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Monday 10 May 2010

Lundi 10 mai 2010

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
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Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
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Toronto ON M7A 1A2
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 10 May 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 10 mai 2010

The House met at 1030.

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

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, I join with my Niagara colleagues in introducing a number of people from the Niagara group, who are here for Niagara Week at Queen's Park: Chairman Peter Partington, Councillor Judy Casselman, Mayor Dave Augustyn, Councillor Brian Baty, Mayor Henry D'Angela, Mayor Damian Goulbourne, Mayor Barbara Henderson and Mayor Ted Salci, along with staff members Mike Trojan, Neal Roberts, Ken Brothers, Patrick Gedge and Justin Watkins, in our gallery.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: May I introduce Mary Kyle and Tom O'Dowda, here from the great and glorious city of London, in the east gallery.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It's my pleasure to introduce Elaine Capes, her daughters and a friend, who are visiting Queen's Park for the day.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: We'll shortly be joined by some 60 students from the grade 10 class of St. Augustine Catholic High School in Markham.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I would like to introduce the mother of Sarah Klapman; her dad, Jordan Klapman; and brother Daniel Klapman. They're in the public gallery to witness the work she does. Welcome.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Joining us today at Queen's Park will be the leaders from Muskoka Woods resort camp, and included will be my daughter, Sarah Witmer.

Hon. John Gerretsen: I'd like to introduce Nile Kenny, who's here visiting from Kingston, together with his sister-in-law Liz Kenny from the Sarnia area.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On behalf of the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and page Emma Allen, I'd like to welcome her mother, Lana Duncan; and her sister Georgia Allen, to the public galleries today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

On behalf of the member from Thunder Bay-Atikokan and page Mary McPherson, we'd like to welcome her mother, Tracy Shields, to the public galleries today.

Being introduced as well, I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome back to the Legislature Peter Partington, the member from Brock from the 33rd Parliament, in

the east members' gallery. Peter, welcome back to Queen's Park today.

Mr. Norm Miller: I'd like to introduce Daniel Bradbury, who's down from the riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka. He's in the west members' gallery listening today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Premier. On Friday, you referred to generations of Canadians who fought the World Wars and who lived through the Depression, and told Ontario families today that they need to "step it up" and pay higher taxes. But, Premier, Ontario families have been stepping it up for years.

Does the Premier have any conception whatsoever of how much fees and taxes have gone up on an ordinary Ontario family since 2007 alone?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I encourage my honourable colleague to take a look at the actual wording, and he may want to check the record for himself in terms of what I said.

But I do want to take this opportunity to thank the Conservative Party for their continuing support for the HST. We have now—and I want to acknowledge this—received the support of Mike Harris, John Tory, Bob Runciman, Janet Ecker, Tony Clement and Jim Flaherty. The list goes on and on in terms of luminaries and leaders—of course, Prime Minister Harper himself. We simply could not move forward with this very important policy without them, and I want to acknowledge here and now the tremendous support we continue to receive from the Conservative Party.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: It's no surprise whatsoever that the Premier did not even try to attempt to answer our question about how much taxes and fees have gone up on ordinary, hard-working families since 2007 alone.

Let me tell you, Premier. An Ontario family's electricity and heating bills, their property assessment increases, auto insurance and university tuition, and the impact of the HST on this common basket of goods and services means the average Ontario family is paying \$2,700 more a year than they were in 2007.

Premier, how out of touch have you become? Surely you will agree that your attack on Ontario families' pocketbooks needs to come to an end.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I gather there's some creative mathematics at work over there.

My honourable colleague tells me that he's concerned about costs that families have got to contend with, so I ask him on behalf of Ontario families, why won't he join us in our effort to reduce the price of generic drugs in the province of Ontario? We want to reduce those drugs by 50%. My honourable colleague understands in particular there are still many, many Ontario families that pay for them. In fact, the largest growing number of workers in Ontario—this is not necessarily a positive development, but it's a growing number of workers—are without health plans through their workplace. They're paying out of pocket. So why wouldn't he join us in our effort to get those generic drug costs down? That's real and meaningful and would be of absolute benefit to our families.

Again I ask him, why won't he join us in our effort to reduce the price of generic drugs for Ontario families?

1040

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Quite frankly, the Premier should be embarrassed for his comments on Friday, when he seemed to describe Ontario families as complainers when he said, "We're not prepared to do difficult things"—from Friday, Premier. You must be completely out of touch not to understand the struggling Ontario families trying to cope with your electricity increases, your HST tax grab, increased auto insurance premiums and increased university tuitions. That adds up to some \$2,700 a year for an average family in the province of Ontario. How much do you think they can afford? If \$2,700 is not enough, how much do you want to take out of the pockets of hard-working Ontario families?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: There are a number of things that we've done and we'll continue to do to help Ontario families, and it would be nice if, at some point in time, we had it either acknowledged or supported by my honourable colleague. On January 1 of this year, 93% of all Ontarians received an income tax cut. My honourable colleague remains adamantly opposed to full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds. That will save parents a half-day of daycare. Over the course of a year, we're talking about thousands and thousands of dollars in savings to Ontario families.

Again, I mentioned before that he is not prepared to support us in our effort to reduce drug costs. We're offering free HPV vaccines to all grade 8 girls; that saves a family \$550. Free chickenpox, meningitis and pneumococcal—

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

TAXATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: Again, the Premier refuses to acknowledge that his impact on the pocketbooks of hard-working, ordinary Ontario families now totals some \$2,700 a year, with more to come.

Let me take this down to some of the details, Premier. In 52 days, your HST tax grab is going to impact on the hydro bills and the home heating bills of Ontario seniors and Ontario families. Can the Premier please tell us what his calculations tell him about the impact of the HST on the electricity and home heating bills of the average Ontario family?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I know that my honourable colleague, through his actions of his party and his former leadership, is actually a very strong supporter, and I want to thank him as well, on behalf of Ontarians, for agreeing not to rescind the HST under any circumstances. It's very important to know that we have that stability and predictability.

I know that some of his party members are confused. I recall reading a story about his party members being confused about his position on this because he says he's against it, but he's also committing absolutely to keeping it in place. So I think it's important, for purposes of predictability and stability in Ontario public policy, that, together with all the former leadership of his party, he too is now fully supporting the HST in Ontario. Again, I thank him for that.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: I suspect the Premier has not had a conversation with an ordinary pair of seniors in our province, with hard-working Ontario families who are paying the bills and seeing less in return—in short, after six and a half years in office, a Premier dramatically out of touch with the struggles of hard-working Ontario families.

Premier, the HST alone will add some \$300 to the electricity and home heating bills of ordinary, hard-working families. You put that on top of your assessment increases and we're looking at almost \$900 a year for a typical Ontario family just to keep their home. Premier, don't you think Ontario families are paying enough as it is? Will you call off your attack on the pocketbooks of ordinary, hard-working families?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I want to thank my honourable colleague for his strong commitment to keeping the HST in place. I think it's important that Ontarians understand that commitment. They respect that commitment. My honourable colleague understands the need for stability when it comes to public policy and understands the need for predictability when it comes to Ontarians planning business decisions. I also want to reassure him that we will not take our eye off the ball when it comes to supporting our families. That's why, as part of our package of tax reforms, we've in fact reduced taxes for 93% of all Ontarians and we've eliminated the income tax entirely for our 90,000 lowest-income earners in our province.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, a typical Ontario family that drives a Toyota Camry, by way of example, is facing some additional \$303 a year thanks to your HST tax grab. For a family that's driving a truck, it's \$490 a year more. Auto insurance increases on top of that, and that's for the

privilege of driving on some of the most clogged highways in the GTA—of any place in North America.

Premier, you've already increased taxes high enough; for the typical Ontario family, some \$2,700 a year. Please tell us that you're not that far out of touch and out of gas after six and a half years in office; please tell us today that your attack on the pocketbooks will finally come to an end.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I want to take this opportunity, because I think it's important that Ontarians understand just how strong the Conservative Party's support is for the HST. I want to thank Mike Harris; I want to thank Janet Ecker; I want to thank Tony Clement; I want to thank Jim Flaherty; I want to thank Senator Bob Runciman—without his support, we could not move ahead; I want to thank the Conservative government, led by Prime Minister Harper; and again, I want to thank my honourable colleague for his solemn commitment to maintain the HST, to keep that in place so that we have stability, predictability and sound public policy, because at the end of the day my honourable colleague understands that this is about 600,000 more jobs for the people of Ontario.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. The Premier has spent about a year hiding the true cost of the HST on families. Last week, we learned why: The average family will pay \$800 a year in new sales taxes. Will the Premier stop playing games and release his government's estimates on how much the HST will cost families?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think I've heard this question before and I'm not sure that my answer is going to be substantially different from what it was. I will refer my honourable colleague to a number of documents that the Ministry of Finance has put out. This one has been out for at least half a year: It's called Ontario's Tax Plan for Jobs and Growth: Cutting Personal and Corporate Taxes and Harmonizing Sales Taxes. It's very helpful. One of the sections specifically covers the impact that this would have both on businesses and on individuals. I would again refer my honourable colleague to this particular document. It goes through different families and different scenarios and provides in some detail just how this is going to benefit Ontario, but especially when it comes to 600,000 more jobs for our families.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Last summer, we submitted a freedom-of-information request looking for how much the McGuinty government's new tax will cost for gas on families. The government admitted that they had the numbers but they refused to release them. So my question is this: What is the Premier afraid of? Why won't he tell families exactly how much his new tax is going to cost them in gas?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I want to refer my colleague to pages 24 and 25 of this particular document.

When it comes to a single parent on Ontario Works with two children, ages five and seven, our calculation is that the net impact will be positive, to the tune of \$585. For a single senior with a pension income of \$20,000, the positive net impact is \$105. For a single individual earning \$30,000, the positive net impact is \$255. For a couple earning \$70,000 with two children, ages five and 10, our calculation is that the positive net impact is \$365.

Again, we have done a lot of work making our best efforts to calculate the full impact of all of our tax reforms and we've laid that out for Ontarians now for close to a year.

1050

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: We've submitted the request. There are some 10 documents that the government refuses to release, so we used StatsCan's economic model ourselves to estimate how much more families are going to be paying to fill up the gas tank under the McGuinty government's new HST. The average family with two kids is going to pay an astonishing \$232 more each and every year on gasoline alone. Is that the kind of impact the Premier was afraid of telling families about?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think we have some familiarity with NDP governments in power. We've had the experience here in Ontario where the tax commission recommended that we adopt the HST. That was their party's tax commission; they recommended that we adopt the HST. Now we have an example of another government in power today in Canada, an NDP government in Nova Scotia. What they've done is taken their 13% HST and raised that up to 15%. So if we want some sense of what would happen with respect to tax policy in Ontario, we know that they would both adopt the HST and likely increase the cost to Ontario families.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My mom told me that when you point your finger at somebody else, you've got to watch, because three more are pointing back at you. I think the Premier needs a piece of that advice.

For the average family with two or more kids, the reality is that they're going to have to pay \$232 more each and every year in taxes on their gas. That's on top of the new taxes just to turn on the lights. That's on top of the new taxes just to turn on the heat and keep the house warm. When was the Premier planning to tell families with kids that the new tax was also going to cost them \$232 more on their gas bills just to fill up the car?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: In addition to the other benefits that I've talked about before, I think it's important to understand that there's going to be a new \$260 sales tax credit for every low- and middle-income adult and child; that's over \$1,000 for a family of four. That is permanent. We've also doubled the Ontario senior homeowners' property tax credit, saving seniors up to \$500, which we think is very important.

I think it's important to take a look at the package of tax reforms in their entirety. We are reducing personal income taxes. We are putting in place new tax credits to help our low-income earners, and we also have special support for our seniors and for people in the north when it comes to their energy costs. We've tried to be as fair and balanced and thoughtful as we can, knowing that our shared desire as a society here is to create more jobs. That's what this is all about—600,000 more.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: For families in northern Ontario, the new tax on gas is going to cost them even more than the \$232. After all, many families in Thunder Bay or Timiskaming or Sudbury have to drive absolutely everywhere in everyday life. Will the Premier come clean with families in northern Ontario and tell them how much this new tax on gas is going to cost them every year?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My honourable colleague knows that we took that concern—and that is particularly a concern of northern Ontario families—into account. That's why we have made changes in our budget that speak specifically to that, not only to families but also to industry. We have this new northern industrial electricity rate program—a three-year, \$150-million plan to support qualifying large industrial facilities in the north. We know that's important to them. At the same time, when it comes to homeowners, we have also put in place a new benefit to help northerners because of the higher costs that are intrinsic to energy use in northern Ontario. We think that's fair, and that's why all of us together are providing that additional support. We are mindful of those particular costs, especially when it comes to northern Ontario.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, \$232 goes a long way to pay the bills; it buys a lot of groceries and helps with already sky-high hydro bills. If the Premier disagrees with our numbers, as he appears to do, why won't he simply stop fighting these freedom-of-information requests that we have in and release his own clear numbers?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: They've all been released for some time; it's just that my honourable colleague doesn't agree with them. I don't know if she has read them, but if she has, she certainly has come to the conclusion that she does not agree with them.

Fortunately, there will come a time very, very shortly when the rage associated with the rhetoric will abate and our new tax reforms will become the reality. Then people will have an opportunity for themselves to imagine and to experience exactly what is happening as a result of our changes to the tax reforms. We're very much looking forward to moving ahead with our tax reforms in their entirety and to giving people an understanding in a practical way.

My colleagues on both sides are saying that the world as we know it is coming to an end, but I want to thank them for their strong support for keeping the HST in place. I want to thank them again.

TAXATION

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is for the Premier. After months of telling Ontarians that they wouldn't have to make any sacrifices for the so-called revenue-neutral HST, on Friday he compared the HST to the ultimate sacrifice. When he did that, the Premier insulted families who have already been paying thousands more in taxes and fees since 2007 by saying we aren't paying enough or doing enough for the future of our children.

My question, Premier: Why did you insult veterans, and did you insult veterans, the serving military, families and all Ontarians out of arrogance, because you are out of touch with families, or both?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I would recommend to my honourable colleague that she actually take a look at the transcript. What worries me is that I think she might already have done that and in fact knows what I said.

Again, I want to thank so many in the Conservative Party for their continuing support for the HST, without whose support—I forgot John Baird, who is obviously a continuing important contributor to and supporter of all we've been able to do in this regard.

I also want to take the opportunity once again to thank Mr. Hudak himself. He has had a number of opportunities to speak to this, and said that he understands now that the single sales tax will help the recovery. He went on to say, "I agree that there's little sense in allowing two separate governments to apply two"—

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: [*Inaudible*] decided to bring up my old friend John Baird. I can tell him something: I know John Baird, and you are no John Baird, sir. I can tell you another thing: You are no John Baird.

Interjections.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Again, he's no John Baird. John Baird would never have equated paying taxes with the ultimate sacrifice of war.

The Premier's new HST rhetoric insults families, who are finding they can't afford the HST and the McGuinty Liberals anymore. Families are paying \$2,700 more today than they were the second time you took office, in October 2007.

Why haven't you apologized to families, to veterans, to the people who are sacrificing right now in Afghanistan and to this entire province?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I would encourage my honourable colleague, whose level of enthusiasm and excitability are often to be admired, that it's always helpful if there is some foundation in fact for that excitability and enthusiasm, and I would recommend to my honourable colleague that she in fact take a look at the transcript so that she knows what she's talking about.

One more thing I want to say is that, again, it would not have been possible for us to move ahead with this

difficult but essential public policy to create 600,000 jobs, not just for us but for our children, without the continuing support of the Conservative Party of Ontario, whether those who hold office today or those who held it before. On behalf of all Ontarians, I want to thank them for their continuing support.

PENSION REFORM

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Premier. Two thirds of Ontario families don't have a pension at work. Tomorrow we'll be debating an NDP motion calling for the implementation of a public defined benefit pension plan that would be available to all these workers. Then, on Thursday, the insurance industry gets their say in the form of a private member's bill sponsored by the Liberal member from Peterborough. With our Ontario retirement plan, we in the NDP have come down firmly—firmly, I repeat—on the side of public, defined benefit pension plans.

When the votes are cast on Tuesday and Thursday, which side will the Premier be on?

1100

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I've had the opportunity to speak to this before and, again, I'm not sure I can offer much by way of interesting variety on the same issue. I will repeat much of what I said before.

I think it's a mistake for us to try to divide and conquer on this issue. I think public pension plans have an important and continuing role to play when it comes to helping us address a national challenge which has to do with the adequacy or inadequacy of retirement incomes.

I also believe instinctively that the private sector also has a role to play in that regard and I think it's a mistake for us to say that it's only going to be one side or the other that must assume some role in acting as part of the solution. I think the solution is going to have to come from both sides.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Paul Miller: I'm glad the Premier mentioned the private sector. Private retirement savings plans are sucking up \$8.4 billion more than contributors would pay if they were saving in a large public pension plan. That's \$8.4 billion going into the coffers of banks and insurance companies and not into the retirement savings of average Canadians.

I think it's time for some common sense. Is the Premier going to embrace a practical, cost-efficient solution and support the NDP Ontario retirement plan, or does he plan to divert billions out of the pockets of working people and seniors by embracing the private insurance industry plan?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm sure my colleague is not suggesting that somehow we collapse all existing private sector pension plans. I'm sure he's not suggesting that we substitute all existing private sector plans with a new public plan. I don't believe he's saying that.

What I'm saying is that this is a national challenge. It calls for a national response. We will continue to find

ways to work with the federal government. I'm glad to see that Minister Flaherty seems to be taking a greater interest in this matter at this point in time. Minister Duncan not too long ago met with his counterparts from across the country and together we are finding ways to grapple with this.

Again, I commend the NDP for the positive proposal that they are putting forward, but I would suggest to them that it should not come at the exclusion of any other possibilities as well.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Mrs. Liz Sandals: My question is for the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. Guelph-based Linamar Corp. is one of Ontario's largest manufacturers of auto parts. Last week it was reported that Linamar had forged an alliance with a German-based company to build wind turbine parts in my hometown of Guelph to supply customers all across North America. This is fantastic news for my community and I believe it supports our government's efforts to make Ontario a hub for clean energy investment.

We're hearing more and more stories each day of clean energy projects taking shape in Ontario and around the world. Ontarians want to know that we are making progress and delivering results. Minister, we've heard the projections about jobs. Are you seeing results?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Absolutely, in communities right across this province. I am personally very excited to see this level of interest that our clean energy plan has created. Stories like Linamar are just one example of the progress we're making to be a world leader when it comes to clean energy investments. There's no question we're creating a buzz around this world in the global energy economy. Ontario is really creating a buzz, really creating a lot of interest out there. In fact, last week our government and the Ontario Power Authority announced the first projects under our feed-in-tariff program are now online. These facilities turn waste into emission-free electricity and are today supplying power to Ontario's power grid. Both projects are located in eastern Ontario. One of those projects is located on a dairy farm and will be converting biogas into clean energy—enough power for 400 homes.

Our vision is becoming a reality—

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

Mrs. Liz Sandals: That's terrific news, Minister, and I always love to hear about good-news stories from the dairy industry. It's great for Ontario that we're seeing such early results. It's good to see such enthusiasm for clean energy in Ontario and the international attention it's creating.

Despite how positive this is, there are skeptics out there—some across the aisle—who are asking about the cost Ontarians are seeing on their electricity bill. They look at all this investment in clean energy and know it is the right thing to be doing, but they're also concerned

about their pocketbook and the impact these investments will have on them. Can the minister assure us that we are making the most of our investments today and that that will benefit us well into the future?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Seven years ago, we inherited a system where frankly the supply was not enough to meet the demand, so we've had to invest in building new generation across this province. We've been investing in building that new generation. More than that, we've been investing in ensuring that the new generation we bring online is clean energy. Our clean energy plan is supporting jobs and growth and expanding this clean energy sector here in Ontario. In fact, we're projecting 50,000 jobs being created over the next three years, in these plans alone. The feed-in tariff is bringing in \$9 billion in investments: That's supporting 20,000 jobs. The agreement with the Samsung-led consortium is bringing \$7 billion of investments: That's supporting 16,000 jobs. Since 2003, we've brought online over 8,000 megawatts of new supply: That's 20% of our current capacity. We've got things in place right now—

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

TAXATION

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is for the Premier. Premier, in just 52 days, the HST will begin cutting into family budgets. For months, the McGuinty Liberals said the HST will be revenue-neutral. But Dalton McGuinty recently admitted he knew Ontario families will be paying hundreds of dollars a year more because of the HST. Premier, what other surprises that will cost Ontario families have you got hidden up your sleeve?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Revenue.

Hon. John Wilkinson: I know this will come as a surprise to the member opposite, but we've cut income taxes in this province. As a matter of fact, we cut income taxes on January 1—something that you voted against. I want to share with the good people of Ontario that there are new tax credits that are coming in. There are transition cheques that will start for many people as early as this June. There's a new GST rebate that is going to start in August that will be paid quarterly. There are increased tax credits, particularly for seniors, where we're doubling the senior property tax credit from \$250 to \$500. Because of the work of the Minister of Finance, we're also expanding the number of people who will be able to see relief on their taxes in regard to the property taxes they pay, either as an owner or as a renter.

I know, for some people opposite, these are a surprise, but they're exactly the measures you've been voting against. I can tell you that when the good people of Ontario hear about that—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Norm Miller: If I can remind the Premier and the minister, they're the ones who cut the property tax credit that Ernie Eves put in place that was there for seniors. A PC amendment to the budget bill proves that Dalton Mc-

Guinty was making it up when he blamed John Robarts for severance packages to tax collectors. The triggering provision for severance is in legislation, not the collective agreement. You could have amended the law to clarify when someone is dismissed and when they are not, to protect Ontario taxpayers from paying \$25 million for people who will not miss a day of work. You could have written it into the CITCA agreement. BC did it, and they aren't paying severances. Why did you tell Ontario families your hands were tied when they weren't?

Hon. John Wilkinson: The business community in this province today spends some \$500 million a year trying to administer a two-tax system, the two-tax system that the member opposite believes that we should keep. He believes that the status quo is the right thing to do in the 21st century, when everyone in Ontario knows that the economy has fundamentally changed. So we're taking action to reduce the cost to business of some \$500 million. And where is that cost? It's in the price of goods and services in the province of Ontario. That is a hidden tax, a hidden cost. We're removing that. It is something that the Ontario Chamber of Commerce has asked our government to do, consistently. That's why they're so delighted that we're taking that action.

It means, as well, that our government will save some \$100 million each and every year going forward because we will not have two governments tripping over themselves trying to tax the same transaction twice when once will do.

1110

WASTE DIVERSION

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Last year, in the middle of the recession, the McGuinty government imposed a new electronics tax on Ontarians: \$13 more for computers, \$12 for monitors, \$10 for televisions. The government promised this \$40-million tax would fund recycling of e-waste, but today, we read that e-waste recycling has fallen 60% shy of its target, that most e-waste is going to landfills or being illegally exported and that the minister doesn't even know what went wrong.

Minister, should we be adding e-waste to climate change inaction and Transit City on the list of broken McGuinty environmental promises?

Hon. John Gerretsen: First of all, the member well knows that this is not a tax; it's a fee that goes to the Ontario Electronic Stewardship council in order to make sure that electronic waste is properly collected, properly transported and properly recycled.

Let's look at the positive side of it: 17,000 tonnes of material that used to end up in our landfill sites, contaminating those landfill sites, are, in fact, being diverted from the landfill sites. More can be done, and that's precisely why we're taking a very close look at the Waste Diversion Act, to see how it can be improved to make sure that all of this electronic waste does not end up in our landfill sites and is properly recycled.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Well, I am somewhat startled by the Pollyanna perspective of the minister. Nonetheless, it's pretty clear what has gone wrong. You've failed to set and monitor strict guidelines for recycling companies. You've allowed companies to unsafely recycle, sell and export highly toxic substances. Government has given one private agency, Ontario environmental stewardship, monopoly power over the distribution of e-waste through a top-down quota system that penalizes good companies.

When will the government fix this program and stop making Ontarians pay for a complete failure to deal with electronic waste?

Hon. John Gerretsen: It is not a failure; that's number one. It's absolutely not a failure: 17,000 tonnes are being diverted from landfill sites that otherwise would have ended up there.

Can we do better? Absolutely. That's why we are working with Waste Diversion Ontario and the Ontario Electronic Stewardship council to make sure that the waste does not end up in our landfill sites. That's why we're working on a new act to make the companies more accountable and to apply the principle of extended producer responsibility to all of those companies that are actually producing the material. That's the only way to do it. The new act will be coming forth, and the kind of difficulties that have been encountered by the program will be overcome.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Ms. Helena Jaczek: My question is for the Minister of Labour. Minister, everyone has the right to a safe workplace. We are all familiar with the common hazards that could cause injuries such as slips, trips and falls, but a safe workplace is one that is also free from harassment and violence. According to a 2004 report commissioned by Statistics Canada, 17% of violent incidents in Canada occur in the workplace. This represents about 356,000 incidents of workplace violence per year across Canada.

Just before this House rose last December, a bill was passed which addresses the issue of violence and harassment in the workplace. Minister, can you explain what this legislation is all about and how it will help to make Ontario workplaces even safer?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I'd like to thank the member for the question. I'm very pleased to discuss the landmark legislation that we passed here in this Legislature last December. The amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act will come into effect on June 15. They will require employers now to increase their protection of workers from workplace violence and harassment. Employers will be required to assess the risks in their workplace for violence and develop new workplace violence and harassment policies and programs. They will also have to take reasonable precautions to protect workers from domestic violence entering into the workplace. Additionally, workers will be allowed to refuse work if they feel that they are at risk of physical injury.

I know that I speak for all Ontarians when I say this is a very welcome, positive step for all Ontario workers.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Thank you, Minister, for your response. The implementation of this legislation is indeed a positive step forward and a clear sign that our government takes workplace health and safety seriously. We all know that workplace violence has an immeasurable emotional impact on workers and their families. There are also negative impacts on businesses in terms of lost-time injuries, low productivity and absenteeism. It will help prevent injuries. This new legislation will protect our workers, create healthier workplaces and save our businesses money.

Minister, you mentioned that this legislation will take effect this summer. Can you please explain to me and this House what your ministry is doing to help employers prepare for the implementation of these new regulations?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: The member asks a very good question. Over the past number of months, my ministry, working with our health and safety partners, has been working closely with employers, providing them with a number of resources to help them comply with this very progressive legislation.

One of these resources developed by the Occupational Health and Safety Council of Ontario is a workplace violence tool box. This tool box helps employers to assess and control risks of workplace violence in a number of situations, like when an employee is working alone, or in a high crime area, or with an unstable client. The tool box will also provide them with specific information on dealing with domestic violence in the workplace.

I encourage everyone in this House to visit my ministry's website, where they can access the tool box and learn more about this exciting new resource.

POLICE

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Minister, as you're aware, the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police are at Queen's Park today to get action on some very important policing issues. You are well aware that one issue is a request to allow police officers real-time access to Ontario's driver's licence photos. It is very important that police have the tools they need to be able to positively identify drivers in a very effective manner. Will the OACP get action on real-time access, or will they go home empty-handed today?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: It's very, very good that the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police are here today. It is not only their Queen's Park day, but it is also the first day of Police Week. We welcome everyone to become actively involved in their local municipal police services.

I have to tell you, when the chiefs of police come to the McGuinty government, they rarely go away empty-handed.

I look forward to working with the Minister of Transportation on this issue. We understand the importance of

the chiefs of police and police services members having the tools to keep Ontario safe, and we will continue to work with them.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Maybe you could begin by answering the question.

Currently, Ontario's police services do not have timely access to MTO driver's licence photos. An OPP pilot project has already proven the value of adding this important policing tool, and some of the benefits are: A person with a suspended licence would not be able to use another person's ID to verbally mislead the police and continue driving; the number of people wrongfully charged due to false ID would be reduced; correct ID has been proven to enhance officer safety, allowing for improved assessment.

I know the MTO is involved in this, but this is about public safety and good policing in our communities.

As Minister of Community Safety, will you commit to this House today and to the OACP that you will do your part to make sure officers get real-time access to driver's licence photos immediately?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: There's absolutely no question that the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, the Ontario Provincial Police Association and the Police Association of Ontario have this government's commitment that we will work with them.

It is very important that we continue to support our police services across the province of Ontario. That's why we made major investments—\$93 million with regard to guns and gangs. That's why we've put 2,000 more police officers on the street. That's why, along with the groups I mentioned, we will continue to advocate to the federal government to continue their community police officer program in perpetuity, not for five years.

1120

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. Hamilton residents are sick and tired of their hospital services being cut as executive salaries skyrocket. Hamilton Health Sciences' McMaster site is cutting adult services in the ER and intensive care units, leaving only obstetrics and gynecology. Does the Premier believe that these cuts to hospital services will not harm patients?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: What I can say is that we continue to find ways to increase our hospital funding. That's what we've been doing for seven years straight now.

One of the things that we are doing, of course, in order to ensure that we can get the maximum efficiency out of every possible dollar that we invest in health care, is to lower our drug costs. There is actually a connection between available levels of funding through our health care system, generally speaking, and what we are doing here in our effort to lower drug costs.

We want to take all those savings and reinvest those in the health care system, including making sure that there

are more drugs available for Ontario families. So I would ask my honourable colleague to join us in our effort to reduce the cost of drugs for Ontario families.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm talking about emergency room services for women and their children at birth; that's what I'm talking about. Hamilton's three chiefs of obstetrics and gynecology are telling the LHIN that these cuts leave women in jeopardy. Doctors are petitioning the LHIN, calling the cuts "medically unworkable and unsafe." This is the very plan that is being investigated by Ontario's Ombudsman, and the chief coroner is investigating tragic deaths related to other hospital cuts that this LHIN has made, specifically in Niagara.

When will the Premier take some responsibility for protecting the people of this province from short-sighted and medically risky cuts to our health care system?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I know that for the Hamilton Health Sciences centre we've increased funding by \$150 million as base funding since 2003. That's a 28% increase and they've done a remarkable job there when it comes to increasing access and turning the patients around more quickly and in a healthier state.

When it comes to the wait times, knee surgeries are down 281 days by way of waiting times, hip surgeries are down 278 days, angiographies are down 64 days, cancer surgeries reduced by 17 days, angioplasty down by 32 days, and MRIs down by 13 days.

I think that, working together, the facts show that we have made real progress, and we will continue to find ways to work with the good people in Hamilton to ensure that we can always find ways to improve the quality of their care.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Rick Johnson: My question is for the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry regarding the recently announced proposed new approach to forest tenure and pricing in our province.

We are all too familiar with the struggles of rural and northern communities that rely on the resources of our crown forests, and I believe that proposing a new approach to tenure and pricing will help revitalize the industry. The current forest tenure system was designed years ago to give primary consuming mills responsibility to manage Ontario's forests in exchange for long-term wood supply. This has made it difficult for new players to enter the market and has left communities vulnerable during economic downturns.

Could the minister please tell the House how the proposed approach to tenure and pricing will help revitalize the forest industry?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thank you very much for the question. I very much appreciate it.

There is no doubt that we do face some daunting challenges in the forestry industry, but I strongly believe that we can revitalize the industry and our communities by restoring prosperity through a new forest economy based on new products, new markets and new processing.

For those reasons, 10 days ago my ministry proposed a new framework to modernize Ontario's tenure and pricing system which we see as a critical step in transforming the forest economy and putting Ontario's wood back to work. This proposed framework seeks to establish a system that is more responsive to market forces by generating greater competition in the pricing allocation of our crown timber resources. These proposed changes will give Ontarians a more active role in the management of their crown forests and will provide local and aboriginal communities more involvement in how these forests are managed and how the wood is sold.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Rick Johnson: Thank you for informing the House about the proposed preferred framework for modernizing Ontario's tenure and pricing system.

It is certainly reassuring that there has been movement towards a modernized and improved system for administering our timber resources for long-term prosperity. This is very important news for all residents of Ontario, as this new framework will create opportunities that will generate the right level of investment to ensure that the crown forest continues to be renewed and enhanced. Putting wood to work will create additional jobs and economic prosperity for Ontarians.

While I believe this proposed framework is the right direction to go in, I would like further clarity on it. Could the minister please tell the House how our government is planning to implement this proposed framework, and what are the major differences between the old system and the new modernized system?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: It's a very good question. Certainly this bold proposal is the most comprehensive overhaul of Ontario's wood allocation system in decades and it certainly fits in with our government's plan to position Ontario's forestry sector as an innovative global player in the 21st century.

The implementation of this proposed system would follow a series of consultations with industry and environmental groups, community leaders, forestry stakeholders, forest management workers, aboriginal communities, organizations, labour, business and the public all across Ontario. This new system—the modernized system—would establish new local forest management corporations across the province, it would introduce more competitive markets to improve the access to crown timber and it would implement a new revenue model that would ensure stability through various economic cycles.

With the input from Ontarians, I believe this system will help to restore the competitiveness of Ontario's forest sector, because we know—

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

PEDIATRIC FORENSIC PATHOLOGY INQUIRY

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: My question is to the Attorney General. Louise Reynolds has lived a nightmare caused

by Dr. Charles Smith's flawed reports. Dr. Charles Smith concluded that Ms. Reynolds stabbed her daughter more than 80 times. Ms. Reynolds spent two years in prison. Her daughter had been attacked by a dog. William Mullins-Johnson spent 12 years in prison for the alleged rape and murder of his four-year-old niece. His niece had died from natural causes.

You said you'd have answers very soon. Given your track record, "very soon" is not good enough for people's whose lives have been torn apart. Minister, you've had enough time; you've had a year and a half. When is very soon? When exactly will these people have some closure?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I'm very pleased that this government fully supported the Goudge inquiry, and moved expeditiously to take prosecutions which in many cases had happened many, many years before, decades before, reopened them, got them before the Court of Appeal, and got them heard as quickly as possible. We continue to do so. We have taken up Justice Goudge's suggestion that we determine whether many different people in many different sets of circumstances could avoid having to start with the civil justice system, which would give them a full hearing but might take a long time, and come up with a short, quick, fair approach to some of their compensation issues, and we're doing that. We've been getting ongoing advice and should have that very soon.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Sherry Sherret-Robinson was convicted of killing her four-month-old son after Dr. Charles Smith testified against her. She spent one year in prison before being exonerated. As a result of the initial charge, Ms. Sherret-Robinson was placed on the child abuse registry. Despite being found not guilty, her name is still on that registry. Minister, Ms. Sherret-Robinson has been a victim of Dr. Charles Smith. She's been forced to wait for 18 months while you examine a possible compensation process. Now she is being pushed from department to department to get off this registry. Ms. Sherret-Robinson wants her name erased from the registry. She deserves an answer from your compensation committee now. Will you address her concerns now?

1130

Hon. Christopher Bentley: In the questions that my friend has had, both today and the other day, he has clearly outlined the challenge. There are many different people convicted at many different times who have suffered different series of injustices or issues. Coming up with one quick compensation approach for all of those in disparate circumstances is challenging. All of them have the right to the civil process, but we're trying to come up with, on Justice Goudge's suggestion, something that is quick, fair and can apply flexibly to all. We've got legal advice. We're getting ongoing legal advice, and that's why we're moving as expeditiously as we can to address these very different cases and circumstances.

LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Premier: MPAC is offering its employees no wage increase for the next two years, yet within the last six months MPAC told municipalities that it had to increase its charges to them because of the cost of rising wages. Premier, will you make MPAC either pass on the higher fees to its employees or tell MPAC to roll back their fees to municipalities?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: As I understand, there is a tentative agreement that has been reached between the parties, and out of respect for the labour relations process, I cannot and will not comment further. But our Ministry of Labour mediator has been working very closely with the parties, I say to the member. As I've always said in this House, and the member has heard me often, collective agreements are the best agreements. They're the most stable; they're the most productive agreements; they're the fairest agreements.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Back to the Premier: Given what you've said about collective agreements, one wouldn't have thought that you'd bring in the last budget with all the interference that's in there with regard to collective agreements—massive interference.

You say you're committed to transparency, fairness and all the other good things in life. Will you tell MPAC to roll back that charge for expenses they plan to avoid and give the money back to the municipalities?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I'm sure the member is aware, or I'll make him aware, that MPAC is an organization that is funded by the municipalities. All of us are paid with public tax dollars. We have a role to play, be it politicians, workers, employers or employees. We're all pulling together to help Ontario become stronger.

But as I said in my earlier response, out of respect for the labour relations process, it wouldn't be appropriate for me to comment further. I do understand that a tentative agreement has been reached by the parties. I'll allow the parties to do their work, of course with assistance from the Ministry of Labour through our mediation department.

TOURISM

Mr. Reza Moridi: My question is to the Minister of Tourism and Culture. Summer is just around the corner, and it's a much-anticipated break for students and their families. Last year, many Ontarians chose a "staycation" and discovered their own province. There is a clear need to showcase all that Ontario has to offer. There is so much for Ontarians to discover about the natural beauty, outdoor activities, great cultural attractions and urban experiences in their own province. How are you promoting Ontario and everything it has to offer to families that are interested in travelling within the province this summer?

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you for the question, honourable member for Richmond Hill. There's no doubt

about it: Summer is just around the corner, and summer is the best time to promote tourism in Ontario. We have a number of great festivals and events taking place across the province. To name a few, the Ottawa Tulip Festival, the international air show and Summer Fest in Windsor, and the Carassauga multicultural festival are all great, family-friendly events. Families can also discover great Ontario attractions, like the Butterfly Conservatory in Niagara Falls, Science North in Sudbury and the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. This summer is another great opportunity for families to discover that there's truly no place like this, there's truly no place like Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Reza Moridi: Promoting Ontario also requires this government to make valuable information available to those travelling across the province. Informed travellers make the best choices, informed travellers will have better experiences, and better experiences give travellers one more reason to return to Ontario.

Families need access to more information about our festivals and events, summer attractions, outdoor activities and family-friendly events. Such information will ensure that families have the opportunity to discover all that Ontario has to offer. Minister, what steps are you taking to ensure that such comprehensive information is within reach for summer travellers?

Hon. Michael Chan: I want to thank the member again for the question. Yes, comprehensive information is important for all travellers. Such information is also key to promoting Ontario. The 2010 festivals and events guide is a great tool for all visitors. With the guide, visitors can experience breathtaking sites and many great festivals and events. Copies of the guide are available at travel information centres, destination marketing organizations and festival and event offices. The information is also online.

The member from Richmond Hill is right: Informed visitors will have better experiences, and better experiences mean more return visits to Ontario. Tourism is one of the economic drivers of Ontario and we are committed to promoting it.

POLICE

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Since I didn't get an answer from the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, I wonder if I could ask the question to the Minister of Transportation. It involves the fact that the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police are here at Queen's Park today, and I said earlier that they have some important policing issues they'd like to address. I'm not sure if you are well aware, Minister, but the Minister of Community Safety certainly is, that one of their key issues is a request to allow police officers real-time access to the files of MTO for the driver's licence photos. It's important to the policing community because it can handle policing in a more efficient and effective manner and help the policing community overall.

I'm wondering, Minister, if you would respond to the question: Will you, in fact, allow the OACP—will you respond to their action, and ask for real-time access as quickly as possible for them? What I'm asking for is to change the system we have today to allow the request from the OACP.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Certainly, I'm happy to chime in and support what the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services says. As it happens, I met with the chiefs of police this morning and had the opportunity to talk about this very issue. As the member opposite knows, there are 500 of these units already being deployed in the province used in police cars. We've committed to another 300 units. I said to the chiefs of police this morning that it makes eminent sense to me that we would continue to work with them to find options. It may not be that we need to have one of these pieces of technology in every single vehicle. There may be a way of having them deployed in a different way. The issue is that the pictures that are in the MTO database can be used at the roadside. I completely understand that, and we're going to be working with the chiefs of police organization to make that happen. As I say, we're expanding within the next three months to another 300 units.

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

I just remind any member who's participating in the wheelchair challenge that I need to meet with them after question period in the side office just to make sure we have the logistics cleared.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1138 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

NURSES

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: It's kind of a sad reason I stand here today. This is National Nursing Week. However, last Thursday, we found out at the Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital that 26 nursing positions were being eliminated. Sandra Tansley, the bargaining unit president of the Ontario Nurses' Association, said, "Instead of celebrating, we're mourning the loss of 26 positions."

The government continues to brag all the time about the nursing positions they've added; the reality is, nothing could be further from the truth. Here's a hospital that has been newly reconstructed and redeveloped with a lot of government funding over the years, a lot of municipal funding. At the same time, we've seen a billion dollars wasted in the eHealth scandal, we've seen \$25 million spent on HST severance for tax collectors who aren't going to lose a day's work and we've seen this government bring in the health premium, yet here we are in the province of Ontario this year, and over 2,000

jobs have been eliminated—nursing positions have been eliminated in the province of Ontario under this government. They like to blame the LHINs, they like to blame the hospital boards of directors, but the reality is, it falls solely on the responsibility of the Premier's office.

This is a very, very sad day in the city of Orillia and area to think that we're losing those positions. We've already got long-term-care facilities that are maxed out; we've got waiting lists on each and every one them. Community care access is down in numbers because of the overload, and here we are laying off another 26 people. This is a sad day in the province of Ontario for this reason.

NURSING WEEK

Ms. Helena Jaczek: It is with great pleasure that I rise today during the first day of Nursing Week to pay tribute to the extremely hard-working and dedicated nurses in this province.

In 1971, May 12, the birthday of nursing pioneer Florence Nightingale, was designated as International Nurses Day. Florence Nightingale was a British nurse during the Crimean War. Her passion, dedication and activism are what turned nursing into a profession.

Nursing Week gives us an opportunity to celebrate our largest group of health care providers—our nurses—for their outstanding patient-centred care and dedication to advancing and strengthening the health care system.

The United Nations has declared 2010 the International Year of the Nurse.

Nurses are the backbone of our health care system, and our government has hired more than 10,000 nurses since we took office in 2003. We've also made Ontario one of the few jurisdictions in the world to guarantee full-time job opportunities for nursing graduates. Over 8,300 new nursing graduates have been matched to job opportunities since this program started.

A special thank you to all of the nurses in my riding of Oak Ridges–Markham and to the following vice-presidents and chief nursing officers from the three York regional hospitals: Beth Snyder from York Central Hospital, Julia Scott from Markham Stouffville Hospital and Annette Jones from Southlake Regional Health Centre. Thank you for your commitment and for strengthening health care in Ontario.

VETERANS

Mr. Frank Klees: I was honoured to attend the Veteran Appreciation Day in Aurora this past Saturday where Mayor Phyllis Morris made this proclamation, which reads in part as follows:

"Whereas veterans are honoured in communities across Ontario in the weeks surrounding Remembrance Day each November 11th; and ...

"Whereas Ontarians are deeply indebted to the courageous men and women who defend our country and who have given their lives for the cause of peace; and

“Whereas a Veteran Appreciation Day will provide a timely reminder of the importance of honouring those who guard our freedoms and ensure our security; and

“Whereas it is an important opportunity to applaud the families whose strong support of our soldiers is vital to their ability to do such a demanding and critical job; and

“Whereas we recognize all veterans for their service to Canada and their achievements and sacrifices for Canadians; and

“Whereas veterans have made a distinct contribution to Aurora by sharing their experiences with young people and enriching the life of the community; and

“Whereas Aurora has a proud history of military service, and our veterans make up a valuable part of our town.

“Therefore be it resolved that, on behalf of the members of council of the corporation of the town of Aurora, I, Mayor Phyllis Morris, do hereby proclaim May 8, 2010, as Veteran Appreciation Day to enable the town council and residents of Aurora to recognize and honour the sacrifices of veterans and their work in the community.”

MALE VIOLENCE

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I rise today to commend all those secondary students from the schools in London and St. Thomas district who participated in the march against male violence. Over 250 secondary students joined together to demonstrate unity and solidarity in protesting male violence. This event is in its 20th year and has proven to be a resounding success in raising money and awareness of this issue and encouraging discussion and advocacy on eradicating male violence.

This year, the students did a tremendous job in raising a substantial amount of money, to the tune of \$7,000. Each student participating in this event showed drive and initiative by meeting or surpassing the \$20 pledge minimum. It's the determination and dedication demonstrated by these students that gives us hope that the future is bright and peaceful for all human beings, no matter their gender, race, religion, socio-economic status or sexual orientation.

It's my privilege to stand here today and commend London and St. Thomas students for promoting human rights and fighting for a better future for everyone who lives in this beautiful province.

ALLISTON HORNETS HOCKEY TEAM

Mr. Jim Wilson: It's with great enthusiasm that I rise today to applaud the Alliston Hornets hockey team on their victory Friday night over the Belle River Canadiens, making them the Ontario Hockey Association's junior C champions.

By all accounts, Friday's game at the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre was a nail-biter. Despite a late-game comeback by the Canadiens, the Hornets stepped up their efforts, refusing to allow the series to go to game seven.

Alliston's goalie, Rob Rankin, and the entire defensive line cranked it up in the dying moments of the game to win the series four games to two. This is the second Clarence Schmalz Cup that the Hornets have brought home to Alliston in the past three years and it confirms their standing as a force to be reckoned with among Ontario's junior C hockey teams.

People across New Tecumseth are cheering today and are extremely proud of their hometown team. Without question, the Hornets' clean and upbeat approach to hockey has gained them an admirable reputation throughout Ontario.

I'd like to salute Tony Veltri of madhunt.com and Matthew Talbot of the Alliston Herald for giving live updates on Twitter right through the series. It was a great way to keep everyone who couldn't make the road games on the edge of their seats.

I think I speak for all members of the Legislature in congratulating the Alliston Hornets on being provincial champions and for the immeasurable amount of time, commitment and sacrifice made to their sport of hockey. Congratulations.

1310

TAXATION

Mr. Howard Hampton: Over the past couple of weeks I have met with a number of chiefs and leaders from First Nation communities, and they all ask the same question. They all ask, how could a government which over and over again boasts about having a special relationship with First Nations go into the back room and sign the harmonized sales tax agreement, which has the effect of removing the point-of-sale exemption from First Nations? How could a government do that, with no dialogue, no discussion, no negotiation and no consultation whatsoever with First Nation leadership?

The second question they ask is this: When this government announced the HST, it also announced a number of exemptions from the HST. So First Nation leaders are wondering, how could the government negotiate such an agreement, arrange in the negotiation for a number of exemptions, and totally leave First Nations out of the picture? Since the presentation of the HST, the government has moved to create two more exemptions: an exemption on the resale of homes that cost up to \$400,000 and what we call the Tim Hortons exemption. First Nations are wondering again, how could this happen and they be completely forgotten by this government? These are questions that need to be answered.

JOB CREATION

Mr. Dave Levac: Over the last year, I've had the opportunity of witnessing an historic moment in the province of Ontario. In the riding of Brant, we've seen Brant, Brantford, Six Nations, Mississaugas of the New Credit, and then lately invited Haldimand and Norfolk to join us in an opportunity in the province of Ontario

because of the Green Energy Act. What we've decided to do as a region is declare ourselves the green energy hub. By doing so, we're going to have an opportunity to deal with Six Nations, New Credit, Brantford, Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk, working together under the auspices of an organization—through the chambers of commerce—that says that we can all come together and work for green energy jobs.

Once we do this, we're going to be the hub of the hub, I like to call it, because Ontario is open for business around the world. We're now seeing companies from around the world land in Ontario, dealing with green energy jobs. We have decided that we're going to come together. We're sitting at the table together and we're negotiating together.

We also have another historic moment, where Brant and Six Nations have signed a business accord that they will be dealing with each other on an ongoing basis. Once we see the end of this negotiation, we are going to be seeing the beginning of the green energy hub. I look forward to continuing to work with all the elected officials in that area. As we move forward, we will be the best place to live, work and raise a family.

BEN VICCARI

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I rise today to bid a sad but very fond farewell to Ben Viccari, a remarkable man whom I had the privilege of knowing while we were both at OMNI television and who passed away last Thursday at the age of 91. A consummate writer, journalist, broadcaster, documentary filmmaker, philosopher and outspoken supporter of Canadian multiculturalism, Ben was born in 1918 in London, England, to an Italian father and an English mother.

Passionate about words, literature and history, Ben earnestly began his journalism career in Great Britain, but the Second World War was to put his journalistic ambitions on hold. Ben joined Britain's Royal Artillery and later the Allied Control Commission in Italy.

Shortly after moving to Canada in 1947, his passion for journalism rekindled. Ben became a vocal advocate for the newly emerging ethnic media in Canada. He first established an Italian weekly newspaper called *Oggi Canada*, then built his own public relations firm. He became president of the Toronto Press Club and the Canadian Ethnic Media Association.

The recipient of numerous journalism awards, Ben lectured at the Harvard Business School and many Canadian universities and colleges. He did not sit on his laurels, and worked to the very end of his life.

I am sure that my colleagues from all sides of the House will join me in recognizing Ben Viccari's remarkable contributions to our province and our country. Farewell, Ben.

VETERANS

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: Yesterday, the parade of Canadian veterans at Apeldoorn in the Netherlands

marked the last day of official celebrations marking the 65th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day. But the debt of gratitude owed to the veterans of the First Canadian Army Corps for pushing back and defeating the Nazi forces in the spring of 1945 is far from repaid or forgotten.

VE Day has been surrounded by many events in both the Netherlands and Canada as Canadian veterans and Dutch on both sides of the Atlantic remember the final days of the Second World War. More than 7,200 Canadians died bringing freedom to the Dutch, and that nation has remained forever grateful.

Following the devastation of the war, many Dutch citizens were forced to seek new lives in other countries. Canada became the country of choice. The Dutch had come to know and love their Canadian liberators. They were trusted and respected as the compassionate army that found them nearly starved into submission by the Nazi-imposed "hungry winter." In addition, it was the Canadian government that had offered safe haven in Ottawa to the Dutch royal family. Princess Margriet was born in exile in 1943 but remained a Dutch citizen through the special efforts of the Canadian and Dutch governments. The princess returns to Canada this week for a week-long visit.

The Dutch relationship with Canada's veterans will endure as we continue to say thank you to the "Canadese Soldaten."

Remarks in Dutch.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ERAMOSKA KARST FEEDER LANDS PROTECTION ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LA PROTECTION DE LA ZONE NOURRICIÈRE D'ERAMOSKA KARST

Mr. Hudak moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 59, An Act to protect the feeder lands of the Eramosa Karst / *Projet de loi 59, Loi visant à protéger la zone nourricière d'Eramosa Karst.*

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. Tim Hudak: First I want to thank my colleague and neighbour, the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, Paul Miller, for co-sponsoring this bill, an issue that our constituents of Stoney Creek and the Hamilton-Niagara area care deeply about.

The bill, in short, requires the government of Ontario to take immediate action to protect from development the feeder lands of the Eramosa karst in Stoney Creek; to

direct that the feeder lands, the additional 36 hectares, be used as a conservation area; and to ensure that the feeder lands remain contiguous with the existing Eramosa karst conservation area. In closing, I want to thank the Friends of the Eramosa Karst, the Hamilton Conservation Authority, and local councillor Brad Clark, among others, for helping Mr. Miller and me bring this bill forward.

PUBLIC SAFETY RELATED TO DOGS
STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI A TRAIT À LA SÉCURITÉ
PUBLIQUE LIÉE AUX CHIENS

Ms. DiNovo moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 60, An Act to amend the Dog Owners' Liability Act and the Animals for Research Act / Projet de loi 60, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la responsabilité des propriétaires de chiens et la Loi sur les animaux destinés à la recherche.

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.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: The bill repeals provisions in the Dog Owners' Liability Act that prohibit restricted pit bulls and provide for controls on pit bulls. The bill also repeals provisions in the Animals for Research Act relating to the disposition of pit bulls under that act.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES

POLICE WEEK

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: This is Police Week in the province of Ontario, and I would invite all members of this House to join me in expressing our gratitude to the brave officers who serve us so courageously and help keep our communities safe.

Police Week is intended to highlight and strengthen the link between the police and our communities by reminding us that police and the community must work together. This year's theme, Building Partnerships for a Safer Community, celebrates that spirit of co-operation and reminds the community that safety is not the sole responsibility of the police. I want to thank the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police for working with us to develop this theme, and to thank all police services for the activities they have organized to mark Police Week in neighbourhoods across the province.

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This year, the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police Queen's Park Day falls during Police Week. I would like to welcome several representatives of the OACP who are

in the visitors' gallery this afternoon and scattered around MPP offices, ensuring that our elected members on all sides of the House get the information necessary to make those very, very important decisions. I want to thank Chief Dan Parkinson, current president of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, who is from the Cornwall police service, and Chief Bob Herman, the incoming president of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police. He's from Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, 2010 is no ordinary year for Ontario police chiefs and the brave men and women who serve under them. In June, Canada is set to play host to world leaders from the G8 and G20 groups of nations in Huntsville and Toronto. This will be one of the largest security operations in Canadian history. Police officers from the Ontario Provincial Police and seven municipal police services are supporting their colleagues in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the lead G8 and G20 police agency, to ensure that world leaders and dignitaries conduct global business in a secure environment with no disruptions, and that the citizens who live in communities that surround the summit venues are safe in their neighbourhoods. There is an enormous spirit of co-operation in this undertaking—it's all about positive policing in the province of Ontario—and I am confident that Ontario's police officers will do us proud in the eyes of the world.

The celebration of Police Week is timed to coincide with the international Peace Officers Memorial Day and with Ontario's own tribute to fallen police officers. We mourn the loss of the brave officers who died in the line of duty. We thank and honour them for their service, and grieve with their families, friends, colleagues and communities over their passing. We must never forget their sacrifice.

Ontario's justice system works best when those of us entrusted with its care work together. I encourage all my colleagues in the Ontario Legislature to participate wherever they can in Police Week activities and to take part in the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police Queen's Park Day. Both are excellent opportunities to show appreciation to our valued partners in crime prevention and safer communities.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Statements by ministries? Responses?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm pleased to respond to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. I want to welcome Chief Dan Parkinson of the Cornwall police service this afternoon. It's always exciting to take part in the lobby day and to listen to the different concerns and issues that you face. As a member of the opposition, along with my leader, Tim Hudak, we're very pleased to meet with you. I think we'll be talking to you about some of those issues within the hour.

As critic for community safety and correctional services, I really enjoy working in this area, particularly with the Ontario Provincial Police general headquarters in my riding; I get to talk to a lot of the deputy commissioners, sergeants etc., and of course to Com-

missioner Fantino once in a while, on a number of different issues as well. I applaud them for the work they've already done this year on the G8 and the G20; I know there has been leadership shown here. That's going to be a very difficult event to police because of the controversy that always surrounds those types of events. I think they'll do an excellent job with the partners in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police as well as the Toronto Police Service.

I was saddened to attend the police memorial here a week ago yesterday, when we put the names of five officers from Ontario on the police memorial wall here at Queen's Park. I met a lot of the young families and the parents of the police officers. Any time you have to attend an event like that, you certainly feel for the families and the police services they represent. In each case, all of the chiefs of police from those police services were there with the families to support them in those difficult times.

As we move forward on some of the issues that the OACP is facing with the government, there are a lot of things we'd like to be able to help the chiefs with here today. I can tell you that we asked a question this morning in the House on access to photo ID files for police officers. We think that's something that's very reasonable. If it can make policing safer, more effective and more efficient, then it's something that we need to move forward on quickly and not drag on and on.

In the Progressive Conservative Party, we believe very strongly in equipping and training all front-line officers here in the province with tasers. We think that it will save lives. I can tell you that I've asked the question of police officers and police chiefs from right across the province, and I think one thing is for sure: They're united in the stand that they believe that's the proper move.

They're not really in favour of putting videocams on tasers for whenever an officer has to use a taser. We don't think that's something that is necessary. It's like Big Brother looking over your shoulder. However, we do believe that as we move forward in this province, there should be a comprehensive videocam program for equipping all cruisers that the police officers work from.

We're looking forward to the meeting today, and we look forward to continuing the good relationship our party has had with not only the chiefs of police but the Police Association of Ontario and the Ontario Provincial Police Association over the years. It has been a great partnership. We enjoy working with them, and we enjoy their recommendations as we make Ontario a safer place not only in our communities, but on our roads and waterways, wherever it may be.

We can safely say that this province has had remarkable co-operation between government and police throughout the decades.

Just last year, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Ontario Provincial Police.

Just recently, we had the 50th anniversary of the Ontario Provincial Police auxiliary program. Over 1,000 auxiliary officers donate their time on weekends and

throughout the week to help our front-line officers with different programs.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak on behalf of our caucus. I look forward to the meeting later this afternoon.

I thank the chiefs of police of Ontario for a job well done. We're proud of the work you do and look forward to good relationships with you in the future.

Mr. Peter Kormos: I'm pleased to respond to the Solicitor General and the Minister of Community Safety on behalf of New Democrats here at Queen's Park.

This is a twofer today. We've got the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police lobby day, and it's Police Week. This is the occasion when the minister and the critics in the two respective opposition parties stand up and each tries to outdo the other in terms of who's pro-police and who isn't. It's a game that's played perpetually here. The minister wants to be identified as pro-cop and says that he's with the police and he backs them 100%. Then the first opposition critic stands up and says he's more pro-police than the minister is. Then the second critic stands up and says, "No, I'm more pro-police than the rest of them combined." All that stuff means nothing, because all that stuff is the yakking that goes on here when people are trying to suck up to a particular lobby group.

The issue is hard policies. The chiefs of police gave us, as they did others, a summary of the issues they wanted to raise today. I can tell you Andrea Horwath and I have already discussed some of these in anticipation of the meeting we're going to have, like other caucuses, at 4 o'clock.

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A couple we find particularly interesting, and one is the need to make some major amendments to the Police Services Act with respect to special constables. I'm particularly sensitive to that, because down where I come from, we have the Niagara Parks Police, for instance. Most of us come from, or are at least close to, university towns or cities where we inevitably have campus police. You've got any number of—and I don't even want to call them secondary police forces, because they're not secondary; they are out there doing the front-line stuff. They're patrolling in the middle of the night, they're dealing with the enforcement of laws and the protection of people, and they're engaging in many of the same risks as any other police officer. I appreciate the discussion that the OACP is generating around the need for legislative reform, amendments to the Police Services Act, to address the whole issue of special constables.

I found particularly interesting the observation by the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police about the ubiquitous one-time funding. They make note of it, and they say, of course, that they're grateful for the one-time funding—the guns-and-gangs type of funding, for instance. But what that inevitably does, they point out, is it raises expectation levels, and rightly so, because they get results as a result of those concentrated efforts and the application of resources to a particular problem, but then when the one-time-only funding ends, the municipal taxpayer is on the hook for yet more and higher property

taxes that people are ill-pressed to afford, or the programs are simply terminated. They're interrupted; they're eliminated. It's one of those one-step-forward, two-steps-back lacks of achievement, because you start to make some inroads and you start to deal with a particular issue, whether it's drugs in a particular community, whether it's gangs, whether it's guns—so there's a need for consistent, stable funding.

Let me—because I would be delinquent if I let the final minute and 38 seconds go by—refer to the recent attack on at least one police officer, maybe more. We had this fellow, Rahim Jaffer, who had charges of drunk driving and cocaine possession withdrawn against him. Some sources tried to create the impression that the withdrawal of the charges was necessary because somehow the police had fouled up. We're told that one of them was a 10-year police officer, a very experienced police officer, with the Ontario Provincial Police. The commissioner of the OPP insists that his police officers followed the letter of the law, and I have no reason to disbelieve him. That unresolved and unexplained withdrawal of those serious charges—and understand what I'm saying: Implicit in the withdrawal of charges is a criticism of the police officers. They haven't had the opportunity to clear their name because they're in a quasi-military type of operation where discipline is essential and where they don't do these things in public. So I'm very concerned about the fact that at least one police officer has been hung out to dry, if you will, because the suggestion has been that that police officer didn't abide by the letter of the law when that police officer was making an arrest and securing evidence around drunk driving and cocaine, and that's why the charges were withdrawn. I'm not sure that that was necessarily the case. The problem is that we don't know, and I'd dearly love to. The Attorney General could clear this up in a minute, but he's disinclined to.

I'm looking forward to seeing the chiefs of police later this afternoon.

PETITIONS

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SERVICES

Mr. Frank Klees: I have a petition that relates to a waiting list of more than 1,000 children for speech-language pathology services in York region, signed by many concerned parents, teachers and pathologists. It reads as follows:

“Whereas there are more than 1,000 children in the public and Catholic schools in York region who are on the wait-list for speech-language therapy; and

“Whereas these are children who are struggling with speech and language disorders, which can have serious consequences without timely intervention; and

“Whereas it is the responsibility of the Central Community Care Access Centre to assign speech-language

pathologists to provide therapy to children on the wait-list, but the McGuinty government has substantially cut funding to the CCAC for speech-language pathology, with the result that children are not being released from the wait-list for treatment; and

“Whereas parents are being told to pay for private therapy if they want timely treatment for their children, but many parents cannot afford the cost of private therapy, with the result that these children are at risk of increased severity of their difficulties, impacting their social and academic skills;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to call on Premier Dalton McGuinty, the minister responsible for children and youth services,” the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care “and the Minister of Education to intervene immediately to ensure that the Central CCAC develop a plan that will ensure that the more than 1,000 children in need of speech-language therapy in York region receive the necessary treatment.”

I'm pleased to affix my signature because I believe that it's an urgent cause.

WATER QUALITY

Mr. Reza Moridi: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

“To continue to upgrade our current water filtration system;

“To continue to monitor and test our water systems;

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

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

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

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

I fully agree with this petition. I sign it and pass it on to page Luke.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Randy Hillier: I have a petition here from residents of my community who are concerned with the closure of rural pharmacies. The petition reads:

“Whereas the people of Ontario depend on the accessible advice and services they currently get from their pharmacists; and

“Whereas pharmacies will not be able to continue to provide current service levels under the conditions proposed by the McGuinty government;

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

"That the current proposed changes to the Ontario drug benefit program not be adopted."

Thank you very much.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: This petition has to do with the Eglinton LRT, which runs between the riding of Davenport and the riding of Eglinton–Lawrence. It reads as follows:

"Whereas investing in public transit and infrastructure is important to Toronto and to Ontario to help reduce gridlock, improve air quality and create jobs;

"Whereas Toronto has the worst gridlock in the world, as noted in a 2010 report; and

"Whereas the Eglinton rapid transit line is a much-needed link that will travel along Eglinton Avenue, from Kennedy station in the east to Pearson airport in the west, connecting Durham region with Peel region through the heart of Toronto;

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

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

"Whereas a rapid transit line has been supported by public transit planners and experts since 1975;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the building of the Eglinton rapid transit line as soon as possible, and to say no to gridlock on Eglinton."

Since I support this petition, Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to sign it and provide it to you.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

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

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

"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;

"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,

"—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'll sign this petition and I agree with it.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas multiple sclerosis (MS) is a debilitating disease affecting a great number of people in Ontario; and

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"Whereas there has been a new treatment discovery called the liberation treatment, which addresses chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency (CCVI) and that has been seen to provide relief for many MS sufferers,

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

"That the government of Ontario invest in research regarding this new treatment and make it available to victims of MS in Ontario as a listed procedure in a timely manner."

I will sign it and send it to the table with page Vrajesh.

WIND TURBINES

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

"Whereas multiple industrial wind farm projects are being considered by the government of Ontario in the absence of independent scientific studies on the long-term effects on the health of residents living near industrial wind farms;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario to put a moratorium on any renewable energy approvals for the construction of industrial wind farms in the province of Ontario until such time as it can be demonstrated that all reasonable concerns regarding the long-term effects on the health of residents living near industrial wind farms have been fully studied and addressed."

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontarians pay more for popular generic drugs for diabetes, high blood pressure and other common health issues than patients in other jurisdictions; and

"Whereas Ontarians deserve fair prescription drug prices so that families and seniors are not charged more than those in other countries; and

"Whereas some members of the opposition have sided with large corporations to preserve the status quo rather than make prescription medications more affordable for Ontario patients by supporting the proposed drug reforms;

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

“That all members of the Ontario Legislature support Ontarians by passing the government’s legislation to lower the cost of prescription medications.”

I agree with this, and I will affix my signature.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario signed by a great number of people in my riding and the ridings surrounding Oxford. It is:

“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 pharmacy now.”

Thank you very much for allowing me to present this petition on behalf of my constituents.

WATER QUALITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

POWER PLANT

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the province of Ontario, through the Ontario Energy Board, has selected a location for a gas-fired electrical generating power station within three kilometres of 16 schools and more than 11,000 homes; and

“Whereas the Milton-Clarkson airshed is already one of the most polluted in Canada; and

“Whereas no independent environmental assessment has been completed for this proposed building location; and

“Whereas Ontario has experienced a significant reduction in demand for electrical power; and

“Whereas a recent accident at a power plant in Connecticut demonstrated the dangers that nearby residents face;

“We, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to immediately rescind the existing plan to build a power plant at or near the current planned location ... on Royal Windsor Drive in Oakville and initiate a complete review of area power needs and potential building sites, including environmental assessments and a realistic assessment of required danger zone buffer areas.”

I agree with this petition, and I’m pleased to sign my name and pass it to my page, Sarah.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Mr. Charles Sousa: I have a petition that reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas multiple sclerosis (MS) is a debilitating disease affecting a great number of people in Ontario; and

“Whereas there has been a new treatment discovery called the liberation treatment, which addresses chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency (CCVI) and that has been seen to provide relief for many MS sufferers,

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

“That the government of Ontario invest in research regarding this new treatment and make it available to victims of MS in Ontario as a listed procedure in a timely manner.”

I’ll affix my signature and provide it to Jacob.

ORGAN DONATION

Mr. Frank Klees: This petition to the Parliament of Ontario is in support of an online organ donor registry.

“Whereas one person in Canada dies every three days waiting for an organ transplant and over 1,600 Ontarians are on a waiting list for organ and tissue donations;

“Whereas organ donor registrations in some jurisdictions are as high as 80%, but Ontario lags far behind at 17%;

“Whereas Ontario’s antiquated organ donor registration process still requires forms to be mailed in or personal attendance at ServiceOntario health card offices;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to call on the Minister of Health to

immediately implement a resolution ... that calls for the creation of an online organ donor registration link on the ServiceOntario website that would enable people to register as organ donors using their OHIP number.”

I'm pleased to support this petition.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Mike Colle: I have a petition from Nancy Wallace and the folks in the Dufferin-Eglinton area.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas investing in public transit and infrastructure is important to Toronto ...

“Whereas Toronto has the worst gridlock in the world ...

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

“Whereas the Eglinton rapid transit line would create ... jobs ...

“Whereas the Eglinton rapid transit line would be a boost for neighbourhood improvement, promoting local business ...

“Whereas a rapid transit line has been supported by public transit planners and experts since 1975;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the building of the Eglinton rapid transit line as soon as possible, and to say no to gridlock” and ask Mayor Miller to stop the stalling.

I support this petition.

TAXATION

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

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

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

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

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

I will sign the petition, and I happen to agree with it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 6, 2010, on the motion for allocation of time on Bill 44, An Act to implement the Northern Ontario energy credit / Projet de loi 44, Loi mettant en oeuvre le crédit pour les coûts d'énergie dans le Nord de l'Ontario.

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: Once again, we have the opportunity to speak to a closure motion—a time allocation motion—this one regarding Bill 44, a credit for northern Ontario residents.

I think we all have to take a look back and look at how things are progressing. This Liberal government is usually known for all its fanfare when it introduces a bill: you know, photo ops, brochures and all the fluff.

1350

Now we have a bill that they've brought in a time allocation motion for, and this, of course, will allow for a credit for residents in northern Ontario to try to deal with the abusive hydro costs and energy costs that they're subjected to by this Liberal government. Abusive: The cost of energy in Ontario is bankrupting Ontario.

Let's just put things on the record for everybody to understand and to reflect upon, especially with the north. So here is this up-to-\$200 credit, and of course, if you have a combined family income of over \$45,000 or a greater income than \$35,000, then you start having this credit clawed back. Let's put on the record what the accomplishments of this Liberal government are in the north. For this \$200, the people in the north have lost 45,000 jobs in the forestry sector alone; 45,000 jobs lost, and they're getting a crumb. The people in Timmins: Xstrata is closing up and thousands of jobs are moving out, and they're moving over to Quebec, where there are low-cost, competitive energy rates, not the exorbitant fees that this government has implemented.

In addition to the 45,000 jobs and the thousands of jobs lost at Xstrata, let's not forget the over 60 mills in forestry that are closed up and gone as a result of this Liberal government's energy policies. That's what is a record that is so, so important for this government and that's what this closure bill is all about. Instead of the fanfare that generally accompanies their bills, they are trying to hide from their record. That's what they're doing with this time closure; it's hiding from their record of job losses and poverty that they have created in the north.

Let's just take a look at what is the cause of this abusive energy cost in the north. We can start looking at the Green Energy Act and the feed-in tariff program and how this Liberal government, how the Premier and his past deputy have enriched their friends in green energy at the expense and the cost of northern Ontario. We can look at the Samsung deal—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I would ask the member to withdraw that last comment.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'll withdraw.

The Samsung deal: They're making money, Korea is making money, but the people in the north are getting sold down the river.

As this government foams at the mouth over windmills and solar panels and pays up to 80 cents a kilowatt hour for that power, what are we missing here? In the north we have over 5,000 megawatts of the cleanest, cheapest, greenest energy ever known to mankind. It's called hydroelectric power. We have over 5,000 megawatts available, and it's left unused. It's left going down the drain as this Liberal government runs to Korea, runs to their friends to sign exorbitant deals—up to 80-cents-a-kilowatt-hour power—and then gets to shoulder that cost onto our industry and our residents. We have huge unemployment as a result.

The solution, of course, from the Liberals is: Let's give them a few crumbs. Let's make a big promotion here of a \$130-a-year tax credit for an individual or \$200 for a family. But we're going to claw it back if you make even medium wage. Can you imagine a family of \$45,000, two incomes, and once they hit over \$45,000 they're going to start having it clawed back? This is crumbs. It's criminal what this Liberal government is doing, and I understand why they want to hide behind the time allocation motion: because they can't stand the scrutiny of their real actions.

I'd like to see any Liberal member, but especially a member from the north—why have you not utilized those 5,000 megawatts of hydroelectric power, instead of running toward these solar panels and windmills, going offshore when we could be creating jobs and creating a competitive environment for northern Ontario?

I understand this Liberal government. We all understand this Liberal government. When there is a problem in front of them that they've created, what is it they do? They don't look for a solution. They could fix the problem, like generating hydroelectric power, but instead it's so much easier for this Liberal government just to write another cheque. They never want to fix a problem; they're well apt at creating them. The only thing they ever do is look at how to mitigate the effects of their ridiculous, harmful policies.

In this case, what is their solution? "Well, we'll mitigate the effects of the HST. We'll mitigate the effects of the higher energy costs by having these crumbs of credits available to people in the north, \$130." On the HST alone, we see that the cost is going to be over \$800 just on that one new levy this Liberal government has placed on northerners. The solution: "We'll give you \$130."

They're shanghaiing northern Ontario with these ridiculous and abusive policies, and now they have the gall to bring in a time allocation motion so that they don't have to be held to account for their actions, so that they can't be held under scrutiny for what they're doing. They just continually put more and more people out of work in the north, put more and more forestry companies out of work, close more and more mines, and then, "Well, let's

just not talk about that anymore and have a time allocation motion."

This is an abuse. It is incredible that any member of this Liberal government would have—and they probably are ashamed of going to the north with these sorts of policies. They are hiding all the gallimaufry of their real actions, which is to do nothing but write another cheque, and, "We're going to go into the taxpayers' pockets one more time, take some more money out of their pockets, and then give them some crumbs in return."

I think everybody in Ontario sees through the facade of this Liberal government. Everybody understands that this is a government that is withered on the vine. There is no substance, there is nothing to this Liberal government, other than to take more money out of people's pockets and then offer them some rhetorical policy that they'll hide from. They'll put another puppy in the window to try to distract people, and then they'll just take more money and hide behind their favoured ploy of "Let's have time allocation once again."

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Phillips has moved government notice of motion number 22. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This will be a 10-minute bell. Call in the members.

The division bells rang from 1359 to 1409.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): All those in favour will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Duncan, Dwight	Moridi, Reza
Albanese, Laura	Fonseca, Peter	Murray, Glen R.
Arthurs, Wayne	Gravelle, Michael	Naqvi, Yasir
Bentley, Christopher	Jaczek, Helena	Oraziotti, David
Brotten, Laurel C.	Jeffrey, Linda	Phillips, Gerry
Brown, Michael A.	Johnson, Rick	Qadri, Shafiq
Brownell, Jim	Kular, Kuldeep	Ramal, Khalil
Caplan, David	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ramsay, David
Chan, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Ruprecht, Tony
Chiarelli, Bob	Levac, Dave	Sandals, Liz
Colle, Mike	Mangat, Amrit	Smith, Monique
Delaney, Bob	Mauro, Bill	Sorbara, Greg
Dhillon, Vic	McMeekin, Ted	Sousa, Charles
Dickson, Joe	McNeely, Phil	Van Bommel, Maria
Dombrowsky, Leona	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wilkinson, John

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): All those opposed will stand and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Klees, Frank	Prue, Michael
Chudleigh, Ted	Kormos, Peter	Sterling, Norman W.
Dunlop, Garfield	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
Hampton, Howard	Martiniuk, Gerry	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Norm	
Jones, Sylvia	Miller, Paul	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):
The ayes are 45; the nays are 16.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Orders of the day.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent that notwithstanding standing order 47(d), the order for second reading of Bill 44 may now be called.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Agreed? Agreed.

LOWERING ENERGY COSTS
FOR NORTHERN ONTARIANS ACT, 2010
LOI DE 2010 SUR LA RÉDUCTION
DES COÛTS D'ÉNERGIE
POUR LES ONTARIENS DU NORD

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 5, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 44, An Act to implement the Northern Ontario energy credit / Projet de loi 44, Loi mettant en oeuvre le crédit pour les coûts d'énergie dans le Nord de l'Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 10, 2010, I am now required to put the question.

On May 3, 2010, Mr. Phillips moved second reading of Bill 44, An Act to implement the Northern Ontario energy credit.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

I declare the ayes have it—

Interjection: Same vote?

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Same vote?

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Five-minute bell: Call in all the members.

The division bells rang from 1413 to 1418.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Members in favour will rise one at a time to be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia
Albanese, Laura
Arnott, Ted
Arthurs, Wayne
Bentley, Christopher
Brotten, Laurel C.
Brown, Michael A.
Brownell, Jim
Caplan, David
Chan, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob
Chudleigh, Ted
Colle, Mike
Delaney, Bob

Gravelle, Michael
Hampton, Howard
Hardeman, Ernie
Jaczek, Helena
Jeffrey, Linda
Johnson, Rick
Jones, Sylvia
Klees, Frank
Kormos, Peter
Kular, Kuldip
Lalonde, Jean-Marc
Leal, Jeff
Levac, Dave
Mangat, Amrit

Miller, Norm
Miller, Paul
Moridi, Reza
Murray, Glen R.
Naqvi, Yasir
Oraziotti, David
Phillips, Gerry
Prue, Michael
Qaadri, Shafiq
Ramal, Khalil
Ramsay, David
Ruprecht, Tony
Sandals, Liz
Smith, Monique

Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
Dombrowsky, Leona
Duncan, Dwight
Dunlop, Garfield
Fonseca, Peter

Marchese, Rosario
Martiniuk, Gerry
Mauro, Bill
McMeekin, Ted
McNeely, Phil
Meilleur, Madeleine

Sorbara, Greg
Sousa, Charles
Sterling, Norman W.
Van Bommel, Maria
Wilkinson, John
Wilson, Jim

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):
The ayes are 60; the nays are 0.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 10, 2010, the bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION
STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE
L'ENSEIGNEMENT POSTSECONDAIRE

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 6, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 43, An Act to amend the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000, the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 and the Ontario College of Art & Design Act, 2002 / Projet de loi 43, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 favorisant le choix et l'excellence au niveau post-secondaire, la Loi de 2005 sur les collèges privés d'enseignement professionnel et la Loi de 2002 sur l'École d'art et de design de l'Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Jim Wilson: I am pleased to join the debate this afternoon on Bill 43, which makes amendments to both the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act and the Private Career Colleges Act. This bill also changes the Ontario College of Art & Design Act to reflect its new name as the Ontario College of Art and Design University, and consequential amendments to allow them to operate as such.

I could go on about the government's dismal record on post-secondary education and remind our viewers and the members in the House that in spite of promises in the 2003 election and the 2007 election, when Dalton McGuinty made one promise to say that he—our post-secondary institutions, our colleges and universities, were dead last in funding: 10 out of 10 of all the provinces in Canada. He promised, in those two election campaigns, that he would bring funding up to at least the national average. That promise turned out to be as adhered to or as fulfilled as all of his other tax promises. He said he wouldn't increase our taxes during both those elections, and what did he do? We have now the two largest single increases in the history of Ontario: the Ontario health tax, which each of us pay—it's really a surtax, not a health

tax—and we have the HST coming in, which caught us all a bit by surprise.

But I will talk to the bill, and I intend to be critical of the government's management of the private career college sector. But off the bat, I do want to say that I am supportive of the name change of OCAD, the Ontario College of Art and Design, and the changes in the bill that allow OCAD to grant degrees as a university. As I said when Minister Milloy introduced the bill a couple of weeks ago, it's too bad that OCAD is being put in this contentious act cracking down on bad people in the sector, because the OCAD part is good news. I know that my caucus colleagues who have spoken to this legislation to date have each said that they support OCAD becoming a university, adding the term "university" to its title, and the changes that amend the powers of its board of governors.

I served on the University of Toronto board of governors as a student rep many, many years ago. I just want to commend all those volunteers who are working with the Ontario College of Art and Design, which will be called, if passed, OCAD University. So, congratulations to them. I'm sure there's agreement on that part of the bill, as I said.

Where this bill gets contentious is when you begin talking about cracking down on private career colleges and private universities. I don't think you will find a member in this House who doesn't agree that deceitful and unprofessional institutions should be shut down right away. It seems that every year, from time to time there are horrific stories reported in the media about students being ripped off, unable to either get the degree or certificate that they paid their tuition for because the institution goes bankrupt through bad business practices or fraudulent practices, the students out of pocket, out of money, out of time, or they do get a certificate or what they think is a degree, only to find that the college they have been attending for one, two, three or four years is bogus and the degree or certificate is not recognized by the government, or any government, and is not recognized by employers. That has happened from time to time, so there is a need to have authority to crack down on the bad apples. But I do want to stress that I will be suggesting to my caucus colleagues that we vote against this legislation on second reading because of the absolute lack of consultation with the private career college and private university sector. It's astounding.

The first problem with the bill, as I said, is a lack of consultation. The second problem is that the bill gives the government more power to do what they have already failed to do in cracking down on the bad apples in the sector. Let's talk about lack of consultation.

In fact, there weren't any consultations whatsoever with the sector on this legislation. That's what the staff at the ministry confirmed when I asked them during my briefing on this bill. To their credit, they were quite honest about that and said that, no, they hadn't consulted nor, to their knowledge, had the minister or his staff consulted with the sector.

I'll read a letter from the sector. They're quite angry that the government did not consult with them; they certainly don't appreciate it. Here's a letter addressed to the Premier from Bryan Merkley, president of the Association of Private Colleges. I promised I'd read it into the record. It's dated May 7, 2010.

"Dear Premier:

"As one of Ontario's private career college owners since 1990, I want to register my opposition to Bill 43.

"This bill and its amendments to the PCC Act, 2005"—that's the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005—"needs to be stopped immediately.

"I'm concerned the act has already affected my ability to operate my campus in Cornwall, and these amendments will further reduce my ability to serve Cornwall's employment market.

"Proper input from schools is required before appropriate amendments can be made to the PCC Act, 2005.

"Yours in education and training,

"Bryan Merkley

"President, Association of Private Colleges."

Here is another letter sent to the minister about the same time.

"Minister Milloy,

"I'm writing on behalf of the Association of Private Colleges (AOPC) in opposition of Bill 43. Specifically we're concerned about the changes to the PCCA, 2005 and would respectfully request that these changes be removed prior to approval of the bill so that a proper period of consultation can be pursued."

Obviously if you did that you would gut the bill, so you'd have to remove the bill.

"AOPC was notified by your office on the night before these changes were introduced. They were described to me as minor technical changes. I was offered a briefing and then told it was probably not necessary because these changes were 'minor'.

"AOPC hosted a private career college reception"—by coincidence, I might add—"on Wednesday, April 28"—two days after the bill was introduced—"and it was only during that reception that we actually saw the wording of Bill 43 for the first time."

I'm going to interrupt the letter again: I in fact brought them 20 copies of the bill, because just an hour earlier I had received a briefing by the bureaucrats, which I requested; it was very nice of them to do that. But the sector knew virtually nothing about the thing.

The letter goes on to say: "Needless to say, we were shocked to see the scope of the changes being made and quickly realized the potential harm this would cause the private career college sector.

"We are open to change the PCC Act, 2005—let's just ensure they are the 'right' changes.

"I look forward to the possibility of further discussions.

"Thank you in advance for your consideration,

"Michael Nurse

"Executive director

"Association of Private Colleges."

We already know that the government said in 2006 that they were going to review this particular legislation. So I just ask, what the heck has the government been doing for the last four years? You'd think they'd be out talking to the career colleges and private universities and asking them how they can work together to ensure the best results for students. After all, that's what it's all about. Sadly, the government decided instead, as they normally do or seem to have a habit of doing—at least this Liberal government—to have people who work in big offices in the Mowat Block across the street here in Toronto come up with their own solution, sitting around a big boardroom table without even going out to talk to the people who deliver these educational and training services.

1430

It goes back to the “Dalton knows best” attitude of this government, like we see as the government imposes windmills on people who don't even want them. It's a very arrogant attitude we see from this government. It's the Liberals saying that if you're not part of the political elite and don't work west of Bay Street, south of Wellesley Street, east of University Avenue or north of College Street here in Toronto, then you haven't got a clue what the heck you're talking about. Then they go ahead and impose rules on you as they see fit from their big offices across the street.

Blame for that lies squarely at the feet of the minister, Minister Milloy. It's his fault nobody consulted with the sector. I don't know what he does all day. He has only introduced a few bills since becoming minister, all of them relatively minor, so I don't know why he wouldn't take the time to make sure that he got them right and to meet with the people he's proposing to regulate. If he had, he would have heard stories like this. I'm going to enter into the record a letter that was sent to the government after this bill was introduced, dated May 4, 2010:

“Re: Bill 43

“To Whom it May Concern:

“As a private career college (PCC) owner-operator for 20 years, I am writing this letter to express my concern over Bill 43, which is currently being debated in the House. My concern centres on the power this bill will give to one individual, that being the superintendent of training, colleges and universities (TCU) should Bill 43 be passed.

“Part of my concerns stem from the lack of knowledge that those sitting at Queen's Park have in regard to the private career college industry in Ontario. There is a problem with illegal private trainers masquerading as ... private career colleges in this province. I have worked very hard and invested a lot of time and money to come into compliance as a registered college offering approved programs and am supportive of any efforts at shutting those down that are operating outside the PCC act 2005. However, my concerns lie with the fact that if this same bill becomes law, it provides one individual with such discretionary power which could then be used against

those that operate good schools, without ever having had a complaint lodged against them with TCU, such as mine.

“One example of lack of understanding by those involved is the continued use of the phrase ‘illegal private career colleges’ ... when referring to an illegal entity operating outside the PCC act 2005, having neither registered nor had their programs approved through TCU.”

The letter goes on to say, “If they are not a registered PCC”—private career college—“then the term should not be used to describe them, even if the word ‘illegal’ is used.

“After 20 years in business I am now being accused of not operating in a financially responsible way and must provide audited statements, my programs may be deemed inappropriate and suspended under the reaches of these new powers, and prospective students are told to ‘protect themselves.’” That's apparently on the ministry's website. “Program consultants have become inspectors and investigators, and I already live in fear of retaliation if I challenge the government on decisions that affect what I have chosen to do for the past 20 years, as is evidenced by the recent Licence Appeal Tribunal hearing against the Niagara on the Lake Culinary School Inc. that clearly points to an abuse of existing powers that could have dire results in my business should it happen to me.

“This Bill 43 needs to be openly debated. Those that are going to have their livelihoods affected by these changes need to have an opportunity to educate those who will be voting on this bill. Not only does Bill 43 need to be considered strongly, but the PCC act 2005 in its entirety also. If not, choice for post-secondary education could be greatly affected for the people of Ontario if this bill becomes law and its power applied to good, moral, hard-working and predominantly compliant colleges. Given the rapid change of policy and definition as it pertains to the PCC act 2005, full compliance is elusive at best.

“Yours in education and training,

“Michael Teglas,

“Owner/director, Academy of Learning (Kingston, Ontario).”

Those are some of the complaints we've heard about the lack of consultations on this particular piece of legislation.

I want to go back for a moment to what I said earlier about the government's failure to act on the powers they've had since 2005, when they announced and introduced the legislation to crack down on unscrupulous private career colleges. A lot of this bill essentially extends the very same powers to investigate and shut down career colleges to private universities. So whether you're a private university or a private college, with this bill, Bill 43, the Liberals are going to subject them both, more or less, to the same rules, which is fine. There should be a level playing field understood by all, but when you look at how this government bungled the first five years of the Private Career Colleges Act, then you'll see why we

might be sceptical on this side of the House of their ability to manage an extension of the new powers in this bill.

Back in 2005, when the government slid the Private Career Colleges Act into the back of a budget bill of that year, they said that the legislation would solve the problems with fly-by-night private institutions. I heard that the other day when I listened to the Liberal member for London—Fanshawe, Mr. Ramal. He said in his remarks, “It’s very important to put some kind of deterrent, some kind of punishment on the people who are going to break the law. It’s important to all of us to create that safety mechanism, because the people deserve respect, and when they come to this province, they believe they’re coming to credible institutions. Therefore, we have to create that credibility for them and allow them to come and study and pursue their education in a professional manner.”

Here’s what the Liberal member for Ajax, Mr. Arthurs, said in his remarks in 2005 in support of the Private Career Colleges Act: “The 2005 budget recognizes that many Ontarians are choosing to pursue training opportunities at private career colleges. To ensure the quality of vocational programs offered at these colleges and protect student interest, the budget proposes to introduce the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005. This legislation would, among other measures, establish a superintendent to oversee such colleges, implement an insurance fund to protect students in the event of a college’s bankruptcy, and ensure that only registered, approved colleges can operate in the province of Ontario.”

It’s as if the Liberal members have just pulled out their notes from 2005 and started to reread them here five years later. The remarks in this House on this piece of legislation now are really just an admission of the failure to enforce the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005. They were going to protect students then, they were going to improve quality back in 2005, and we all know what a miserable failure that has turned out to be.

I think the Ombudsman did the most work to point this out. He was piercing in his view that the government was failing to protect students, despite the Liberals’ much-heralded Private Career Colleges Act, 2005. Here’s what the Ombudsman said at a press conference here at Queen’s Park on July 14, 2009, about four years after the Private Career Colleges Act was put in place by the Liberals: “When I released my annual report a few weeks ago,” the Ombudsman says, “I spoke about how the current economic situation has intensified the need for strong and effective oversight of government, to protect public dollars and trust. The report I’m releasing today tells the shocking story of what happens when the government fails to protect vulnerable members of the public.

“Bestech Academy was a small private career college with a relatively small number of students—but the implications of the government’s failure to look out for those students are as big as Ontario itself. Thousands of students attend these colleges, and as more and more

people are thrown out of work or forced to seek retraining in new fields, their enrolment will only grow. We simply cannot allow what happened to the Bestech students to happen again.

“The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has a duty to regulate private career colleges. In fact, when the Private Career Colleges Act was proclaimed in 2006, the then-minister declared it would ‘ensure that all students enrolled in private career colleges get the education and training they were promised.’ But our investigation,” the Ombudsman goes on to say, “found that for the students of Bestech, that promise was broken many times over.

“We found that the ministry’s handling of Bestech Academy was abjectly inept. The very ministry that was supposed to be policing Bestech’s deceitful president was actually paying for students to attend her college, giving her endless chances to comply with rules that she openly flouted, and, days after she shut the place down and left students stranded, the ministry actually hired her as an employee!

“My concern is not just with this one school and the ministry’s complete lack of enforcement against its brazen director, who saw herself as ‘too cool for school,’ or above the law. I’m concerned about its systemic failure to enforce the rules governing private colleges—to the point that Bestech’s president told us that she essentially ignored them because so many others were doing the same thing.

1440

“The fact is, the ministry has never laid a charge or prosecuted an illegal college. Its officials told us they didn’t want to play ‘gotcha’ games—they wanted to encourage more colleges to obey the law and become registered. But because of their timidity and squeamishness to get tough with unregistered colleges, Bestech’s students had no protection—because the assurance fund set up under the act only applies to registered colleges.

“This is not a case of strained government resources,” the Ombudsman goes on to say. “The ministry was well aware that Bestech was operating illegally for two years, right under its nose.

“The good news is that the ministry has accepted 10 of my 11 recommendations, which will benefit the tens of thousands of students who will entrust their money and their future careers to private colleges this year and in the years to come. I’ve recommended a ‘buyer beware’ list be put up on the ministry’s website, with much clearer lists of problem colleges, so students will have a fighting chance against rogue operators.”

The Ombudsman goes on to say, “But I’m very disappointed that my recommendation that it find a way to compensate the Bestech students was rejected, because the ministry refused to think outside the box and do the right thing. This is very unfortunate for this small group of people who had the courage to come forward with their stories. They didn’t get the education they were promised, or the protection of their government. But for the lack of due diligence by ministry officials, many of

these students would not have been ripped off by Bestech.

“The cost of helping them would have been miniscule, but it will take the ministry a long time to repay the cost it has incurred to the public trust in this case. We will keep a close eye on the ministry as it implements my recommendations and reports back to us over the next year.”

In fairness, the Ombudsman didn't just look at private career colleges; he was critical of public colleges, too. A month later, in August 2009, he had some very tough words for Cambrian College. Let me read from his prepared remarks. He said in his remarks, “The report I'm releasing today could not be more timely, because it's a back-to-school horror story. This is a stressful time of year for a lot of people—even if they are no longer students or parents with kids going back to class. For many people, this anxiety triggers a common nightmare: You're back in school, and you have to take an exam that you're completely unprepared for.

“That's what happened to the students in the case I'm reporting on today. But for them, the nightmare happened in real life.

“The students in the health information management program at Cambrian College in Sudbury believed they were training for high-demand, well-paying jobs in the health sector, particularly in hospitals, working with complex file coding systems. They had dreams of working anywhere in Canada, in top medical facilities.

“They studied for two long years towards their goal. Many spent tens of thousands of dollars on tuition, books and living expenses, only to find out that they were not only completely unprepared for the exam that would get them into the profession—they were not even eligible to take it.

“That's because the health information management program at Cambrian College was never recognized by the Canadian Health Information Management Association, or CHIMA—the national body that controls entry into the profession. Cambrian College knew this, but didn't tell its students. Instead, it repeatedly told them they were ‘working on’ getting CHIMA recognition, and ‘not to worry.’ This, despite the fact that they had not even applied for CHIMA recognition until 18 months after the course started—and when they did, the program didn't even come close to CHIMA's standards.”

The Ombudsman goes on to say, “When the unfortunate graduates learned they weren't eligible to write the CHIMA exam, Cambrian offered to help them—by sending them back to school again. If they spent another year studying and another \$1,700 on tuition, they could take a course that would get them ready for the exam, and they would be reimbursed by the college if they passed.

“But for some of those same students, that was just another nightmare—they signed up for the course, only to find out it was far too difficult. Their two years at Cambrian hadn't even prepared them for the course that was supposed to prepare them to write the exam!

“I launched my investigation in this case after more than half of the graduates from the first two years of this program complained. My findings were clear—Cambrian College treated them unfairly, and it was callous about their plight. It was arrogant and dismissive toward my investigation as well—an attitude that I've summed up in my report title as ‘too cool for school.’

“You may recall that title from my last report, and that is no coincidence. Last month, I reported on how the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities was failing to protect students of illegal, unscrupulous career colleges that also exhibit this kind of attitude. I called on the ministry to use its powers to crack down on these facilities so Ontario students can have confidence that they will get the education they pay for.

“Although today's report—Too Cool for School Too—sounds like a sequel, it is even more serious than the first, because this case involved colleges that are publicly funded, as opposed to private career colleges. Cambrian College alone receives in the neighbourhood of \$50 million every year. It's not just the students who trust that those funds are being spent on quality education that will prepare them for gainful employment—it's all taxpayers. We all have a stake in this.

“Sadly, the ministry doesn't see it that way. It hands out money to colleges, but abdicates any responsibility for ensuring that they deliver the programs they promise. It says this is out of respect for the independence of colleges. But it doesn't serve the colleges, or their communities, to enable programs that waste people's precious time and money and don't qualify them for the jobs they seek.

“The ministry assured me it is concerned about accountability, but I found its response weak and disappointing. I am very concerned that if it does not implement stricter monitoring of the college programs it funds, we will see more cases like this.

“We will see more students like the young people we interviewed—several of them trying to make a better life for themselves and their young children—who gave up two years of their lives and wound up doing dead-end work instead of the job of their dreams.

“Those students should be able to turn to their government when its publicly funded institutions let them down. The ministry was not there for them in this case, and I hope it has learned a valuable lesson.”

That concludes the excerpt from the Ombudsman's two reports.

Those are two recent examples of the government's failure to protect students, despite their authority to act on these issues. Those are two examples where the government has extensive authority now, but has failed to use it since it last gave itself that authority some five years ago. I'm not convinced that using the heavy hand of government is the best way to get the best results. We've certainly seen that approach fail in the past five years, and I'm not sure why I or my colleagues should endorse a continuation of that same old plan.

My colleague from Lanark-Carleton, Mr. Sterling, raised a great example of how they control the quality of

education in the United States. I'll remind members of what Mr. Sterling said last Wednesday. He said that how the Americans "control the quality of education in private colleges is by limiting the ability of students going to that private institution in terms of their ability to get money from the government for student loans. If they're not producing"—that's the colleges—"graduates who can go out and earn enough money to pay their student loans, that private institution is shut off. It doesn't matter whether it's private or public. So it drives not only a better student repayment rate, but it also puts aside anybody who doesn't have a good program.

"Under our system, there is no penalty. If you encourage a young person into your institution, public or private, and you say, 'Borrow \$30,000,' if you don't give a good program you still get another student in the next year and you can do the same trick.

"So why not do it that way, rather than do it through this bill?"

The member for Lanark–Carleton raises a great point: Is Bill 43 truly the way we should be approaching the problems in the sector? Or should we be looking at alternatives that seem to work in other jurisdictions?

In closing, I'll just say that I'm disappointed that the government did not consult on this bill. In light of that, I am looking forward to committee hearings. I hope we have more than just a couple hours of committee hearings. We need a few days. We should actually visit some of these career colleges and talk to the students, but this government doesn't like to do that, so I'm not going to hold my breath.

I'm going to recommend to my colleagues that we vote against this in second reading because of the lack of consultation, and because it's just propagating the same old system that doesn't seem to be working, that was going to be the cure-all back in 2005—and the law was proclaimed in 2006.

Yes, I'll admit that when you go through the bill clause-by-clause it does give more teeth to the superintendent. But given the ineptness of the ministry, why would you want to give that person more teeth to keep doing the same lousy job they've been doing for years? Nothing personal, I'm sure, but the system isn't working.

1450

This bill is supposed to be minor. That's what the career colleges and their association were told. It's far from minor. It quadruples the fines, in many cases. It introduces new fines. It's very, very heavy-handed. I'll just remind the people at home that there are 425 career colleges with 500 campuses in Ontario and more than 27,684 students pursuing degrees in 3,425 approved programs in more than 70 communities. There are 17 privately funded universities in Ontario. Some examples would be Emmanuel Bible College and the Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies. There are 29 institutions that offer degree programs by ministerial consent, also captured under this bill. Some of these private institutions would be the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College;

Cornell University has a program here in Ontario; Niagara University and Trinity Western University. Also captured under this bill are public institutions that are permitted to grant degrees instead of diplomas. These are colleges like Sheridan, Seneca, Niagara, Loyalist, Georgian in my own riding, and many other Ontario colleges.

It's a large sector. The whole post-secondary sector is under tremendous pressure. The \$350 million that the government put in its budget just two months ago are not going to be adequate. The government has not planned; their Reaching Higher plan at \$6.2 billion that they introduced in 2004 sounded great, and it silenced the sector. I've only been the critic about two years, but for many years we didn't hear anything from the sector. The presidents and the bigwigs who make these half-million-dollar salaries in these institutions were basically bought off by the government: no complaints, until they started to figure out—and it was before the recession, but it was worsened by the recession—that the \$6.2 billion was a masterful marketing ploy. The government smartly figured out in 2004: "This is our five-year projection for enrolment growth." So rather than announce year by year the funding for the post-secondary sector, as other governments did in the past, it packaged it all together in a five-year plan called Reaching Higher. It did not keep up with enrolment. You're actually spending less per student than you would have under an Ernie Eves or Mike Harris government. That comes from the Canadian Federation of Students, who, I'm sure, do not vote Conservative, but they have been very good to come in and point these things out.

The fact of the matter is that it was a masterful plan. The sector was looking for a renewal, what they called Reaching Higher 2, another package of some sort in the last budget. All they got was \$350 million, which I'm sure the sector is grateful for. The colleges and universities of Ontario tell me they're eager to spend that money and to build capacity in the system, but they are not quite sure how they're going to do that and also make room for 20,000 new foreign students. There is a real danger that Ontario residents and Canadian students will get pumped out of the system or not be able to get into the system because of 20,000 new foreign students coming in, the only rationale being not that it's better for the system but it provides cash: "In lieu of the government giving the post-secondary sector money, we'll raise the foreign tuitions—which are already four times the average tuition that an Ontario resident pays—through the roof. That will generate a lot of money for the sector and hence get the government off the hook."

You've got a quadruple cohort. You've got the regular graduates this year who in September will be looking for places—our regular high school graduates; you've got massive unemployment, over 350,000 manufacturing jobs lost, and many, many of those people, on their own dime, trying to get into college, university or retraining programs; you've got about 22,000—or 23,000, I guess, now—being paid for through the Second Career program, who are also trying to get in, competing for those

same spots; and now you have these foreign students coming in. So \$350 million won't do it.

I often say in my remarks to the sector when I'm out speaking: "Yes, Mr. McGuinty, the Premier, said he was going to be the education Premier, but he didn't say he was going to be the post-secondary education Premier."

Other than a masterful packaging of the money under Reaching Higher, we're still dead last in Canada in terms of funding. Ontario has the highest tuition fees in Canada. I think we have the second-lowest per capita funding of any jurisdiction outside the state of Alabama for post-secondary education students. The record is miserable, it continues to be miserable, and the recent budget didn't do anything for it. All you can think to do now is to bring in a bill that gives more powers to a ministry that has been doing a lousy job of cracking down on the unscrupulous and illegal characters in the private career college sector.

With that, I look forward to comments from colleagues, but we won't be supporting this legislation on second reading, and we'll see what happens in committee.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: I appreciate the opportunity to take a couple of moments to comment on the official opposition leadoff, at this point in time, by the member from Simcoe–Grey.

Let me start by saying that I'm pleased that there is an element, if not elements, of the bill that he supports, particularly in respect to the Ontario College of Art and Design and its recognition for the work it has been doing for a number of years, obviously, and university status recognition, which would certainly go a long way for the graduates coming out of that facility. I had a chance to read last week—I don't have it in front of me, but I was particularly interested in the long history of that particular facility and the reference to changes in name and structure and strategy. But this is a significant change within the legislation itself.

The member spent the latter part of his time speaking to post-secondary planning. I can tell you that, in my view, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities and the sector have been and continue to be pleased with the investment that the McGuinty government has been making in post-secondary education, whether that's the \$6.2 billion that was part of the Reaching Higher plan or, more currently, the \$310 million set aside in this budget, on an annualized basis, for student growth within the system.

It certainly supports the Open Ontario plan. It continues to support the need to understand the importance of having a highly trained, skilled and educated population as we continue to change focus on what the world is going to look like from a business standpoint, on a go-forward basis. We have to plan for that, and the way to do that is to invest effectively within the system.

One only needs to talk to the college and university presidents and their senior staff in a casual way to see how excited they are about the investments we continue

to make and the direction that we're providing. This legislation builds on that in a variety of sectors, including the private and career colleges.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: The member for Simcoe South—

Mr. Jim Wilson: Grey.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: Simcoe–Grey. As he called me the member for Lanark–Carleton, I thought I'd get him back, as I'm the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills.

He talked a little bit about what the public accounts committee did about two years ago, and that was that we looked into the repayment rate for students who had loan money to go to post-secondary-school institutions. What we found is that the default rate had gone from about 13% up to 17% and was going—and probably is still going—in the wrong direction.

So we looked at other jurisdictions. What some of the jurisdictions in the United States do is they say to the institution, whether it's private or public, "If your rate goes above 5%"—I think it was 5% in some jurisdictions; it was slightly different in other jurisdictions—"then we will not allow students going to your particular institution in that particular program to access student funds." So it puts a financial limit around what an institution can do in terms of attracting people into programs that are either not very good or programs that are producing too many of a particular profession or whatever. It's much more honest with the students than our present programs here in Ontario. In Ontario, we encourage students to go into programs where there are no employment opportunities in the end. So I think it's a very unique, innovative way to actually do a better job in education and a better job for young people in the workforce after education.

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The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Prue: I rise to comment on the statements made by the member from Simcoe–Grey. I have to state that I am somewhat puzzled by the statements that he had to make. I go back to my own career which was, long before I became a politician, when I worked in the immigration department. I would see people come from around the world expecting to get a decent education in Ontario, and particularly those who attended secondary and post-secondary education in unlicensed colleges. I remember seeing the looks on their faces as they were literally ripped off by very many unscrupulous schools that promised a lot of things and promised degrees and promised higher education, oftentimes to deliver nothing. I remember talking to many of those students who scrambled to try to go from those schools to some of the regular schools that were provided here in Ontario, and the difficulty that they had.

I also saw other people who used those same unscrupulous schools as a way of coming into Canada

because, you see, they couldn't get accepted into some of the government-run schools in Ontario and so they would apply to these little career colleges or places. I remember one of them was the General Welding School on Jarvis Street, particularly notorious because nobody had ever made it through a whole week in the education program. They would pay the money upfront; they would get a visa; they would come to Canada; they would go to the school for one day; they would see the futility of it, or they didn't really plan to go in the first place, and no diplomas were ever issued. So I think it's time that Ontario does something, does anything to try to rein in these career colleges, to protect those people who are legitimate students and to stop it being some kind of avenue to simply gain access to Canada. I think it's very late but I'm going to vote for this bill in the vain hope that something can be done.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Dave Levac: The member from Simcoe–Grey offers us some snapshots of what he believes is the problem with the legislation and does understand that it is going to committee and we are going to do some hearings. So I think he would acknowledge that; I think he did acknowledge in his speech that he had hoped that that would happen, and I can assure him that that's going to happen. He does accept the college of art designation, the new reality of it being a university. He understands that and is supportive of that. We're grateful for that.

The comments that he made about the rest of the career college issue are somewhat difficult because, like the member from Beaches–East York, the concept here is to try to close a door that's been used far too often to hurt an awful lot of students who were taken—I mean, just simply put, they were taken. So I think that section of the bill is going to be received.

I myself have received a couple of letters from career colleges or private colleges that are concerned about issues, and my response to them is that I will have their voice heard at the committee. I will make sure that the minister is aware of the concerns that they are putting out in front of us. When I attend committee meetings, I do my best to offer good amendments, and when those amendments are coming that are going to improve the bill, I will be in favour of them and tend to speak as such.

But as far as this particular process that is happening in Bill 43, it is not the beginning. It's not the end. It's a continuation of the improvements that all of us seek. I just didn't buy the tone that it was all wrong-headed and that the pokes that we receive as a government are a duty of an opposition to do. But as far as this bill is concerned, I think we're going to see some improvements during committee.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Simcoe–Grey has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I appreciate the comments all around. You know, on first blush when I looked at the bill, I thought, yeah, I guess the government needs more

power to crack down. And then when you get into the auditor's report, some of it actually has looked at what the government has done with the existing power it has and uses words like "inept" and "squeamishness." The legalese doesn't match the actions of the people that are supposed to be enforcing the laws that we do have, the fraud laws that we have. A lot of what we were just talking about is fraud. But the auditor, Mr. Marin, points out that no one has ever been charged.

There's lots of fraud law out there, so I am somewhat suspicious that if this was good for the sector and good for the legal, registered career colleges, some of them with well over 100 years of history, and the private universities, of course, many of them with almost 150 to 200 years of history, certainly, if you look at St. Mike's at the University of Toronto and a lot of these private institutions that are publicly funded, why weren't they consulted? What does the minister do all day? He hasn't got the biggest portfolio in the world. It's pretty easy. They're pretty organized. They all have associations. To have to tell them at a reception that, "The bill was brought in two days ago, and here's a copy of it," and they didn't know anything about it tells me that there's something wrong. We'll maybe get to it in committee; we'll hear from the people. But if it's such good news here for students and it's such consumer protection legislation, why wouldn't you consult? Why did you sneak it in and then call it a day later for debate? I was lucky I was able to get a briefing on it. What's the hurry on this thing if it's such good news?

I certainly look forward to committee and hearing from the groups themselves that you haven't heard from yet.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm pleased to join the debate in support of Bill 43. As has been previously noted, Bill 43 would amend three different acts. One is the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, which is the PSECE act. Basically, to translate, it has to do with universities and colleges. The second set of amendments are to the Private Career Colleges Act. The final set of amendments is to the Ontario College of Art & Design Act.

Let me start with the third one first, the Ontario College of Art & Design Act, because although the language does actually go on for several pages, the primary thing that it does is turn the Ontario College of Art & Design into the newly named Ontario College of Art & Design University. The important thing here is that OCAD is receiving acceptance and recognition as a university. Part of the language in the act sets up a senate and a board of governors that would be similar to other universities in Ontario, and makes sure that what is an extraordinarily good school with a very long history is recognized both nationally and internationally as having full university status. That's the piece of the bill that is perhaps the simplest to understand.

When we look at the rest of the bill, it really is around making sure that we're protecting both the students who

attend our post-secondary institutions, be it university or college or private career college, and that we're also protecting the reputation of Ontario's post-secondary education sector. That may seem like a rather strange thing to say on the surface, that it's important to protect the reputation, but that's absolutely key, because if you're a student who has gotten a bachelor of arts or some sort of a designation from a community college, some sort of a diploma, or perhaps you've got your welding ticket from a private career college, no matter what level it is you're dealing at, you want people to look at that and say, "This student got this designation from an Ontario college or university or private college. I know that Ontario has good academic institutions, so I'm going to take this paper at face value. I know that if you got this designation in Ontario, it means something, it is real, and I will accept that this credential means what it says."

When we say we're protecting the reputation of Ontario's post-secondary education sector, that's the logic. We want our students to be able to go out into the workplace and make sure that they can go on to further education or get jobs which recognize the credentials they've got.

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So the amendments that we're proposing would strengthen the ability of the government to shut down unscrupulous and unauthorized educational organizations. They would prevent them from taking advantage of students, either those who are already Ontario residents or perhaps, as the member from Beaches–East York mentioned, international students who are newly arrived or offshore. We want to make sure that all our post-secondary institutions are meeting the highest standards of quality and excellence.

We know right now that part of our Open Ontario plan recognizes that more and more people are going to need post-secondary qualifications. Our goal is to have 70% of Ontario students receiving some sort of post-secondary education.

Right now, as we're emerging from a recession, we know that many of the jobs that people were laid off from are not the jobs they're being hired back into, and our colleges, including our private career colleges, play an important role in retraining.

So this is a very important piece of legislation in terms of that protection and reputational piece.

It's interesting: The member from Beaches–East York talked about his past life. One of the things I did in my past life was hire all the graduate teaching assistants in the department of computer science at the University of Guelph. I spent a lot of time reading transcripts literally from all over the world, from various sorts of educational institutions, which meant I got pretty good at looking at transcripts and seeing if they passed the smell test of validity.

It was interesting to me that when I became an MPP, I would occasionally have people coming in to my constituency office with what I thought was rather an odd request, which was, would I certify some piece of paper

as a legitimate educational qualification? As I said, my smell test on these things was reasonably acute. I would look at the piece of paper and think, "I'm not so sure about this," and we would go on the website to try to track down where this particular piece of paper came from. Of course, what we often found was that this was a piece of paper that came from a degree mill, a paper mill, what have you; someplace where people had paid to get a degree without necessarily doing any coursework.

While that is not a common sort of institution here in Ontario—they tend to be other places in the world—we want to make sure that the Ontario brand is equivalent to an excellent education which has been earned through hard work and diligence, and not something that was a piece of fluff or perhaps just bought. That's the purpose that we're looking at with this bill.

Let's dissect this a bit and look specifically at the college and university bill, and then we'll go on and have a bit of a look at the private career college pieces.

The act which is being amended, the PSECE Act, was brought in back in 2000-01, and it expanded the people who could offer degree programs in Ontario. It allowed private institutions in and outside Ontario, public out-of-province institutions, and colleges of applied arts and technology to apply to the minister—that would be the Minister of Colleges and Universities—to give his consent to one of these three offering a degree program. In order for that to make sense, you need to understand that prior to that, for a private institution to be able to grant a degree in Ontario, there had to be a specific piece of legislation about that particular institution, and colleges of applied arts and technology were simply not allowed to offer university degrees.

Since that particular piece of legislation came in, there's a wonderful program now at Humber College, which is the Guelph-Humber program, where there's a partnership and people go to a program at Humber College here in Toronto but actually end up with a University of Guelph degree designation. There have been a lot of these sorts of partnerships and new degrees that have flourished coming from that, where community colleges have been able to expand their role. That was the upside of that act.

There was an effort to increase student protection through transcript protection and prescribed financial security to make sure people weren't giving money to people who couldn't deliver. There was also a quality assurance framework—and again, we're getting into acronyms; sorry, education is really bad at acronyms—the establishment of an advisory board known as PEQAB, or the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board, which actually reviewed these applications for degree programs. What PEQAB, this review board, did was actually set up a program quality review, so if an institution applied to grant a degree, first of all, peers in that particular discipline would have a look at the program qualifications, faculty qualifications, curriculum—are the right physical resources available to offer if you need lab space? Is the lab space there to offer the

program? There was a quality review. This now applies to undergraduate degrees. Prior to that, there had actually been a similar process at the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities which looked at graduate degrees, master's and Ph.D.s, before universities were allowed to offer those. That took this graduate degree process and brought it down to the bachelor level of the degree-granting process, so there's quite a thorough review now.

There's also an organizational review for private institutions only, again to make sure that they are financially viable so that we don't get into this problem of people collecting money and not delivering.

As I say, this has gone a long way in terms of protecting, but there are still some problems we run into with private institutions parking an office here in Ontario and purporting to hand out a degree.

A few years ago, the ministry did do some review on how this particular act was working. It had been in effect for six or seven years and it was time to have a look and see if it actually worked. There were some questions and some findings that came about. One of the first issues was, is the process whereby organizations obtain the right to grant degrees addressing all the quality and access issues? The finding was that some organizations were actually saying, "Well, this act doesn't really apply to me, so I can still do whatever I like." There was a problem around some of the private institutions thumbing their noses, essentially, at the ministry and saying, "The act isn't tight enough. It doesn't apply to me."

Are there gaps in the accountability framework? That was another question. What was found was that—and this relates perhaps back to the first question—the terms used in the act actually weren't always defined. If you haven't defined what you're talking about, it's easier for people to slip around the edges. There was a need to define more clearly exactly how the act was to apply.

Then finally, this business of reputation: Was the reputation of the public institutions in Ontario being held whole or was it being interfered with?

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The amendments that have come forward address these three issues: first of all, to provide greater definition; secondly, to increase student protection and make sure that there's tighter ability for administrative penalties for restraining and compliance orders when people are found to be in contravention; and thirdly, to allow a bit more flexibility in terms of the PEQAB process. So, for example, if somebody came and wanted to set up a private institution which would be in direct competition with a small public institution, a small program, and in essence knock out the small public program, you wouldn't have to go through the whole quality evaluation. It would simply be that the public program, the one which is publicly funded, publicly controlled, would be the one that would take precedence. You don't have to go through all of this review; it's simply that the public one stands. There's more flexibility in the review process than in the old act. That's what's happening on the college and university side.

Now we come over and we look at what is happening with the private career colleges. Again, as previous speakers have spoken to, there are often and continue to be concerns raised about private career colleges. Again, we have this issue that I mentioned of some argument around terminology and where does the existing act apply, where doesn't it apply—tightening all of that up to make sure that the bad actors just aren't allowed, and there really are some bad actors in the private career college sector.

On the other hand, there are also some very good private career colleges, and we need to make sure that we can recognize both.

The member from Beaches–East York talked about a notoriously bad welding college in Toronto. In Guelph, I've got an absolutely wonderful private welding career college that does a great job. The program that it runs is several months long. At the end of the program you go through exactly the same test to get your welding ticket that you would go through if you were at Conestoga College, so that the certification you come out with is exactly the same as if you had been at the community college. It is simply more accessible for a lot of Guelph students. In fact, it's got such a good reputation that students from the whole area—Cambridge, KW, Fergus and so on—come to this particular career college. I want to make sure I make it clear that we're not denigrating all private career colleges, but that what we're trying to do is sort the wheat from the chaff, as it were. That's not always easy to do sometimes.

What these specific amendments to the Private Career Colleges Act do is ensure that the private career colleges will meet program standards when they are set in a consistent and very timely fashion; that is, you can't take five years to meet new standards, but that some reasonable time frame is recognized. The maximum fines for provincial offences, if you violate this act, are being increased from \$25,000 to \$50,000 for individuals and from \$100,000 to \$250,000 for corporations. I would just say that from my time once upon a time as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Government Services, I know there were a number of acts where, as we were modifying them, we put these fine levels in effect. This is actually quite an ordinary fine level. Also, there are issues around serving notice, because if you've got somebody that's fly-by-night, finding them to serve notice can often be an issue in and of itself.

But the main effect of this will be working with the private career college sector on the whole quality assurance measure and making sure that as program standards are developed, people are actually putting those program standards in place in a timely way, and making sure that, yes, people have a reasonable time to adjust the programs, but that there is a process for getting on with that.

I think it might be useful, just in closing here, to look at the actual bill around private career colleges. Reading legislation is not exactly like reading a novel, as you well know. It tends to be language which is pretty dense. I'm

going to, therefore, edit this a bit so that it comes out a little bit closer to understandable English.

I think one of the really key pieces that's in the amendment to the Private Career Colleges Act is that it says that no person or institution shall grant a credential or represent that a credential may be obtained—because in many cases with these career colleges that are a problem, they say you can get the credential, they take your money, and then it turns out they've got no authority to actually deliver that program. So, no person or institution shall grant a credential—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I was interested in hearing the members talk about this particular piece of legislation. The one area where I would find some objection in terms of this act is, if there are two programs that are being offered, one by a private college and one by a public college, evidently this act immediately or almost immediately eliminates the program provided by the private college. Quite frankly, I think we should eliminate the worst program and keep the best program, whether it's in a private college or in a public college.

The advantage that I have experienced through my constituents who have come and talked to me about some of the private colleges is that they seem to have greater contact with the employment community than some of our public colleges.

Unfortunately, in our public college system, the people who are the educators have remained the educators for a long, long period of time, and there doesn't seem to be as much synergy between the teaching staff and the people who employ the people after they graduate from a post-secondary institution, be it private or not.

The other point I would like to make is that I really do wish that the government, in this bill, would enforce and provide the public with some reporting mechanisms that would have to be put on websites by colleges as to their success rates, their employment rates, after the finishing of a program.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Member from Trinity–Spadina.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: With all due respect to the member from Guelph, I just want to say that normally I take my whole hour when I do the leads, and I think I only took 30, 33 minutes. The member from Simcoe–Grey had a whole hour, and he only took 30, 33 minutes. I didn't want to do my whole two minutes on this. I really don't. That's why I said “with all due respect”—if the Liberal members could just show us some mercy and not do the whole 20 minutes out of kindness to people like me and the others. We did hear the parliamentary assistant last week. We thought he covered it all. Please, try to discourage the others who might be on the list from taking another 20 minutes. I say that with all due respect, member from Guelph. Please help us.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Glen R. Murray: I'd like to give a two-minute speech on how much I admire and respect the member for Trinity–Spadina—from his lips to God's ears.

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We are all about being good team players here, and I just want to commend my friend from Guelph. I also want to recognize the member's extraordinary contributions, both in this House and, before getting here, to public education and the advancement and understanding of public education. Not only has she been brilliant, quite frankly, at developing innovative public policy initiatives in this House, but she has helped us all understand that, in a knowledge economy, the integrity of post-secondary educational institutions is fundamental and that with the Internet, the reputation and brand of both our public and private institutions, whether we want them to or not, become global in an instant.

The reputation of, in my constituency, George Brown or St. Michael's College or Ryerson University—the credibility of those institutions is highly tradable and highly instantaneous. The importance of this particular piece of legislation to better managing that, protecting people who come here to seek that education and protecting the integrity of those institutions is absolutely fundamental.

It is also a huge factor that 80% of the jobs being created in Ontario right now are knowledge- and skill-based jobs. They are innovation, not production, jobs, meaning that these are the portals to job creation, and that also makes their integrity even more critical.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

There being no more questions and comments, the member from Guelph has up to two minutes to respond.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Thank you to my colleagues for their comments.

I want to just touch on this public-versus-private business, because when we're talking about the presumption of the priority of publicly funded, this isn't to say that there will never be instances where a private college and a community college are doing exactly the same. I talked about an instance of that. However, if the private duplication of the publicly funded program would undermine the viability of the publicly funded program, there is a public interest in protecting the public program, because it's the one that's going to have the longevity and not potentially disappear when the height of the market disappears.

I also did want to just finish what I was saying, quoting the act, so let's take another run at that. “No person”—or institution—“shall grant ... a credential or represent that a credential may be obtained ... unless the person is registered and both the provision of the vocational program leading to the credential and the granting of the credential have been approved.” In other words, we're clarifying the law to make it very clear that if you're not giving an approved credential, you don't belong in the private career college business in Ontario.

To my friend across the way from Trinity–Spadina, the next time he's complaining that I've only taken five

minutes when it could have been 20, I will remember that you really want me to be brief, because sometimes it's the other way around. Sometimes it's the other way—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Bob Delaney: It is a pleasure to join this debate. Just finishing up on a point that my colleague from Guelph began to make as she was bantering with our good friend from Trinity–Spadina, whom we all love and admire so much here—he's virtually an institution in this place. Sometimes on occasions when the government decides that we're actually going to spare them, that's when our friends across decide they're going to needle us and say, "Well, the government doesn't even want to debate it." Now the government actually wants to talk about this, because this is an important thing that we're doing here.

This is a time for everybody to have a little engagement with the ladies and gentlemen who sit on the other side of the television screen out there. Maybe you've been going through with your channel changer and you've focused on one of us and you've thought, "That's kind of interesting. Maybe I'll just stop and listen in for a second." So we'll have a chance to talk to you briefly about the notion of the private career college, some of the things that have gone wrong that we aim to rectify by this particular piece of legislation. In the course of my time, I'd like to talk a little bit about what I found in my discussions with career colleges. Overwhelmingly, those who operate cleanly and ethically and responsibly constitute the real market niche that those institutions can fill.

The proposals in this act lend more integrity to the concept of a degree. You ask yourself: "What's a degree?" A degree is more than a piece of paper. A degree is something that has changed a little bit of you, probably for life. If the process of getting the piece of paper, which is merely the representation of a degree but in and of itself isn't the learning that has taken place in the classroom and in the workplace; it isn't the changes that have taken place in your mind; it isn't the new set of skills that you've acquired; it isn't the alignment between what you now know and what you need to do to work in a field—the piece of paper is merely a manifestation of the fact that you've done it. And a piece of paper, without that change having happened, without that fundamental bit of training, is just a piece of paper. You can hang it on the wall, you can falsely represent that you know something that you don't, or, in the extreme, you can line the budgie cage with it. But for that piece of paper to have any meaning, to have any integrity, it has to go hand in hand with the type of training that you associate with the word "education."

One of the things that this act does is it clarifies the meaning of a word like "degree." "Degree" means something. What we don't want to have in Ontario is a system that allows an institution to create what we have often read about in the newspaper and seen on television: a degree mill that simply exchanges money in return for that piece of paper—which, as I've just said, if a piece of paper represents learning, it's a degree; if all the piece of

paper represents is the fact that you've sent somebody a cheque or put something on your credit card, you can line the budgie cage with it. And that's not what we want to have in Ontario around the concept of a degree. A bad degree takes all of us who have worked very hard for our degrees, be it at university, be it in a community college or be it in a private career college, and it taints all of our degrees. We need to have a degree that means something. We need to have a degree, in everybody's mind, be consistent with training, with a change having taken place in what you know, and with you being more aligned with a skill or a body of knowledge that you can take and apply to something that earns a living.

If all you have is a cursory shadow of a curriculum, which some institutions do have, you shouldn't be in the private career college business. What you need to have is a teaching infrastructure, a rigorous system of examinations and a quality-control mechanism in your institution that ensures the integrity of the word "education" and the word "degree," and that's what Bill 43 does. It's really not that hard. It tells the student, many of whom or most of whom are actually working, or parents themselves that they will get what they've paid for. That's really what students and employers have asked: "Will we get what we paid for? Will we get education and training that are valuable so that that degree actually has some meaning?"

Among the things that this piece of legislation does set out to finally get rid of is a system in which an institution, an entity, an organization or an individual sets up an office in Ontario to simply grant degrees to students who are required to do very little actual work in return. The degree may be something they can represent and say, "I've got a degree in this from that institution," but again, it takes the degrees that all of us have achieved and it cheapens them, and we can't have that. You can't allow an institution to say, "I'm going to grant a degree. You can represent the degree as being meaningful in the workplace but you don't have to do any work." Aside from the inherent unfairness of that, if it means that someone is taking training to work in, for example, health care, or how about engineering, would you expect someone who's designing an electrical system in a building to have gone out and bought a degree without actually having been trained on how to do the wiring? That's not a good idea. That's not even healthy, let alone safe.

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The other thing that this bill should address is the notion of tailoring a fee for a program so that you can take an amount that you may be eligible for from an employer or, more often than not, from government and you gross it up. So if, for example, the program will pay, for argument's sake, 85% of such-and-such a program if you can produce a facsimile that says, "All right. This student has registered for the program," then you're reimbursed it. They'll charge you a certain amount of money and then they'll give you an invoice that says that you've paid this much more. It's fraudulent and we don't want that to happen. And it's really easy to do. If it says

you're eligible for 85% of this amount of money up to a limit of that, you take whatever the limit is, you divide by 0.85, and that's the amount that you have grossed it up. Then you can charge the student the maximum that either your employer or the government has given you. All you've done is to take money from the taxpayer or from your employer, but no real training has taken place and all you've got is a budgie-cage-liner of a degree. That's not what the province of Ontario wants, that's not what employers want and that's certainly not what serious students want. That's the sort of thing that the province is doing.

A lot of newcomers to Canada, as a few of my colleagues have mentioned, scramble to get into Canadian universities and Canadian career colleges so that they can study and prepare themselves for a future in this country. Many believe that private career colleges are as tightly governed as are public community colleges and public universities, and many of them are very surprised to find that too much of the operations of a private career college are really a bit of the Wild West. They'll find that suddenly, the program that they've been working on, as some of the speakers have mentioned, doesn't lead to the certification that they've believed that it will. They'll find that the program suddenly closes, or so does the entire private career college. What this bill does is it gives the province some teeth to go in and correct those measures, and for that reason alone it's a good idea.

I'm going to talk more about some of the business models that private career colleges can adopt, many of which do. There's a lot of latitude for private career colleges to offer programs. For example, they can offer either eclectic or esoteric courses for people who are not really streaming to a degree or orienting themselves to a profession, a trade or even a particular occupation. They may just be people who are looking more for personal development or continuing ed or, indeed, for a stream of industry-specific programs that, from the vantage point of the local industries, they can operate much as professional development.

For example, in one of the sectors I worked in before I was elected, the information technology sector, as a rule of thumb, people who work in that sector should be devoting somewhere between 10 and 15 days per year to themselves in professional development and to keeping their skills current. In many of the professions, the requirement is somewhat similar. The number of days may vary, but the institutes or governing bodies have, either as guidelines or as rules, some pretty hard and fast numbers in which you've got to devote that amount of time to keeping your skills up to date in the marketplace so that what you can offer your clients or your employer is, in fact, relevant and state of the art.

Certainly, going back to my IT example, as I have found so very clearly since I have been elected, the era in which I've considered myself reasonably proficient in writing code and developing for the Web—my skills rust very quickly. So if you're not actually out there practising and, more importantly, staying up to date with the

technology and developments in your field, you're going to be left behind very quickly.

This is one of the niche markets that a private career college, if it has a good, aggressive business model, can take and adopt; because if there's, for example, a cluster of similar industries around, you can find that it's a fairly well-paying occupation to go out and find the good-quality trainers, who themselves stay up to date in their field, and to be able to offer specific industry or occupation-specific programs to local industries, be that, in some cases, IT, software, networking or, in other cases, medical technology, pharmaceuticals and whatnot.

As well, the bulk of the private career colleges in Ontario do grasp this market opportunity. Among the things that they do is partner with some top-quality instructors to offer just this type of training. Private career colleges will look for opportunities with local businesses and local industries to offer programs that add value to those industries and, in so doing, become part of the service sector to the local economy and add value to those industries by ensuring that, without a very long commute, people can get job-specific upgrades to their skills and professional development that allow them to be more valuable employees, not merely to their own employer but certainly, in the broader span of their own career, to become more marketable employees in and of themselves. It allows people to enhance their opportunity to gain different employment.

As well, a private career college can offer programs that are not just degree-path courses but that may just have an audience in the local community. In a very diverse and affluent and eclectic market such as, for example, downtown Toronto, if you pick up some of the local tabloids, you'll see very clearly that a lot of the private career colleges do offer just that type of program that deals with all manner of areas such as personal development and whatnot that they find their local neighbourhood responds to—fair game. That's one of the strengths of the private career college system.

These are market niches that can change very quickly. They are ones that tend to be local or idiosyncratic in some respects, but these are market niches that the private career college system is uniquely equipped to capitalize on. When they do, and wherever they do, good for them. Those are the good actors, and we want them to keep doing that because that's the type of private career college that's a credit to the system and a real value to the province.

It's the ones that don't, who figure that they can print up a degree and sell the degree without the underlying training, that this bill aims to get at with some measures that have teeth—and the measures do have teeth.

As I said, in addition to defining such terms as “degree,” the bill defines the terms “educational institution” and “distance education.” You think to yourself, “Isn't that self-evident?” But if you think it's self-evident, then you've passed up the fact that if you want to operate in an unscrupulous manner, that would be a good opportunity to sort of play fast and loose with the notion of

distance education, or to play fast and loose with what we would normally consider an educational institution.

An educational institution isn't a briefcase and it isn't a car trunk and it's not a hotel room. An educational institution is something that has the infrastructure to offer a very clear methodology and quality-control standards that say, "This is our path toward where you start and the body of knowledge that you think, and that we represent, that you'll have when the process is over."

Along the way, there have to be some milestones and stepping stones, such as different courses, a syllabus, examinations, tests and whatnot, that determine whether or not you, as the student, have acquired them and they, as the educational institution, have actually taught it. Again, it's very common sense stuff, but that's what Bill 43 aims to do.

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It's very congruent with the province's long-term plan. Looking at Open Ontario, the long-term plan for the province over the next few years, among its objectives is to enable an additional 30,000 unemployed workers to get training, thus bringing to nearly 60,000 the total participants since the Second Career strategy began as recently as June 2008. This is a lot of people.

This particular means of dispensing training—the private career college—can play a really important role in that. Second Career doesn't say you have to go to this institution or that institution, or that you have to take this program or that program. It does say that you have to start from where you are, have a vision of where you're going and delineate a series of steps to help you get there. If you can, then the province of Ontario will help you get there with some support.

This is an enormous market opportunity for private career colleges that can step up if, for example, there is a local industry that very clearly is transitioning some workers from one set of skills to another or there's a new industry moving in, in some force. The private career college can sit down and meet with some of the people there and say, "Here's the general range of skills of people around here. What is it that you're looking for? Presumably you'd like to hire locally." Most businesses will say, "Sure, we'd love to hire locally."

In many cases, as new industries move in, a lot of the local businesses are saying that this isn't just hiring people to behave as robots to do production. As numerous other speakers have said, education today means adding value with what you know. A lot of the value is added with what is in your mind, and you do it not so much with your hands and your muscles as with your brain. In this respect, we need private career colleges as part of the solution, not part of the problem.

This bill addresses those few private career colleges whose activities and business practices have made them part of the problem. This particular bill aims, with some very solid, concrete measures, to take the institutions that have been part of the problem and either have them rectify the problem or turn that mandate over to someone who can actually do the job.

In the longer term, this is going to enable Ontario to continue its progress in the last few years. Since 2008, some of the province's programs, such as Job Connect, have served nearly half a million clients; the employment assistance service, 367,000 clients; rapid re-employment and training services, 120,000; 2009 summer jobs and services, 110,000; literacy and basic skills, 101,000; apprenticeship registration, 50,000. In all, nearly a million Ontarians get skills training and employment assistance annually, a million Ontarians who need private career colleges doing those things that private career colleges with a responsible, ethical, well-regulated, well-run business plan can be doing in a solid, progressive, going-forward manner, because that's what Ontario is about. Ontario is about going forward, and that's why this bill should be passed as soon as possible.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Mike Colle: I certainly agree with my friend from Mississauga–Streetsville that our residents have to be very cautious when dealing with private career colleges. They have a place, and there are a lot of good ones—certainly valuable ones. But when you consider the cost of the courses the private career colleges offer or the degrees that they offer or whatever they call them—diplomas—at a time when people are out of work, and sometimes they're getting back in the job market, it can be very devastating to enrol and find out that, basically, the diploma is really not worth the paper it's written on. I think he cautioned people on that.

I was looking on TV the other day, and there was a career college—I think it's in my riding—that was advertising: "If you want to become a personal trainer, enrol in a career college." I was sort of saying, "A personal trainer?" I don't know; do you really have to enrol in a career college to become a personal trainer?

I've always said to people looking for this type of training, "Make sure that what you want is not offered at a local, publicly regulated and funded community college." We have some of the best community colleges in the world here. George Brown, for instance, is one of the best community colleges. It offers incredible courses on gourmet cooking, baking and culinary arts. It's incredible. So I always tell people: "Please, find out what the cost is and what's offered at the community college. It'll probably cost you a lot less, and that diploma or degree you get from a community college is worth a lot more than one from some of these private career colleges."

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Seeing no more questions and comments, the member from Mississauga–Streetsville has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I acknowledge my colleague from Eglinton–Lawrence, who, as always, has the best interests not merely of his constituents in mind but of all Ontarians, in the roles that he has been given both within the executive council and as a member who has served this province for more than 15 years now. The member

for Eglinton–Lawrence has put his stamp on so many different areas. He is a real credit to the province, and it's a small wonder that he's always very handily re-elected in the riding of Eglinton–Lawrence.

He echoes the concern that certainly we all feel, that clients and potential clients of private career colleges look carefully when they're shopping for a place to buy their education. We say to everybody who is looking for training opportunities or a chance to get ahead in Canada, in Ontario: "By all means, consider a private career college, but do your own due diligence. See if the program that you're looking at is offered somewhere else. Compare your prices, compare your outcomes and talk to some of the students who have been through the program. If you possibly can, see if you can get some independent validation from employers of the value of the program that you're going into."

That's what the member for Eglinton–Lawrence has pointed out to people. I think that's very good advice, and I encourage people to take it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Dave Levac: Before we wave the white flag—and I know that there's a member over there who has pulled out his handkerchief and is waving it—I made the commitment that I would make some comments on this particular proposal that we have before us.

As I speak, I want to touch on a few things. I want to touch upon what's happening in my riding with this particular topic, the good news that's happening in my riding regarding post-secondary education, and then some comments that I've received from some of the private colleges in my riding. I committed, as I always have, to make sure that if they do have concerns, it comes to the Legislature. I want to bring the voice of Brant to Queen's Park, instead of simply saying that Queen's Park is going to do something to my riding. That voice will be heard.

I want to make an observation about the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills, who talked to us about the differential between the private colleges and the public colleges, which he—and I agree with him, but I want to talk about that. He says that we should actually be supporting the best, and I do subscribe to that, as he does, but I want to make a comment—just that at the tail end as he was speaking, he was talking about how we might better show the people what kind of success rates are out there. I do agree with him, but I do want to remind him—and maybe I'll deal with it right now—that the member knows that there are postings of each of the colleges in terms of their graduation rate. They also post—at least the college that I'm aware of posts—their job placement success rate on the skills that they teach in the college. So I don't know if they've broken it down college by college in the province, and I would bow to his knowledge if he can clarify that, but I do want to make it clear that he is on the right track and I support that, but I also would suggest, respectfully, that they do post those.

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Mohawk College in my riding, which has a campus from Hamilton into Brant, does post success rates in job

placements of the courses they teach, which means that if it's about an 85% placement rate—in some cases I've seen it as high as a 95% to 96% placement rate—it says that when you take this course, you know from the previous years that this is the success rate of this particular course in getting placement in a job. I believe that's exactly what he's headed for, and I would support him on that if something comes forward to try to do that. Maybe we can talk about that at committee level when we get the bill to committee, which is going to happen.

That's one I wanted to deal with immediately, because he and I do see eye to eye on that. I believe we should be looking at the best of all and the most success, and also information for students to have before they sign up. Because if they could go to a site, if they could go to the government or somewhere and see what the successes are of all colleges that are offering that information—we need to know whether or not the legitimacy is there.

We would also have, and I think you would agree with this, to endeavour to ensure that the information that they're posting is legitimate. I know that there are some colleges that have posted some pretty phoney information about how spectacular they are, their success rate, and that they're an internationally known college. That's the one area I think I'd like to see some debate and discussion on. As far as I'm concerned, I do know that, locally, the colleges and universities in my riding do have that information available and it is done.

Now, the second piece to that—more of an, "Are you aware...?"—the Maclean's magazine edition that comes out on an ongoing basis puts an awful lot of that information inside of it. It has become almost like a handbook for all universities; whether or not they like the idea, it's happened. When Maclean's comes out and you see this posting of all the different colleges and universities and that they're doing this review, they do a pretty substantial job on getting that information out for the general public in terms of their ranking, not just professional ranking but ranking from students. I would also suggest to you that there's another role to be played in that aspect.

Let me take a look at the rest of the review I wanted to do. I had wanted to talk about my local riding. We have Wilfred Laurier, from Waterloo, who has opened up a campus. In a very short time it is now larger than when I attended it in Waterloo. When I attended it in Waterloo—that's to tell you how old I am, to the member from Trinity–Spadina—the population of Laurier at that time was 1,900 students. It was the year they transitioned from Waterloo Lutheran to Wilfred Laurier, and they chose it because the letters matched, I guess; I'm not sure how that worked.

But anyway, 1,900 students back then, and today, right in Brantford, Laurier's campus of Laurier Waterloo is 2,500 students, inclusive of another agreement they've got with Nipissing as a teachers' college.

Mr. Jeff Leal: How's that going?

Mr. Dave Levac: That is just going great guns. It's a great addition to our community. As a matter of fact, our

city council has endorsed a university sector right in the downtown area. Mohawk College is a partner in that. So we've got three very strong universities and a college that are working together, along with the municipality and the Grand Valley Educational Society, who are bringing those together.

Now, these types of changes that we're talking about—

Mr. Jeff Leal: What about the Bell museum?

Mr. Dave Levac: My friend from Peterborough asked me how the Bell Homestead is doing. Its 100th anniversary is coming up in terms of Alexander Graham Bell, but—

Mr. Jeff Leal: Is there a party?

Mr. Dave Levac: —as we talk about that we're going to have an opportunity for us to celebrate that. But I digress. I'm going to come back onto the topic that I was chosen to speak on.

Mr. Jeff Leal: I didn't mean to throw you off.

Mr. Dave Levac: No, no; it's all relative because we saw what happened with the invention of the telephone, which happened in Brantford, not Boston, Massachusetts. It happened in Brantford. The evolution of the phone took place and now the evolution, as I've always said in this House, continues with this particular bill on the evolution of post-secondary education.

There's nothing wrong with career colleges. As a matter of fact, private career colleges provide a great service to our province, except, the fact is—and we all would agree to this; I've heard it from every opposition party, I've heard it from our own side—we need to do something about the ones that are just in it for a buck. That's what we're going to do with this particular bill. That's one of the sections that I'm going to talk about.

Laurier, Mohawk, Nipissing—a growing concern. It is continuing to grow. We are now looking at estimates of that partnership expanding to over 10,000 to 15,000 students in the downtown area. Can you imagine what it was like for a community the size of Brantford?

As a matter of fact, I can give this as a statistical, because in 1999, when I was elected, we did a study and found out that Brantford was the largest community in Ontario that did not have a university at the time. We now have one, and it's a growing concern. Quite frankly, it is a beautiful fit for our community. We're keeping some of our kids home. We're saving money for the parents of those kids and the kids themselves. They don't have to spend the money on apartments and everything, and they're staying home—a very high local turnout. But also, we're spreading out and we're drawing people from all over the place. We're now taking out-of-province students who are showing up at Laurier Brantford and Nipissing for teachers' college. So we're doing well.

I want to go back to the career colleges. I've made this commitment, and I've already received some emails and some writings from some of the career colleges that have indicated concern. My immediate response—I try to get a 24-hour return. I immediately indicated to them that their voice would be heard at Queen's Park and that I would

ensure that their emails were sent directly to the minister and submitted to the committee when they review the bill. They have some questions and concerns about the wording of the private college section, and that's going to be taken care of. We're going to try to find some responses for them to assure them that we're not out to knock off career colleges. What we're here to do is knock off the fraudsters. We're here to get rid of the people who do damage to Ontario students and, as mentioned by the member from Beaches–East York, to international students. Quite frankly, we're going to try to close the door as best we can in preventing them from getting ripped off. I do believe he's in support of that. He has spoken about that several times in the House, about international students getting ripped off.

One of the things that I think we need to also address is the overview of the bill itself. The bill actually deals with three sections from three different bills. The proposed legislation amends the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000; the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005; and the Ontario College of Art & Design Act, 2002. That third one is one that no one has any problems with. I'm quite sure that that should be able to be accepted and receive support right across the board, because what we're basically doing there is we're going to change it from the Ontario College of Art & Design Act to the Ontario College of Art & Design University Act.

Quite frankly, it's going to have full degree-granting privileges, as I know that those who are involved in this were—actually, Speaker, just as a little bit of a side note, I actually received an acceptance into the Ontario college of art, just after I received my acceptance into teachers' college. I made a career path choice. I didn't turn them down; I had already made a choice.

Mr. Ted McMeekin: You took the road less travelled.

Mr. Dave Levac: I took the road travelled more, actually, this time, but in terms of the Ontario college of art—a very, very fine international reputation. So I'm glad that the government can work together and have that taken care of.

The amendments would further protect the students and strengthen Ontario's reputation for excellence in post-secondary education at home and abroad. A lot of things that sometimes we lose sight of are, when we've got something that is as admired around the world as our post-secondary education and the way our health care system is, we tend to focus on what's wrong with it. Well, the one thing that I want to stand and say is that for all intents and purposes, when you take a look around the world, the post-secondary education institutions are pretty mighty fine. They're good; they're excellent. We have excellent teachers, we have great administration and we have people who are working very hard to ensure that our students get the best.

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That's the other part of this discussion that I know the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills reinforced, and that I want to bring up again. He indicated that we want

the best. So while we are bringing these three sections of three different acts together in one bill, one of the things I would like to see us do is make sure, when we go to committee, that we look at the pieces we need to improve and see, from the opposition and indeed from the government—because sometimes we've done that as well—that we offer amendments that are going to strengthen the bill and make it even better: better not just because it's a piece of legislation, but because it's going to have an impact in a positive way on students who will be attending post-secondary education.

I also want to mention the fact that I've actually seen in the back covers of comic books: "Bob's university. Get your Ph.D. Send us \$500, and we'll send you a piece of paper that says you have a Ph.D." The old comic book thing is still alive and well. I couldn't believe that I saw it. I don't remember the actual name of the university, but it was something like Bob's university, California, or whatever, and you could literally buy a Ph.D.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: On a point of order: Perhaps the speaker would let us know how often he is reading comics.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): That's not a point of order, as the honourable member well knows.

Continue.

Mr. Dave Levac: Whether or not I read comic books isn't the point. The point is that it was handed to me and somebody said, "You've got to get a load of this. How do you like that?" How's that for a recovery? I opened up the back cover, and there it was: "Bob's university: Get your Ph.D. Mail in \$500, and we'll mail this wonderful certificate back to you." I thought to myself, "Holy mackerel, we've got to stop that."

Do you know what? There are people who will actually send in and hang that up on the wall, and therein lies the problem. If we're not ready to take that on, then what we're saying is that mediocrity—that little sham, that fraud that's going on—is acceptable.

I do believe we will have agreement on all sides, including the private colleges that are indeed legitimate, as has been pointed out by many people in the House today. What they're talking about is, we're not here to beat up the ones that are the best, that deliver, that get jobs, that produce numbers that say the money I spent is worthwhile because I've entered the world of work, or I've continued my education and have legitimately been accepted by another institution because it is legitimate, or it helped with the rest of my education. There's nothing wrong with that at all. As a matter of fact, we applaud them. But what we really want to do is get after the back-of-the-comic-book problem. The back of the comic book is basically, "I've got a piece of paper for sale."

Having said that, I leave you with a couple of ideas that I think are important, which we need to not skirt but get around in depth. I have had some constituents approach me because of these private career college situations they're focused on, which have a very large impact on their OSAP, and it happens to be negative. I hope we can also, inside this bill, discuss the impact OSAP has for

students and the money being put out of their pockets. We're talking about people who want to involve themselves in Second Career opportunities as well.

One other question I had, and the minister is looking into it for me, is how does this impact bursaries and scholarships? Does it have a negative impact on that? Those are other questions that I think we need to delve into to ensure, as we're looking at this phase of fixing post-secondary education, that some of the concerns raised in this particular bill are part of that discussion that we need to evaluate.

One of the things we have set as a lofty goal for Ontario is a 70% post-secondary education graduation rate. The question I would ask is, will the three amendments to these three acts under one bill have an impact on the opportunities afforded for that graduation rate? If we get this right once we go to committee, I think we can land on a "yes" on that one.

The amendments will ensure the strength of the post-secondary education programs offered here in Ontario and that they're of the highest quality and meet our standards of excellence. Again, rising to the top and making sure that we get the best of the best is a good way to operate.

We also have the expansion of degrees in our programs for the universities and colleges, and we have seen already that happening, where certain colleges have removed the "college" designation and moved into "university." There was Ryerson, and now we're looking at the Ontario college of art.

The amendments will clarify the application of the act by defining certain terms such as "degree," "educational institution" and "distance education." Whenever you make changes, as we have in the three previous bills, there's always somebody scanning it, always somebody going through it to find out how they can put their hooks into it. They have no intention of worrying about the students. That is a standard expectation of any scam artist, carpetbagger, whoever you will. They always look for ways to get around the edges.

I see the white flag waving. As the white flag is waving, I'm just going to wrap up by saying—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The Lord is merciful.

Mr. Dave Levac: I'm trying to be as merciful as possible. The member from Trinity-Spadina, whom I admire and am good friends with: I understand that you actually were listening on the TV in another room and you thought it was important to be here to have it wrapped up. So I'm going to wrap up very quickly by saying to you that I believe this particular bill is a step in the right direction. As I've always maintained, when we put a bill on the top, it's not the be-all and end-all of everything; it's a step. Step, march, arm's-length—a step.

We hope that we will get support. I understand that the critic from the Tory party has indicated that he's not going to recommend to the party to receive the bill—that was his recommendation, to turn it down in second reading—but in my understanding of how the NDP have responded so far, they plan to support the bill and will

work with us during committee to try to tweak it, to make it better and see if we can get that number from 31 to 1. We'll move forward on that.

Speaker, thank you for your indulgence. Thank you for providing us with an opportunity to have this dialogue about post-secondary education.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I want to thank the member for Brant. He brought forward many of the ideas and concerns that I have previously stated on this bill. But there's one other thing that I don't think any speaker has mentioned, and perhaps other members have experienced this in their constituency offices. When a constituent comes to me and talks about their ability to finance a program, often because they are out of work at that particular time, I find them in an extremely vulnerable position, a position where they're trying to get back into the workforce as quickly as possible and they're trying to find a more meaningful career going forward. I find them to be in a very vulnerable position as to what people will tell them that the results of entering into a particular program might be. I think it would behoove us all, and it would behoove all governments, to require those people who are providing financial assistance, in any form that might be, to people who are going particularly through a retraining program or a program where you have more mature adults trying to access—it would behoove governments to require those funding agencies to provide the applicant with clear, unequivocal data as to the success rate of those programs in numbers so that those people who are in a vulnerable position will get clear information that isn't hazed over by people who are trying to sell the program.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I just want to say to my friend from Brant that we're going to be supporting this bill because it's a little step, so why not? I also want to tell him that I surrendered an hour ago, that I threw the white flag over an hour ago, just in case they forgot.

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The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments.

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: The member from Trinity–Spadina has been begging us to put him out of his misery, at least in my words, not necessarily his. I think he said, “What more can be said? It's all been covered.” But the member from Brant, in the time he had, brought to the debate a whole spectrum that we really hadn't covered effectively. I hope the member from Trinity–Spadina, both on-site and remotely, was able to catch his entire 20 minutes, because I know he learned a lot that'll be helpful in committee in that regard.

I didn't have the opportunity last time to comment on the strengths that we have in my own riding. I have campuses of Centennial College and the University of Toronto Scarborough campus, and adjacent to me on the east side within Durham region, although not in my

riding, are Durham College and the University of Ontario Institute of Technology—and that doesn't even speak to the presence of the private career colleges. Within my own hometown, we used to have the Toronto School of Business, which was subsequently purchased, restructured and renamed Trillium College as part of the private career college system.

I think some of the points that are being made—we want these to be the best they can be. We need to weed out the bad actors, and we need to provide the resources and support necessary, both for the public and the private systems that exist out there, so that whether it be young people or adults who are retraining, they're going away with absolutely the best possible—I see the member from Trinity–Spadina over here, and he's begging us to move along. I know he's anxious to see this get to committee, where he can add his voice and then bring forward—as the member for Brant was saying, tweak the bill, if that's what's required, to make it a better piece of legislation and usher it back here in the shortest possible time so that we can act on it expeditiously.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: I have to tell you, I'm surprised by what an aggressive and engaged debate this is. Members just seem to be leaping to their feet, which I think comes as real oxygen to our post-secondary education institutions, both private and public—that we're really giving this piece of legislation the full and complete unrelenting attention that it's due, and my friend and colleague from Trinity–Spadina has been noting that with great enthusiasm. I actually thought the very important work we did on the accounting professions was the high-water mark in public debate since I've been here, but I think this is certainly rivalling that for the depth and breadth and just the sheer level of controversy and the provocative nature of this legislation. This is very, very critical.

I want to acknowledge the comments of the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills. When I was a young fellow going to Carleton University, Claude Bennett was my MPP, a very fine man.

Mr. Jeff Leal: A very distinguished man.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: He was. That seat is now represented by our Premier.

I remember living in Ontario when Bill Davis was our Premier. It was remarkable because of the level of commitment that that government had to post-secondary education. I know some of my colleagues in the House were here sitting on the government benches at that time.

I remember arriving there, and I remember going to Carleton University. I was all of 17 years old. I had managed to skip past CEGEP in Quebec where I'd grown up. They handed you a deck—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. The member from Brant has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Dave Levac: I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the members from Carleton–Mississippi Mills,

Trinity–Spadina, Pickering–Scarborough East and Toronto Centre. I thank them all for their sound discussions.

To the member from Trinity–Spadina, this is a take-no-prisoner opportunity as opposed to waving the white flag. We're not allowed to take any prisoners here. We want to make sure that all our points are made.

The member from Toronto Centre is obviously a very masterful, strong community man who understands that when we get this right, communities having post-secondary education, career colleges, in them will be better for it. I want to thank him for his comments.

The member for Pickering–Scarborough East reminds the listeners and this place of his commitment to the campuses in his riding. I too rededicate myself to the campuses in my riding. I want to explain to you a quick little anecdote about that. I was able to talk to the then Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities and, for the first time, offer a singular grant to a campus alone, not to the university itself, just straight to the campus. We were able to get some money to help build that campus. We continue to talk to this government and the federal government, and the municipalities are on side. We will continue to grow that wonderful institution in our community, right in the downtown, that is growing a university and post-secondary education for the community and abroad. I want to thank him for that.

Now, the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills: Yes, I do agree with you. I do believe that information is extremely important and delicate during the time frame that you're talking about, but I think it should be across the board. Quite frankly, yes, I do agree that somebody being laid off who has a family, a house, a car payment, has to get to work. They want to know what the success rate is. They should have that information, and I'm fully agreeing with that. You'll see in Hansard that I did make a comment about that, indicating that I believe we should be doing a better job with that.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: I apologize, Madam Speaker. I thought I was doing 20 minutes before, but now I am.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You've only got 18 minutes.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: My friend from Trinity–Spadina reminds me that now I only have to do 18.

I'll just pick up where I left off before, which was to say that that was a particular period in time. In a very non-partisan way, I think every party that comes to power, though we don't like to admit it, inherits good things of the governments that came before us. The reason I was leading to that is, because of the quality of our education that we're trying to protect, people have been recognized, and it was just announced the other day that Bill Davis has won the Jane Jacobs Lifetime Achievement Award for his work in education and city-building. I think that if you live long enough, and you get far enough away from politics, people will finally appreciate you. I think that's the lesson for all of us.

But that was a different time. When I went to Carleton University, I remember getting a stack of computer cards,

and some of the members present who were in that twilight period between the time before we had computers and when we got them lived with those large machines with large tapes and large stacks of computer cards. It wasn't very automated, because you lined up to take your courses and the registration process was that they fed these cards through—I think you had six or seven cards—and you only got your courses if the machine didn't spit out one of your cards and you had to go all the way back to the beginning. This was an absolutely incredibly insane, repetitive process that one went through long before the days of laptops.

But there was also a sense that information travelled much slower. You didn't have Internet universities. Long-distance learning was a process of telephones and paper. It wasn't the kind of process we have today, when my partner was studying nursing at UBC, never actually once going there, doing all the technical work around perioperative nursing and advanced surgical nursing from the comfort of our home on a laptop computer, something—and I'm not that far out of university—that was unimaginable back then.

It has also opened up in the knowledge economy training, education and apprenticeship, private and public, to any numbers of players. As you can sell knowledge and access to knowledge and sell credentials over the Internet, as well as use it as an incentive for people to come to this country, the need for regulation is much more complicated, much more essential than it was 30 or 25 years ago, when our educational institutions were physical, when you had to show up, when things were done with paper, and when it was easier to verify things because the sheer volume and numbers involved—the number of courses—were not required. This legislation starts the foundation of building a more modern and progressive and agile regulatory system for the times we now live in.

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The other piece of this, for me, is particularly important, because Ontario really is Canada's education capital.

I want to commend my friend from Brantford for the extraordinary work and leadership he has provided in really working with the mayor, city council, local educators and business leaders to realize the development of a very important educational cluster with Laurier and now with other post-secondary institutions.

One of our other immigrants, Richard Florida, makes the point that a university or a post-secondary college is probably the biggest determinant between those communities that are successful and those that aren't. So for a community like Cornwall, building educational capacity is really important if it is going to become more—after the deindustrialization of some small towns, whether we're talking Wallaceburg or Cornwall, having a post-secondary institution is really critical to that community's capacity to participate in the knowledge economy.

Because these brands are global, because knowledge is created almost in a second and transmitted globally

within a second, verifiability of knowledge is difficult. Reputations and credibility of credentials become really critical. For our government, that has been a huge struggle. I'm hoping, actually, that the foundations of better regulation of our private and public institutions and the setting of standards will eventually lead us to a point in the not-too-distant future where all educational institutions, whether they're in India or Poland or Chile, are tradable; that we actually have international standards for degrees, to verify competency and content. Until each region and each nation establishes that, we are going to have continuing difficulties in recognizing foreign credentials.

That is important because the average skilled worker now spends fewer than three years in one city and less than one year in one job. These are folks who don't go looking for someone to create a job for them; they're the folks who create jobs where they go. To get the best and the brightest, which we are trying to do with Open Ontario, means that our institutions have to be verified, fraud-proofed and have their reputations protected so that their brand and the value of the degree is resilient going forward as we attract more people from the world to not just gather knowledge, get their credentials and do their research and learning here—but also because that's the best attraction we have in building Ontario's skilled workforce. It's also important for long-term equity, as we will hopefully be able to export this verification of the quality of credentials, so that when people get degrees in other places they are completely portable. We are really moving, in a knowledge economy, to almost a global citizenship for knowledge workers, which means that their credentials have to increasingly become globally tradable.

Also, our economy is becoming so specialized that new degrees, new specializations, discoveries—the current work being done in my own constituency of Toronto Centre on genome work is creating entire new subspecialties, areas of expertise and new credentials all the time that are needed to work in those fields.

So as we advance knowledge, as we advance specialization, we increasingly have to be able to verify that. That is a peer-reviewed process, and I think it's extremely important that we are formalizing and extending peer review work and not bureaucratizing or politicizing this, but pushing it back to the colleges and to post-secondary institutions and universities to have a framework for self-policing amongst credible peers. To systematize that process, I think, is really very critical.

If you look at the last 20 years, the biggest shift in Ontario and in the world has been from an economy where wealth was generated by production to an economy today where wealth is generated by innovation, and that is very hard, because not only are degrees difficult to measure, as we are discussing today, but it is a lot easier to measure production assets.

It's very easy to understand that jobs are being created in your town when there's an auto plant or when there's a plant opened to make toasters. The skill levels are very visible. People see assembly taking place; they can watch

and see production. Production and the manufacture of goods are very easy to measure. Exports of goods, the sheer volume of them, are much easier to measure.

But in almost the entire industrialized world, those jobs are in decline. They are in decline even in places that were recently industrialized, like Poland, where they're estimating that in some areas, 75% of the industrial jobs created since the liberation of Poland as an independent state have already disappeared and have moved to lower-income, emerging industrial economies where people are paid less; where the skills that we're talking about, that need to be certified and researched and covered, are not required; and where plants are automated and use 25% of the number of employees.

What we're experiencing in Ontario is that education in itself has become an industry. Knowledge is so pervasive—required for 70% of jobs right now. Just in the GTA, Madam Speaker, where you and I have the privilege of representing folks, 80% of the jobs being created right now are knowledge-based jobs, 20% are service-based jobs, and there's a net decline in manufacturing. That is true in Michigan, in the UK, in France. It is even true in northern Italy. In every industrial economy, those jobs that do not require university or post-secondary education—you could go to a vocational school or apprentice—are disappearing.

In Hamilton, from where my colleague for Hamilton Mountain hails and for which she has been such a great advocate—and as she is very aware—26,000 industrial jobs have disappeared in the last 20 years that they've been tracking it; 63,000 knowledge and service jobs have emerged in Hamilton. You don't often see them. We will often hear that a bottling company or a brewery has closed in Hamilton, and that gets a great deal of attention. But the expansion, because of McMaster and Mohawk and the incredible educational infrastructure in that city and the emergence of companies that mostly have 10, 15, 25, 30 people, with jobs that pay better than the jobs that were there before, is not as visible.

The quality of those companies depends on the quality of their workforce. Having competent engineers, researchers, artists, performers and designers is critical to quality control of product, because what we are selling is a package of knowledge. We are selling something that is only verifiable based on the quality of the education and the credentials of the people producing that product.

When you talked about German engineering, everyone knew what that was because they saw it in their BMW, Volkswagen or Audi. When you're talking about knowledge that does not in itself produce a direct product but is sold, the quality of the knowledge economy is based on our ability to verify the institutions that create the knowledge and produce the research and to maintain a high level of quality professionalism.

There was a comment made about Ontario's educational institutions. I think you'd be hard-pressed to find a place in the world that is starting from so far ahead of the game.

I've lived in Ontario. I worked on a dairy farm in Glengarry. I had the great pleasure of working for the

federal government in Ottawa and ran my own company there. I've lived in Toronto twice. When I was mayor of Winnipeg, I worked very closely with my friends collaboratively, regionally, in northwestern Ontario, and what an extraordinary part of the province that is.

Everywhere I've lived in Ontario, the implications of the shift from production to innovation have been completely different—and it has been brutal. My friend from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex is one of the folks who get this. As a farmer herself, she understands how important skills are, especially when you have to create them on your own. There's a place in her community that she has advocated for powerfully called Wallaceburg, and Wallaceburg lost about 11,000 jobs in the tool and die industry, which is why our government stepped forward so aggressively to support the auto sector—not because of the GMs and the Chryslers so much, though they're important, but because any revival in Wallaceburg at any time in the future requires us to recreate the supply chain that those tool and die companies found so critical to sustaining themselves.

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How do we reinvent, as we are through Second Career right now, jobs for people who are 55, whose experience is in the tool and die industry? That is a huge challenge that would scare off many people in public policy, but when they do get that and when you're an older worker and you haven't been in high school in 30 or 25 years, the quality of the credential you're going to get is important because you're likely going to have to move.

We in Ontario have been blessed that we have it. I've lived in Cape Breton and I've lived on the prairies. The reality is that if you want to get jobs in certain areas, you can no longer get them in the small and mid-sized centres outside of Ontario, and that if you're going to get those jobs, you're likely going to get them near a Hamilton, near a Windsor, near a Toronto, near an Ottawa, near a Kingston, near a Thunder Bay—near a centre that's large enough to have a post-secondary institution that can support a level of knowledge-based employment.

While this may seem like a fairly straightforward piece of legislation—and it is—when you are moving to understand that we're a knowledge economy, this is absolutely integral to creating 20,000 new places for students in Ontario. This is absolutely critical to the Green Energy Act and the 60,000 jobs that are now well-developed and in play. I think we're almost halfway to that number already, just since the legislation has been passed. Certainly, I had a company phone me out of the blue that wants to move 100 jobs to Ontario because of the Green Energy Act. But the other reason—they said this to me—was because the quality of graduates and the quality of educational institutions in Ontario was second to none.

If you look at some of them, my friend from Guelph—we will all know that Guelph, arguably, has one of the best agricultural schools in the world and that it has now moved beyond that into biomaterials and into all kinds of things. Research out of Guelph is now driving the quality

of new bioinfrastructure, bioauto—the Ontario BioAuto Council in Guelph. The extraordinary innovation that's coming out of that is again attached to the quality of those institutions.

In my own constituency of Toronto Centre, there's a college that is doing a master's degree. They have said that they would love to see this legislation pass for the simple reason that the quality of a private college's master's degree—this is in organizational psychology, and it deals a lot with the stresses of a workplace because we are now working so much. The expertise at this college is quite extraordinary, and they are using graduates from OISE and from other public-sector-funded institutions.

One of the things they said when they came to see me was, “You can't get this legislation passed any faster?” And they had gotten, unfortunately, an email from one member of this House, whom I won't embarrass by name, misrepresenting this legislation—I don't think intentionally; maybe I'd better say representing their political point of view on it in a way that challenged the facts of the legislation. They wrote this person back and they copied me. They said, “Look, if this legislation isn't passed, if we cannot stand up internationally”—because they estimate that three quarters of the people who will come to Toronto to do this degree are not from Ontario, that over half of them will come from other parts of Canada and the other half will come from overseas because of the very specialized nature of this degree. “Being able to hold up this kind of certification process, we plan on including what the government standards are with our programs when we send them out so that we can tell people that we actually have honest, third party public sector verification of the quality of our degree.” She said, “That's the difference between the profitability of my business”—and I don't think she should apologize for that, because she runs a very efficient college—“and the credibility and sustainability of that.” She said, “You know, I haven't always voted Liberal, but I read Open Ontario and I read this commitment and I read the commitment to 20,000 places. For me, as a businesswoman, as someone who runs a post-secondary institution, who had in the past felt undervalued and underappreciated, I welcome this.” She said, “You call me, Mr. Murray, any time anyone from a private educational institution challenges the government on the need for that, and I will take them to that, because I started this college 25 years ago from absolutely nothing, and I'm very proud of the reputation we built. But I simply cannot stand up because people expect me to say, ‘My college's education standard’—and I've been very challenged internationally because of the number of people who don't maintain reasonable standards, and I can't point yet to a sufficiently aggressive and rigorous evaluation process that protects this.”

Many people are welcoming it, and I would just ask members to talk to some of these people before any of us go on a campaign to suggest that somehow this is creating bureaucracy or a nanny state. I don't know anybody yet whom I've met, and I represent a lot of educational

institutions in the centre of Toronto here, who hasn't called on the government to do something like this. This is very much a response. I think as we go to committee with this, we will hear very aggressively from these people.

We have an educational system in Ontario that every party has had a hand in, and it's a blessing. I would like to thank the members who have been here longer than me—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. Questions and comments? There being no questions and comments, the member has up to two minutes to respond to—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): —no questions and comments.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, there's no response.

Interjection: If there are no questions, then there's no response.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Okay, no response. We'll move right along then. Further debate.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Mr. Phillips has moved second reading of Bill 43. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

There will be a 30-minute bell. We'll call in the members.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I've received a deferral slip from Jeff Leal, chief government whip. It reads: "I request that the vote on Bill 43, An Act to amend the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000, the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 and the Ontario College of Art & Design Act, 2002," by Minister Milloy, "be deferred until Tuesday, May 11, 2010."

Is it the pleasure of the House that this be deferred? Okay.

Second reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Orders of the day.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The Minister of Education has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

I declare that this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

The House adjourned at 1649.

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Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
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Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
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Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB) Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Oakville Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP) Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Nickel Belt Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP) Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Kenora–Rainy River Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB) Hudak, Tim (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB) Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB) Jones, Sylvia (PC) Klees, Frank (PC) Kormos, Peter (NDP) Kular, Kuldip (LIB) Kwinter, Monte (LIB) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB) Leal, Jeff (LIB) Levac, Dave (LIB) MacLeod, Lisa (PC) Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock Dufferin–Caledon Newmarket–Aurora Welland Bramalea–Gore–Malton York Centre / York-Centre Glengarry–Prescott–Russell Peterborough Brant Nepean–Carleton Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud Trinity–Spadina Cambridge	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Marchese, Rosario (NDP) Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB) McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
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McNeely, Phil (LIB) Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	

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Murray, Glen R (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
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Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Garfield Dunlop
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Robert Bailey
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson
Jim Brownell, Kim Craiton
Bob Delaney, Garfield Dunlop
Amrit Mangat, Phil McNeely
John O'Toole
Clerks / Greffiers: William Short (pro tem.), Sylwia Przewdziecki

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

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laura Albanese
Laura Albanese, Wayne Arthurs
Toby Barrett, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Pat Hoy, Norm Miller
Glen R Murray, Charles Sousa
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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

Chair / Président: David Oraziotti
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Helena Jaczek
Bob Chiarelli, Steve Clark
Helena Jaczek, Kuldip Kular
Dave Levac, Rosario Marchese
Bill Mauro, David Oraziotti
Joyce Savoline
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Laura Albanese, Michael A. Brown
Donna H. Cansfield, M. Aileen Carroll
Howard Hampton, Ernie Hardeman
Lisa MacLeod, Leeanna Pendergast
Jim Wilson
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Leeanna Pendergast
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Ted Chudleigh
Mike Colle, Christine Elliott
Peter Kormos, Reza Moridi
Leeanna Pendergast, Lou Rinaldi
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Yasir Naqvi
Bas Balkissoon, Bob Delaney
Joe Dickson, Sylvia Jones
Amrit Mangat, Norm Miller
Yasir Naqvi, Michael Prue
Mario Sergio
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Shurman
M. Aileen Carroll, France Gélinas
Jerry J. Ouellette, David Ramsay
Liz Sandals, Peter Shurman
Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Michael Prue
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller
David Caplan, Kim Craiton
Jeff Leal, Gerry Martiniuk
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch
Michael Prue, Lou Rinaldi
Tony Ruprecht
Clerks / Greffiers: Trevor Day (pro tem.), Sylwia Przewdziecki

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

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin
Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal
Elizabeth Witmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott
Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott
Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas
Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones
Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

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