting people out of work and taking away the valuable health care services provided every day by pharmacists across Ontario. Many of these services are provided to seniors and vulnerable Ontar-

ians, many of whom don't have a family physician. So what's going to happen as a result of these changes? More and more people are going to be forced into already overcrowded emergency rooms and physicians' offices, at least for those of them who actually have a family physician. The cost of this will be significant—it hasn't been factored into this equation—and, I would suggest, will virtually wipe out any perceived savings as a result.

At the end of the day, it's clear that the pharmacy changes proposed by the McGuinty government don't present a real solution to any of the problems in our system. Quite the contrary; they only create more problems.

What needs to be done? I think the answer is pretty clear. This government needs to listen to Ontario's pharmacists and work collaboratively with them to develop solutions that will protect health care for all Ontarians and not cut it. That's why we're calling upon the McGuinty government, and particularly the Minister of Health, to get back to the table, to listen to what the pharmacists are saying, and to engage in real and meaningful discussions with Ontario pharmacists that will present real, practical solutions for all Ontarians that will protect our health care and not cut it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I'm pleased to rise as the leader of the official opposition and leader of the Ontario PC Party to say exactly where the Ontario PC caucus stands on the issue of Dalton McGuinty's plan to cut front-line pharmacy care.

The Ontario PC caucus stands with Ontario families, the Ontario PC caucus stands with Ontario seniors, and we stand with the worried moms and dads who are going to fight Dalton McGuinty's plans to close down neighbourhood pharmacies in our province each and every step of the way.

I'm pleased to say that our Ontario PC caucus stands for the protection of front-line health care services that Ontario families depend upon each and every day, at home in our communities, by the people we know and trust: Ontario's hard-working pharmacists. We stand behind them.

Since Dalton McGuinty's announcement to cut front-line services provided by pharmacies, our offices have been swamped with letters, postcards and petitions from concerned citizens. My own constituency office in Niagara West–Glanbrook has received more than 1,000 emails, postcards and names on petitions from families, seniors and those chronically ill patients who are worried about Dalton McGuinty's plan to cut front-line health care in their community.

We stand with our concerned family members who benefit from deliveries of prescriptions, who benefit from free clinics on diabetes, advice on medication, and open stores late at night when their son or daughter comes down with a fever—services provided each and every day, weekends and holidays, by Ontario's hard-working neighbourhood pharmacists; services they provide for all of us here in the House.

**1630**

There are people in the communities we trust to give us the right advice on prescriptions, to tell us what over-the-counter medications we should be giving our kids. There are people we trust to help explain issues that face our health, and face the health of elderly parents or grandparents.

As the member for Niagara West–Glanbrook, I'm proud to stand behind Scott Penner, who owns a pharmacy in my riding in the small town of Fonthill.

I'm proud to stand with Tom Betts, a constituent of mine from Grimsby and a pharmacist who has served the people of our province for 37 years. Mr. Betts contacted my office to say this about Dalton McGuinty's plans. Dalton McGuinty's plans "will in fact reduce accessibility to professional services/advice from the most accessible health care professional in our entire system."

We stand with Ontario's seniors, such as Gerald Hartley of Mount Hope, and families and patients from small towns like Terrace Bay, where pharmacist Chris Stewart fears the McGuinty cuts mean he will no longer be able to afford free fittings of orthopedic devices or, as he does in his job, give free medication and services to the working poor.

We stand with our pharmacists in cities like Toronto and in London, like Scott Coulter, whose family pharmacy has been operating in the health minister's hometown of London since 1973. Scott Coulter provides after-hours emergency services for young parents, for senior citizens, but with Dalton McGuinty's cuts, he questions whether he will be able to continue providing those services.

The Ontario PC caucus stands with CARP chairman Bruce Draper from Windsor–Essex, who says that "the McGuinty government's health care cuts are going to hurt seniors."

Pharmacists, by nature, are not political operatives. They're not protestors. They're not agitators. They simply want to go to work, to put on that lab coat and help local families and seniors with their health care needs. They work those long hours and weekends, and they provide services every day that keep Ontario seniors, families and the chronically ill from having to access more expensive parts of our health care system.

So where do we go from here? We're calling upon Dalton McGuinty to set aside his plans of cuts to pharmacy and work instead to ensure seniors have the comfort in knowing that the pharmacist they've relied upon for so many years will be there to help them monitor their prescriptions and give them advice on the different drugs and how they interact. He should be choosing, instead, to support front-line care to make sure that deliveries to senior's homes and for the chronically ill will continue. He should be choosing to ensure that Ontario families, seniors and patients won't be left with the prospect of reduced pharmacy hours on evenings or weekends, increased wait times or lineups or increased out-of-pocket fees for deliveries and health care seminars.

We call on Dalton McGuinty today to sit down with Ontario pharmacists, who have put good ideas on the table to reduce the cost of drugs, to maintain and strengthen the pharmacy services Ontario families rightly deserve.

I support the excellent work of my colleague, our health critic and deputy leader, Christine Elliott, and join in the call of this House to guarantee that Ontario's seniors will not have to pay increased prices or have services reduced as a result of the cuts the McGuinty Liberals have made to the front-line health care delivered by independent local pharmacies. And I hope to see my colleagues across the floor support this good motion.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's an honour and a privilege to rise on behalf of the New Democratic Party as their small business critic in support of the motion put forward by the PC Party, and I'm going to tell you why.

First of all, I want to set the stage a little bit as small business critic, because I think this is part of a larger war on small business that the McGuinty government has been waging for some time now. On Saturday evening, the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas celebrated 40 years of wonderful work in our communities across Ontario. The very first BIA in the world happened to start in my own riding on Bloor West, and they have been standing up for small business ever since.

We in the New Democratic Party hosted a press conference for TABIA to come here—this is going back a ways—to protest the introduction of the HST, because it's going to hurt small business as well as pharmacists. It's going to hurt all small business; 85% of their members are opposed to it. We had a press conference here, and the government wouldn't even meet with them.

Many of us remember the fact that many small independent butcher shops went out of business when this government brought in onerous regulations that cost the average butcher shop somewhere on the order of what it is going to cost pharmacists—\$200,000 to \$300,000—to meet the regulations. Most of them went out of business. It was ostensibly done for health reasons too. However, listeriosis didn't start with small independent butchers; it started with Maple Leaf Foods.

Over and over again, we see this government taking the part of big business over small business. This is another instance of exactly that, of course spun very differently, and I'm going to talk about how it's spun very differently. It's not the first time they have attacked small independent pharmacies either. I remember the WSIB regulations, where only some pharmacies—guess who, guess where—could process WSIB prescriptions. Not my local independent pharmacist; another attack on local, independent pharmacists on behalf of large chain pharmacies. This is what this government does.

The very symbol of what this government does is the fact that in the recent cabinet shuffle, they don't even have a minister in charge of small business anymore. They just eliminated small business right out of the portfolios—no small business ministry portfolio. That's

what this government has done for small business. Over and over again, we are seeing bankruptcies of all sorts of small businesses across our communities because of the actions of this government.

We in the New Democratic Party stand up for Main Street over Bay Street. We stand up for Main Street over the mall. Whether in rural Ontario, northern Ontario or downtown Toronto, we want to see vibrant Main Streets exist. We want to support young and small entrepreneurs. Guess where big business comes from? It comes from small entrepreneurs who grow into large ones.

This government is doing nothing to help small business, and let us not forget that small business accounts for 90% of the jobs in Ontario. That's the general atmosphere at Queen's Park ever since the McGuinty Liberals got elected. This is just another aspect of that attack.

Then we move to the direct attack on independent pharmacists. I want to highlight a letter I received from Dan Yurchuk, from High Park Pharmacy in my riding. He says: "I have calculated that this funding cutback will cost my pharmacy over \$200,000. I have no idea of how to absorb this loss without a drastic cut to the services we provide our patients, the reduction of staff and pharmacists and increased charges to my patients. I'm scrambling to figure out what to do."

I don't get it. What is the point of this measure? Has the government not sat down with small business—with small pharmacists—to talk about this? Have they not listened? These are health care workers whom this government has really declared war on with this measure. It's outrageous.

You've got to love the spin on this that's played out in the press: This is about saving patients money, and this is against Big Pharma. Give me a break. Come on. We all know that 76% of the drugs out there are patent drugs; they're not generic drugs. That's 24% of the drugs against 76%. This government isn't taking on Big Pharma; they're taking on an indigenous industry of generic drug manufacturing in this province. They're going to cost 9,000 jobs just from the generic drugs. My goodness, that's what they're doing. They're not taking on Big Pharma; they're taking on generic drug manufacturing here. Give me a break. The spin is absolutely out of whack. It has no bearing on the reality of the situation—absolutely out of whack.

**1640**

Quite frankly, we in the New Democratic Party, and I'm sure the pharmacists who are here, are in favour of reduced drug costs. Of course we are. There are other ways of getting there without putting independent pharmacists out of business. There are lots of other ways of getting there. My goodness.

As you've heard, these might even raise costs. We as a party federally have proposed a national policy of pharmacare. European countries have it; others have it. We certainly believe that everyone should have access to the drugs they need, the prescriptions they need, but you don't do that by putting independent pharmacies out of business.

Quite frankly, who's going to gain from this? It's going to be the big pharmacies. The big pharmacy chains are going to gain from this, because they sell everything else, as well as prescriptions. They'll gain. They can weather the storm. The Minister of Health knows this. Her brother-in-law sits on the board of Shoppers Drug Mart. She knows they're going to weather the storm. They'll do just fine, and they will do better, quite frankly, because they will have driven all their competition out of business.

Guess what? Guess what happens when you drive competition out of a market. We know that prices go up because they can, because there isn't competition. That's what happens. That's what they are doing.

It's interesting. For one of my local pharmacies, I was happy to go to the ribbon-cutting—I guess I'm going to be going to its closing now too—on Roncesvalles Avenue. He said to me, "If you go into Shoppers, it costs \$11.99 for dispensing fees. I charge a \$9.99 dispensing fee." Think about it. Think about it purely from a competitive aspect.

Again, the spin has nothing to do with the reality of this move—nothing to do with it.

The motion is well put. It's to guarantee that Ontario seniors will not have to pay increased prices. Please. I mean, my goodness. Just like my friend from Whitby–Oshawa, I assume the government is going to vote against this. I assume that what the government is basically going to say is that they are not going to guarantee that Ontario's seniors will not have to pay increased prices or have services reduced.

That, quite frankly, leads me to another issue, and that is the attack on seniors in this province by this government. This government has not only attacked small business; they've also attacked seniors in a variety of ways. The HST is going to affect seniors because they live on fixed incomes. They are going to pay more in utilities; they are going to pay more at point of purchase. They are going to pay more, and they know it. They know it. Seniors are going to pay more. They know it. Come on. And their salaries, many of them living on fixed incomes that are geared to the interest rates in the market, have been suffering already during the recession. They see their incomes going down.

A simple little measure for seniors is on the motion paper. It's been there forever; I put it forward. It's simply to let our seniors get into galleries and museums for free. It used to be the case in Ontario that they could do that. A simple little measure like that—nothing doing. Nothing doing there for seniors.

Certainly for my seniors, and we see them often in my constituency office, this is not their issue. Their issue is how to pay the rent. Their issue is the lack of affordable housing. Their issue is long-term care—where did it go?—and the lack of care in long-term-care homes. Their issues are all of the above. Honestly, not one senior has ever walked into my office and said, "I think pharmacists should go out of business because I want to pay less for generic drugs." That has never happened yet in my office. But we've heard from them on a host of other

issues that have to do with health care, especially long-term care, retirement homes etc., and seeing this government absent on all of those other issues that are critical and important to seniors.

Let's make no mistake about it: If the government votes against this motion, what they're saying is that maybe Ontario seniors will have to pay increased prices or have services reduced. In fact, possibly that's what they're in favour of. That's what they are voting for. When they vote against this motion, we want to be very clear about what it is that they are against. It's very clear that they're against independent pharmacies—that's obvious. They wouldn't be sitting here today if it wasn't the case.

It's hard to know where to begin and where to end with the McGuinty Liberals. I'm going to leave some room and some time, because I believe my benchmate is coming back, but suffice to say—oh, I should touch on one thing, too: the \$100-million promised fund for pharmacies that hasn't really been announced, and we have no idea, really, of the extent to which this will offset the withdrawal of current funding. Again, that's a hallmark of this government, these kind of vague promises that they put out there about—"Don't worry," they say, "we'll take care of you. Something will happen last minute to prevent you all from going out of business."

We've heard that before, have we not, friends in this House? Have we not heard that before? I heard that before Karl's butcher shop closed on Roncesvalles. It's still closed. I heard that before on children's aid societies, which are mandated to provide care, before the government came in with just enough to keep some of them open, not all of them open. Right up to the last minute with daycare centres, they were pointing fingers at the federal government before they, at the last minute, gave just enough money just to barely keep them open. Still, many of them are worried about closing because of the implementation possibly of full-day learning, which we support, but again, badly implemented, badly thought out, no consultation—the usual.

It is interesting—a couple of challenges to the government that I actually would like answers on. One of them is: Why did you get rid of small business as a ministry, as a portfolio interest? Why? I just would love an answer to that question. It's shocking to me.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Not a priority for this government, Cheri.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I guess, obviously. Certainly, my main streets are feeling the impact of this government. That's number one.

Number two: Did they not think of the ramifications of this move on independent pharmacists before they brought it in? Did they not consult? Did they not listen to health care workers called pharmacists? They are health care workers, you know. Did they not listen to them? Is this news to this government?

I guess, finally, because they must know the impact, particularly those of you who have one or two pharmacies in your communities, and people are going to have to travel sometimes hundreds of kilometres to get to

one, particularly those members—I'd like to hear what they really intend to do, because they're making kind of vague allusions to, "Yes, don't worry about it. We'll help you out. Don't worry; you won't have to close." I would like to actually know what it is they're going to do. What are the exact steps that this government is going to take to prevent this catastrophe from happening?

Three simple answers.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Yes. I hear, over here, talk about transit. I'm here. In an hour, some of our benchmates will be at Transit City in Toronto, where this government promised \$4 billion, and then—gone. Plans were done. They were about to order new cars. They were about to build light rail transit, and then, bang—gone.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It was a promise; exactly. It was a promise on behalf of Dalton McGuinty. City hall will be packed with people who wonder what happened to that promise, because we're Torontonians. That's great; now we're going to deal with seniors, who have difficulty often with mobility issues—they are going to not have the subways promised, not have the light rail promised, not have the transit promised to get to the non-existent local pharmacy to get their non-existent prescription.

This is insanity. It has nothing—I'll repeat, absolutely nothing—to do with the government fighting Big Pharma on behalf of consumers. We have to say that over and over again because of the spin on this. It has absolutely nothing to do with the government fighting Big Pharma. Big Pharma is not even in this picture. They're not even in this picture.

1650

We're talking about an indigenous Ontario industry you're driving out of business. We're talking about generic drug manufacturing, not patent drug manufacturing. We're talking about independent pharmacists, not huge multinational chains. That's what we're talking about.

And we're talking in this motion about seniors. We're asking you simply to guarantee one very simple thing—one very simple, ethical thing—and that is: Don't hurt our seniors in doing this. If you can't even guarantee that, it's a very sad day in Ontario.

At any rate, I'll leave it at that. Suffice to say, another day, another Dalton McGuinty day: another day of broken promises, another day of lack of consultation, another day of a war on small business, another day of ignoring seniors and other health care needs in our community—another Liberal day in Ontario.

Thank you, member from Whitby–Oshawa, for bringing forward this motion. We certainly support it. We certainly support lower drug prices, but not this way, folks. We certainly support help for seniors; this isn't going to do it. We certainly support, on this side of the House, small business, but this is an absolute war on small business.

Please answer my questions: Where did small business go? What exact measures are you going to take to stop this catastrophe? Exact measures: when, where, how

much. We'd like to know and they'd like to know how their businesses are going to be saved.

I'm interested in the senior piece too, whether you're actually going to vote against a guarantee that this isn't going to cost seniors more. I'm interested in that too.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I welcome the opportunity to speak to this very, very important issue that we are dealing with in Ontario right now.

I'd like to start by welcoming the pharmacists who are here today. I want you to know that we support the work you do. We consider you to be vital members of our health service delivery team. We actually want to pay you directly for providing services that customers need. That's why we expanded your scope of practice under Bill 159, and it's why we are putting \$150 million—\$100 million of that is new money—into paying pharmacists directly for services to customers.

I also want to welcome, in the opposition members' gallery, Mark Valesano, executive vice-president of Shoppers Drug Mart. Welcome, Mark, today.

The Leader of the Opposition has suggested that we sit down and talk to pharmacists about this plan. I would love nothing more than to do that. We have some important decisions to make about how we are going to allocate that \$150 million, plus the \$24 million to support rural pharmacists.

However, I'm very sorry to inform you that the Ontario Pharmacists' Association—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member for Renfrew, the odd quip is tolerated, but just a continuous dialogue isn't.

Minister.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The Ontario Pharmacists' Association has actually cancelled two scheduled meetings with us. I received a letter today saying that the proposed April 23 meeting would be premature, and in fact, they suggest that we postpone the meeting until after May 15.

I want to repeat: I want to sit down with pharmacists. I want to talk to them about how we will allocate the significant dollars, the many millions of dollars, to support pharmacists in doing their work. We have posted the regulations and we look forward to hearing from pharmacists their reaction to those regulations.

I think it's important that we remember why it is we are making these changes. We are making them for patients. We are making them for hard-working Ontarians who are paying far too much for generic drugs. And we're making these changes for taxpayers, who deserve a government that will stand up for them when they are not getting good value for their money. We pay far too much for our prescription drugs, as much as five times as much as some US states pay for the most popular generic drugs for diabetes, for high blood pressure and for other common health conditions.

By far, the biggest reason that we are paying such inflated prices for generic drugs is these so-called profes-



sional allowances, the payments paid by generic companies to pharmacies in exchange for stocking their products on their shelves. By eliminating these professional allowances, we will be able to cut the cost of drugs by 50% and more. We will also be able to clean up a system that has been open to widespread abuse.

I heard the member opposite talk about also wanting to eliminate these professional allowances. Tomorrow, Bill 16, the budget bill, comes up for second reading. I hope you will vote to eliminate the professional allowances tomorrow, when you have that opportunity.

The elimination of the professional allowances will generate savings that we will be able to reinvest in new drugs, more drugs, and also use to increase the directed compensation for Ontario's pharmacists. Professional allowances, as I say, are payments that we started to address in Bill 102 in 2006. They are supposed to be used to support direct patient care. However, according to their own audited numbers, 70% of the money that pharmacies receive in professional allowances is not being spent on that direct patient care; only 30% of the money received in professional allowances is going where it was intended to go. That is simply unacceptable. They have been used to increase the bottom line of pharmacies, including, of course, the big chain drugstores. Our government's reforms will clean up the abuse, eliminate the unaccountable system, increase direct payments to pharmacists for the valued services they provide and deliver less-costly drugs for Ontario's patients and seniors.

We know that our very well-trained pharmacists provide a most valuable and necessary service for Ontarians. Through these reforms, our government is ensuring that pharmacists are fairly compensated for helping patients by increasing dispensing fees and paying for those additional services provided to patients. I also want to make clear that we have a special \$24 million set aside to support rural pharmacies, pharmacies in those areas where there may be only one or two pharmacies in a community. We will increase their dispensing fee even more.

As I said, we are committed to paying pharmacists directly for many of the services that they are claiming they will have to eliminate. Programs like MedsCheck will continue. We are prepared to pay them for their services. We want to sit down with them and talk to them about what services they can and will provide and how much would be fair compensation for them.

The party opposite is on the side of big pharmacies and nobody else. They are on the side of rebates; we are on the side of lower prices. Even the federal Competition Bureau understands that this rebate system is driving up the cost of drugs and padding the profits of big chain stores. I don't know why you have chosen the side of big chain drugstores, but I can tell you that we have chosen the side of lower drug prices for all Ontarians.

We're putting money back in the system. We're increasing transparency. We're on the side of people with cancer. We're on the side of people with diabetes. We're on the side of people who need those drugs. I am proud to take the position I have taken.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I want to begin my remarks by saying I wish I had a lot more time; I only have three minutes because my colleagues want to speak to this as well.

But I want to start off by reading the words of a constituent who is here today, Mrs. Aziza Amarshi. Here's what she said to me in an email: "All we are asking the government to do is pay us fairly for our services. We are asking the government to negotiate, not legislate." I believe that the problem we have here is as much about how the government has conducted itself with this profession as it is about the consequences of their action.

**1700**

For the government to have been involved in negotiations with this profession for a number of months, and then, at the very last minute, to bail on that and simply announce a measure that is going to strip away, on average, \$300,000 out of the average-size pharmacy in this province is unconscionable. There is not a business in this province that could sustain having \$300,000 of revenue stripped out of its bottom line overnight. This industry, in its negotiations, has offered to work with the government and, over the next four years, reduce costs by some \$1.3 billion. That was a co-operative effort. There were a number of mechanisms involved in that proposal, and the government chose to ignore that.

This is much more about the battle between the government and the pharmacists of this province. It is a fundamental principle of the government of this province interfering in commercial terms by legislation. This is a principle that this House cannot ignore, because my question to the people in this province is: Which profession and which business is next in the crosshairs of this government? It doesn't respect them sufficiently to negotiate on this very important issue and, overnight, has no conscience about the consequences to their businesses or the consequences to the patients that they serve on the front line.

We stand with the pharmacists on this. We're calling for the government to get back to the table to negotiate a reasonable settlement, a reasonable commercial term under which these important health care deliverers can in fact do their job, meet the needs of people in our community, and have the self-respect that they so deserve as important health care professionals. It's unconscionable how this government is conducting itself with these people.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate? The minister of industry, trade and commerce.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** Thank you so much—and small business, I'm very proud to say.

Let me say today that I'm very happy to have an opportunity to speak to the constituents of Windsor West. Compliments of some of Big Pharma, some of which we have represented here in the House, we've had an opportunity to have an entire ad placed in my local newspaper, and I want to thank you for that. And the executive vice-president is here. I think my constituents just wanted to

know that you paid for that ad, because that might have tainted a little bit how they would interpret the kind of data that you chose to put in that newspaper about their local MPP. Because what you said was that we've cut health care in my community. There isn't anyone in my community who could actually be in Windsor to compare when I started in 1995 as an MPP to today. It has been a revolution of driving health care and bringing services to my community. It has been my lifeblood as a local MPP, and that is why today's debate is so important—

**Mr. Frank Klees:** On a point of order, Speaker: I believe that it is highly inappropriate and against the standing orders of this place for a member to stand in her place and debate with a member of the audience.

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

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I ask—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I've heard your point of order. I'll direct the minister to speak through the Chair, please.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I'll tell you what's inappropriate. Inappropriate is advertising that is filled with lies. And I'll tell you—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I ask the minister to withdraw that.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I withdraw.

I am convinced that the people of Windsor West will know: Why would Sandra not be comfortable with an ad on a full page of the paper that puts my picture, and not a very good one, I might add—but anyway, you probably did that one on purpose. But you know what? It's about the message to my constituents.

My question is this—and I have asked this question for a number of years. Many people in the drug industry, especially Big Pharma, might know this question, and it is this: Why is Ontario, as the largest buyer of drugs in Canada, the second-largest in the world, paying the highest prices? When I go home and talk to my neighbours in my neighbourhood, when I go home and talk to those retirees, people who have worked all their lives to be seniors today to access a health system, they're going to ask that one question. They're going to say, "Why is Ontario paying so much for those drugs?"

Do you know who else asked that question over the years since I've been in this House? Jim Wilson, former Minister of Health; Liz Witmer, former Minister of Health; Dave Johnson, former Minister of Health—you'd kind of forget him; he was only there for a few months. All the former ministers since I've been in my place have tried to do the right thing and bring Ontario in line with paying the kind of prices we should pay.

When you compare other places like Europe, even they cumulatively don't have a large account like the Ontario government. We need to get a better value for those drugs. When we finally talk about health care, when we have made the significant investments we have, in particular in a community like Windsor and in Essex county, which the Speaker will know so well, it is imperative that we come up with the value discussion.

That is why I too have emails from my constituents: "I congratulate your government for finally taking action on the issue of pharmacy rebates from generic drug manufacturers and inflated Canadian generic drug prices." Thank you. Without that ad in the local newspaper, people might not have known we're actually doing the right thing.

And for the number of pharmacists who are calling my office—and some of them have—because they want to have a meeting with me, let me tell you this. I want to have a meeting with them, and I want to ask them these questions: Explain to me how I could possibly go to my neighbourhood, how I could possibly go back to my constituents and say, after we have spent so many millions in my community to bring in so many new programs in health care, that despite a massive deficit we're facing since we got over the last one, compliments of the Conservative government, we are turning our attention to value, and that we are going to have to address this across the whole of the health system, not just drugs. Drugs are just a part of this.

What we need to do is address what the pharmacists should be paid for. When you go on their website and look at the kind of work they do, the kind of work they could do because of the skill set they have, that's the conversation the government needs to engage in with the pharmacists.

The pharmacists need to come to the table to have that conversation. "Are you supposed to be giving injections, because you can; refilling prescriptions without having to go back to the primary care in the system?" This is an imperative discussion to have. And to think—

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I heard the minister say she is the minister of small business, yet it says here that she's the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** What she's the minister responsible for is not my purview.

Minister?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I think it's really important for me to tell my constituents that we are looking at value for the taxpayers of Ontario. When we pay for drugs, we want the best price. I'm not embarrassed to say we want a better price. If that means the elimination of professional allowances, to replace that with something that is imperative that the pharmacists ought to have in their hands to show value for the work they do as pharmacists, let that conversation begin. That conversation hasn't started.

It's not fair to say, "The professional allowance is gone. What's coming in its place?" Come to the table and have that conversation, but do not go to the general public and tell half the story when the other half would shock and appal most constituents across Ontario when they know that we pay outrageous prices and that we, Ontario, are the second-largest buyer of drugs in the world.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'm pleased to be able to join the debate today on my colleague's resolution to save Ontario pharmacies. The member for Whitby—Oshawa, our party's health critic, has clearly outlined the health concerns caused by this government's attacks on pharmacies. As our party's critic for small business, I want to speak to the economic effects on pharmacies, large and small.

In light of the debate that has gone on, and in recognition of the amount of time we have as a caucus, I'm going to reduce my comments to what I consider to be the most important part of this. As I am the critic for small business, I've looked at it with that lens, and I've had many, many pharmacists in my constituency call me.

**1710**

But what becomes clear to me is the fact that what we're talking about are three things for pharmacists. The first one is the rejection of the negotiation process. The fact that people were working together—the pharmacists were working together to ensure that they had an opportunity to present a credible plan to the government. The second is the betrayal of this government to make unilateral decisions; the fact that people grow up in this country expecting their government to consult, expecting the government to respect expertise. Thirdly, this has led to a fear of the future. Those pharmacists and those community members who have written, petitioned and called me: They fear for the viability of the pharmacy in the community.

That's why we are here, and that's why we wanted to make sure we had today's opportunity to bring this to debate. The time is now. The government must listen to pharmacists and stop this destructive plan.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** In the brief time that I have left, I want to raise some issues which I raised the other day. My constituency is the largest geographic constituency in the province—40% of the geography in one constituency. There are a number of small towns—towns like Sioux Lookout, Red Lake, Rainy River, Emo—where there is one pharmacy. It's a small community pharmacy, and in many cases—most cases—it's the owner/operator of the pharmacy. When I talk with those people operating the pharmacies in Rainy River, Emo, Sioux Lookout and Red Lake, they're very direct; they say that this government's legislation is going to put them out of business.

This might not seem to upset people in Toronto too much, except that the nearest pharmacy to Red Lake would be 200 kilometres away, and in the winter the 200-kilometre drive becomes easily a three-hour drive. The closest alternative pharmacy to Rainy River would be Emo. When I talk to the pharmacist who owns the small community pharmacy there, he says, "This, too, will close me." So they would end up travelling almost 100 kilometres to the next community to a pharmacy.

When you talk with people about this, when you talk with these owner/operators of the pharmacies, they're very reasonable. They say, "Here are my books. I don't

have the luxury of selling expensive perfume. I don't have a huge store where I stock food products. I'm essentially providing pharmaceutical medicines and other over-the-counter pharmaceutical products. I provide this service to this community. It may be 6,000 people. With the surrounding population, it may be 7,000 or 8,000 people. This is the work that I do. I can tell you, because I've done the numbers, that what the government is proposing will put me out of business."

So my question is—and I've asked this question a few times now in the House, and I've yet to hear a member of the government stand up and provide an answer: What are these people supposed to do—go 100 kilometres, 200 kilometres to the next drugstore?

It is more than that. A lot of the communities are First Nation communities; 25 of them are First Nation communities that you have to fly into. Let me tell you: Those communities do not have a community pharmacy. They rely upon the pharmacy in Sioux Lookout and the pharmacy in Red Lake to provide them with all kinds of information about the prescription medicines that have been prescribed for them, to provide all kinds of services that are never compensated for by the government. So I have 25 First Nation communities saying, "What happens to us? What happens to us? Where are we going to find the pharmaceutical services? Do you want us to fly to Thunder Bay?" I ask these questions in all honesty and in all earnestness. I'm looking for an answer from the government.

I say to these pharmacists, "The government says that they're going to give you a little bit more on the prescription fee." And they say, "Well, look, I've done the numbers. I'll get this much more on the prescription fee, and I'll lose this much. That's why I'm out of business."

I suppose the Liberal government can hold an editorial board with the Toronto Star or the Toronto Globe and Mail, who probably have never heard of Red Lake and, what's more, couldn't care less what happens there; who probably haven't heard of Sioux Lookout and the 25 fly-in First Nations that have to rely on the small community pharmacies there. But this is a government, and the government should care about what happens to these people. The government should care that pharmacists—honest, decent people who have been providing a community service, a health service for many years—are saying, in very reasonable language, "What you're proposing to do will put me out of business, and I don't see any other alternative for the 6,000 or 7,000 people who live in this community and the surrounding rural area." What the government has proposed in terms of, "Well, we'll just increase the prescription fee a bit"—they're very clear, they're very objective: It's not going to do it.

I just want to tackle the other part of what the government says, their media spin. Their media spin is they're taking on Big Pharma. Well, this is not Big Pharma. The big pharmaceutical companies will not be affected by this legislation whatsoever. They account for 76% of the cost of the prescription medicine system, and they're not going to be touched by this one bit, not one bit. Yes, this may take some money out of the pocket of the 24% of

the prescription medicine system that is provided through generic providers. But I'll tell you, I don't think the generic drug companies are going to lose on this. They've got the size and they've got enough market dominance that they're not going to get hurt by this. They'll simply shed it off onto those independent pharmacies. And independent pharmacies that try to stay in business will have to somehow charge the very people they're trying to serve with delivery charges, consultation charges and all kinds of other fees if they hope to stay open.

I say to the government: Yeah, you've held an editorial board with the Toronto Star and the Toronto Globe and Mail and they swallowed your line. But all those people out there—real people who go to their family doctor and get prescriptions for medicine to help them maintain their health—are asking, “What happens to us?”

They're asking these questions very reasonably. They're not holding rabble-rousing demonstrations in front of the Legislature. They're not threatening to do something dire. They're simply saying, “Look, there is no other option in my community. There's no option within 50 kilometres. There's no option within 70 kilometres. In some cases, there's no option within 200 kilometres. Will the government please stand up and give us the answer? Tell us what is going to happen when my community pharmacy goes out of business.”

To demonstrate their point, some of them have made appointments with me for this weekend. They want me to come in, and they want to open up their books and say, “Here's the money I make. Here's how I make it. Here are my costs. If you can tell me how I'm going to make this circle work after the government takes out a major portion of my income, then please do. Please come and show me how I'm going to do that.”

1720

I make this offer to the Minister of Health: Instead of simply promoting the spin lines all the time, you come with me to Emo, you come with me to Rainy River, you come with me to Sioux Lookout, you come with me to Red Lake. You come to those 25 fly-in First Nation communities that will never get any service from Shoppers Drug Mart, never get any service from Pharma Plus. Most of the people who live in those communities wouldn't know what a Shoppers Drug Mart is. I say this to the Minister of Health: You come with me and you explain to those people how they're going to get a service, because they do not see it. They have sat down, they have looked at it, they've tallied up the numbers, they've looked at it again, they've called their accountant, they've called the bank manager and said, “How is this going to work?” The answer they keep getting back is, “It's not going to work. You're going to be out of business.”

Now, maybe the government thinks, “Oh, well, you know, we'll just win this spin battle and then afterwards maybe we can provide some sort of mail-in service or some sort of once-a-week delivery system to these communities.” This is not like making widgets. Talk to any nurse, especially a nurse who's dealing with seniors.

The whole issue of dealing with someone's prescription medicine regime and following it and watching it clearly has a direct impact on their health, clearly has a direct impact on their life. If you leave all kinds of communities without service or with service that has been substantially reduced, then you are really playing with people's lives, and no government should do that. No government should engage in those kinds of politics.

It's too bad the Minister of Health isn't here. One would have thought the minister would be here.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Member, you've been around a long time. You know that we don't refer to members who are in the House or not.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Okay, that's fine. I make the invitation anyway. I invite the minister to come with me to some of the small towns in my constituency where there is one community pharmacy, and come to the 25 fly-in First Nations who have to rely upon a community pharmacy. That community pharmacy provides all kinds of services that they are not paid for and that the prescription medicine system such as the provincial government operates doesn't pay for. I invite the minister to come with me and explain to those people how this is going to work, how they are going to be able to continue to provide services to people who need these services, services that for some people are a matter of life and death.

Now, hopefully over the next few weeks the government is going to be prepared to listen to pharmacists, to actually engage in a dialogue with pharmacists, to actually listen to some of the alternatives that pharmacists have put forward, and the government will drop this phony line that it's taking on Big Pharma, that this is about taking on the big corporate giants in the pharmaceutical industry. Beating up on small, independent drugstore owners is not taking on Big Pharma, and putting small independent drugstore owners out of business and depriving people of service is not beating up on Big Pharma, no matter what the Globe and Mail and Toronto Star editorial pages say.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** There's a lot of opinion and a lot of emotion flying around here, so let me bring this back to some facts, some context for this debate.

First of all, here's the really big context: Health care costs now in Ontario are about 43%. If we don't get them under control, health care costs are going to move to 70% of provincial revenues. That's a number that the province cannot sustain. That's a fact.

Second fact: Generic prescription drugs play a big part of that expenditure. If we get the generic drugs part right, if we do something with these professional allowances, the estimates are that we'll reduce the cost of generic drugs in the province of Ontario by some 50%.

Now, what's the situation here in Ontario? Here are some comparables. There's a blood pressure medicine that in Ontario costs about five cents. In the United States, it costs 10 cents. That's five times more. In New Zealand, it costs 21 times more than it does in Ontario,

and in Europe, Germany and the UK, it's three and a half times.

There's another prescription medicine, for epilepsy. In the United States it costs 2.6 times more than in Ontario; New Zealand, 1.5 times more; Europe, almost two times more. There's another prescription drug, for diabetes. These are all common medications for common ailments. In the United States, 1.5 times more; New Zealand, 6.2 times more; France and Germany, 1.7 times more. There's another drug to deal with gastrointestinal disorders.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Less.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Yes, the other way. Sorry. But you get the point. In the United States, five times more; New Zealand, 15; and in Germany—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Okay. Order.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Those numbers get reversed on the chart. The point is, there are common medications that are hugely more expensive in the rest of the world. Why is that? That's because there are about \$750 million of professional allowances that get tacked on to the costs, because those costs go back to the pharmacies in terms of rebate.

Big Pharmacy is the beast that we're trying to manage here. The fact is, for small pharmacies, when you read closely what we're doing, there's a \$150-million fund set up that is going to go to assist the pharmacies to provide better and further and more health care, patient care and coverage. That's going to go to the folks who are sitting here watching that debate, so they're not going to be left out there on a limb.

Now, how about some endorsements? Let me tell you what Christine Elliott, the member for Whitby—Oshawa, who is the Conservative health and long-term care critic, said on April 14: "I don't think anyone would suggest that the professional allowance system is an ideal system to be working under." We agree. We're going to reform it.

Now, what do the stakeholders out there in the community say? Susan Eng, who is a vice-president for CARP: "We welcome the improvement to affordability and potential for more access to new drugs and will encourage similar measures in the rest of the provinces."

The chief executive officer of the Canadian Cancer Society: "The Canadian Cancer Society applauds the Ontario government on the changes ... that will enable greater access to funded drugs" and cancer care in Ontario.

The director of research for the Heart and Stroke Foundation: "The Heart and Stroke Foundation applauds the McGuinty government's changes to improve the drug care system. The announced changes should improve the sustainability of the public drug system, which is important to all patients in the province given the increasing burden of costs on the health care system." The quotes go on and on and on. Everybody recognizes that we've got to get this problem under control. That's the big picture. This is a fair way to go about it: huge savings that will be reinvested in health care; and for the small mom and-pop

and neighbourhood pharmacies, there's a \$150-million fund set up that is going to assist them to continue with their drug patient care.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** In the few moments I have to speak, firstly, I want to respect the pharmacists who are here today. They see first-hand the debate of just how poorly prepared this government is to try to defend their position. I thank you for taking the time that you have today to bring some significance to this comment this afternoon.

I'm also pleased that I have worked with the pharmacists in my riding, and I just want to get clearly on the record that I depend on them to tell me—because their patients depend on them in the communities. I think of the small communities in my riding where they're the principal employer in many cases. They're the only health care provider in the community. People trust them, and now they are being attacked. There's war against these small towns because they're the ones at the bottom of the heap that haven't got the diversification that often bigger Shoppers Drug Marts may have. The business plan is being destroyed by this government—without fair consultation, I might add.

**1730**

I want to comment on the email that a couple of young pharmacists who are here today sent me, Richard Smith and Peter Meraw. They are with Pharmasave in a small community where I know—they're the only business in town in Minden—they serve with great passion, after talking with them today, their constituents.

I also talked to my constituents, who are well represented. Traditionally, it's Mark Borutskie from the IDA store, as well as Doug Brown and Lisa Brown. Doug Brown has a Shoppers Drug Mart in Port Perry and Lisa in Uxbridge. Brian Doddridge has the Medicine Chest in Bowmanville. Muhammad Ishsaq is a pharmacist in Bowmanville, as well as Azim Manji.

One of the people I've known for many, many years, who was on the OPA, is Neale McLean. I want to thank him for advising me. They are a highly regarded family, and, indeed, his daughter's a pharmacist working in the health clinic in the community. That's where patients often go when the clinic is backlogged.

Tino Montopoli is the only pharmacist, the only health care provider, directly located in Orono.

I commend all of the pharmacists in my riding: Robert Moore in Uxbridge, as well as Mel Pathak, who's in Port Perry; Goerge Tadros, the IDA in Bowmanville; Phon Tan, who's in Newcastle; Lorraine Watson in Bowmanville; and David Zhao, who is actually in the drugstore pharmacy in the Loblaws store. There are others that I want to thank for keeping me informed.

In conclusion, I just want to make sure that you understand, at least as I'm being told. Here's an example of one generic drug: digoxin is now \$38 under the generic, and that generic is being discontinued and replaced by a drug called Toloxin, and that drug is going to be \$60. That's the real story here. They're not taking on Big

Pharma; they're taking on the pharmacist who serves your community.

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

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** It's a pleasure to rise and get involved in this debate today. I want to thank the minister for her words earlier today.

We're entering a period in Ontario and, indeed, in Canada where the baby boomers are retiring, turning 65 and qualifying for the Ontario drug plan. This is going to have incredible pressure upon the system as it goes on. There will be more people over the age of 65 than at any point in history, more people accessing the plan. The numbers are going to grow dramatically over the next few years. Our Ontario drug plan is currently costing the province \$4.7 billion, more than 10% of our annual health care budget.

We need to act now to preserve the plan. I am fearful of a future government saying, "We can no longer afford this any more." I've lived through those types of cuts previously from 1995 to 2003, when the previous Conservative government closed 28 public hospitals, eliminated 5,000 hospital beds and cut \$557 million from hospital budgets in their first two years.

What we need to do is ensure that our seniors and our vulnerable citizens have access to the Ontario drug plan. We need to ensure that our drug plan is sustainable. Our move to lower drug costs will help ensure that the Ontario drug plan is sustainable.

We are faced with important choices. We were elected to make important decisions. We believe in the Ontario drug plan and the support that it provides to our seniors and our most vulnerable citizens.

The Canadian Association for Retired Persons, the Canadian Cancer Society, the Ontario Nurses' Association and the Heart and Stroke Foundation are just a few of the associations that are supporting our moves.

Our government has clearly demonstrated our support for health care since being elected, including our supports for seniors. Our living-at-home strategy is just one idea where we've invested \$1.1 billion over the past couple of years.

What is the impact on Ontario families? What will the impact of our changes be on people in Ontario who aren't part of the Ontario plan, who don't have a drug benefit plan through their job? Once our reforms take full effect, a woman who pays for a generic birth control pill out of her own pocket could save more than \$80 a year. Someone who takes ramipril, a generic drug for high blood pressure, will save \$160 a year.

I am proud to stand in this House to support the changes our government has put forward. I'm proud to stand in this House as a representative for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock to speak up for the hundreds of people in my riding who have contacted my office to say thank you for explaining the other side of the issue of bringing down drugs costs. I thank the local pharmacies in my riding for having people contact my office, giving me and my staff a chance to explain the reasons we have taken this action. It's about making tough choices to ensure that the Ontario drug plan is there for our children.

It's the right thing to do and I'm pleased to speak in favour of this.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I'm very pleased to support the motion that has been introduced by my colleague the member for Whitby-Oshawa. I think she has done an outstanding job in presenting her remarks today and letting everybody know what our concerns are all about.

We're obviously very concerned about the gradual erosion of front-line health care services that we've seen since this government was first elected in 2003, starting with cuts to physiotherapy and chiropractic services, and the list goes on and on; we could include optometry there as well. We now have a situation where, again, it looks like there are going to be cuts to front-line health care.

We're very concerned about the impact that this is going to have on seniors in this province and certainly on other people as well, because we see a possible reduction of services. We also see a possible increase in prices, and, of course, we're very concerned about the independent pharmacists who have been writing to us and sharing with us their concerns. For them, it could well mean that some of their pharmacies are going to close as a result of this initiative. Others certainly aren't going to provide the additional services that they're currently providing, whether it's one-on-one counselling or delivery of the drugs to the patients in their care.

But I want to tell you that my mother, who is 89, depends on her pharmacist. I think many seniors in this province would tell you that they see that independent pharmacist as a very significant person in helping to keep them as healthy as they possibly can. They do spend a lot of time in one-on-one counselling with the people who come into the pharmacy. The last thing we want to see is any of these pharmacies closed and seeing a very negative impact on seniors and others.

This government talks about how they're going to cut costs and how they're going to make things better. There was an opportunity for them to have worked with the pharmacy community. The pharmacy community had proposals that could have seen some savings, and this government, regrettably, arbitrarily decided that they knew best. They brought down the hammer, they didn't allow for any discussion or an opportunity for any compromise and they weren't prepared to accept the good recommendations that were being put forward.

I am pleased to support the independent pharmacists in my community. One of the people who has been writing me often is Bryan Hastie. I appreciate the communications I've received from Bryan and from all of the other independent pharmacists in Kitchener-Waterloo—also from the students who are at the pharmacy school. I can tell you that these changes are really causing them concern as to the impact they're going to have on patients in the province of Ontario. I want to applaud them, and I just want to say that we want to make sure that there are no further cuts to front-line health care for the people in the province of Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak on this motion. I want to highlight what is at the crux of the issue here; I think we need to focus back on the issue. The issue really is prices for drugs in the province of Ontario, which the people of Ontario pay. That is the issue here.

I had the opportunity to meet with many pharmacists, big and small, in my riding. I've been talking to them for some time about this particular issue and I've asked this question again and again of them: "Please explain to me why prices for drugs are so high in the province of Ontario." And there is no reasonable explanation for it.

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Of course, we very much accept the fact that the pharmacists provide a very valuable service. Absolutely. The issue is not pharmacists, the professionals. They are very much a critical part of our health delivery model. The issue is pharmacy, the business, that business model which is outdated and is resulting in huge costs for our health care system.

These professional allowances, from which bigger pharmacy companies benefit the most, are the ones which are escalating the prices for drugs which are paid by Ontarians. That is the issue which the government is trying to address by making these very important changes.

I want to clarify something else, and I speak to people who are watching this debate, because a lot has been said here today which muddies the water, which gives the impression that somehow the government, by making these changes, is cutting the Ontario drug benefit plan which is given to the people of Ontario. I want to make it very clear: That is not the case. Right now, the government of Ontario, through its drug benefits plan, pays for prescription drugs for 2.8 million Ontarians. That includes seniors, residents of long-term-care homes and homes for special care, social assistance and disability benefits recipients, and people who qualify under the Trillium drug program. The payment of those drugs for them is not being cut. I think we have to come very clean on that from all sides.

Right now, the province of Ontario is funding 4,000 brand and generic drugs through taxpayers' dollars. We need to make sure that we can add more drugs to the public list so that we can help Ontarians get those drugs at no price or at a reasonable price, at a lower price.

One of the issues I face, and I think all MPPs probably hear from constituents all the time on that issue, is when people are trying to access very expensive drugs to fight cancer and other life-threatening disease, to improve their quality of life, but somehow the government doesn't cover it under OHIP. Why? Because the government doesn't have the means to do so.

Putting an end to a practice like professional allowances, which is tantamount to kickbacks to pharmacy, the business, and which escalates the prices of drugs, enables the government to use those dollars to bring other drugs onto the public list so that we can provide them to Ontarians. That is the real issue.

We're not challenging what pharmacists do. We thank them for the services they provide. That is why—and this has been mentioned a few times in this House—pharmacists will be paid for the services they provide, because they're important services. That's why dollars are being put aside to compensate the pharmacists for the services they provide, because we want to make sure they continue to provide the services, which are very important for all Ontarians.

That is the crux of the issue: It's to reduce the prices of drugs, to make sure that the drug prices we pay in Ontario on the public side of the system—and those who are on private benefits or pay out of their pocket—are reasonable prices. That is why I will be voting against this particular motion.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It certainly is a pleasure to join in this debate this afternoon. It has been a spirited debate. I think the member from Windsor got a little over the top here. She's taking this issue quite seriously; personally, I guess. However, she'll have to deal with that in her own way, in her own riding.

I tell you, I do know this much: The decision of this government to attack small rural pharmacists could be taken personally on their part. You know who else could take it personally? The seniors who are going to be affected by that.

I was at a meeting on the weekend and I asked the people in that audience, "Who has not gotten medical advice from their pharmacist?" And every one of them, in unison, said, "We all have." I said, "How many of you people have avoided a visit to your doctor or the emergency room as a result of a consultation with your pharmacist?" Again, the heads nod in unison.

You know, the government on one hand wants to convince the world that they're going to be saving a whole lot of money by attacking small independent pharmacists, but the reality is that it will be a pyrrhic victory at best, because the costs that will have to be borne by some other part of the health care system cannot be ignored. You can't just simply say that we're going to cut pharmacists and cut the amount that they receive in professional allowances—which the pharmacists are quite prepared to do, but they want real, genuine negotiation about how we get to the end, how we get to the point where we can offer the same kinds of services, no loss of services to seniors and the vulnerable people in our communities. We can get there. It doesn't have to be by a full frontal attack on the part of the government because they think they have a political issue that they can win on.

That's the only thing that motivates this government. If they believe they have an issue that they can be political winners on, then they want to take it on. The reality is that there are an awful lot of people getting caught up in the wake here.

It is important that this motion, as tabled in this House today, calls upon the government to sit down and have meaningful negotiations so that what we offer our seniors and those people most vulnerable in this province will be

the best possible outcome when it comes to health care being delivered and the costs being assumed by the taxpayer—that we'll be in the right place. It's time to sit down and start talking and stop attacking.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** The one question that hasn't been answered by any of the opposition members of either party is why, in this province, we are paying anywhere between double and 22 times the price for generic drugs of any place in the States, in other provinces or what have you.

Now, I come from a family of four generations—and if I include my son, five generations—of independent business people. We know what it's like to meet a payroll and we know what it's like to meet expenses at the end of the day. I also realize that through the professional allowances—because we in effect have been paying too much for generic drugs compared to other jurisdictions—a lot of the money has been funnelled back through professional allowances, or kickbacks, as they themselves have labelled it in the newspaper just recently, to the pharmacists. I can well understand that for 30 or 40 years, a lot of these pharmacies have depended on that income. That may very well be the case. We simply want to make sure that the people of Ontario pay no more for generic drugs than people in other like jurisdictions.

Should the pharmacists be compensated for some of the additional services that we would like to have them perform in the future? Absolutely. It's with that in mind that \$150 million has been set aside to pay for those kinds of services, particularly in those rural areas where there may only be pharmacists. We don't want to see anybody go out of business. But we also don't want to see the people of Ontario, whether it's through the Ontario drug benefit plan or whether it's through their own pockets, pay up to 20 times more for generic drugs than anywhere else in the western world, and the opposition obviously doesn't want to talk about it. They want to view this as some sort of fight with patients, with this group or with that group. That's not what it's about. It's all about making sure that we in Ontario pay the right price for generic drugs. If that system has been around for 20 or 30 or 40 years, it is wrong. Yes, the pharmacists have to be compensated for the kind of medical advice, the kind of health care advice, that they are going to provide etc. Enough money has been set aside to make that happen. But the people of Ontario, through their own individual pocketbooks or through the various drug plans that the government pays for, should not be paying more for generic drugs than anywhere else in the western world. We've heard the numbers here, over and over again, for all sorts of drugs that we're currently doing that for.

I would just simply implore the people of Ontario to clearly understand that this is all about lowering the price of generic drugs that all of us at one time or another have

to take advantage of or need etc. That's what this is all about. It is not about attacking anybody. It's making sure that the dollars that are in the health care system can be utilized to the best advantage, and that does not include paying professional allowances to organizations so that they can meet their bottom line, as has been the case over the last 20 or 30 years.

This is the right thing to do, and I hope the members in the House will understand.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Mrs. Elliott has moved opposition day number 2. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1751 to 1801.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Members take your seats, please.

Mrs. Elliott has moved opposition day number 2. All those in favour, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Jones, Sylvia	O'Toole, John
Bailey, Robert	Klees, Frank	Savoline, Joyce
Barrett, Toby	MacLeod, Lisa	Shurman, Peter
Clark, Steve	Martiniuk, Gerry	Wilson, Jim
Elliott, Christine	Miller, Norm	Witmer, Elizabeth
Gélinas, France	Munro, Julia	Yakabuski, John
Hampton, Howard	Murdoch, Bill	

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** All those opposed, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Fonseca, Peter	Phillips, Gerry
Albanese, Laura	Gerretsen, John	Pupatello, Sandra
Arthurs, Wayne	Hoy, Pat	Ramal, Khalil
Balkisson, Bas	Jaczek, Helena	Ramsay, David
Bentley, Christopher	Jeffrey, Linda	Rinaldi, Lou
Best, Margaret	Johnson, Rick	Ruprecht, Tony
Bradley, James J.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sandals, Liz
Brotten, Laurel C.	Leal, Jeff	Smith, Monique
Brown, Michael A.	Matthews, Deborah	Sousa, Charles
Caplan, David	Meilleur, Madeleine	Van Bommel, Maria
Chan, Michael	Murray, Glen R.	Wilkinson, John
Chiarelli, Bob	Naqvi, Yasir	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dickson, Joe	Oraziotti, David	Zimmer, David
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Pendergast, Leeanna	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 20; the nays are 41.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I declare the motion lost.

*Motion negatived.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** It being past 6 of the clock, this House is adjourned until 9 of the clock, Thursday, April 22.

*The House adjourned at 1804.*



**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
<b>Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough–Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough–Centre	Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
<b>Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, 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
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of 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
<b>Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)</b>	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	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)</b>	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres 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	
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	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
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	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**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Helena Jaczek  
Bob Chiarelli, Steve Clark  
Helena Jaczek, Kuldip Kular  
Dave Levac, Rosario Marchese  
Bill Mauro, David Oraziotti  
Joyce Savoline  
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Jerry J. Ouellette, David Ramsay  
Liz Sandals, Peter Shurman  
Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Jeff Leal, Gerry Martiniuk  
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch  
Michael Prue, Lou Rinaldi  
Tony Ruprecht  
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**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de  
la politique sociale**

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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

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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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