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Thursday 12 May 2011

Jeudi 12 mai 2011

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 12 May 2011

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 12 mai 2011

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

McMICHAEL CANADIAN ART COLLECTION AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA COLLECTION McMICHAEL D'ART CANADIEN

Mr. Chan moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 188, An Act to amend the McMichael Canadian Art Collection Act / Projet de loi 188, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Collection McMichael d'art canadien.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Debate?

Hon. Michael Chan: Today I will be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member from York South–Weston. We are proud to speak for second reading of Bill 188, the McMichael Canadian Art Collection Amendment Act, 2011.

Our government is committed to advancing Ontario's world-class cultural institutions. They play an invaluable role in our province by preserving, protecting and promoting our cultural and artistic heritage. Through exhibitions, outreach and innovative programming, they help us discover new ideas and inspiration. They help connect us to our past, our present and each other.

Of our great cultural institutions, one of the most well known is the McMichael Canadian Art Collection. Since it was founded in 1965, the McMichael has welcomed thousands of visitors from around the world. The generosity provided by Robert and Signe McMichael includes almost 200 works of art, a log-and-fieldstone building and 14 acres of land to the province of Ontario. In 1972, it was officially established as a crown agency through legislation.

Over the past four decades, cultural tourism has become increasingly competitive. The McMichael now faces tough competition from other institutions. But unlike other institutions, the McMichael's ability to renew its collection and its exhibitions is quite limited. The McMichael's current legislation limits its collection to artists that are specifically named in the legislation or others

that are approved by an art advisory committee and limits its exhibits to those that enhance and complement the collection. This is more restrictive than the mandate of other large public galleries. Galleries like the Art Gallery of Ontario or the National Gallery of Canada do not share the same kind of restrictions as those placed on the McMichael in terms of whose work can be collected, how that was determined and what kinds of activities can be undertaken. In order for the McMichael to successfully compete in the cultural tourism market, these must change.

At present, the McMichael requires greater flexibility to enhance its collection and exhibitions, to better reflect Ontario and Canada's diversity, to attract and engage more visitors, and to continue to be sustainable. Our proposed amendments would help support these necessary changes. Our amendments would provide the gallery with the flexibility to develop groundbreaking displays, to attract more visitors and to increase interest in this great institution and collection. These are changes that would help address the needs and the expectations of the McMichael as they exist today.

The proposed changes to the act would allow the McMichael more flexibility in the scope of its exhibitions while still continuing to showcase its permanent collection. It will ensure that the collection continues to have a focus on the Group of Seven, their contemporaries and the aboriginal peoples of Canada. The McMichael Canadian Art Collection is world-renowned for its focus on Canadian art. We are supporting this focus by making it easier for the gallery to collect works that have made or are making a contribution to the development of Canadian art. These are changes that strike a balance between protecting the McMichael's legacy and providing the gallery with the tools it needs to grow, because in order for the McMichael to attract a broader audience, change is necessary.

The McMichael Canadian Art Collection is undoubtedly one of the most significant cultural institutions. It has an outstanding collection, and with its beautifully designed grounds and walking trails it offers local residents and visitors a unique experience of Canadian art, both indoor and outdoor. But since it was founded in 1965, a lot has changed. These amendments would help us get ahead of changing times. They will help us increase cultural tourism and economic activities in the province.

Overall, Ontario's cultural attraction agencies collectively draw more than three million visitors and generate \$4.5 billion annually. They support hundreds of jobs and

improve the quality of life for all Ontarians. They have positive impacts for local shops, for restaurants and, of course, for our economy. The McMichael is no exception. World-renowned for its extraordinary collection, it attracts almost 90,000 visitors a year to the Kleinburg area.

We can and must go further. Our proposed amendments will, if passed, protect the legacy, the memory and the gifts of Robert and Signe McMichael. By helping the gallery continue to grow and be sustainable, these changes will allow the McMichael's legacy to continue to be recognized, protected and enjoyed in the years to come.

We have the support of the McMichael's board for these changes, and that of the surviving McMichael family members too.

I call upon all members of the House to show their support for this invaluable cultural institution by showing support for Bill 188.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: It is a pleasure to share time today with my colleague the Minister of Tourism and Culture. I am pleased to be able to add my support to this bill today.

As the minister has mentioned, the proposed amendments to the McMichael Canadian Art Collection Act are important to the future growth and renewal of one of our most treasured cultural institutions. We want to ensure that Robert and Signe McMichael's legacy continues to be protected while giving the gallery greater flexibility to develop its collection and exhibitions. Our proposed amendments would do just that.

The proposed legislation was developed from recommendations submitted by the McMichael board and reviewed by the ministry. Furthermore, we consulted the McMichaels' surviving relatives and their representative to ensure that the spirit of Robert and Signe McMichael's gift was intact. I am proud to report that we have their support and the support of the board for these proposed changes.

0910

Our proposed amendments would remove the list of named artists, make it easier for the gallery to build its collection, provide the gallery with an unrestricted exhibition mandate and update the act by removing sections that are no longer relevant or that are better addressed in the agency's bylaws. Streamlining the act will enable the gallery to attract a broader audience and increase revenue while ensuring that Robert and Signe McMichael's gifts continue to be enjoyed by future generations.

With a clear and unrestricted exhibition mandate, the McMichael would have the flexibility to develop diverse and innovative exhibitions that are more inclusive of a wider variety of artists and works; that provide a broader context for the collection; and that reflect Ontario's diversity and the interest of today's audiences, positioning the McMichael with a greater ability to attract new visitors who would be able to discover and enjoy the McMichael's permanent collections.

We recognize the importance of the McMichael founding collection and world-renowned reputation for

its focus on Canadian art. That is why we are making it easier for the McMichael to continue to build this collection with works that make a contribution to the development of Canadian art, while also ensuring that the collection continues to have a focus on the Group of Seven, their contemporaries and the aboriginal peoples of Canada.

Our changes support both of these features. These changes do not impact the McMichaels' gifts. Under the current act, no work of art or land donated by either Robert or Signe McMichael may be disposed of by the gallery. This will not change. In fact, our proposed amendments would help ensure that all of the McMichaels' gifts continue to be recognized, protected and enjoyed in the years to come.

In order to support the McMichaels' legacy, we need to ensure that the gallery continues to remain viable. Our amendments would update and streamline the legislation, making it consistent with practices governing other Canadian and international art institutions. For example, our changes would bring the McMichael in line with many of our other cultural agencies which do not require the minister's approval for the appointment or removal of a director or for approval of their bylaws.

We would also bring further clarity to the legislation. For example, the small cemetery on the gallery's grounds was always intended as a final resting place for the McMichaels as well as for several members of the Group of Seven and their spouses. With the deaths of Robert and Signe in 2003 and 2007 respectively, interments ended. Our proposed amendments would clarify this in the legislation while also ensuring that the cemetery continues to be maintained.

Furthermore, removing the requirement for an art advisory committee will improve the process for the gallery's ability to collect and exhibit artworks. The gallery's board and management will establish policies and processes for acquisitions and exhibitions within the framework of the McMichael's renewed mandate.

Our proposed changes would bring the McMichael in line with current industry standards and practices for other great Canadian museums and galleries. That is why we are proposing amendments to the McMichael Canadian Art Collection Act now. Our changes would provide the McMichael with the flexibility it needs for future growth and sustainability so it can continue to build on the legacy of the McMichaels to attract more visitors and help them discover the beauty of its grounds and permanent collection.

Our government is proud to help support this important and invaluable cultural institution, and I call on all members here to join us in that support by passing this bill today.

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

Further debate?

Mr. Ted Arnott: Thomson, Jackson, MacDonald, Harris, Lismer, Varley, Carmichael, Casson, Johnston and McMichael: some of the most illustrious names in

the history of Canadian art. On behalf of the Ontario PC caucus, I'm very pleased to have this opportunity today to speak at second reading of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection Amendment Act, 2011.

I'm pleased to say that I'll be sharing my time with my colleague the member for Durham. The member for Durham makes an effort to speak to every single government bill, and he deserves a lot of credit for this. I know he has got a great deal of interest in this issue, and I look forward to his remarks as well.

First and foremost, we want the McMichael Canadian Art Collection gallery to succeed into the future. We also want to see the memory of Bob and Signe McMichael, as well as their generous philanthropy, suitably honoured in perpetuity, ensuring that the collection will be enjoyed not by a select few but by all Canadians and those around the world.

We also believe that the Group of Seven, their contemporaries and First Nations artists should continue to be the primary focus of the collection, in keeping with the vision of the founders. Any serious effort that would further these worthy goals should, I believe, merit the support of the House. When I spoke about the McMichael gallery in the House on May 3, when this bill was first introduced, I said that our caucus would approach this bill very carefully and with an open mind, as we always do.

Before I speak in greater detail about the substance of the bill and how it would affect the McMichael collection, I want to share a recent experience I had in Wellington-Halton Hills at an event in Elora. Last Saturday, May 7, I attended Artcetera, a three-day fundraising silent and live art auction featuring our local and regional artists. The proceeds from this event benefited one of our province's premier arts organizations, the Elora Centre for the Arts, as well as our local and regional artists.

The Elora Centre for the Arts is a tremendous asset to our community, and this event went a long way to make it even stronger. I want to inform the House of the Elora Centre for the Arts' own account of their role and mission:

"The Elora Centre for the Arts is a vibrant and community-oriented arts organization that inspires and stimulates artistic excellence, aesthetic maturity and critical insight through exhibition, performance and education. It is a national model of a regional centre for artistic endeavour and education.

"It provides opportunities for both artists and the broader community to engage in artistic pursuits of all kinds in a unique historic setting. It offers innovative and creative programs in a broad range of disciplines, including visual arts, spoken word, music, dance and crafts.

"It serves as a home for the local and regional artistic community and provides a venue for people of all ages to experience enriching artistic activities and expression. The centre is a leader in and encourages artistic freedom of expression, innovation and creativity.

"Through its arts education programming, it encourages youth to embrace the arts as integral to life."

To me, Artcetera only confirmed that the Elora Centre for the Arts is indeed fulfilling that important and impressive mission in our community and beyond. For that, I want to thank and congratulate everyone involved, the staff and volunteers, for making Artcetera such a success.

Even though we may not be directly involved in the arts as MPPs, we too in this Legislature and beyond have the opportunity and indeed the responsibility to contribute to the success of the arts in Ontario.

In 1994 and 1995, during my first term as an elected member of this House, I was honoured to serve as the PC critic for culture, just as I do today. At that time, we were the third party in the Legislature. You'll recall those days, Mr. Speaker. Bob McMichael came to visit me at my constituency office in Arthur; at that time, we were located in my home community.

In that meeting, he invited me to come to Kleinburg to tour the McMichael Canadian Art Collection and visit him and Signe at their new, scenic home in Belfountain. When I finally had the chance and the time to visit, I was overwhelmed with the McMichaels' warm hospitality. I spent about an hour with Bob and Signe, and they showed me their still-private collection of Canadian art which adorned their walls in their home. I'll never forget it.

Looking at that Canadian art and listening to Bob and Signe, Ontarians who had done so much for the arts in our province, was very much a privilege. Their passion was palpable; their vision, clear. Even at that time, they were especially concerned about the need to preserve that vision—their vision—for the McMichael Canadian collection. And while it became a public collection because of their very public generosity, it was really their collection, one they had acquired on their own with their own resources before donating it to the province for all to appreciate.

To be sure, I found this special couple to be very inspiring. And so I was pleased when, in the year 2000, our government passed legislation which Bob had sought, ensuring that as long as he and Signe were alive, they would continue to have a very significant role in the acquisition of works of art and temporary exhibitions.

0920

When I reassumed my role as critic to the Minister of Culture, I knew that one of the first places I wanted to visit again was the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, as I had done more than once over the years since I first visited during my university days in the 1980s. I visited again in September of 2009. While the gallery is never quite the same as it was on a previous visit, it remains one of my favourite art galleries, as it is for many Ontarians.

The history of this gallery is remarkable. Bob and Signe began their collection in 1955, and just 10 years later it had expanded to over 300 works. In co-operation with the provincial government, the McMichaels donated the collection and their home in Kleinburg to the province of Ontario. The province, in turn, assumed responsibility for the protection and maintenance of the artwork

and the grounds. This took place in 1965, when the gallery was known as the McMichael Conservation Collection of Art.

In 1972, Premier Bill Davis, one of Ontario's greatest Premiers, introduced legislation changing the name to the McMichael Canadian Collection. The legislation also appointed Bob McMichael as director and formed a nine-member board of trustees. In 1981, Bob resigned the directorship and became founder director emeritus. Meanwhile, Michael Bell was appointed director and chief executive officer. In 1982, Ian Thom joined the staff, becoming the curator of collections.

In the years following its inception as a public gallery, the collection broadened to accommodate the McMichaels' vision to include First Nations and Inuit prints, sculptures, paintings and masks. Also added were works by artists such as Clarence Gagnon, Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald and J.W. Morrice. But the Group of Seven has always been the primary focus of the gallery, along with the works of Tom Thomson. That's a fitting focus, I think, for a gallery set in such a beautiful natural surrounding.

This leads me to quote from the Group of Seven catalogue from 1920, as published by the McMichael Canadian Collection in 1983: "The Group of Seven artists whose pictures are here exhibited have for several years held a like vision concerning art in Canada. We are all imbued with the idea that an art must grow and flower in the land before the country will be a real home for its people."

While I wasn't present in 1920, I was very fortunate to have been present at the 1991 ceremony awarding A.J. Casson the Order of Ontario. I think that the only MPP who is prouder than me to be there, perhaps, was Premier Bob Rae, who seemed to be having the time of his life. But for me, to be in the presence of this iconic figure of Canadian culture was an amazing experience I'll never forget.

As I've said many times, the McMichael showcases the very best in our province and our country. We want the McMichael to succeed; indeed, to continue to show our best to the world.

In a briefing last week, the officials from the Ministry of Tourism and Culture told us that the number of visitors to the McMichael in recent years has diminished somewhat. Given that this government appears to take Ontario's tourism industry for granted, this fact is perhaps not surprising. I'm told that in 2009-10, there were more than 97,000 visitors, while in 2010-11, that number has slipped to slightly more than 89,000 visitors.

The question, therefore, is: How do we reverse this trend, bringing more visitors, bringing repeat visitors, bringing new visitors to experience the McMichael? This should be part of a concerted strategy to market Ontario as the premier tourist destination that we know it is: the best attractions, the best hospitality, the best festivals and events.

What about the Sorbara report and its many recommendations that seem to be gathering dust? What about

its aim to double tourism receipts by 2020? What about its call to bring our tourism and cultural attractions up to leading global standards? And what about its call to take action, to fundamentally improve tourism in Ontario?

This government's pace in making these changes is frustrating and slow. We're not making the progress we need to make to meet and exceed those global standards. In the McMichael, we have a cultural gem that can be counted as one of the best in the world. But how do we ensure people know that, both at home and abroad? Will Bill 188 contribute to its success? We sincerely hope so.

I was encouraged to read that the chair of the McMichael Canadian Collection, as well as Penny and Jack Fenwick, members of the McMichael family, are supporting this bill. Given their written endorsements and given that we have received no indications of opposition at this time to this legislation from within Ontario's artistic community, the official opposition will not stand in the way of the government's efforts on this issue, and I wish to express support for this bill at second reading.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for this opportunity to speak about an institution of such importance to the arts in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I believe you indicated you were splitting your time. The honourable member for Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole: I would first like to thank the member from Wellington-Halton Hills for giving me the opportunity to also express my admiration and respect for the McMichaels. The comments he made really reflect, I think, a general appreciation and respect for the McMichael as it existed and its work since 1972. At that time Premier Davis, as was said, created this wonderful collection and destination, and we're still talking about it today.

I guess the primary issue that I think is important is, would Robert and Signe McMichael be supportive of the intent of this bill? I also was here in 2000 when this was last debated, trying to move forward, I guess is how you would describe it. In my research, I have come to understand that the sentiment of the board is certainly reflected in this. Also, surviving relatives Penny and Jack Fenwick have given the bill their support, noting that, "The proposed legislation is a reasonable approach to moving forward and would provide a framework to support Robert and Signe McMichael's magnificent vision and their gift of works of art by members of the Group of Seven and other Canadian artists." That's the respect and wishes of the family.

I think if you look at the legislation, it has more specifics in it with respect to the duties that would be required on the passing of this legislation. The bill would do a couple of things that are structural. It empowers the McMichael to broaden its mandate, allowing it to collect and exhibit works not permitted under current legislation. The present legal framework permits the McMichael collection to exhibit only works created by a select group of artists or by artists designated by the advisory committee. The bill will revoke the list of artists, allowing the

gallery to display those works which it deems appropriate. That could be a question, and I know there will be public hearings.

All references to the art advisory committee are revoked. All reference to the special status afforded to Robert and Signe McMichael are revoked, as both have died. The bill provides that the McMichael board of directors must take steps to recognize Robert and Signe's donations to the province. The bill provides for the maintenance of the cemetery to further honour the memories of Robert and Signe McMichael.

The appreciation of those structural issues is important, and I suspect that with the family's support, that's moving forward.

Just a bit of my own contribution and research on this—I should say that I had the opportunity to speak to one of my constituents, Anne Wright, who served on the board for six years—she's just retired, I believe—a wonderful, strong, committed, intelligent woman in my riding who is going on to serve at, I believe, Trent University now. I asked her what her feelings were, and she said that of course it's the wishes of the board to respect what has been respected in the bill, I gather, but also to move forward and to become an enriched destination for the right reasons, to maintain the collection and to make it an exploration for visitors.

She said that her last memory would be the new totem pole in the entranceway, which is a nice bridge between the past and the present. It's a magnificent structure, but when you look at the details of the totem pole—and I did take the chance to see it. I think it must have been maybe two years ago—I could be wrong—when I had visitors from another country here. There's a frog with a laptop and a bear with a cellphone. I think that's the transition really that this bill is moving forward with: respecting the past while having a vision for the future. I'm always moved by that.

Some people ask me regularly—I have a personalized licence plate, and it's "GRP OF7." They always ask me: Do I know them? I have five children, and my wife and I make seven. So we always used to sign our Christmas cards "The Group of Seven." I do know of the Group of Seven and do not have the money to have one. I have a couple of prints—Tom Thomson and a few of them—which are important.

0930

Actually, that brings me to the next point. There's a whole list of those artists that the member from Wellington-Halton Hills—he is very respected in his respect for the work here, and he gave me the privilege to speak. There are a lot of misconceptions. Tom Thomson was not really a member of the Group of Seven. That's a broad misunderstanding, including by myself—I have two Tom Thomson prints, both of the outdoors, one with the canoe and one with, I believe, the pine.

"The life of Tom Thomson was the pure stuff of legends. Most of his later years were lived alone in the forest. His early death, in mysterious circumstances, plus the meteor-like briefness of his dazzling career, combined to turn him into a national icon of art.

"Tom Thomson's art has always had a special meaning for Bob and Signe McMichael, as it has for most Canadians."

There is one example of a well-known, well-respected artist who is not really a member of the Group of Seven.

Another equally famous, I believe, is Emily Carr: "Few artists have wedded nature and the human spirit so passionately as Emily Carr. A headlong, single-minded mingling of art with her love for her native British Columbia produced the finest expressionist painting Canada has known.

"Emily Carr's long career was plagued by difficulties," it goes on to say. There is another very famous icon in the history of Canadian art.

Those were not members of the Group of Seven, but a lot of people think they were.

LeMoine FitzGerald was the only western Canadian painter to become a member of the Group of Seven later: "FitzGerald's membership came at the very end of the group's existence, too late to have any but an honorary significance. He was, in fact, too removed physically, because he was from Winnipeg." I just looked into this.

"Clarence Gagnon was the pictorial bard of rural Quebec. The life and land of the habitant inspired him to some of the most engaging paintings ever made of the Canadian scene."

I guess the point of these Canadian legends, if you will—Gagnon was 1881–1942.

Then there was J.W. Morrice, 1865–1924, "one of the greatest gypsies of Canadian art. Born in Montreal, his wanderlust took him ... to Paris ... Brittany, Spain, North Africa, Tunis, England, Cuba and Trinidad," but he always came back to his original inspiration.

A.J. Casson, mentioned by the member from Wellington-Halton Hills—I also have a Casson print—"left the more elemental and epic landscape of the northland to other members of the Group of Seven. His serene pictorial compositions have emerged mainly from southern and central Ontario settings. Particularly, he has been the pictorial biographer of the small communities of Ontario."

This is kind of the theme: The recording through the eyes and mind of an artist—the way they interpret it—is so important to the whole legacy issue, not to be destroyed but enhanced, if you will, because art, like life, changes, as it should.

David Milne, 1882–1953, "was the quiet man of his generation of Canadian artists. Eloquent in paint, and a descriptive writer in his occasional prose, Milne talked little about his art. Unlike the sociable Group of Seven members, Milne only rarely came into contact with his fellow painters."

They all had a connection and a synergy that was important, and as I say, there's much to be said about all of them. I think the interesting ones I see are Carmichael and, as well, the elusive Frank Johnston, who really only exhibited once with the group and then moved on. He was quite a prolific painter and had his own reviews—a quite large composition of work in the late 1920s. He moved on, I believe, to Winnipeg.

But I liked Lawren Harris. To my thinking, he's quite visionary for his time and quite modern with respect to the traditions of the other painters. He certainly was, I think, quite visionary, and his sort of—I can't even describe it. It's more modern, more geometric; modern as well as a transition between the two members.

I think that what is important also is to thank those members of the McMichael. I had the privilege of meeting the new executive director, Victoria Dickenson, when she was here last week, when the bill was introduced. I thank the board as well as Noreen Taylor and others—I did mention Anne Wright—for the work they do, and all of the trustees, the foundation members and the volunteers who make the McMichael a wonderful destination.

I say that because, on two occasions, I've had visitors from Australia. I have a daughter who lives there, and I have visitors from the Isle of Man. They were here for a very special occasion—a wedding—and we took a special day to go to the McMichael to say, "This is a wonderful side of Canada that's not all a bunch of rough rednecks," as some people from other places might characterize it.

I also think that in my own community, when I was a councillor some years ago—I know of the volunteers in the art and culture world and how important it is to small towns, not just Kleinburg. I referenced it, when it started, as being a small destination, and see what has happened?

I thank the people at the Kent Farndale Gallery in Port Perry. They have displays, and I believe it's an important part, a vital part, of the communities we all live in and represent. The Visual Arts Centre of Clarington is an ongoing place of learning and art. I've worked with one of the small artists; they had an art and politicians display. I only say that because these destinations are important to the tourism of Canada, but more importantly, to understanding the culture of Canada.

I thank the members, as I said before, and those who, in a continuing sense, will move forward. Hopefully, the destination of Kleinburg will be enhanced by this legislation, but the memory will not be lost. With that, I'll concede the time.

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

Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's my honour to stand today and address this bill that's before us.

The McMichael collection, as everyone in Canada knows, is one of the most significant art institutions in this country. It's one that has impressed and awed people who've had the opportunity to go there. There's no doubt that the home of the significant collection of works by the Group of Seven has shown how their vision redefined the way that Canadians and the rest of the world have seen Canada.

This collection, this institution, has been, at times, at the centre of much debate. I don't think there's any question that when you talk about strong people with fundamental visions, thinking about how Canada and Canadian artists should portray themselves to the world, to other

Canadians, we shouldn't be surprised if there has been or can be some difference. But that seems to have been resolved in many ways by this bill. This bill appears to reflect common ground by the major stakeholders involved in this institution.

In my inquiries after the bill was put forward, I had a chance to talk to people in the museum and culture sector, whose response was much quieter than it was a decade ago when this matter was first debated here in this Legislature. My colleague Rosario Marchese was part of that earlier debate. The people I talked to in the arts community said that this is a very precious collection, a very important institution, and that this bill gives the board and the community that is involved with this gallery the ability to hold on to its core and reflect what's critical in our history, but also to expand its offerings to the public so that this gallery, this collection, will not simply be static but, while maintaining the Group of Seven and aboriginal art at its heart, will reflect the ongoing development of Canadian art. That's very important to an institution that is not simply frozen in time, not simply sealed up and seen very occasionally. To have a living, economically viable institution, this collection needs to continually be in a process of self-renewal to be able to offer new works to the public, different works to the public.

0940

Let's say you're a visitor to Toronto from anywhere in the world and you go to the AGO. It's very simple: From your downtown hotel, take a cab, take a streetcar or walk. You can go there. This museum, this collection, is outside Toronto.

It's a destination that has to constantly draw people in. Casual drop-ins are not the order of the day. To give it the ability to draw new people, to ensure that its base of support is strong and ongoing, these changes give the board the power to develop and provide programming that will continue to bring in new visitors and continue to expose new generations of Canadians to art that reflects their lives and their realities.

The last debate on this issue, according to my colleague from Trinity-Spadina, was fairly raucous. It was a debate that went right through the arts community. People had very strong opinions. This bill before us appears to many as giving this collection the powers and the options that are consistent with the practice of many other museums and art galleries. I think that the family members, the stakeholders, the board—all of those who worked together to craft this bill—seem to have found that common ground that allows old and very distant disputes now to be gone and gives this gallery a new lease on life.

I'm looking forward to public hearings, in case there are stakeholders we haven't heard from or perspectives that we should take into account. My sense is that probably we're in good shape, but I think it's viable, it's a good idea, to go to those committee hearings and make sure that it's publicly posted. If there are those who have concerns, let them come forward and let us hear them. If

there are changes that are needed, we can discuss that. My suspicion is that we're probably in good shape, but let's just make sure.

In this country, for decades—for centuries—our view of ourselves was dominated by very European sensibilities. I think this collection, this home of very substantial Group of Seven works, is part of Canada's growing up, is part of Canada determining how it will see itself in a very new and very bold way. Many who first see the Group of Seven paintings, not as little prints, as many of us saw in school, but in their full size and their extraordinary glory, never think of our landscape in the same way again—never. So to make sure that this collection, this institution, will be economically viable in the long run, will be a place where tourists, Canadians, residents of the GTA will go, I think is a good step forward.

Speaker, I know that I've been allocated more time, but I'll be quite honest with you: This is a very concise bill which addresses the issues that are before us, there seems to be a general sense of support in this chamber for it to go forward, and there is an honouring of those who have made it possible. I look forward to voting in favour of this on second reading. I look forward to hearing the presentations in public hearings.

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

Seeing none, Mr. Chan has moved second reading of Bill 188, An Act to amend the McMichael Canadian Art Collection. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Minister Chan.

Hon. Michael Chan: I would like to ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Agreed? So ordered.

Orders of the day?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: No further business.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): There being no further business, this House stands in recess until 10:30, at which time we will have question period.

The House recessed from 0945 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Mike Colle: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today some very special constituents of mine. Stella Samonas has lived in the same house in my riding for 60 years. She is joined by her son Lou, who is here with his three sons, Andrew, David and Marc. Lou and his family are here today to support his wife, Jean, who is here for the International Awareness Day event for myalgic encephalomyelitis, fibromyalgia and multiple chemical sensitivities, being held on the south lawn of Queen's Park today.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I'm very pleased to introduce a constituent of mine, a very special constituent from

York South-Weston, Carol Sip, who is here to observe question period with us today.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'd like to welcome my constituents Eleanor Johnston and Maureen MacQuarrie, who are here with board member Denise Magi and other representatives from the Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association of Ontario—it's an organization in the riding of Don Valley West—and the Environmental Health Association of Ontario. They're here today for International Awareness Day for myalgic encephalomyelitis, fibromyalgia and multiple chemical sensitivities. I'd also like to welcome to the chamber Susan Monaco and the Mississauga Fibromyalgia Support Group from the riding of Mississauga East-Cooksville, as well as representatives from a number of other groups who provide support for those living with these conditions.

Welcome to Queen's Park, and on behalf of them, I'd like to remind honourable members of the reception at noon today in committee rooms 228 and 230.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to recognize a couple of my constituents who are here today supporting the fibromyalgia and multiple chemical sensitivities issue. They are Rick and Jackie Forsey, Marg Cartwright, as well as Joanne Shewan. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Joe Dickson: I believe we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear a ribbon for International Awareness Day for myalgic encephalomyelitis, fibromyalgia and multiple chemical sensitivities, which is today.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Ajax sought the consent of the House to wear the white ribbons. Agreed? Agreed.

Mr. Frank Klees: I welcome to the House today members of the York Region Fibromyalgia-Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Wellness Group: Gisella and Armando Imbrogno, Carolyn Polisuk, Simin Ayati, Irene Turrin, Roland Leandrosz, Cecilia Szalontai, Maria Nakroun and Yvonne Connel.

Hon. John Wilkinson: Cystic fibrosis is the leading genetic cause of death in Canadian children, and today the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation is here—I think now for the eighth time—for a reception that will be held in committee room 2. We want to welcome Maureen Adamson, who is the CEO of the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. I invite all members to join me and our other colleagues, Ms. Witmer and Mr. Prue, for that reception.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I'd like to introduce a first-year student at Wilfrid Laurier University, a resident of Mississauga South, and my son. Welcome to Queen's Park, Justin Sousa.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I'd like to welcome two residents of Nipissing, friends of mine, a prominent businessman from our community, Bruce Knox, and his lovely wife, Marisa Valenti Knox, whom I grew up with. I'm delighted that they're here. They're here in support of the North Bay Food Bank, and we're delighted to have them here today.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I'm so pleased to welcome today the girls of the girls' government program from St. Nicholas Catholic School and from Edna Staebler. We have Taylor, Jennifer, Kristen, Sabrina, Emily, Abby, and parents Sharon and Wendy, with their teacher Patty Preiss.

Then we have the principal of Edna Staebler, Jeff Parliament, and his students Erin, Megan, Brooklyn, Kaity, Shanza, Missy, and parents Todd and Muhammad. Welcome.

Mr. Joe Dickson: We're pleased to have one of our pages, Hamza Naim, with us today. I'd like to introduce his mother, Mrs. Sylvia Naim, who is in the west gallery, directly behind me. Please welcome her.

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

I'd like to welcome today two girls' government groups: from Etobicoke Centre, 13 grade 8 girls from Humber Valley Village Junior Middle School and Dixon Grove Junior Middle School are here today, working with MPP Donna Cansfield to address cyberbullying.

I'd also like to welcome, from Kitchener–Waterloo and member Elizabeth Witmer, 12 grade 8 girls from St. Nicholas Catholic Elementary School and Edna Staebler Public school, who are working to address concerns surrounding organ donation. They're seated in the Speaker's gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Seated in the Speaker's gallery, from my riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London, I'd like to welcome Sandi Loponen and her parents, Don and Mary Burgess. Mary and I go way back, having worked together at Alma College in St. Thomas. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Where's Joe? Will Joe be back before the end of the session?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): My brother Joe will be back, I can assure you.

I wanted to let members know just a couple of items of interest. As many of you know, we've had a resident pair of red-tailed hawks living on the grounds for a number of years now. They're nesting in the white pine outside. George, the CTV cameraman, informs me that there are two baby hawks that are there and have been flapping their wings, so we have proud parents living on the grounds of Queen's Park.

As many of you also know, particularly the urban members, who may not have ever seen a trillium or a white trillium, we did plant, a couple of years ago, white trilliums on the front lawns of Queen's Park. The white trilliums are blooming now: our provincial flower.

It's now time for oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Robert Bailey: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Premier McGuinty says skyrocketing hydro bills

are the price Ontario families have to pay for Samsung jobs. While hydro bills are up—and an Ontario PC government will do something about that, and right away. But let me give an update on those 800 jobs Premier McGuinty said his Samsung deal was creating at the Sarnia solar farm. Today, seven months after the minister rolled in and out of town for a photo op, there are—count them—eight employees; a big difference from 800. One is a security guard and another cuts the grass. I guess you could call that a green job.

Why are you attacking the pocketbooks of Ontario families and defending your secret sweetheart Samsung deal with phony job claims?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I can understand why the member opposite would be very, very uncomfortable supporting his leader's plan to kill thousands—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Renfrew and the member from Nepean–Carleton: The Speaker has really nasty allergies and is in a grumpy mood. I would just ask that you be respectful of my sinuses.

Please continue.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I can understand why the member opposite would be very sensitive about this issue because indeed, we're creating thousands of clean energy jobs across this province in ridings like his and ridings like the member for Oxford's, who is sitting just in front of him today.

Yesterday, I brought up an article that was in the Tillsonburg news, where the member from Oxford said this: "The province's deal with Samsung ... could survive under a Tory government." Even their own backbenchers, within hours of making that announcement, are backpedalling on their leader's plan to kill thousands of clean energy jobs—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary? The member for Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: Back to the Minister of Energy. There are 2 things for certain: An Ontario PC government will give families relief from the price of the sweetheart Samsung deal you're adding to Ontarians' hydro bills and the McGuinty Liberals will throw out phantom job numbers to defend their expensive energy experiments.

Let me update you on the 26 solar installer jobs you promised to create in my riding. Of the 24 people who graduated from that program, only six have jobs—none in my riding. In fact, I don't think the minister can tell me whether they're even working in Ontario.

Why would you think families in Leeds–Grenville will choose phony jobs over real relief a PC government would provide?

1040

Hon. Brad Duguid: Let's talk about jobs in communities. Let's talk a little bit about what happened in Tillsonburg this past weekend, because I think the members opposite should pay very close attention to this. The Simcoe Reformer reported that this past week, Siemens

Canada hosted a job fair at the Tillsonburg Community Centre. Some 1,500 job seekers packed the community centre to learn about the opportunities being offered by the Siemens blade plant.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members will please come to order.

Member from Halton. Member from Thornhill, comments like that are not helpful.

Minister.

Hon. Brad Duguid: In that community, people showed up as early as 6 a.m. for a 9 a.m. job fair.

I want to ask the members opposite why it is that they want to take hope away from Tillsonburg. Why do you want to take hope away from those workers? Siemens is bringing on a manufacturing plant there that's going to create 900 direct and indirect jobs in that community. Their leader wants to kill those jobs, kill hope for Tillsonburg—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Final supplementary. The member from Haldimand–Norfolk.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Minister of Energy, Premier McGuinty has admitted that the Samsung deal is a major reason why hydro bills are going up 46%. The Ontario PC leader has laid out a plan to—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. My comments on members coming to order apply to both sides of the House. As you know, my motto is “Hear the other side,” and I would encourage you to follow the Speaker's lead.

Please continue.

Mr. Toby Barrett: The PC leader has laid out a plan to relieve people of the biggest cost that is driving up hydro bills: your Samsung deal.

Let me update you on the jobs you say Samsung created to make my region a green energy hub: There's no activity and no jobs. Six Nations, a partner in the hub, said they couldn't trust the foreign multinational conglomerate to come through with the jobs, so they walked away.

Minister, if Six Nations can walk away from Samsung without fearing penalty, why can't you?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Our clean energy economy has created 13,000 jobs—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): It's amazing how quickly I stand and you come to order.

Minister.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Our clean energy economy has created 13,000 clean energy jobs in the province of Ontario already. We're well on track to creating the 50,000 jobs, and they will be created over the next couple of years.

But I want to talk about the impact that their policy to kill those jobs is going to have on other sectors. Look at our steel industry here in Ontario. Samsung is intending to use 100% Ontario steel to manufacture all of their

wind turbines. That will be 200,000 tonnes of domestic steel with a face value of \$140 million.

Last November, I was in Essex county where 100% Ontario steel towers from Sault Ste. Marie were being constructed. This is what Algoma Steel had to say: that these wind towers are helping them to sustain operating employment levels, which are particularly critical in today's difficult—

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

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. John Yakabuski: Back to the Minister of Energy. Six months ago, the Ontario PC leader and caucus warned you that your Samsung and feed-in-tariff subsidies would kill jobs. It's what the experience has been all over the world when they've tried your expensive energy experiments for themselves.

Spain's Calzada report says that the subsidized power projects ended up losing 2.2 jobs for every so-called renewable energy job. The Bruno Leoni institute found that the price Italy paid for their version of Samsung and FIT subsidies was 4.8 jobs killed in the economy as a whole, and 6.9 jobs in the manufacturing sector.

Why should Ontario families pay 46% more for hydro bills so you can put their jobs and Ontario's economy at risk?

Hon. Mr. Duguid: Yesterday, we shared with the mayor of Windsor the Leader of the Opposition's plan to kill over 1,000 jobs in Windsor. Paco Caudet, general manager of Siliken, a solar panel manufacturer that will employ 165 Windsor workers, had this to say about your job-killing plan: “It would be a disaster for Windsor. It would mean, basically, that we would close our factory and leave.”

It would be a disaster for Windsor. It would be a disaster for Tillsonburg. It would be a disaster for Guelph. It would be a disaster for Cambridge, Fort Erie, Burlington, Don Mills and communities right across this province. Why do you want to kill jobs throughout the province of Ontario? Why do you want to kill jobs in those communities just when they're turning the corner and recovering from that global recession?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Premier McGuinty used to get that the price of his Samsung deal and FIT subsidies would kill jobs. Back when he was the Liberal energy critic, the Premier said, “There is a direct correlation between Hydro's rates and our rate of unemployment in Ontario. As the rates go up, so will the rate of unemployment.”

He used to get it. But now he listens to his backroom advisers who sold him on the sweetheart deal with Samsung and FIT subsidies. In Denmark, they heavily subsidized their renewable energy sector for 15 years, only to learn that just one in 10 so-called new jobs came to light. Why won't you walk away from this job-killing deal before it's too late?

Hon. Brad Duguid: The PC Party's job-killing plan is going to have a devastating effect on our economy and put countless Ontarians out of work. Let's just talk about some of those workers whose jobs you're trying to take away: millwrights, sheet metal workers, electrical engineers, industrial machinery mechanics, welders, machinists, metal fabricators, industrial truck drivers, construction equipment operators, electricians, iron and steelworkers, labourers, and the list goes on.

These are honest, hard-working Ontarians who deserve good-paying, solid jobs. We're providing it for them. You want to take it away. Shame on you for wanting to take away these jobs from Ontario workers after they've worked so hard to turn around our economy.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: Your sweetheart deal with Samsung and expensive FIT subsidies are driving up hydro bills and killing jobs. It was true in Europe, and evidence is piling up here in Ontario. The Sarnia solar farm is the largest solar project in North America and has realized only 1% of the jobs you promised would come. Even your own government backgrounder to the Samsung deal shows that there never were going to be more than 1,440 jobs in renewable energy created.

Denmark, Spain, Italy and Germany all walked away from their expensive energy experiments after it was too late. Why are you so desperate to pin your hopes on a sweetheart deal that will kill Ontario jobs?

Hon. Brad Duguid: The PC Party's announcement this week to kill our clean energy economy is also bad news for Ontario farmers. The same day that they made that announcement, they voted against risk management for Ontario farmers. Our clean energy economy is providing farmers with an opportunity to participate in renewable energy projects. It helps—

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member from Simcoe-Grey and the Minister of Agriculture: I'm very pleased to hear you're talking about agriculture, but I would encourage you—the question was about energy. Take the discussion outside, please.

Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Thousands of farmers across this province are participating in our microFIT program, and those guys want to take those opportunities away. Hundreds of farmers are benefiting from our feed-in tariff program, benefiting significantly, and they want to make those farmers take a loss on that as well.

On this side of the House, we're standing up for Ontario farmers. We're going to fight to ensure that they get the benefits of our microFIT program. We're going to fight to ensure that they get the benefits of our feed-in tariff program, and we're going to fight to ensure that risk management becomes the law here in this province. We will stand with Ontario farmers against the PC plan for the next six months and for the next 20 years.

1050

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Acting Premier. Yesterday, the Premier insisted that the HST wasn't increasing the price of gasoline. Can the Acting Premier explain to drivers how a new 8% tax on gasoline doesn't increase the price at the pump?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The Minister of Energy.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Actually, just as we speak, the federal Minister of Industry is holding a press conference to discuss the issue of gas prices. I'm looking forward to hearing what he has to say because gas prices are something that is certainly international in nature, and national. We're a subnational government here in Ontario, and we're subjected to the same international occurrences with regard to gas prices as every other province in this country and every other jurisdiction around the world.

What I will say is this: We welcome the federal government moving forward, if indeed that's what is going to happen today in the announcement by the federal Minister of Energy, to investigate gas pricing across the country. It is a federal responsibility, and certainly I think Ontarians and Canadians would—

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

Mr. Paul Miller: Let me get this straight. The Premier says gas companies will just gouge customers if the HST isn't there, but he also says he can't protect drivers from gouging. His solution is to give corporate tax cuts to the same people he says are gouging us. The provincial government has a constitutional responsibility for the pricing of energy. If the McGuinty Liberals can't protect drivers from gas gouging, what exactly are they being paid for?

Hon. Brad Duguid: The NDP act as though somehow they have a monopoly on concern about rising gas prices. Certainly this is something that's disconcerting to us as well. We know it impacts families, and we know, as the Minister of Finance said yesterday, it impacts our economy.

That's why we're encouraged by the fact that there's a press conference happening in Ottawa right as we speak and that the federal Minister of Energy, we expect, is making some form of an announcement. We hope the announcement will involve investigating pricing across the country, because indeed it is a national issue and it's something that the federal government has responsibility for. We would welcome the federal government to conduct such an investigation, and we would hope that such an investigation would lead to some potential solutions on this very, very critical issue.

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

Mr. Paul Miller: Yesterday, the Premier said that drivers were being gouged. If the government truly, truly believes that, then they have a responsibility to protect families who are already reeling from sky-high costs. What is this government actually prepared to do to con-

front the gas price gouging that the Premier was so concerned about yesterday?

Hon. Brad Duguid: It's very important that the member recognize that the federal government is responsible for any combines legislation.

Now, I know that the NDP like to raise these issues. What they don't do, when they raise these issues, is provide any kind of credible, reasonable solution.

We want to encourage the federal government to investigate these matters, investigate how pricing's taking place throughout the country, because this isn't unique to Ontario. In fact, Ontario has seen less of an increase than most other provinces since July in gas prices, but we recognize that's cold comfort to somebody at the pumps today. So we encourage the federal government and the federal Minister of Energy to investigate these matters. We encourage them to come to the bottom of the pricing regime that's happening here in this country, because Ontario and all provinces are subjected to the same system.

CORONER'S INQUEST

Mr. Howard Hampton: My question is for the Attorney General. Sadly, grade 9 student Jordan Wabasse's body was found in the Kaministiquia River in Thunder Bay Tuesday night. Sadly, Jordan Wabasse is now the seventh First Nations high school student attending high school in Thunder Bay to disappear and die over the last 10 years.

When I asked you about this issue three days ago, you said that "an inquest is under way up north with respect to the deaths." Minister, the inquest you referred to was to get under way in June 2009. It is now almost June 2011. Two years later, young First Nations students are still disappearing and still dying. How do you explain the two years of inactivity on the part of your government?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: It's a terrible tragedy. All members of this House and all those outside have the greatest sympathy for the families of all of the victims. We all want to know what has happened to the disappeared and why. The police are very concerned, the community is very concerned, and the school, I'm sure, is very concerned.

The Premier actually met directly with the family of Jordan Wabasse several weeks ago. Our government expresses the greatest deal of sympathy, is very concerned, and wants to get answers, just like everybody else.

My friend knows that the inquest began—and I'll defer questions on this to my colleague—several years ago in legal arguments, which have now been resolved—

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: The minister also said, "We take any tragedy very seriously, and take the death of young people who travelled to school very seriously. We're working through every ministry and every way to make sure that people are safe."

The inquest was delayed for two years, and during that time, more young high school students from First Nations died.

Can you tell us, when you say that you're doing everything you can, working in every way, what has been done over the last 10 years?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I won't speak about all of the 10 years—and I think the fact that it's 10 years tells us something. It tells us that there are a lot of parties that need to come together.

The inquest, as my friend knows—he doesn't state this in his question, but my friend knows—took time for legal arguments that had to be resolved. I understand that they have been resolved at the Court of Appeal, and that process will carry on.

Every ministry of this government that has touched this issue is deeply concerned with the issue.

The Premier's call yesterday to the Prime Minister to bring all of the parties to the table at a First Ministers' conference recognizes all the different jurisdictions. When you have the federal government responsible for funding First Nations education, a school in Thunder Bay that's run by the First Nation in the province of Ontario, we need everybody at the table to resolve these—

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: The Attorney General refers to legal arguments. What's clear is that what was holding up the inquest was the Attorney General's inability to put together jury rosters that were representative of First Nations. I first asked you about that in 2008; it's now 2011. I want to ask: What were you doing?

As well, the Deputy Grand Chief of NAN says, "While we do not yet know the full details" of the death, "we do know that youth from NAN territory often find themselves without an adequate network of social support in an unfamiliar environment..." That's been going on for 10 years.

I ask again: What have you been doing while these young students have been dying in Thunder Bay?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: The question is a critically important one. We've been working very hard through the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and the other ministries of government, whether they're health or education.

In stating the question, my friend outlines the challenge: Students come from an isolated community, often with no road access except in winter, to a school that's run by the First Nation and that's funded by the federal government, in a place they're not familiar with. There are a lot of different issues there.

We need all of those responsible for the different jurisdictions at the table. The inquest, I know, will provide us with some answers, but there are broader issues as well. The Prime Minister could certainly show some leadership by calling the First Ministers' conference on aboriginal issues and education that he referenced some years ago. We look forward to it.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Peter Shurman: My question is to the Minister of Energy. A simple question, Minister: How many jobs are there at the \$80-million Windsor Energy Centre?

Hon. Brad Duguid: In all of our clean energy economy, as of the end of last year, and the number is growing quickly, we've created 13,000 jobs—many of those jobs, this week, placed at risk by the PC energy policy, which is a job-killing policy.

1100

I've been to Burlington. The party opposite seems to want to deny the existence of these workers. Well, join me in Burlington, where you'll see hundreds of clean energy workers. Join me in Fort Erie, where you'll see hundreds of clean energy workers. Join me in Guelph. Join me in Peterborough. Join me in Scarborough. Right across this province, there are hundreds and thousands of clean energy jobs being created, jobs that you want to kill. You owe those workers the satisfaction of being able to maintain the jobs that they've worked so hard for. We're turning the corner—

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

Mr. Peter Shurman: I'm talking about the Windsor Energy Centre—you know, the Dwight elephant, the one attached to—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): No, it's not Dumbo; it's Jumbo in St. Thomas.

I've cautioned the member previously on that comment that he used and would ask that he withdraw it, please.

Mr. Peter Shurman: I withdraw the comment. The Windsor Energy Centre, the one attached to the \$500-million casino that was the Premier's last failed economic development scheme for that area; the Windsor Energy Centre in the finance minister's riding, the one that makes hot air, not power; the same Windsor Energy Centre with all the lawsuits and police investigations: We hear that, despite all the money you've thrown at it, there's only one job to show for it.

Why is every family in Ontario paying for your latest energy experiment with Samsung when your last attempt at using an energy experiment for your seat-loss-prevention program failed so badly?

Hon. Brad Duguid: The opposition will try anything to divert us from the fact that this week they brought out a job-killing energy plan—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member from Halton. Member from Durham.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member from Halton again, and Leeds. Halton. Renfrew, we can make it three strikes and you're out.

Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: We're talking about 1,000 clean energy jobs that are being created in the city of Windsor at a time when they need it most.

They want to do everything they can to divert attention from their energy plan that's going will kill jobs in Windsor, Tillsonburg and right across this province. At Siliken, 165 jobs that are being created, you want to kill.

The 700 jobs with CS Wind in the wind energy sector being created in Windsor, you want to kill.

The mayor of Windsor invited your leader out to Windsor to give him a tour to meet those workers. What's your answer? Are you going to go and meet those workers, or are you going to continue to stay here at Queen's Park and hide behind the fact that you want to kill their jobs?

Interjections.

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

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Minister of Labour. A report to be released later today shows that one in three low-wage workers in Ontario is a victim of wage theft. The report concludes that, "The legal right to minimum wage, overtime pay and wages is not a reality for people in low-wage and precarious work." That's a very, very sad commentary on the deplorable state of employment standards in this province. My question is a simple one for the Minister of Labour: What is he going to do about it?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Thank you for the question. I would like to, first off, thank the men and women of the Workers' Action Centre who have come forward with the report today. We all appreciate the tremendous advocacy and work they do for those most vulnerable. I'm thinking of the single moms or new Canadians and certainly young workers who start. They deserve to be paid; they've got to pay their bills. We have to do better to continue to support them.

I would also like to recognize, however, some of the significant advancements that have been made, as appreciated by those very same advocates. In terms of prosecution, I just want to cite something: Between 1989 and 2003—that was during the time when both the NDP and the Conservatives were in power—there were 97 prosecutions initiated under the Employment Standards Act, in the entire time. Since then, there have been over 1,800 prosecutions—

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: The question was about the one third of low-wage workers who have been victims of wage theft and what the minister was going to do about it.

The report actually has some suggestions. It urges Ontario to target industries like cleaning, hospitality, retail and construction, where newcomers to our province have a long, long history of substandard employment practices. We New Democrats have for a long time—for years now—on the order paper urged more and vaster inspections of these very industries.

So I ask again: Is your government going to continue to ignore the plight of Ontario's most vulnerable workers, or will you take the advice this very wise report is giving you and actually act on it?

Hon. Charles Sousa: We're doing everything but ignoring those most vulnerable. That is why we now have more than doubled the number of inspectors that are involved. We have now increased the number of inspections to 13,000 since that time.

We care deeply for those new workers. That's why we also offer, in 23 different languages our employment standards. We provide a number of initiatives to support those very same people. And I say this: Any time that anyone feels that they are intimidated or vulnerable, I encourage them to contact us. We have made every effort to try to reach out to those most vulnerable, and we will continue to do so.

NURSES

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. This week is National Nursing Week, to celebrate all the amazing work and accomplishments of nurses across the country. I know that nurses do such remarkable work and I'm proudly part of a government that holds such high value for everything they do. I also know that this government is taking steps to ensure there are more nurses in places where they are needed across Ontario. Will the minister tell the House how the Ontario government is supporting the excellent work of nurses across this province?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thanks to the member from Northumberland-Quinte West for the question: a passionate advocate for his community and the health care in his community. I want to also take this opportunity to thank all the nurses across this province. Happy Nursing Week. That includes the very hard-working Minister of Community and Social Services, the only nurse in this Legislature, as I understand it.

Ontario's nurses are the backbone of our health care system. They are such a valuable piece of the patient experience. As a government, we understand the value of nurses, and that's why we've created 11,600 more nursing positions in this province since we took office. We have come a long, long way from the days when governments like the government opposite slashed nurses, cut and fired nurses and sent them south of the border. We have made incredible progress—

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

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Thank you, Minister. Not only does this government have great respect and appreciation for nurses, but we have significantly expanded the workforce to provide more and better care for people across the province. Specifically, this government has taken significant steps in terms of nurse practitioners. These highly skilled people have been given more responsibility under this government and are giving primary care to patients across the province. I would like the minister to tell me about how this government is expanding the scope of nurse practitioners.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm enormously proud of the nurse practitioners across this province and very

happy to report on the progress we have made. When we took office, there were fewer than 600 nurse practitioners; now we've got almost 1,900, so triple the number of nurse practitioners. We've established nurse-practitioner-led clinics across this province: 25 new nurse-practitioner-led clinics. Eight of them are up and running and the patients, I am very proud to report, are ecstatic about the care they are receiving. Once fully operational, 40,000 Ontarians who do not have access to primary care today will have access to the care of nurse practitioners.

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We've also expanded the scope of practice for nurse practitioners. We're moving towards giving them the authority to admit and discharge patients from hospitals and giving them open prescribing. We believe—

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

GASOLINE PRICES

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: To the Acting Premier: What did the Minister of Finance mean yesterday when he was talking about the HST being added to gasoline and said, "It might be that the price would have gone higher had that (HST) not happened"?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think the Minister of Energy has spoken eloquently to the issue of gas prices already today.

What we know is that there is a national conversation that has to happen. There's a press conference that has happened today, and we hope that Mr. Clement has made an announcement that will be helpful to people across the country.

This is obviously a volatile and difficult sector. It's something that we all have to be concerned about. But we also need to have the discussion at the level of government where it needs to happen, and that's at the national level.

We look forward to hearing from Mr. Clement and the federal government on what their plan is to work with all of the provinces to address this issue.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: This McGuinty Liberal government is so desperate and so out of gas that it will say and do anything to get re-elected. In fact, I actually think that they're so out of gas because they can't afford to fill the tank after the HST.

The finance minister says that his idea of relief for families from rising gas prices is by adding 8% more. Seriously, I cannot make that up. It's as absurd as saying that Samsung will only add \$1.60 to hydro bills, or that hydro bills have flatlined, or that smart meter tax machines will actually save you money.

There has to be a reason that this Liberal government is saying that the HST has lowered gas prices. Very simply, Ontario families want to know: Is it because they're getting us ready for a 1% or 2% hike of the HST?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I understand the political motivation behind the member opposite's comments. I understand that. What I don't understand is—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members from Halton, Oxford and Renfrew, your seatmate would like to hear the response.

Please continue.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: What I don't understand is what the position of that party is on this issue. Let me quote from the MPP for Simcoe. He says that "regulating gas prices hasn't worked and that oil companies have taken advantage in the past when governments have tried to alter the tax structure on gas to save consumers money."

So I say to the party opposite: They have among them members who understand that this is a complex issue. They have among them members who understand that this is something that has to be dealt with at the national level and that all provinces are struggling with this. To play politics with it does not help the substance of the issue.

We look forward to the federal government's pronouncements today on how they might take this issue forward.

PATIENT SAFETY

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Minister of Health. Yesterday, the province's medical regulatory college announced that there would be no discipline for the Windsor doctor who performed two unnecessary mastectomies on two women. Janice Laporte, whose breast was removed by Dr. Heartwell, was told a week after her surgery that she didn't have cancer at all. Laurie Johnston had a mastectomy performed by Dr. Heartwell and learned later that the results were misread.

Ms. Laporte said to a news outlet, "Laurie and I are victims, we will always be victims, and God only knows who else this is going to happen to ... I just think people have to make sure you look out for yourself because our government's not going to look after us obviously," Laporte said in tears."

What does the minister have to say to these women who feel so abandoned and betrayed by their own government?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Let me begin by saying that my heart goes out to Laurie Johnston and to Janice Laporte and their families. This obviously is a tragedy, and we are determined to improve the quality of care in our health care sector. In many ways, the improvements in quality have been inspired by the experiences of people who have not received high-quality care.

I cannot comment on the specifics of this case, and the CPSO, I'm sure, would be prepared to talk about it, but I can speak to the actions of this government since we became aware of the issues in Windsor.

When I became aware, I appointed an investigation team to go into the Windsor-area hospitals and look at this issue and what was going on. They have reported back to the ministry. We're implementing their recommendations—

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Patients in Ontario must have trust in their health care system, and right now, that trust has been betrayed. The Ministry of Health's own investigation pointed to systemic problems in our province's pathology system, but today Ontarians have no assurance that these problems have been fixed.

Ontarians need to know that what happened to women like Laurie Johnston and Janice Laporte will not happen again. When will this government be able to show Ontarians a clear plan—not a promise; a clear plan—for making sure that this is the case so that other women do not have to experience what these two women went through?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I can absolutely assure the member opposite that we are moving on every one of the recommendations by the investigators that were sent in to look at this exact problem. For the member opposite to suggest that we are not moving forward to improve quality in our hospitals is disingenuous at best.

What I can tell you is that we have appointed a supervisor at Hôtel-Dieu Grace Hospital. Ken Deane is on the job making the changes that were recommended.

More broadly across the sector, the Excellent Care for All Act that was passed unanimously by this Legislature has been hailed as perhaps one of the most important pieces of legislation since the introduction of universal health care. Hospitals are now publicly reporting on quality indicators and developing annual quality improvement plans, and the quality of health care in this province is getting better. We have more work to do, and this party is committed to continue—

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

ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, I'd like to ask you a question about bullying that occurs both internationally and nationally—cyberbullying. It's a very significant problem in all communities, and in particular in communities such as mine, where there is such access to computers. I want to know and understand what Ontario schools are doing to make the schools safe places for our students.

As you heard, today at Queen's Park the girls' government groups are here, and they're raising this issue of cyberbullying because the students are exposed to it in an increasing number of ways.

Minister, please share with us what we are doing to help these students and their parents.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I'm very happy to receive the question. I'm very happy to have the opportunity to respond when the girls' government are here to hear it as well, because I think it is important you are aware that bullying awareness is an important issue for our government.

One of the first things we did was to introduce legislation, the Safe Schools Act. In that act, we have made bullying an offence for which students can be suspended.

We've made it very clear that not just the parents of the students who might be suspended but also the parents of the students who would have been bullied must be notified. We've also provided resources, money, to school boards to train staff around the issues of bullying and how those issues should be dealt with in our schools. So I say to everyone in this assembly, particularly to our visitors today: It is an important issue we have been working on.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: As we often say in this Legislature, Ontario youth are our future, and we do have a responsibility to ensure their safety.

Never more than today has the Internet played such a significant role. Not only can they access different forums from around the world, but it impacts the lives of our students as well. It has the ability to enrich lives, but it also has the ability to be a potential threat. It's often used to target youth and can result in our youth being victims of cyberbullying or, in worse cases, of sexual predators.

Minister, can you please tell me what the McGuinty government is doing to ensure the safety of our students when they use the Internet?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I'm going to ask this to be referred to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Our government has invested more than \$3 million to date in the safer and vital communities grant program. This program focuses on the prevention of crimes against children, women and seniors, as well as hateful and racist crimes.

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An example would be in Renfrew: North Renfrew Family Services received a grant for a program on cyberspace safety. Among other things, this program educated parents about Internet luring, cyberbullying and how to protect their children.

Also, the OPP's Internet exploitation and threats training: OPP officers are educated in cyberbullying, specific investigative techniques and directions on how to deal with cyberbullying cases. Officers are also provided with resources such as presentations for youths, educators and parents.

ORGAN DONATION

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I'm very pleased today to be joined by the 12 grade 8 girls from Edna Staebler and St. Nicholas schools in Waterloo. They're here, as you've said, as part of the girls' government program.

These girls have identified organ donation as a priority that needs to be addressed. After reading—this is to the Minister of Education—about an organ recipient, they were quite shocked, after doing some surveys, about how little was known about organ donation. They feel it's critically important to raise the awareness.

What they are suggesting, I say to the Minister of Education, is that you would consider making revisions to the

curriculum that would include educating students, beginning in grades 6, 7 and 8. On behalf of them, I would pose that question to you.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: Again, I'm delighted that yet another question that is important for everyone in the assembly—but I'm particularly happy that the girls in government group are here to hear the response that I have.

In the province of Ontario, the honourable member would know that we do have a process in place around revising curriculum on a regular basis. This particular issue would probably, I would expect, fall in the health and physical education curriculum. I think that this is an important issue and something that most definitely would be, could be and should be considered as the review process unfolds next time, or even perhaps before. It is something that I can definitely bring to the attention of the folks in the ministry and bring to their attention that it would be part of the next review cycle.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Again, to the Minister of Education: I do appreciate the response.

As the girls took a look at the issue, they realized that it really was important that the younger generation become better informed about organ donation. They were quite shocked to learn, for example, that there were 1,500 people waiting on the list last year and that there are people dying every few days because there are so few organ donations made.

They also recommended that we need to take a look at exposing younger people to organ donation; making people feel comfortable. They're suggesting that, perhaps through the Trillium Gift of Life Network, they should somehow be expanding the publicity that would appeal to the younger generation and using advertising that would appeal to them. Would you support their recommendation?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: Again, a wonderful recommendation. What I can say to the honourable member is, I have listened very carefully to the question that was posed in the assembly today. The honourable member would be aware as well that we have a curriculum council. My intention would be to take the information that you have presented here today and present it to the curriculum council. I would ask them to take that into consideration as they deliberate important curriculum matters going forward.

I do thank you for the question, and I thank the young people who have come here today for the good work that they have done to bring an important issue to our attention.

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My question is to the Minister of Education as well.

Christina Buczek of Toronto is here in the gallery. She's here because her 14-year-old daughter Emily, who is autistic and functionally non-verbal, recently received a refusal-to-admit notice from her Toronto board of

education, which was unable to accommodate her attendance at a Toronto high school. Emily has been sitting at home, denied her basic right to an education, since April 7.

Will the minister take action to ensure that Emily and all mute or verbally limited children get the supports they need to participate fully in Ontario schools?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: This is a very important issue, certainly, for the family and for the student involved. These are matters, my experience has been, that are best handled and dealt with, first of all, at the school level, and failing that, I think it would be important for the parent to be in touch with people at the school board office. If there's still not satisfaction, then it would be important for the parent to have a conversation with the locally elected trustee.

There's no question that, in this province, our government has increased support to school boards to support students who have particular needs. So we know that the resources are there within schools.

Again, I would say to the honourable member, it would be very important for the parent to have those conversations with—

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

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I would just remind the minister that this mother has been in touch with the world for years. Christina has had a lifelong struggle trying to get her daughter the support she needs. Everyone knew since last May that she needed a trained assistant and money that should be coming from the special incidence portion.

First, Emily was discharged from an intensive behavioural intervention program, despite the fact that she was making progress. Now she has been sent home from her high school. Neither the Ministry of Children and Youth Services nor the Ministry of Education seem to be able to provide Emily with the curriculum and communication supports she needs.

What will the minister do to ensure that children and youth like Emily do not fall through the cracks and receive the supports they need to fully participate in Ontario schools?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: You've identified the mother as being here today, so I want the mother to know that our government takes very seriously the responsibility we have to provide boards with the support they need to support all children in our schools. I can tell you that we have increased funding—and I don't expect that the mother has come here to hear me say that today.

It would sound, from the question, like the honourable member has maybe even more detail that would be helpful to me. Perhaps after this session, I could meet outside with the honourable member and get the full picture of the situation, and I will do my very best to provide the direction that might be helpful.

MULTICULTURALISM

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Minister, multicultural-

ism is a pillar of our society. Since Canada adopted multiculturalism as an official policy, multiculturalism has shaped our society. It made us stronger.

Around the world, many countries would like to replicate our success in building a strong multicultural society. Many nations have looked to Canada and Ontario as an example of how to create an open, inclusive society, a society where our diversity is our strength and widely celebrated.

Minister, what has our government done to support multiculturalism in Ontario and make it the success it is?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: One of Ontario's greatest strengths is its diversity. We know from our province's history that our past and future success is dependent on our ability to bring people together, to celebrate each other's cultures, our traditions, our skills and our contributions. In this way, Ontario is unique. People from 200 countries around the world call our province home.

Rather than seeing multiculturalism as a challenge, the McGuinty government welcomes and celebrates diversity as an opportunity. We do so not only because it's the right thing to do, but because these new communities enrich our culture and make us more competitive in the global economy.

I've seen first-hand the horrors of conflict which arise when communities and governments discriminate against difference. That's why I'm proud to be part of the McGuinty government, a government that knows that diversity makes Ontario stronger, more vibrant and more prosperous.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: This week, controversial Dutch politician Geert Wilders spoke to audiences in Ontario. While in Ontario, he criticized multiculturalism as a "disaster" and called for an end to Muslims immigrating to Canada. Mr. Wilders has even compared Islam to communism and fascism.

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When I hear these hateful rants, I am extremely offended. Constituents in my riding of Scarborough—Rouge River are offended. Muslims across Ontario, and especially those in my riding, are disgusted with this individual's deplorable views.

Many distinguished Ontarians have spoken out against Mr. Wilders. The CEO of the Canadian Jewish Congress, Bernie Farber, recently said that Mr. Wilders knows how to offend in the grossest possible way.

Minister, will you speak out against—

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Let me be clear. Mr. Wilders's comments are not only disturbing but extremely offensive to Muslims and indeed to all Ontarians and to our core values of diversity, tolerance and inclusion. The McGuinty government absolutely opposes the politics of division and discrimination. Side by side with all Ontarians, we denounce all forms of discrimination, and we stand with all our communities against it. When it comes

to protecting our human rights together, our resolve will never waver.

The most effective way to fight hate and Mr. Wilders's divisive and disgusting statements is to renew our commitment to embracing, honouring and celebrating our diversity and our human rights, not only in words but in actions, and I'm confident that Ontario will continue to be a shining example of these cherished values.

HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, in June 2005, the terms of reference for the environmental assessment of the Highway 427 extension were submitted to the Ministry of the Environment. Later that same year, public consultation began for the proposed 6.6-kilometre extension. A full six years later, the Ministry of the Environment approved the EA for the extension of the 427 to Major Mackenzie Drive. Minister, can you tell me why, after six years, your government has now said that the 427 extension is not a priority?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As the member opposite knows, the EA on the 427 was completed this past November. I think that demonstrates that we understand the importance of this corridor. We are currently working on preliminary design and planning.

The reality is that there are hundreds of projects around the province that need the attention of the ministry, and we are working on those. They're in various stages of completion. What we also need is the funding to make sure that those projects go forward.

As I've said in this House before, we put \$2.8 billion into new roads and new bridges and repairing and expanding the highway network in this province. That is a substantial investment, far beyond what the party opposite did when they were in government. We will continue to make those investments, but the reality is—

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Minister, I was disappointed to read in the local paper that you said that the 427 extension is not a priority for your government. Commuters in my riding have been waiting since 2005 for Highway 427 to reach the southern end of Caledon. Businesses in my riding have been waiting six years to have an improved transportation corridor for the movement of their goods. The region of Peel's Goods Movement Task Force reported in 2010 that highway congestion in the GTA cost \$2.7 billion in lost opportunities for economic expansion.

Minister, can you please explain why a project that was started by your ministry in 2005 is no longer a priority?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Here is what is a priority for our government: A priority for our government is to make sure that we make the ongoing investments in infrastructure, including transportation in this province, so that we can repair and expand the highway network, the transit network, that's needed for the people in this province. Integrated transportation is a huge priority for us.

What's interesting is that this is a question from a party that has said that all tax cuts are on the table. When they go into their convention, presumably they're going to bring out some kind of plan. Everything is on the table in terms of what they might cut, and yet they have members standing up asking us, who have invested \$2.8 billion in highway infrastructure this year, why we aren't moving faster, why we aren't doing everything that they want, when they are on the brink of bringing out a plan that will cut infrastructure funding in this province.

ÉDUCATION EN FRANÇAIS

FRENCH-LANGUAGE EDUCATION

M. Michael Prue: Ma question est pour la ministre de l'Éducation. Le 20 avril dernier, j'ai demandé au premier ministre qu'est-ce que son gouvernement fera pour améliorer le manque de places dans les écoles publiques francophones à Toronto. His response was a string of polite words about great teachers and high-scoring EQAO test results.

Thousands of parents and children who have the constitutional right to French-language education have waited for seven long years for answers. Will the government make good on its commitment to assist the Conseil scolaire de district du Centre-Sud-Ouest in obtaining surplus schools in the city of Toronto so that its students will have schools to attend this September?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I'm happy to have the opportunity in this House to say to all of the members that our government has provided extraordinary resources for French-language boards across the province, particularly with respect to the public French-language board in the city of Toronto.

My office is very aware of the pressures they have around accommodation. We have been working with all French-language boards in the greater Toronto area to appreciate where there are surpluses and where there are needs and bring the parties together so that the appropriate accommodation can be provided for all students in the French-language system.

I also want to say that my colleague the minister responsible for francophone affairs, the Honourable Madeleine Meilleur, has been really outstanding in advocating, pressing for and actually making sure that we get together and we understand the complexities of the issues in French-language—

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

Mr. Michael Prue: We understand that school boards are supposed to co-operate, but we also know that when the co-operation has not been there, this minister and this ministry have a responsibility to step in to ensure French-language services.

The Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs is also concerned that the rights of French-language students in Toronto are at risk. In fact, after I spoke to the Premier, she commended me for raising this important issue in the Legislature. She knows that the commitments

were made; she knows that the conseil scolaire has been patient, but that the situation is now abysmal.

My question: When will the government stop stalling and commit to provide the school buildings which are badly needed by French-language students here in Toronto?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: First of all, I want to say that our government respects the locally elected school boards. We work with them to do everything we can to ensure that students have the appropriate accommodation. That is why—because we are absolutely committed to a quality French-language program in Ontario—our government has constructed 80 new schools for French-language students in the province of Ontario as well. I would say that that has been an unprecedented investment: 80 new schools, or upgrades to French-language schools.

Interjections.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I know there's disbelief on the other side because they ignored them, but this government—

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

TAXATION

Mr. Rick Johnson: My question is for the Minister of Revenue. There seems to be a lot of misinformation around the HST and how it applies to families who want to buy a new home. Many people in my riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock are unclear about how the HST affects the purchase of a home in Ontario. Of course buyers are confused about the application of the HST on homes; the parties opposite have been out there confusing the people of our province and stating things that are simply untrue.

Buying a new home is one of the most important investments a person will make in their lifetime. It's crucial that Ontario families know the facts when it comes to how the HST affects their real estate purchases. Can the minister set the record straight for the people of Ontario and for the parties opposite, who are clearly confused, and tell them how the HST applies to real estate in the province?

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: I want to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock for the outstanding work that he's been doing to get the message out about the HST, making sure that his constituents know the facts.

To the member and to the House: It is really important to get on the record that when it comes to buying a new home, it's very important to note that there is no HST on the resale of homes and there is no HST on any new home up to \$400,000.

VISITORS

Hon. Charles Sousa: I just want to take an opportunity to acknowledge two important individuals from the

area of Mississauga South who weren't acknowledged today: Howard Klein and Jeff McPhee, who are active volunteers, members of the Port Credit village community. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Mr. Kuldip Kular: I also want to acknowledge two individuals, Nirmal Gill and Gurinder Gill. They are visiting us from London, England. Mr. Nirmal Gill is the mayor of Barking in London, England.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Welcome to Queen's Park, Your Worship.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Nepean–Carleton has given notice of the dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Acting Premier concerning the HST. This matter will be debated next Tuesday at 6 p.m.

There being no further business, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1141 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Vic Dhillon: It's a pleasure to introduce Mr. Jasjit Samud Rai, who's visiting us from India. He's with the Indian forestry service. With him are members of my constituency Mr. Kuldip Singh, Darvara Singh, Harbhajan Singh, Gagandeep Singh, Avtar Singh, Parminder Grewal and Jasbir Pabla.

Mr. Frank Klees: I would like to introduce Ms. Irene Turrin, who is here with the fibromyalgia awareness group today. We want to welcome her along with many others who have come to Queen's Park today to advocate for the government to be aware of the importance of this disease.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

FIBROMYALGIA, CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME AND MULTIPLE CHEMICAL SENSITIVITIES AWARENESS DAY

Mr. Frank Klees: May 12 is the national awareness day for fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue and multiple chemical sensitivities. These illnesses are characterized by severe cognitive problems, non-restorative sleep, chronic, often disabling muscle pain, depression, poor stamina, and many other symptoms. Some 440,000 Ontarians alone have been diagnosed with fibromyalgia.

The women and men who come from all ages and backgrounds are left in a very weakened physical and emotional condition. It often gets to the point where they cannot even feed themselves. Many of their jobs are lost,

their family is distanced, and friends who cannot understand often simply walk away.

The government must work in tandem with the medical establishment to adequately research the causes and treatment of these conditions. There's still much to be done to change public awareness and dispel the invisible myths surrounding these illnesses. Those who suffer from fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue and multiple chemical sensitivities are real people with real illnesses who need real solutions.

Today, a number of people afflicted with the conditions of fibromyalgia join us in this chamber to send a clear public message that the time to move forward to fund proper research and develop workable solutions for our citizens has come and is, in fact, long overdue.

FIBROMYALGIA, CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME AND MULTIPLE CHEMICAL SENSITIVITIES AWARENESS DAY

Mr. Joe Dickson: This may be in part a duplication, but I had a young lady in my office this morning representing the same organization.

Today, May 12, is international awareness day for myalgic encephalomyelitis, chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia and multiple chemical sensitivities. These illnesses have many overlapping symptoms, including neurological and cognitive problems, muscle and joint pain, and overwhelming fatigue. These illnesses are all debilitating, multi-system physical illnesses that affect individuals of all ages, children included. According to the Canadian Community Health Survey, over a million Canadians have been diagnosed with one or more of these conditions, and 440,000 of these people live in Ontario.

There is much need for more research into the causes and treatment. No treatment research centres yet exist in Ontario.

Awareness events like the one held today on the front lawn at Queen's Park put a real face on these people who live with these life-changing illnesses. It takes courage every day to live knowing there is no cure, no ongoing funding for treatment and no research or education for our health care practitioners.

Please join me in applauding the efforts of the many dedicated volunteers from 30 grassroots support groups, provincial associations and organizations who all do their best to provide education, information and support, including the ME/FM national network, which will be hosting an international research conference in Ottawa this September.

CYSTIC FIBROSIS

Mr. Ted Arnott: May is Cystic Fibrosis Awareness Month. Cystic fibrosis is the most common fatal genetic disease that affects Canadian children and young adults.

The effects of cystic fibrosis are most devastating in the lungs, and most CF deaths are due to lung disease.

Despite progress, there is still no cure, and each week in Canada, two children are diagnosed with cystic fibrosis and one person dies from this horrible disease. Only half of all Canadians with cystic fibrosis are expected to live into their 40s and beyond.

Cystic Fibrosis Canada is a national health charity with over 50 volunteer chapters. The organization has set its sights on finding a cure and helping people and families affected by cystic fibrosis cope with their daily fight.

I'm pleased today to welcome here representatives from Cystic Fibrosis Canada: Maureen Adamson, chief executive officer; I'm told Paul Arsenault, past president, and Miles Nagamatsu, the treasurer, are here as well; Kerri Dawson and her son Louis Eberschlag, who is almost one year old and has CF; Trevor Roberts; Kelly Gorman; Aida Fernandes; and Dave Ronson, president-elect of Kin Canada.

Cystic Fibrosis Canada is a global leader in CF research. This research has far-reaching benefits to other diseases like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma and HIV/AIDS. The research and clinical care advances funded by Cystic Fibrosis Canada help to improve care and quality of life for people with CF. They also present new opportunities for chronic disease management and system cost containment.

During the month of May, CF Canada is organizing many events to raise awareness and funds to support vital CF research and care. To learn more about cystic fibrosis, visit drowningontheinside.ca.

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Mr. Michael Prue: I rise today to talk about my Bill 114, which was debated in this House on October 28 last year. The bill, in a nutshell, would make it illegal for an employer to take a portion or all of an employee's tips as a condition of their keeping employment. We have debated this, and I have asked questions of the minister on many occasions since then. I do know that letters and correspondence keep coming in to my office, and I'm sure that if I'm getting them, so is the minister and so are other members of this Legislature.

Quite recently—within the last few weeks—I got three letters. I'd better put my glasses on to read them. I'd like to read into the record what servers are saying.

One says, "I'm a bartender at a downtown restaurant/club and my employer deducts 2% of whatever I sell, which ranges my payout from anywhere between \$40 to \$200 a night to cover what I've been told is their debit/credit fees, two nights of night cleaning and glassware.... I'm tired of having my employer's operating expenses externalized on my tips, which account for over 60% of my income."

Another one I got: "Just recently heard that a bill was trying to be passed and just wondering if this is something to look forward to in the near future." This is a woman who loses \$150 to \$200 a week.

A third one writes, "This is extremely unfair and should not be allowed to continue. Why should a server, who gets \$2 below the minimum wage, be allowed to share their hard-earned tips?"

We're asking that when this is negotiated, please consider putting this forward. The servers of Ontario are looking for government help.

SRI SATHYA SAI BABA CENTRE OF SCARBOROUGH

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: This past weekend, I attended the inauguration ceremony of the new centre of the Sri Sathya Sai Baba community of Scarborough, in my riding. For 25 years, the Sri Sathya Sai Baba Scarborough organization has engaged thousands of people from different religions, nationalities, races and economic status in the spiritual advancement of humanity through the principle and practice of selfless love and service to the community. They strive to spread the human values of truth, right conduct, peace, love and non-violence to the community.

I commend the leaders of the Sri Sathya Sai Baba Centre of Scarborough for their vision and persistence, and congratulate the community, who worked extremely hard to help raise the funds required to build this landmark building, one of the largest outside of India.

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I'm proud to be affiliated with this organization, previously as a city councillor in their rezoning application and now as their MPP for the grand opening. I wish them continued success in their new home.

SLEDGE HOCKEY

Mr. Khalil Ramal: A few weeks ago, my hometown of London hosted the World Sledge Hockey Challenge. The championship was played at the Western Fair Sports Centre from April 19 to 23 and attracted fans and future players to the city of London.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate all the people involved in the organization of this event, including Todd Sergeant, who chaired the organizing committee. I would also like to take the opportunity to congratulate team Canada, which included quite a few outstanding players from throughout Ontario, for winning gold in this tournament.

Sledge hockey is a fast-paced, aggressive sport that was invented in 1960. Designed to allow people with physical disabilities to play hockey, it's now one of the most popular sports at the Paralympic Games.

Hosting the World Sledge Hockey Challenge not only raised the profile of the city of London, but also shows how much London cares about the sport and how much it cares about people with physical disabilities. It also helped the city of London to make most of their facilities, especially the Western Fair Sports Centre, accessible to all the people who are in wheelchairs and to make it accessible for all people to play sledge hockey in the city of London.

Again, I want to congratulate the city of London and also the organization for the great event in London.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. John O'Toole: I rise in the House today to support Clarington Wind Concerns. This group has taken a stand against this government's policy of imposing industrial wind development in Clarington and, indeed, across Ontario.

I'd like to congratulate the leadership of my community and my citizens, led very competently by Heather Rutherford, for her advocacy and their advocacy.

Citizens are asking for very simple things: safe setbacks to protect our environment and safeguards for human health. They want further research into potential health risks. No doubt these are among the issues covered in the Wind Concerns Ontario spring tour to connect with local citizens and to raise awareness.

Mr. Speaker, you would know that wind turbines are just another example of this government's failed energy experiment and lack of respect for elected local governments. The McGuinty government's expensive and unsustainable energy program and its sweetheart deal with Samsung are among the reasons why Ontario families are fed up and they can't afford to even turn on the lights in Ontario. Ontario's bills are forecast to rise by \$732 a year. It's simply unsustainable.

Renewable energy must be integrated into Ontario's energy supply mix in a reasonable way that makes sense, but the process must be competitive and transparent. I urge this House to respect Ontario citizens and to pull the plug on McGuinty's expensive energy experiments once and for all. You'll get your chance on October 6.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: It is about time for the federal government to transform the employment insurance system and end discrimination against Ontario workers.

In April 2009, this House unanimously passed my resolution, which put the federal government on notice that unemployed Ontarians deserve the same benefits they would get if they lived elsewhere in Canada. The current formula doesn't address the needs of Ontario's labour force. If Ontario workers received what is given to workers in other provinces, they would receive an extra \$4,000 per year. This support would help parents who have lost their jobs pay the mortgage, buy groceries, buy gas and get the training they need to get back into the workforce.

I call on the newly elected federal government to end this inequality against Ontario workers and the labour force of Mississauga-Brampton South and to do what is right and fair.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: We all know the key to a strong economy is good jobs and a healthy population.

That's why we've made really vital investments to build a stronger and a cleaner economy. These investments are bringing our energy systems into the 21st century. They create tens of thousands of jobs and they're making the air cleaner and easier to breathe.

I think we're all dismayed to hear the Leader of the Opposition vow to eliminate these jobs and stop Samsung from investing \$7 billion in our province. He said he'll cancel the contract that has already created 1,800 jobs. He's going to scare away future investment, and he's threatening to board up manufacturing plants right across this province. On top of that, he wants to return to dirty coal.

I'm particularly concerned locally about Satcon Power Systems. They recently expanded their workforce to 158 people, creating 40 new jobs for Burlington families. These jobs could disappear, along with the jobs created by more than 30 other companies that have announced plans to participate in Ontario's clean economy, all thanks to the Leader of the Opposition's reckless plan that could kill an entire industry.

In contrast, under our government, Ontario is moving forward. We're creating tens of thousands of jobs and we're emerging as a world leader in a fast-growing new industry.

VISITORS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Before we proceed, I ask the indulgence of the House, and I ask order too.

I want to welcome, on a personal note, the folks from Cystic Fibrosis, and particularly the president-elect of Kinsmen. Being a life member of Kinsmen, I was the governor of District 1 of Kinsmen back in the early 1970s. It was the first time that we raised over \$100,000 in one year for cystic fibrosis, and I understand it has just gone up and up since then. Good for the association and good for Kinsmen.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ONTARIO SOCIETY
FOR THE PREVENTION
OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS
AMENDMENT ACT (ANIMAL
PROTECTION COMPLAINTS
COMMISSIONER), 2011

LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LA SOCIÉTÉ DE PROTECTION
DES ANIMAUX DE L'ONTARIO
(COMMISSAIRE AUX PLAINTES
RELATIVES À LA PROTECTION
DES ANIMAUX)

Mr. Berardinetti moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 194, An Act to amend the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act to establish and provide for the office of the Animal Protection

Complaints Commissioner / Projet de loi 194, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société de protection des animaux de l'Ontario en vue de créer la charge de commissaire aux plaintes relatives à la protection des animaux.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Does the member wish to make a short statement?

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Just a very short statement.

This bill amends the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act to establish the position of the Animal Protection Complaints Commissioner.

The commissioner is an officer of the Legislative Assembly. The commissioner's functions are to investigate any decisions made by, or any act or omission of, the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, as well as to educate the public about the obligations and prohibitions under the act regarding the care of and harm to animals. The commissioner is required to report annually on the affairs of the office to the Speaker of the assembly.

PETITIONS

WIND TURBINES

Mr. John O'Toole: It's always nice to be first once in a while. However, I have a number of petitions from my riding of Durham which are very important, and I'm going to read one of them now.

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"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas industrial wind turbine developments have raised concerns among citizens over health, safety and property values;

"Whereas the Green Energy Act allows wind turbine developments to bypass meaningful public input and municipal approvals;

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

"That the Minister of the Environment revise the Green Energy Act to allow full public input and municipal approvals on all industrial wind farm developments and that a moratorium on wind development be declared until an independent, epidemiological study is completed into the health and environmental impacts of industrial wind turbines."

I'm pleased to sign it and support it and present it to Hamza, one of the new pages.

DOG OWNERSHIP

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

"Whereas aggressive dogs are found among all breeds and mixed breeds; and

“Breed-specific legislation has been shown to be an expensive and ineffective approach to dog bite prevention; and

“Problem dog owners are best dealt with through education, training and legislation encouraging responsible behaviour;

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

“To repeal the breed-specific sections of the Dog Owners’ Liability Act (2005) and to implement legislation that encourages responsible ownership of all dog breeds and types.”

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

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: This is a petition calling on the Ministry of Transportation to install traffic lights at the intersection of Highway 12 and Fairgrounds Road in Orillia.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the intersection of Highway 12 at Fairgrounds Road in Orillia is a main traffic link for Notre Dame Catholic School, for the Odas Park fairgrounds and a number of local businesses; and

“Whereas we are concerned about the increased congestion and safety of the travelling public and the transportation of children to Notre Dame Catholic School;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to have the Ministry of Transportation install traffic lights at the intersection of Highway 12 and Fairgrounds Road, Orillia.”

I’m happy to support this and will pass it to Erica to give to the table.

TAXATION

Mr. John O’Toole: I’m very pleased to present another group of petitions from my riding of Durham.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I’m pleased to sign it, support it and present it to one of the pages, Hamza.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and I see that it’s been signed by residents of Guelph, Wellington county and of Waterloo region. The petition reads:

“Whereas agriculture plays an important role in Ontario’s economy, and strong, prosperous farms mean a strong, prosperous Ontario; and

“Whereas the establishment of a risk management program was the single most important action the provincial government could have done to help ensure the economic success of Ontario’s non-supply-managed commodities; and

“Whereas agriculture is a federal and provincial responsibility, and yet the federal government has refused to act and come to the table with their support;

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

“We applaud the Ontario government’s support of risk management programs and encourage the federal government to partner with the province and its farmers to support the risk management programs put in place by the province to bring much-needed stability, predictability and bankability to Ontario’s agricultural sector.”

I totally agree with this and I will add my signature as soon as I find my pen.

SOLAR ENERGY PROJECTS

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: A solar farm petition:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty’s Liberal government is forcing Ontario municipalities to build solar-powered generation facilities without any local say or local approval; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government transferred decision-making power from elected municipal governments to unelected and unaccountable bureaucrats, who are accountable to no one; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government has removed any kind of appeal process for municipalities or for people living in close proximity to these projects; and

“Whereas Tim Hudak, Garfield Dunlop and the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party have committed to restoring local decision-making powers and to building renewable energy projects only in places where they are welcome, wanted and at prices Ontarians can afford;

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

“That the McGuinty government restore local decision-making powers for renewable energy projects and immediately stop forcing new solar developments on

municipalities that have not approved and whose citizens do not want them in their community.”

I'm pleased to sign that and give it to Kyla to present to the table.

ONTARIO SOCIETY
FOR THE PREVENTION
OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr. John O'Toole: I must be a popular person; they're sending all these petitions to me. This is a group here that I've received from my riding of Durham, which reads as follows:

“Petition to the Parliament of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) recently and unilaterally announced that it would euthanize all animals in its care at its Newmarket shelter, citing a ringworm outbreak as justification”—this is a bit dated;

“Whereas the euthanasia plan was stopped in the face of repeated calls for a stay in the Legislature and by the public, but not until 99 animals had been killed;

“Whereas the Premier and Community Safety Minister Rick Bartolucci refused to act, claiming the provincial government has no jurisdiction over the OSPCA” at that time;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to immediately implement the resolution tabled at Queen's Park by Newmarket–Aurora MPP Frank Klees”—who is here today—“on June 1, 2010, which reads as follows:

“That, in the opinion of this House, the Ontario Legislature call on the government of Ontario to review the powers and authority granted to the OSPCA under the OSPCA Act and to make” all “necessary legislative changes to bring those powers under the authority of the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services to ensure that there is a clearly defined and effective provincial oversight of all animal shelter services in the province, and to separate the inspection and enforcement powers of the OSPCA from its functions as a charity providing animal shelter services.”

I'm pleased to sign it and present it to the page here at Queen's Park.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS**

IMITATION FIREARMS REGULATION
AMENDMENT ACT, 2011
LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LA RÉGLEMENTATION
DES FAUSSES ARMES À FEU

Mr. Dickson moved second reading of the following bill:
Bill 189, An Act to amend the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act, 2000 with respect to the sale of imitation

firearms / *Projet de loi 189, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur la réglementation des fausses armes à feu relativement à la vente de fausses armes à feu.*

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

Mr. Joe Dickson: I rise in the House today to address a growing problem—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Joe, you need another book.

Mr. Joe Dickson: I'm trying to hide, honourable member Yakabuski, behind here.

I rise in the House today to address a growing problem facing our communities, public school students, their parents and families, and our law enforcement officers in Ontario. There are a growing number of converted starter pistols and replica firearms making their way into neighbourhoods and on streets across the province of Ontario. Recent media coverage of robberies and assaults involving imitation firearms has elevated the concerns in my riding of Ajax–Pickering. I'm here to address those concerns with my private member's bill, An Act to amend the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act, 2000.

Let me first share a news story with the Legislature, which took place in my riding. In October of last year, Durham police were called to Notre Dame, which, when you combine with the public board's J. Clarke Richardson, is one large secondary school with an enrolment of almost 4,000 students—a mistake that happened with the previous government.

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We had an incident following reports that a 15-year-old student was seen with a handgun concealed in his waistband. He was in class at the time, and the portable was surrounded. Other portables in the vicinity were evacuated, and the school was placed in lockdown. Tactical officers called the boy out of the portable where a class was in session, and he was arrested. A search revealed a loaded Glock-style pellet gun inside the student's gym bag.

This student was arrested without incident or injury, according to the police and the media. However, as you can imagine, the situation could have been tragically different had the young man brandished the gun in front of the responding officers. Whether a gun is real or fake, a police officer only has a split second to react when a gun is pointed at them. I never want to lose a child or a police officer.

Fast forward to the present. In March 2011, Durham Regional Police Service announced that they had seized four starter pistols that were reportedly used in the commission of a crime, or at least possessed for that purpose. All four looked like real handguns, and one of the pistols had been modified in order to fire real bullets.

That last piece of information is the most concerning. These starter pistols, which you can purchase at a number of shops in and around the GTA with little more than one piece of government identification, can potentially be converted into genuine ammunition-discharging firearms, and they are already on our streets.

The Durham police media advisory hit the local Metroland Media paper, and that's when I contacted Durham police chief Mike Ewles, who's very aggressive in the community. We discussed how we could work together to tighten the laws and regulation on replica handguns and starter pistols in the province of Ontario. In his media release, the chief emphasized it by saying, "It's becoming very clear...that criminals have turned to these devices to threaten and intimidate victims and, in some cases, may have successfully adapted them to become real guns."

I agree with Chief Mike Ewles. This needs to be addressed and is a very real concern, and the problem reaches far past Ajax-Pickering and Durham region. A recent CTV news report quoted an RCMP firearms expert as saying that the conversion of starter pistols is so easy that even a layman can do it. The same news report talked about an incident out west in Vancouver, where three converted firearms were seized over the past few months.

Here's an especially daunting quote from that article: "In New Westminster, BC, the combined forces unit raided a military surplus store and seized 1,000 rounds of ammunition and 100 guns.

"Police allege that the owner sold three starter guns to undercover police officers and then told them how to convert the guns. Officers say the owner didn't ask for a firearms license" at the time of purchase.

You may be wondering: Are starter pistols and replica handguns federally regulated? The answer is no. Do starter pistols and replica handguns have serial numbers like real guns do? The answer is no. Definitely no. I can tell you, it's a real concern.

We have current Ontario legislation passed by the previous government, which attempted to address the problem in the year 2000. This legislation, the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act, 2000, defines the terms "replica" and "firearm" and "starter pistol," and imposes moderate fines for those who sell a replica or starter pistol. Still, all you need to purchase one of these potentially-convertible firearms is a driver's licence. They are sold at some sporting goods stores, hunting shops, army surplus stores and virtually anywhere in Ontario.

Currently, a retailer can get a fine of \$15,000 under the legislation if they sell an imitation firearm without the purchaser's proof of legal age, which is 18. That is essentially all that the legislation does to make sure starter pistols and replicas don't end up in the wrong hands.

I'm proposing two additional requirements upon purchase. The first additional requirement proposes that the individual, the purchaser of the starter pistol or replica, will be required to provide a written statement that describes what his or her intentions regarding the use of the imitation firearms are. It also includes a declaration that he or she will not use the imitation firearms for unlawful purposes. This is not simply stating, "I promise to behave." Rather, it is a way to track the purchase of an imitation firearm and holds an individual responsible and accountable for it. This means that the gun simply can't

disappear into the wilderness once it has left the store. The store owner is required to keep a record of these statements.

Number two: The second additional requirement proposes that the purchaser must have obtained a criminal background check which reveals a clean record. This one is logical. It should have been in the original legislation, and I'm surprised that it is not.

A few months before the previous government passed this legislation in 2000, our former member and past Attorney General Michael Bryant came forward with a private member's bill with the same goal: to regulate the sale of imitation firearms in the province of Ontario. I thank him for his assistance in this process that I've gone through. It was called the Replica Firearms Regulation and Protection Act, 2000. I believe that Bryant's bill actually had more teeth than the bill that was passed by the previous government of the day, so I've taken the important parts of the bill and I'm proposing to fit them into the existing legislation. The requirement of these two additional pieces of information at the time of purchase will help track purchases and ensure that convicted criminals can't buy an imitation firearm to use as they please or see fit.

Imitation firearms still pose a risk even if they are not converted into a real gun. They are used to intimidate and rob victims, and as I have covered already, they are much easier to obtain than real handguns. Imitation firearms appeal to criminals and young offenders because of their propensity to intimidate the victims. A study from the federal Department of Justice acknowledges that sometimes firearms that are used to intimidate a victim may not be real firearms. The same report also referenced a 1994 study that found that, in the few cases of armed robbery where they were able to obtain information on the type of firearm, 43% involved handguns, and 36% involved imitation firearms or air guns. Imitation firearms are highly prevalent in recorded cases of armed robbery, and our law enforcement agencies are reporting more and more cases.

Our current provincial government continues to help reduce crime in Ontario. I should note that overall in Ontario, this has fallen 17% since our government took office in 2003, and we've seen an 11% reduction in violent crimes as reported by the office of the Attorney General. Our current Attorney General, the Honourable Chris Bentley, and our government have been proactive in battling guns and gangs with the provincial anti-violence intervention strategy, or PAVIS. Since 2007, these initiatives have led to more than 1,100 arrests, 2,000 criminal charges and the removal of 200 illegal firearms off our streets. Our Durham Regional Police Service is one of 17 services that receive this funding. This past January, our government announced an additional commitment of \$15 million towards the PAVIS program over the next two years. That is a 41% increase above the original \$16 million provided through this program since 2007. The program has seen positive results and continues to see results.

My proposed amendments, if passed, would help prevent some of the starter pistols and replicas from reaching the street level. The proposed amendment is to increase the fines for sellers contravening this act: \$25,000 for a first offence and \$50,000 for a second offence, rather than the current \$15,000 fine. Most retailers will comply with the law.

The incident in my riding of Ajax–Pickering in October was followed by more recent reports from other areas of the province such as St. Catharines, York region, Sudbury and Barrie. I know some of our members in the House may wish to speak to that today in their particular area, in their ridings.

In conclusion, I am proposing stronger regulation of imitation firearms, replica firearms and starter pistols in the province of Ontario. I'm proposing amendments that increase accountability for purchasers of imitation firearms and ensure that convicted criminals cannot purchase them. I'm proposing increased fines for sellers who do not co-operate with the legislation.

I look forward to continuing to work with all members of Durham police services; their police chief, Mike Ewles; and other community leaders throughout our Ontario government as we tackle the problem of replica and converted starter pistols.

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I ask for your support, ladies and gentlemen. We've seen photographs in the newspaper. I'm just deathly concerned that we could lose a child or lose a police officer when something dramatic happens in a split second. I hope this new legislation goes a long way to covering that off, and I thank you for your time here today.

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm pleased to rise today to speak to private member's Bill 189, An Act to amend the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act, 2000 with respect to the sale of imitation firearms. In the explanatory note, "The bill amends the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act, 2000 with respect to the sale of imitation firearms.

"Currently, the act prohibits the sale of an imitation firearm unless the purchaser is at least 18 years old and presents specified identification. The amendments impose additional conditions on the sale of an imitation firearm. These conditions include that the purchaser must provide a description of his or her intentions regarding the use of the imitation firearm and that the purchaser must not have been convicted of a criminal offence.

"The amendments impose a requirement on a person who sells an imitation firearm to keep a record of the sale for five years.

"The amendments increase the maximum fine to which a person who contravenes the prohibition regarding the sale of imitation firearms may be liable."

We've got some concerns with this bill. As the member mentioned, it was our party, the former government, that passed the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act, 2000. He mentioned that the former Attorney General, when he was a member of the opposition, had a private member's

bill himself back before they became the government. I'm curious as to why, if the former Attorney General was so supportive of regulatory changes and amendments to the bill, he didn't do it himself? He's been out of the House now for, I guess, the last three years, but he had five years here, a lot of those as Attorney General and justice critic. He brought in pit bull legislation etc., but why would they not have made an amendment if it was so important to the Attorney General when he was in opposition? That's something I'd like to understand.

We've got, what, two or three weeks left here? We're at the end of the session and we're bringing in a bill, and I'm not sure if we've got the support of the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. We tried to contact their office, and we didn't get a response. As a result of that, we haven't seen any reason for the ministry to actually support these amendments.

I did contact—I've introduced a number of private member's bills, and any time I deal with anything with community safety, I always try to deal with the stakeholders. In this case, when Bill 189 came up, we immediately contacted the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police to see if they had a briefing paper on it, because normally a member would contact the policing stakeholders to find out if that had actually occurred. In this case, it's our understanding that probably the Durham police chief was contacted, but other than that, none of the other policing stakeholders.

What I want to do today is just read into the record the position paper on replica firearms prepared by the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police youth committee. It's not very long—it's a couple of pages—and I'm sure I've got enough time to do it.

The overview: "The Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police's (OACP) youth committee was asked by the association's board of directors to examine the significant threat to community safety posed by replica firearms. Our examination of the issue has led us to conclude that replica firearms contribute to the fear of crime and gun violence in our communities, are often used to commit other violent acts, increase the anxiety level of our front-line officers, and contribute to the glamorized Hollywood image of gang culture.

"In many communities around the province, there is a rise in imitation firearms offences which exceeds offences involving real firearms. Replica firearms can be used with a high degree of confidence in the commission of other offences because of the high quality of production. In today's world of consumerism, more and more people feel that they must have the latest and greatest devices available. That consumer culture is not lost on replica firearms. Many of our young people feel that they cannot be seen as being weak to others for fear of being exploited. A replica firearm can offer the illusion of power associated with possession of a real firearm. Ontario's communities are asking for greater control over this emerging trend.

"Legislative considerations: The issue being considered in this paper is the applicability of current legis-

lation on this topic and the suitability of local bylaws to address the concerns.

“Currently in Ontario, there are three layers of legislation addressing replica and imitation firearms. At the federal level, the Criminal Code of Canada outlines laws and related offences for violations of the laws. Provincially, the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act addresses the topic and some local municipalities have enacted bylaws for replica and imitation firearms.

“The Criminal Code sets out separate and distinct definitions for replica and imitation firearms. A replica firearm is defined as, ‘any device that is designed or intended to exactly resemble, or to resemble with near precision, a firearm ... ‘ An imitation firearm ‘means anything that imitates a firearm, and includes a replica firearm.’ Replica firearms are prohibited devices and as such possession of these devices constitutes a criminal offence. Imitation firearms, on the other hand, must be used in connection with another criminal offence before criminal prosecution is made possible. In addition, the Criminal Code sets out offences relating to firearms, including air pistols, and has regulations speaking to each.

“At the enforcement level, the criminal possession of a replica firearm, a prohibited weapon, is challenged by the restrictive definition contained in the Criminal Code. To exactly resemble or to resemble with near precision is a very fine line and it is left to the judicial system to determine on a case-by-case basis whether the specific device exactly resembles a firearm. It is often very difficult to discern the difference between a real firearm and a replica firearm for officers proficient in firearms. It is even more difficult for officers who are not firearms experts and to members of the general public. Once the weapon is in the possession of a police officer the officer must then make a determination regarding the extent to which it exactly resembles a real firearm before deciding to prosecute. This is an extremely difficult decision. The judiciary relies on case law, legal arguments, and legal opinion to make those decisions.

“Moreover, when officers are faced with one of these weapons [they] must make a split-second decision on what type of weapon is confronting them and react accordingly. When an imitation firearm is pointed at any person it must be treated as real. Officers receive training on the use-of-force options available when presented with potentially lethal force. In addition to communication, lethal force is an option available to police officers based on a number of impact factors. The implications of this decision have significant and long-lasting effects.

“Calls for less restrictive definitions prohibiting the possession of imitation firearms have been heard through our communities. When imitation firearms or replica firearms are used in conjunction with other offences, such as robbery, the enforcement options are less convoluted. Unless the device falls within the restrictive definition of a replica firearm, possession of the device does not constitute an offence. Potentially, a person could openly carry an imitation firearm, one that while looking similar to an actual firearm does not exactly resemble a real

firearm, and walk through the streets of our communities without committing an offence.

“The Imitation Firearms Regulation Act of Ontario defines an imitation firearm as ‘any object ... [that] could reasonably be mistaken for a firearm but is not a firearm or a replica firearm as defined in section 84 of the Criminal Code (Canada)...’ The legislation creates an offence to sell or transfer an imitation firearm in the course of business to a person under 18 years of age. It does little to address the concerns associated with the possession of these weapons. While restricting the sale of imitations to persons over 18 years of age it still provides a method for these devices to be legally sold in the province. Not all imitation firearm misuse is contained within the youth population.

“Perhaps the more relevant question to answer is, ‘What is the legitimate use of imitation firearms in our communities?’ For many in our communities, the answer is that these devices have no legitimate purpose in public places and, as such, bylaws have been enacted to restrict sales and possession of replica and imitation firearms for persons under the age of 18 years of age.

“The creation of a lower form of regulation governing the peaceful possession of replica and imitation firearms does, while well intentioned, present another series of enforcement challenges. These devices present a very serious decision-making challenge for police officers, even those with expertise in firearms. These types of incidents call on the full range of use-of-force training options available to our police officers. Presumably, a bylaw could be enforced by local bylaw officers who have not been privy to the same range of training as a police officer.

“Our police officers” often “report having difficulty in distinguishing the imitations from the real firearms and the bylaw officers would have the same difficulty. The difference is that if the device turns out to be a real firearm, the police officer is trained and equipped to respond appropriately. A bylaw officer should not be placed in the position of making those life-or-death decisions or be placed in a position where they may be confronted with a real firearm. Other challenges are posed in relation to the limitations at the lower level to arrest, detain and search individuals and individuals in vehicles or residences who may be in violation of the law.

In conclusion: “The heart of the issue being addressed in this paper is the applicability of current legislation regarding imitation and replica firearms. The OACP acknowledges that these devices present a very real threat to the safety and the perception of safety of our community members and police officers. They, in part, contribute to some of the anti-social behaviour displayed by some of our young people when trying to emulate and participate in gang culture. These devices are often used in the commission of very serious criminal offences that have significant negative impacts on our victims of crime. At the same time, these devices and devices such as pellet guns and air pistols have been in our society for many years, and when used responsibly have not created

the level of fear currently being experienced. It is the improper use of these devices and the restrictive enforcement options available that has fuelled the drive for local legislation to fill the gaps.

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“The OACP believes that it is inappropriate for these types of serious incidents to be addressed through lower level forms of legislation.

“The OACP believes that the improper use of imitation firearms in connection with other criminal offences is currently addressed within the Criminal Code.

“The OACP believes that there is room to reform the restrictive definition of replica firearms contained within the code to allow for reasonable enforcement options for front-line officers when dealing with the possession of these devices in our communities.

“The OACP believes that gun culture is a complex problem and there is no simple solution. Education, awareness and prevention campaigns addressing the mindset behind the desire to possess real-looking imitation firearms must be addressed by all of our community partners. The committee also recognizes that our municipal partners have attempted to answer the desires of their communities by creating legislation to help turn the tide of this growing trend.

“It is the position of the OACP that this issue is serious and complex and is best addressed through legislative reform in our criminal justice system.”

In summary, I just want to say that it would have been nice if the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police could have been notified of this bill. I think there are some opportunities for improvements to it. I think that all of our policing stakeholders should be of the understanding.

I am disappointed with something like this that the former Attorney General said was a good bill as a private member's bill when he was a backbencher, but when he got into government it takes eight years and nothing has happened, and here we have a private member's bill basically at the end of the session.

I thank you for this opportunity and look forward to other comments on the bill.

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

Mr. Michael Prue: I've listened intently to the debate, and I must admit some level of confusion when I read the bill because, although it is very laudable what the member is attempting to do—it's very laudable to give the police extra tools, and it's very laudable to try to cut down on crime or people using imitation firearms in the commission or possible commission of a crime—we wonder how effective this bill is going to be.

I need to preface my remarks by the fact that I'm more than happy and willing to allow the bill to go to second reading, if in fact that's where the Legislature decides to send it, but we have some very major questions on the effectiveness of what is being proposed.

If I could go through some of that, the first is that the bill requires a written statement that outlines what the purchaser intends to use the imitation firearm for and

attests that it will not be used for illegal purposes. I'm sure everybody's going to sign such a form. I'm absolutely positive that everyone is going to say it's not going to be for illegal purposes; in fact, it probably won't be for that at all. The majority of them are more than likely going to be used for what they were intended for, as starters' pistols for races, regattas and the like, so that people will know when they can start the race. In any event, people are going to have to file that written statement.

The second thing is, it will require the purchaser to pass a criminal background check. Again I'm wondering, if a person is going to use the starter's pistol for a legitimate purpose and perhaps has a criminal record, does that preclude them from being a coach or a person who is at the line at the start of a race or some regatta in which a loud noise needs to be made? Are those people therefore prohibited from participating in sporting and other like activities in the province of Ontario?

You have a third one, that sellers are required to keep records of the sale for five years. I really don't have much of a problem with that.

The fourth one is that it increases the maximum fines from \$15,000 to \$25,000 for the first offence and \$50,000 for subsequent fines.

Perhaps in the time remaining to him, which is, I know, a minimum of two minutes, but it could be longer if some of his colleagues decide to give up some of their time for speaking on this, he could answer some of our questions to assuage some of the concerns we have in advance.

Although I have indicated we are likely to vote for the bill in any event, we need to know a couple of things. There are published studies that show that crimes involving imitation firearms have significantly increased in a number of jurisdictions. We are unaware whether those jurisdictions include Ontario. Perhaps the mover can tell us whether there is any kind of statistical information that indicates that this is, in fact, an occurrence that is happening in the province of Ontario.

We want to know as well what percentage of crimes involve legally purchased imitation firearms. As we know, the United States, that great country to the south of us, is a sieve for many types of firearms, legal and illegal, crossing over it. Imitation firearms of all types, I'm sure, probably do not originate in this country or in this province; the majority would come from there. Therefore, we need to know, if these are to be registered, how they are registered and the keeping of records; how many are actually legal starter's pistols being used in the commission of a crime that have been purchased for a purpose which is legitimate and lawful and known to the public; how many of them are being smuggled across the border; and what, if any, effect would this bill and its provisions have in stopping that trade and stopping that use?

The third question we have: Are there figures to distinguish crimes carried out with legally obtained replicas versus crimes that involve imitation guns that have been

stolen or obtained by other illegal means? We need to know and the Legislature needs to know—perhaps the police can give this information to us—the ratio of legally obtained replicas being used in the commission of a crime and those that have been stolen or obtained by other illegal means.

We also have some questions about what purpose the declaration declares. In our view, when a person goes in and buys a starter's pistol, they're going to state that it is being bought as a starter's pistol. Nobody who intends to use it for a crime is going to say they are going to use it for the commission of a crime. We already know that. We need to know the purpose of the statement, other than, I guess, that it could be used in a court of law to say that you lied when you bought this starter's or replica pistol, because you said you were going to use it to start a race and in fact you were going to use it to hold up a bank. Other than that, I don't think anyone who has an ulterior motive is going to go in to buy a replica pistol and say they're going to use it in the commission of a crime. If anybody thinks that is going to happen, please indicate that during your speech, because we want to hear that this is somehow going to happen. We wonder what possible purpose the signing and keeping of these declarations is going to serve.

We also think that the declaration may possibly help to increase the punishment for violators but have little weight as a preventive tool. As I said, I can see that the judge, leaning heavily over the bench, will look at a perpetrator and say, "You lied at the time you bought this. You said you were going to start a race, and in fact you were going to rob a bank. Therefore, I'm going to give you a higher fine." But I think the fine would be serious in and of itself, no matter how it was obtained. Perhaps the member, or someone else who is speaking to this, can tell us what this declaration is going to do.

We also have the whole issue of increased fines. We need to know, in terms of this bill, how many times fines have been levied under the current act, because this is simply increasing those fines. I don't know; I'm singularly not aware of any. There could be some fines that have been levied against people using imitation firearms for purposes other than starting a race, but we don't know how many times this has been levied under the current act. Has the highest possible fine, which is \$10,000 at the current time, ever itself been levied? Therefore, to what purpose is the increase in fines? I think that's a legitimate question that has to be asked. Has there been a willingness to use the measures on behalf of the judiciary if anybody has in fact been found guilty in Ontario of the extant law? We have all of these questions.

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We're all in favour, and we are totally in favour, of any measure that will assist the police in maintaining law and order in Ontario. We fully understand that there are people in this province who are bound and determined to break the laws, and if one of the ways of breaking the laws is to walk around with a starter pistol, if one of the ways is to walk around with an imitation firearm, if one

of the ways is to intimidate, saying that they have a weapon when in fact they don't, we need to stamp that out.

The question comes down to, in wanting to give these additional powers to the police, the judiciary and everyone else, what is the purpose of the law? How is the law going to act? Why are declarations necessary at the time of purchase? How many imitation guns are being used illegally in the province of Ontario at this time? What is the success rate of police apprehending those that have been obtained illegally versus those that were obtained legally and are now being used for ulterior purposes? And a whole bunch of other questions.

I welcome the member's contribution. I welcome that if this passes, it will go to second reading, but I will tell you that it will be difficult to answer the questions that I have asked, never mind the perhaps hundreds of others that will be asked at the time that this is debated. I ask the member to think honestly and clearly and quickly in terms of how these are going to be answered, because the public has a right to know why the bill is being proposed and what is going to happen to it.

Again, I thank the member for his contribution to the debate. We will support it at second reading, but there are so many questions at this point that we need answers to. We hope that they are forthcoming.

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

Mr. Monte Kwinter: I'm delighted to stand in support of this bill. As a former Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, I can bring some light to the discussion. You should know that particularly in 2005, which in Toronto was dubbed the summer of the gun, there was a spike in the number of gun-related homicides, notwithstanding that on a comparative basis across the country and across North America, it was still very, very low. But for Toronto in particular, it was higher than in the past.

Now, that resulted in some very tragic situations. An organization called UMOVE, United Mothers Opposing Violence Everywhere, headed up by Audette Shephard, came to see me with other members of this group, and they all had pictures of their young sons who had been shot and killed in gun-related gunfights. Unfortunately, a lot of that was as a result of a gang culture where having a gun gives you stature. It doesn't really make any difference whether it's a replica which is almost an exact copy of a real gun or an imitation gun or a starter gun, the mere fact that they are carrying a gun allows for someone else to retaliate with a real gun, and then it's a problem. I support anything that will make it more difficult and at least try to act as a deterrent.

I'm sure some of you may know, but you might not know, that we had a situation in Toronto where a mother was making her 13-year-old son's bed and found a real—not a replica—AK-47 in his bed, and he's 13 years of age.

I've gone into schools, depending on where they are, and when I talked to students in my role as Minister of

Community Safety, I'd go into some schools in very affluent neighbourhoods, and they had a whole line of questions that their teachers had prepared for them, talking about things that had nothing to do with guns. And then I'd go into another area that had a particularly high crime rate and a particularly high gun-related crime rate, and all the kids wanted to talk about was guns and tell me the stories about how they hear guns being fired, and it's just a matter of course in that particular neighbourhood.

I think it's critical that we take a look, and we're asking what the police say about the number of guns. I can tell you that at the present time, the number of illegal guns that they have identified is about 75% that have been imported from the United States, and 25% of the guns come from thefts from gun collectors. I don't have the exact figures, but I would assume that the proportion would be very much the same with replica guns, which, as I say, are virtual, direct copies of a real gun. Even the police have difficulty in ascertaining whether they are real guns or replicas. The imitation guns and the starter guns are a different breed, and they are handled differently by the police.

I think anything we can do to get the people who are selling these guns legally—to make sure that they are more attentive to who is buying them and that there is some attempt to keep a record of these particular guns. What people don't know is that when you bring an illegal gun into the country, there is an ability to trace where it was first sold, regardless of where it was sold. Even though they have attempts to file off the serial numbers, there are serial numbers in there that they can't reach. The police have the ability to do that. They can say, "This gun started out in Los Angeles." How it got to Toronto they don't know, but they know where it started from, and at least that gives them a starting point from which to determine how this gun got here.

You can go to flea markets in the States where you can buy attack weapons, mortars, all of these things. All you have to do is show your driver's licence, and you can walk away with those firearms. It's a serious problem, but the good news is that it's not as great as in some jurisdictions.

I commend the member for bringing this forward, and I hope that we'll all support it.

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

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I'm very happy to rise in support of Bill 189, An Act to amend the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act, the existing legislation, which was created in the year 2000.

Certainly, the existing legislation is what I would describe as toothless—simply the requirement to provide photo ID for the purchase of an imitation firearm or a starter pistol. So the provision in the bill that we see before us today requiring a criminal reference check, I think, is a very good step forward. Increased fines are important, as well.

This is an area of some concern in my riding and in York region as a whole. After a recent incident where a

Vaughan man was charged with possession of a weapon for a dangerous purpose after police were called to Richmond Hill, Sergeant Gary Phillips of the York Regional Police told the York Region Media Group that the York Regional Police deputy chief suggests starter pistols and other replica handguns aren't needed at all. His comments followed several incidents involving starter pistols in York and Durham in the last several months.

So it is an issue of concern in my riding, to the extent that in 2006 the town of Aurora tried to bring forward a bylaw. They made some recommendations to the region of York and circulated them to all of the other eight area municipalities—along the line of the member for Simcoe North. He suggested that perhaps bylaws could be used. The difficulty there is that you're going to get a patchwork of bylaws across the province. I think consistency is always something that is to be applauded. At the end of the day, when it came to smoking bylaws, I know that it was more effective to have provincial legislation.

I applaud the member for bringing this forward. I think there certainly needs to be considerable discussion at committee as to what an amended bill might look like, but I think this is a very good step forward.

I know there are so many members of our caucus wishing to speak to this. I will confine my remarks to those.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I just have a couple of minutes. I did want to relay a tale from a friend who had twin boys and like all parents—of our generation of parents, anyway—tried to keep firearms of any sort, even imitation, away from their children. These two boys, never having had a gun or being allowed to have a gun of any sort, actually chewed their toast in the morning into the shape of a firearm and used it to go bang, bang at each other. I'm not saying there's anything inherently violent in the male psyche. Actually, some of my best friends are men, including my husband. But it strikes me.

When I look at this bill, it is well-intentioned. There's no question: We all want the same thing here, and we want what the member who proposed the bill wants. The question is, is it the most efficient and effective way of going about it? It seems a little bit—and a researcher said this, so hats off to researchers, by the way, before the end of the session; we never acknowledge our researchers. They said this is deterrence by red tape. I tend to agree with that assessment.

I think if you look at an example of a jurisdiction that's done it rather well, it's the UK, where they simply banned outright the sale or importation of realistic firearm imitations. That makes sense to me. Like, just get on with it. Just do it once and get it over with. I can't imagine any rational reason for production of something that looks exactly like the real thing other than to commit a crime with. A starter pistol, yes, there's a role for that, of course. There's even a role for toys, but you could make them significantly different and that could be part of—and is part of what the UK did.

Yes, it's a well-intentioned bill. Yes, it should go to second reading. No, I don't think it quite accomplishes what the member would intend. As a private member's bill, we would want to hear, of course, from those in the field, from police and others who have a stake in this, but more to the point, I think, to look at the outright ban of anything that could be used to commit a crime like this.

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

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Let me lend a few words of support on this Bill 189 to my good friend from Ajax—Pickering.

Let me say from the outset that I'm not a fan of any gun. We never had one in our home. Thank God, I guess, none of my kids had any interest. I say that because then you are less tempted to maybe use it for whatever reason. I guess this is from my view, maybe because of my mentality or where I am on this: Anything that we can do to restrict the use of or any attempt to use replica firearms falls into the same category.

As I heard some of the other members in this Legislature during this private members' time, there are challenges to refine this if we're going to put it to use. Of course there are. It is complicated.

Yes, when I first looked at this, frankly, I said, "We're trying to kill a little fly with a great big sledgehammer. Is this the right way to do it?" So I do have some of those questions, but the fact of the matter is that we are debating it here today. Our final goal, if it will get to committee sometime—and if doesn't, then hopefully somebody will bring it back up—is to at least put those feelers out there to see that we need to deal with this issue.

I'm going to support this, to try to get it advanced as much as we can. I look forward to the vote in a little while.

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

Mr. Mike Colle: When the member from Parkdale—High Park was speaking, I was just wondering: In this day and age, why do we need these starter pistols? You'd think we can develop a way of starting a—I guess it's a track and field event. Why do we need a starter pistol? I don't know why we need to even manufacture these things.

Anyways, the member from Ajax—Pickering—obviously, this has been raised locally in Ajax, and the thing that he pointed out is, it's a real threat to everyone's safety. You can imagine, as a police officer or anyone approaching anyone with one of these, you have no way of knowing that that thing is a replica. The consequences of that and what could happen are just life-altering. I think there's got to be a way of dealing with this, and the member's proposal is his best attempt to do this, and I hope he is successful. I certainly support his initiative here.

As you know, I've had a long-time pet peeve—not even a peeve; it's a real point of anger: I can't believe the perpetual use of cars to transport guns throughout Ontario and the GTA. Just last night, there was another drive-by shooting of some people in the northwest part of Toronto. It's almost impossible for a police officer to convict anyone of having illegal firearms in their car or

truck, because they always have the valid excuse—they still say, "Oh, I borrowed the car from my Uncle Louis. I didn't know he had six shotguns in the trunk of the car." There's a case right now where a guy is before the courts; they found four illegal guns in his car, and he says, "I didn't know that the car that I was driving had four illegal guns. My friends may have brought them." This goes on without any repercussions from our Criminal Code, which doesn't take driving around with guns in cars as a serious enough offence. You can do it with no repercussions.

Anyway, I thank the member for his initiative here.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The honourable member from Ajax—Pickering has two minutes for his response.

Mr. Joe Dickson: I'm pleased to acknowledge and thank the members from Simcoe North, Beaches—East York, York Centre, Oak Ridges—Markham, Northumberland—Quinte West and Eglinton—Lawrence.

I'd like to run a couple of things by you, and I ask that we not lose sight of this. First of all, there is the conversation and the quotation by the RCMP officer on the gun end of it, who indicated that any layman can convert this replica firearm to a real firearm quickly.

The Attorney General from three terms back did put forth regulation on this, which was altered by the government, and some of the stronger points he had in there were taken out. I can understand why they're not back in now, although it was one of the questions. The information went to community safety and correctional services. The information went to the Attorney General's office.

There's a bit of a groundswell out there. You'll see it as time marches on. Police chiefs and police services are asking for these changes, and I think we have to pay attention to them. They're the front-line men and women out there who provide safety for us 24/7, 365 days a year.

The positive things we as a government are doing is increased funding, and that's working well, taking guns off the street. It is time that purchasers take liability and responsibility.

I just want to leave you with one thought—I only mentioned it once when I was speaking—and that is, I never want to lose a child and I never want to lose a police officer.

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

ROYAL ASSENT

SANCTION ROYALE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to a certain bill in his office.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): The following is the title of the bill to which His Honour did assent:

An Act respecting 2011 Budget measures, interim appropriations and other matters / Loi concernant les

mesures budgétaires de 2011, l'affectation anticipée de crédits et d'autres questions.

RADON AWARENESS
AND PREVENTION ACT, 2011
LOI DE 2011 SUR LA SENSIBILISATION
AU RADON ET LA PROTECTION
CONTRE L'INFILTRATION DE CE GAZ

Mr. Moridi moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 182, An Act to raise awareness about radon, provide for the Ontario Radon Registry and reduce radon levels in dwellings and workplaces / Projet de loi 182, Loi visant à sensibiliser le public au radon, à prévoir la création du Registre des concentrations de radon en Ontario et à réduire la concentration de ce gaz dans les logements et les lieux de travail.

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

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Mr. Reza Moridi: I rise in this House today to present you and my honourable colleagues with an initiative that will have an enormous effect on the lives of all Ontarians and their well-being.

First, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has assisted me in preparing this bill, including the staff at legislative counsel and my own staff. I would also like to acknowledge the late Dr. Delmar McCormack Smyth, the founder of the Radiation Safety Institute of Canada, who brought the first and only personal alpha dosimeter to Canada to monitor the Elliot Lake uranium workers for exposure to radon; and Dr. Fergal Nolan, president and CEO of the Radiation Safety Institute of Canada, who, over the past 30 years, has been tirelessly advocating across Canada for workers' safety in uranium and non-uranium mines and other workplaces, as well as the public's safety in homes and schools as it relates to radon exposure.

Bill 182, if passed, will certainly increase the level of safety in our dwellings and workplaces not only for us, but for generations to come.

I would like to begin by first providing some background and history on radon and its carcinogenic effects. Radon is a radioactive gas found naturally in the environment. It is produced by the decay of uranium found in soil, rock and water. When radon escapes from the bedrock into the outdoor air, it is so diluted that it poses a negligible threat to health. When radon gas is released into a building, it can accumulate to high levels in enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces.

Radon is an invisible, colourless, odourless, tasteless gas. You can't see it, you can't smell it and you can't taste it. It's a silent killer, and as any silent killer, it can seep into your home unnoticed until it is too late.

Studies have been conducted not only in Canada, but across the globe, showing that exposure to high levels of

radon in buildings has been associated with an increased risk of lung cancer. Radon is the number two cause of lung cancer after smoking. People who smoke and are exposed to radon have an even higher risk of lung cancer.

There have also been various studies which have confirmed that the cancer risk from exposure to radon in residential and other buildings is the same as exposure to radon in uranium mines. There is no safe level of radon.

There have been many studies designating radon gas as a cancer-causing agent. Many of my honourable colleagues may be aware that radon levels in underground uranium mines are predominantly high. However, it may interest you to know that studies have shown that residential and other buildings may have radon levels as high as a uranium mine. Radon can enter homes through tiny cracks in the foundation of homes and is present in most homes at some level. Radon further decays into radioactive products which release alpha particles into indoor air. Upon inhalation, alpha particles with sufficient energy enter into the lungs and have the potential to damage the DNA molecules in lung tissue. In other words, inhalation of radon increases your chance of developing lung cancer, similar to smoking cigarettes.

Current estimates suggest that radon in homes is responsible for approximately 10% of all lung cancer deaths in Canada, making radon the second-leading cause of lung cancer after tobacco smoking.

As miners dig the uranium-bearing ore, they inevitably release large quantities of radioactive radon gas into the mine atmosphere. As uranium is present in almost every rock, non-uranium underground workers are also exposed to radon gas. Epidemiological studies of uranium miners and other underground miners have consistently shown that miners exposed to high levels of radon to be at increased risk of lung cancer.

These data, which are supported by animal and cellular studies, have resulted in the designation of radon as a known cause of cancer in humans by the International Agency for Research on Cancer. A combined analysis of 11 cohorts of over 60,000 underground miners conducted by Lubin et al and updated by the U.S. National Research Council provides a comprehensive assessment of lung cancer risks associated with radon.

There have been more than 220 documented deaths and up to 400 estimated lung cancer deaths in Elliot Lake uranium mines here in Ontario. It should be noted that the Elliot Lake uranium mines were closed down about 20 years ago. In 1974, the Ontario Royal Commission on the Health and Safety of Workers in Mines pointed out that Elliot Lake uranium miners had already experienced twice as many lung cancers as then expected. Instances such as the ones at the Elliot Lake uranium mines and others around the country have had enormous financial and human costs. It's important to note that Ontario had one of the worst radon-related workplace disasters in the world.

Canada, through its high-grade uranium mines in Saskatchewan, is the world's largest producer and exporter of uranium. Various engineering and radiological protec-

tion measures are in place, along with monitoring every single worker at these modern Saskatchewan uranium mines. That results in much better worker protection against exposure to radon in these mines.

Approximately 20,000 people die each year in Canada from lung cancer. Two thousand of these deaths are directly related to radon gas exposure in homes and other buildings. Of the 2,000 lung cancer deaths caused by radon in Canada, 40% take place here in Ontario. This results in 800 deaths per year in the province of Ontario due to indoor exposure to radon.

It may also interest my honourable colleagues to know that legislation such as I am proposing has been in place in other jurisdictions and countries for many years. In Quebec, radon testing in schools started last year. In 2009, province-wide testing began in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. In Ontario we have had no policy in place to kick-start testing homes, schools or workplaces for the presence of radon gas.

Legislation passed in the United Kingdom has resulted in the creation of a comprehensive radon map for England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. These maps have allowed the public and workers to identify radon-prone areas and test buildings for radon in order to take action to reduce radon levels in buildings, if needed.

Bill 182 is a comprehensive bill which not only requires government to ensure the safety of Ontarians in their buildings and workplaces, but also places an onus on the government to educate the public on radon and its health effects. Given the high number of deaths from lung cancer which are a direct result of radon, the public must be aware of the health implications of exposure to radon and the steps they can take in order to reduce levels of radon in buildings. This education can take place via various means, such as large-scale advertising and public awareness campaigns.

Children who are exposed to radon will unfortunately have a much higher chance of developing lung cancer than those who are exposed to radon in later stages of their lives, as there is a 10- to 15-year latency period between exposure to radon and development of cancer. With this knowledge in hand, we must ensure that all public schools in Ontario are safe and that our children are radon-free.

The Ontario radon registry will be established with the passing of Bill 182. All testing results from publicly and privately owned buildings will be filtered through this registry.

This registry will begin to create a mapping of the levels of radon across the province, similar to maps created in the United Kingdom and elsewhere.

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As a government, we have taken every step to reduce lung cancer due to smoking, and different levels of government have placed legislation to reduce Ontarians' exposure to carcinogenic agents.

By ensuring the successful passing of this bill, we can continue on the path to a healthier Ontario.

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

Just stop the clock for a moment. The honourable member for Trinity–Spadina.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Mr. Speaker, thank you for your indulgence. If the other members don't mind, we have some special guests—they're only here for another half-hour and I wanted to introduce them.

We have Umberto Vattani, the president of the Italian Trade Commission; we have Antonio Lucarelli, the Italian trade commissioner of Canada; and we have Jimmy Johnson, the senior trade analyst for the Italian Trade Commission.

Welcome, in particular, Umberto Vattani, who has come from Italy. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Welcome to Queen's Park.

The member for Wellington–Halton Hills will have his full time.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I, too, wish to welcome our guests into the legislative chamber this afternoon.

I'm pleased to have the chance to speak briefly to Bill 182, the Radon Awareness and Prevention Act, 2011, which has been brought forward by the member for Richmond Hill. I know that my caucus colleague and friend the member for Durham hopes to speak to it as well, on behalf of our party, this afternoon.

I listened to the member from Richmond Hill as he introduced the bill and gave his presentation, and I want to compliment him on his remarks. We all know that we're coming to the end of the 39th Parliament, and it's hard to know which private members' bills might be part of the package that might actually see their way into passage into law at the end. We'll see about that.

I certainly want to wish the member for Richmond Hill well, because I know he is obviously very well intentioned in bringing this forward. The bill is being brought forward in a non-partisan way, and I would commend him for that as well. Especially as we get close to the election, the partisanship around here gets a little more acute, shall we say, and the fact that the member has brought this forward in a non-partisan way, not attacking anybody, is something that is worthy of recognition. I've tried to do that sometimes with private members' bills too, and I think that's the way to do it. This is a serious issue, and we acknowledge that. We commend the member for bringing it forward.

On this side of the House, we know that high radon levels have been linked to serious health risks. The member talked about the fact that radon is the second most frequent cause of lung cancer. I know people who have, unfortunately, been afflicted with lung cancer who never smoked, who never had someone in the house who smoked, so in all likelihood they weren't exposed to a great deal of second-hand smoke over an extended period of time. It's possible that I know people who have had to face this terrible illness because of radon. We have an understanding and awareness of that on this side of the House, obviously, and we believe that this legislation must reflect that the measurable level of radon will protect Ontarians as much as possible.

In terms of the discussion of this bill, I think it's important to point out that this bill would amend the Building Code Act, 1992, to provide for the establishment of the Ontario radon registry. The act would require radon measurement specialists and laboratories to provide the registry with specified information, and the minister would be required to educate the public about radon, in addition to encouraging homeowners to measure radon levels. I think that's a very important aspect of the bill. Greater education, led by the minister, would certainly be in the public interest, in my view.

The minister is also required to ensure that radon levels in every provincially owned dwelling are measured and that remedial action is taken where necessary. Owners of enclosed workplaces would also be required, as I understand it, to ensure that radon levels are measured and remedial action is taken, if necessary.

The Building Code Act would further be amended to provide authority for regulations that require dwellings to be constructed in a way that minimizes radon entry and facilitates post-construction radon removal. The minister is required to review any such requirements within five years after the day this act comes into force.

The only concern I would want to bring forward is that we have to remember our business community, obviously, in the context of any new regulations that are coming forward. I've had a number of meetings with small business people in the last few months. Of course, they recognize that they have an obligation to adhere to the letter and the spirit of all the laws and all the regulations, but the fact is, in recent years—and I don't want to be overly partisan—there have been, really, a huge number of regulations and new legislation coming forward that have affected small business, and there's a limit to which small business can deal with this kind of regulation.

If you think of the smallest of businesses, whether it's a single proprietorship or two people working together in a partnership—and we must remember that every business starts small, usually with the vision of one entrepreneur or a small group of people working in partnership. The smallest of businesses don't have a lot of time to deal with government. They're out there trying to work with their customers and trying to find new customers to grow their business. For the smallest of businesses, every hour that's spent or taken up by government regulation, government forms and those sorts of things directly inhibits their ability to grow. That's something we always have to keep in mind in a general sense. And I don't say it just with respect to this bill, but I think we need to remember that in terms of our awareness of the importance of the small business sector.

Another key consideration with respect to this bill is our recognition that radon is a radioactive, colourless, odourless and tasteless gas. Occurring naturally from the decay of uranium, it's considered to be a health hazard due to its radioactivity, and evidence shows a link between breathing high concentrations of radon and the incidence of lung cancer. As we said, radon exposure in homes and buildings can particularly accumulate in con-

finned areas such as attics and basements. Measures such as increasing under-floor ventilation and sealing cracks and gaps in the floors of buildings can help address radon concentrations from seeping into the building.

We also know that radon test kits are available. A do-it-yourself kit costs approximately \$40 dollars, and a 24/7 monitor is about \$170.

Again, I want to commend the member for Richmond Hill for bringing forward this bill. I think it's brought forward in the spirit of a good private member's bill, where we have a chance to discuss an issue that otherwise might not be brought forward on to the floor of the Legislature. The member deserves credit for that. I hope his colleagues in government will find a way to ensure that the issues that he raises this afternoon are in fact addressed in terms of government policy, and I wish him well going forward.

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

Mr. Michael Prue: I preface my remarks at the outset by saying that I will be supporting this bill, but I think there are simpler ways for Ontario to get there than through the passage of this bill.

As has been said by my colleague speaking immediately before me, these are the dying days of this Legislature. We're only here for a couple of more weeks, and the opportunity for this bill or any bill at this point to make it through committee and third reading is limited.

In fact, there is a way for the government to very easily put in the safeguards that ought to have been done a long time ago when it comes to radon gas: simply through the building code of Ontario. That can be done and is done every year by regulation, but there does not seem to have been a will to do so in the past. It's a sad reflection of Ontario and what Ontario has thought about radon gas vis-à-vis other jurisdictions.

The provincial building code in Ontario has one of the highest levels of acceptance of radon gas of any jurisdiction in Canada. Therefore, in Ontario, we are told that it is safer to breathe a higher concentration of radon gas in our homes, our buildings, our places of work, our schools, our institutions, our museums or private places where people go than almost anywhere else in Canada.

The National Building Code has a much lower threshold for the ingestion of radon gas than we have here in Ontario. For us to be proactive, all we would have to do in Ontario in the building code is develop the national code. That's all we would have to do. We would lessen the dangers to every single person in Ontario immediately. Never mind doing all this other stuff. With the stroke of a pen from the minister—adopt the national code, and therefore, the amount of radon gas that would be allowed in people's homes or public institutions would be reduced substantially. If we bring our building code in compliance with that, Ontarians will have less exposure to radon. Of course, we've all known about this gas for a long time; uranium was mined extensively in Ontario in places like Elliot Lake and less extensively in other places a little bit closer to this Legislature.

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In just a little personal aside, I know that my parents for many years after they retired from here in Toronto lived in a little town just south of Bancroft, called Cardiff. Cardiff, Ontario, was a totally artificial town that did not exist at all until one day the Bicroft mine was located south of Cardiff, and they mined uranium for a number of years in the 1950s and 1960s. All of the homes in this little town were owned by miners or people who worked in the mine, around the mine or for the mine, and when the mine stopped producing and the market was gone for uranium in Ontario—we found that it was cheaper to import it from Saskatchewan—of course, the mine closed. The miners left, the homes came up for sale, and they were filled—surprise, surprise—by a lot of retired people who were looking for cheaper housing. But I do know that my own parents, when they bought this house, were somewhat concerned and had the home tested, as did everybody in town, for the existence of radon gas, and they found out that literally every one of the 600 or so people who lived there was exposed to higher concentrations of radon gas than the National Building Code would permit. However, I think it was in line at that point, or pretty close to in line, with what the Ontario building code permitted. It's just an example of how you can live in a place and not understand that there is a silent killer. For them, they quite wisely took it upon themselves to more properly ventilate the house, and that's all that was required. The proper ventilation of the house, once people became aware of it, was all that was required to bring the home into compliance with the code.

Now, in March of this year, the Canadian Cancer Society made a submission towards the building code about radon gas limits, and I'd like to quote in part what they had to say in the submission, because I think it was very wise and sage advice, and some of that has found its way into the member's private member's bill. They said:

"The proposed changes to the building code support our mission and vision by preventing Ontarians from exposure to a known cancer-causing substance.

"Radon is estimated to be responsible for approximately 2,000 lung cancer deaths per year in Canada.

"In Ontario, radon is a serious issue. In the first year of the cross-Canada residential radon survey, 5% of Ontario homes tested had radon levels above the guideline recommended by Health Canada." That's serious. That means one in 20 homes has a radon level higher than the guideline of Health Canada.

"More research in year two of the study will provide more data, but at this point, it is clear that Ontario has a radon problem that needs to be addressed. Exposure to radon is not confined to homes in certain regions.... If a vapour barrier is already planned, adding a vent to prevent radon gas from accumulating may cost as little as \$50."

They said a lot more than that, but I think that was the important part of what they had to say. Again, I go back to the building code. I go back to what could be done

should this bill not make it through third reading. We would implore the minister responsible for the building code to take a look at the very small effort that could be made to give force and effect to what this honourable member is attempting to do.

In the meantime, before we can set up a registry and search out all the houses and do all the other things he is talking about, simply change the building code so that the level of radon gas would be reduced, and allow for minor modifications to be made that would cost as little as \$50, or the implementation of a vapour barrier which would protect people from a known carcinogen.

In 2007, Health Canada recommended a new threshold for maximum annual average radon concentration lower than the current one in Ontario, and the 2010 edition of the model national building code includes enhanced radon protection provisions. So here in Ontario, that is all we would have to do: just adopt what the federal government recommended in 2007 and did in 2010. The government's own ministry builds a case for the need to change our building code to be in line with the National Building Code.

Just to conclude, because I think everything that needs to be said has been, I would encourage the government to update the Ontario building code to match the federal building code in relation to acceptable radon levels immediately. This can be done through regulations. It can be done immediately.

In the meantime, I am more than happy to support this member and his initiative. He has brought again to the light of this Legislature something that needs to be done. We can collectively, as a Legislature, pass this bill. We can send it to committee. We can send it hoping somehow that it will get third reading. But I would also ask the government members here—you have two caucus days left. They come on Tuesdays. There are two of them left before this Parliament winds up on June 2. Please use them to talk about private members' bills, this one and other ones. Please use them to say that a lot of good ideas have been debated here on Thursday afternoons, including this one. If all of the bills cannot be passed and if a negotiated deal cannot be made to pass those bills, use other methods to have them passed. The building code can pass the radon level. The building code can put fire sprinklers in old-age homes. There are other methods other than these private members' bills, and please, please, especially the government members, take those opportunities.

For those of us in opposition—and it has been said that I am the dean of opposition members; I am the one who has been here the longest who has never been in government. It is I. But you know, I wish I had some of these levers that you have. I do not have the levers, standing on this side of the House that the government members have, and you have three weeks left to exercise them. Please go to the caucus and exercise them. Make sure that these bills are passed. Make sure that Ontarians are saved from the exposure to radon gas. It is the least we can do to support this member and to support what he

is trying to do. It is good for all Ontarians. I commend him for bringing it forward, and you, sir, will have my vote when it comes due in about an hour.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you. It's my pleasure to introduce Mr. Larry O'Connor, the member for Durham–York in the 35th Parliament.

Further debate?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I'm very pleased to rise today in the House in support of my honourable colleague the MPP for Richmond Hill's bill, Bill 182.

Bill 182 will not only educate Ontarians; it would also help reduce the number of deaths related to radon. As we have heard, of the 2,000 lung cancer deaths each year, 40% are radon-related. With the passing of this bill, we can ensure that our children, who are the most vulnerable to radon, are protected and aware of its existence.

I would like to mention a few of the health risks involved with radon. Radon has come to be known as a silent killer that has had a great effect on the number of annual lung cancer patients. Lifelong smokers who are not exposed to radon have a one in eight chance of getting lung cancer. If you add the exposure of radon, the risk of lung cancer for smokers increases to one in three. While smoking is the leading cause of lung cancer, I was very surprised to learn today that radon is the second, and the leading cause of lung cancers for non-smokers. Unless we take the opportunity to educate Ontarians as to where radon can be found, as it is odourless and colourless, as we heard, radon will continue to kill people.

1450

In Canada, the provincial government has jurisdiction over the health effects of background radiation. With that being said, the provincial Legislature has yet to take proper measures to ensure that our residents, our citizens, are well educated and aware of the presence and harm of radon. It is therefore our duty to take action on this silent killer.

Radon takes 10 to 15 years to develop in the lungs, causing our children to be at the highest risk of radon exposure and eventually becoming victims of it. The health risks of radon are long-term and are not immediate, which is why the passing of this bill will ensure a better tomorrow for generations to come.

Bill 182 will not only inspect old buildings but will provide regulations for new buildings to protect Ontarians, as I mentioned, for years and years and generations to come.

The existence of radon comes about from dwellings and cracks. The most prominent locations of radon are in mines and residential buildings. This is another surprise: There are no safe levels of radon, and it has been proven that many buildings have radon levels equivalent to that of a uranium mine. That is astonishing.

Radon is seeping into buildings from the ground. Indoor radon exposure can be reduced by increasing ventilation and improving building materials, so it's very simple. Exposure is reduced with routine radon monitoring of building materials and building locations. With the passing of Bill 182, we can implement proper inspection

procedures to ensure that Ontarians across our province are protected from exposure to radon.

Testing for radon is easy and inexpensive, making the implementation of this bill even more advantageous and beneficial for Ontarians. Other jurisdictions have already implemented regulations with regard to radon exposure. As a leading province in the country and worldwide, we must follow these steps to protect the people from this invisible poison.

Implementation of Bill 182 will allow us to gather information and create a map of where radon exposure is at its peak in Ontario, and educate the public of where homes should be built. As of yet, no map locating radon levels exists, and Ontario, as a leader, can take the first step to ensure that such a map comes into existence. Ontarians have the right to know of its existence, and it must be a part of our mandate, as elected officials, to inform our constituents of its presence in their homes.

While as a government we have taken many measures to reduce lung cancer caused by smoking, we have yet to take measures to prevent lung cancer from its second leading cause. Bill 182 is embedded with many advantages, such as the registry, which will allow the government to control and protect these areas; the inspection procedures for building new homes; and the awareness of radon that can be brought to attention, more specifically in schools.

People are more and more concerned with the environment and the negative effects of its chemicals on their health, making the passing of this bill even more crucial than before. The successful passing of this bill will show that we are on a path to a healthier and better tomorrow for all Ontarians.

I'm very proud to support this bill for a healthier future for my constituents, for our children and for our grandchildren. I want to congratulate my colleague for bringing this bill forward. I will obviously be supporting this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Further debate?

Mr. John O'Toole: With your indulgence, I'll take a privilege here—the member from Trinity–Spadina had a privilege with the time as well. I just wanted to introduce a friend of mine who was here and left. He was with the CF. Paul Arsenault is the past president of CF Canada, and he volunteered in my community for 25 years. I just wanted to recognize him for the record.

On Bill 182, I do want to extend my congratulations to Dr. Moridi, and I say that with deliberate intent; he has a Ph.D. in physics, I believe, and is highly respected. I think it's important to recognize the member from Richmond Hill.

This bill to raise awareness about the Ontario radon registry and reduce radon levels in dwellings and workplaces is very commendable. We would want to be on the record, on behalf of our leader, Tim Hudak, of being in support of the bill.

Arguments have been made about the climate of silly season we're in, moving in towards an election, where

serious business often isn't taken seriously. But I think this debate this afternoon is important. It's important to move forward on initiatives like this. As part of the intent of the bill, if I look at the preamble, the minister is required to educate the public about radon and to encourage homeowners to measure radon levels in their homes and take remedial action, if necessary. That's really a public service that we're doing today, which is the intent of the bill, to the greatest extent. So I commend the member. Never be daunted by the mood of this place. Move forward on principle, and I think you will serve both your constituents and, indeed, the province—and you have the skills to do that effectively.

I would only say that in researching the bill—and most of the comments have been made by many speakers. Radon is an invisible, odourless, radioactive gas. It is formed by the disintegration of radium, which is a decay product of uranium. Radon emits alpha particles and produces several solid radioactive products called radon daughters—you know all this.

I had the privilege of looking up, in a-little-more-than-necessary detail, comments with respect to some of the people you mentioned in your opening remarks. This was a study done in January 2005—you're probably very familiar with that study—Radon in Homes and Risk of Lung Cancer: Collaborative Analysis of Individual Data from 13 European Case-control Studies. Some of the documents you mentioned were part of that.

It's important for me today, it's important for my constituents in Durham, to understand fully. If I look not far down the road, in Port Hope, there are issues with respect to radon gas there as well. There have been for some time in the community. It's very important. One of the things one of the speakers mentioned in their remarks with respect to schools and public buildings is in there.

I commend you: I think you've planted the seed. Eventually, you will harvest the products of your effort sometime in the future—probably when we're government. I say that with a great sense of humour because there is an election this year.

I think worthy causes should continue on in the order paper. If you happen to not be here, I'd like to introduce the bill, and I will make reference to that—if I happen to be here. But anyway, all of that is in good jest, because I think we want to make sure we do perform some of the functions here today.

Radioactive lining: "After radon gas is inhaled, it readily dissolves in the blood and circulates through the body, organs, and tissues, until it is again exhaled through the lungs or skin. Equilibrium is established between the ambient and the internal radon concentrations. Since the radioactive half time of radon-222 is 3.8 days, most radon atoms harmlessly leave the body before they can disintegrate."

However: "The glow of ionizing radiation

"Most of the radiation dose to humans is not from radon itself but from the radon daughters, most notably polonium-218." It's a very technical area but, nonetheless, when you look at it, it's disintegrating uranium. You

look at how easily we assume these things and how important—even one particle could actually cause cancer. That's really what this study says.

I commend the member and, as I said before, I think that by this debate this afternoon you have made a contribution. We will be supporting it. Then it goes back to the government.

Now, with all due respect, I want to spend a few minutes speaking to the member in the chair. The member from Oxford has a bill, Bill 69, and it is actually before one of the standing committees, I think, to be called for business. The bill is entitled the Hawkins Gignac Act, and it was in response to the carbon monoxide poisoning of the Hawkins family in Woodstock. That bill was introduced in 2009 and, member from Oxford, the preamble and the intent of the bill are almost the same.

If we're promoting a public service here today, the important thing is for the viewers, the Hansard and ourselves, as participants representing the people of Ontario, to be aware that carbon monoxide is also colourless and odourless. It can kill. The Hawkins Gignac Act is trying to do the same thing as you are.

I think both bills—if Premier McGuinty wanted to do a noble thing on his last effort before October 6, he would convene these bills, because this will be passed this afternoon, and make them law for the people of Ontario—

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank you very much. Further debate?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: It is certainly a pleasure to rise in support of Bill 182, An Act to raise awareness about radon, provide for the Ontario Radon Registry and reduce radon levels in dwellings and workplaces, introduced by my friend and colleague the member for Richmond Hill. As has been noted, he has a Ph.D. in physics and I know is extremely well respected within the radiation safety community.

As a physician, I really do have to emphasize the health effects of radon, particularly, of course, lung cancer deaths due to radon. The numbers have been spoken of in this House, and perhaps some people might even be skeptical of figures like 10% of lung cancer deaths being due to radon. It's not just Canada that has looked at this, of course; it is a serious issue that has been looked at in many other jurisdictions, and they've come to very much the same conclusions. In the US, 10% to 15% of all lung cancers are due to radon, and the European community is actually a little higher, at 15% of all lung cancers. This could very well be related to the exposure in those individual jurisdictions because, as we've heard, it depends very much on where you live, where you work, where you might be exposed.

This does translate into some 2,000 lung cancer deaths per year in Canada due to radon. By extrapolation and assuming equal exposure, this would mean some 800 deaths a year in Ontario alone due to radon exposure.

I'd like to thank the members of the Canadian Cancer Society. They're with us here today. They certainly made

a major point of radon education in their lobby day recently here at Queen's Park, and I know the member for Richmond Hill took that very much to heart in the preparation of this bill.

Looking at what the regulations are in terms of Canada, as has been noted, there is no formal regulation. However, Health Canada, along with the Federal Provincial Territorial Radiation Protection Committee, did develop radon guidelines some time ago. I think it's especially noteworthy that, in fact, the guideline was reduced from 800 becquerels per cubic metre of air to 200 becquerels per cubic metre of air in 2007. Clearly people are following the science. This particular committee is looking at this issue seriously and did make a significant adjustment to what they felt was a safe exposure.

The fact is that there is legislation that does relate to radiation in certain circumstances. As an example, workers in the nuclear energy industry, those who may be exposed to x-rays, those who work in uranium mines—there is some federal legislation, and our provincial occupational health and safety legislation does follow that type of secure measure for workers in these cases.

It really is quite ironic that dwellings, in other words, where people live and even where people congregate—members of the public obviously congregate in institutions such as schools, hospitals, long-term-care facilities and correctional facilities. Clearly, these areas need, I think, more than guidelines, and I think this legislation does a great deal to address this current deficiency.

I'm very fortunate in that one of my constituents, Mr. Bob Wood—and I noticed that Bob and Maureen are here with us in the public gallery—is an individual who alerted me to this issue a couple of years ago. Bob has been in construction for the last 30 years and is a plumber by trade and a certified home inspector. In relation to this particular bill, Bob is one of a handful of National Environmental Health Association-certified radon gas technicians in Canada and is listed on the national Radon Information Speakers Bureau.

What Bob has been telling me about is exactly what is necessary to do in terms of testing radon levels in your home in order to potentially mitigate the effect on your family. As has been mentioned, construction techniques are extremely important. There needs to be an analysis not only of the radon levels, but a complete soil permeability test to see what possibly could be coming through the basement floor. This, obviously, is very dependent on the type of construction, the age of the building, and so on.

It is relatively simple to have your home tested, an analysis of your potential exposure, and then the opportunity to mitigate. There are many measures that can be taken. The member for Beaches–East York alluded to some. One that Bob told me all about was active soil depressurization. This methodology actually also removes methane gases and pesticides that might be entering your home.

The best of all, of course, is prevention. Mitigation is possible, as I've just been explaining, but I think the

aspect of the member for Richmond Hill's proposal that is so important is the amendment to the Building Code Act of 1992.

Clearly, prevention is always better than cure. I urge all members of this House to support this important bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate? Seeing none, the honourable member for Richmond Hill has two minutes for his response.

Mr. Reza Moridi: I would like to thank the members from Wellington–Halton Hills, Beaches–East York, York South–Weston, Durham and Oak Ridges–Markham for their contributions to the debate on this bill.

As noted here, radon is a carcinogen and there's no scientific doubt about the fact that radon is the second major cause of lung cancer among people, and also in animals. In Canada every year, about 20,000 people are dying of lung cancer, and in Ontario, 800 lung cancers every year are due to exposure to radon in buildings, homes, schools and other workplaces. This is a huge number when you look at the human cost of lung cancer and also it's really a tragedy when a person goes through this disease. Lung cancer is a terrible disease.

One of my family members actually lost her life as a result of lung cancer and I know that it's a terrible disease. Its pressure on the health care system is enormous. Can you imagine how much we pay through our health care system to take care of lung cancer patients?

I urge my colleagues to vote for this bill. By passing this bill, hopefully we'll prevent the unnecessary occurrence of lung cancer among Ontarians and we will save lives. It's very easy to test your home or your school for radon gas. I urge all the school boards to take the initiative. Don't even wait for the passage of this bill, take the initiative and test all your schools for radon gas, as it is very crucial. The lives of our children are the most important and precious things for all of us.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The time for this ballot item has expired. We'll vote on Mr. Moridi's bill in about 50 minutes.

ADULT EDUCATION

Mr. Rick Johnson: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government should explore the feasibility of expanding Eldercollege, or similar programs in Ontario, in order to serve adults over the age of 55 who wish to enrich their lifestyle through active involvement education.

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

Mr. Rick Johnson: I'm pleased to bring forward this resolution which asks the government to consider supporting and expanding a truly innovative program for seniors in Ontario. I will get into the details of my proposal shortly.

My mother-in-law, Jean Thorne, has a saying which is quite common. She says, "If you don't use it, you will lose it." She reads books, subscribes to three different

daily newspapers for the crosswords and participates in activities at her seniors' centre in Whitby. She has learned how to do things like wood carving, line dancing, paper trolls and scrapbooking. My mother-in-law will turn 90 this year and I'm sure that her commitment to constantly challenge herself to learn plays a huge part in her longevity and her quality of health and life.

1510

I was elected as a trustee to the Trillium Lakelands District School Board in 1997 and served on that school board until I was elected to Queen's Park in 2009. We spent a lot of time on the board working to promote lifelong learning in our community. Education for me has always been something that I pursue every day. I try to learn something new every day. We prided ourselves at the school board on the programs that we offered to area children. Teachers were encouraged to be innovative, and we established a program enhancement fund to support their ideas. The adult education centres run by the board offered courses for more than 1,000 people in a half-dozen locations, people who, for the most part, were looking to complete their secondary school.

People have asked me what we have for seniors in terms of education. Most seniors do not really like attending college or university with young people. It can be intimidating. Campuses are large and not necessarily senior-friendly. Parking is not always convenient and is usually quite pricey. Campuses are centrally located and not always easy to get to, especially in rural Ontario.

I've spent quite a bit of time since being elected as the MPP for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock visiting senior centres and talking to seniors. I co-host a series of senior seminars each spring with my federal counterpart which provide information to seniors about programs and services specifically for seniors. These will be taking place in June in Lindsay, Millbrook, Beaverton, Haliburton and Apsley around my riding. Many seniors have asked me about courses for seniors, especially in rural areas. The more I looked into this request, the more I have come to realize that there is a huge need and a lack of options when it comes to continued learning for seniors. As our population ages, this need will only get bigger.

Recent research by neurobiologists at the University of California, Irvine campus, is providing more evidence that learning promotes brain health and therefore mental stimulation that could limit the debilitating effects of aging on the memory and the mind. Researcher Christine Gall found that everyday forms of learning animate neuron receptors that help keep brain cells functioning at optimum levels. Her research suggests that staying mentally active as we age can keep the brain in good shape, which may limit memory and cognitive decline.

It was while looking into lifelong learning and programs for seniors that I learned about a great program that has existed in British Columbia for over 20 years. It is called Eldercollege. Eldercollege is an established and thriving program in British Columbia. One example is at Capilano University in north Vancouver. Eldercollege is

a community of individuals age 55-plus with a zest for learning and exploring life. At Eldercollege, they foster an environment where it's easy to share ideas, socialize and learn for the sheer enjoyment of learning. There are no exams, no deadlines and no pressure. Each term, they offer a mix of courses that are as eclectic as your interests. Nominal fees are charged, courses are taught by volunteers, and courses can range from one to six weeks, usually once a week. This program has been embraced by seniors in BC and has spread across the province.

As we prepare in Ontario and, indeed, across Canada for the aging of our population, this is an idea whose time has surely come. While doing research on this great program from BC, I was made aware of the launch of a similar Eldercollege program in Windsor, Ontario. It is affiliated with Canterbury College, an affiliate college of the University of Windsor. The program is being championed by Dr. C. Lloyd Brown-John, professor emeritus. I had the pleasure of talking with Dr. Brown-John last week about the program that they are developing in Windsor, and I will attempt to try to capture what they are doing, but I guarantee that I will not be able to do it with anywhere near the enthusiasm that the doctor had when telling me about his vision for Eldercollege in the Windsor area.

They are proposing to develop Eldercollege under the auspices of Canterbury College, an affiliate of the college of the University of Windsor. In the long term, they hope to be able to offer Eldercollege courses in a number of pod locations in Windsor and throughout Essex and west Kent counties.

So what is Eldercollege? Eldercollege provides learning opportunities for older adults who wish to enrich their lifestyle through active involvement and education and to contribute to the social and cultural development of the community. Eldercollege participants design and offer quality educational activities to stimulate interest in learning and to provide a forum for sharing ideas, knowledge and social experience with others. Members can lead study groups, serve on the Eldercollege board and its committees, be study group participants and, most importantly, take courses. Activities are both planned and operated by members to maintain a high-quality offering at a minimum cost.

So what types of courses are offered? In duration, courses can run from one half-day to not more than six sessions over one to three weeks. Courses will be developed by facilitators and may be offered by those same facilitators or by others as guests arranged by the facilitator. Courses are offered only during weekdays and never in the evenings or on weekends. Courses will be offered in locations more convenient to persons over age 55, such as libraries, community centres, seniors' centres and residences, recreation centres and such other locations as may both suit a course or be arranged by a facilitator.

Diversity of courses is what makes the Eldercollege concept so appealing. Examples of courses offered at Capilano University include Incredible Journeys—travel

adventures; Gourmet Club—six restaurants host do-it-yourself gourmet lunches; The Leading Edge—new and creative ideas; Pivotal Events in 20th-Century History; North American/Canadian History; Wonderful World of Wine; 21st-Century Technology; my favourite course title, Computers for Scaredy-Cats; What's New—Current Affairs; Opera Highlights; Crime and Justice; A Geological Walk; Lawn Bowling for Beginners; Eldercollege Music Mornings; Local Art and Artists; Six Great 19th-Century Novels; The Universe—Stars and Planets.

Eldercollege could not exist without money and in-kind donations. Rarely, for example, would any payment be offered for facilitating a course. It is driven by volunteer work. But to sustain Eldercollege will require funding. Funding can come from several sources. Ultimately, Dr. Brown-John feels that there will need to be a full- or part-time office at Canterbury College responsible for all aspects of the Eldercollege program delivery, including publications, advertising, course scheduling, liaison with the University of Windsor, liaison with sponsors, finance and accounting, course registrations and much more.

Any person taking a course or courses will pay a membership fee. For example, Capilano University offers the following membership fees: a one-course charge of \$72, or a multiple-course charge—take as many as you like—of \$135. They would propose to do much the same thing in Windsor with a membership fee.

Government grants: They are pursuing financial support from the province. They have requested bridge financing for three to five years and are awaiting the provincial response. Grants from other agencies such as the Trillium Foundation will be pursued once they have an Eldercollege program in place and operational.

For sponsorships, companies interested in supporting the Eldercollege concept, such as retirement centre management companies, will be invited to become sponsors. Sponsors may also donate in-kind, including services, facilities and essential supplies.

Donations: Of course, Eldercollege would benefit from individual donations, including estate donations. Such donations to Eldercollege would be administered in trust by Canterbury College.

The logistics of course delivery: Courses are arranged or delivered by facilitators. A course facilitator can offer an entire course or part of a course, or arrange to have others deliver the course or segments of a course. Courses could be as short as one half-day or as many as six sessions over a one- to three-week period. Generally, a course should attract a number of people, although certain courses may require limited enrolments.

Courses are always offered between approximately 9:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. No courses are offered on weekends or evenings because they don't want members to drive in rush-hour traffic or at night.

Courses are offered in diverse and, hopefully, convenient locations. For example, courses could be scheduled in public libraries; seniors' residential centres; community centres, both seniors' and recreational; wineries;

restaurants; or wherever enough interested people can gather to offer a viable and valuable course.

Some courses would require a small supplementary fee; for example, a gourmet food course held in a restaurant. Some courses may also necessitate a small honorarium for a special guest participant, to possibly cover travel expenses. Normally, neither facilitators nor guest participants would be remunerated. This is all about volunteerism.

A key component of the Eldercollege program is its curriculum committee. Do you have an idea for a course you would like to take or a course you would like to facilitate? Then develop your idea as a proposal to be considered by the curriculum committee. Remember, there will be no assignments, no exams and no credits towards anything but yourself.

Who are the course facilitators? Well, actually, anybody could be one. Facilitating a course does not mean teaching a course. Rather, it means organizing and delivering a course. The course may feature you or it could feature one or more people you have recruited to deliver the course. If you want to take a course on astronomy but you don't know anything about it, find somebody who can help you.

How would one get a course developed? Prepare a proposed course outline and submit it to the local curriculum committee.

What is being proposed by Dr. Lloyd Brown-John for the Windsor area is one of the most exciting things that I have heard for seniors in Ontario in years. The doctor and his team are taking a great program from BC and making it uniquely Ontarian by expanding courses into rural communities. Instead of people going to the courses, they are planning to bring the courses to them in their communities. This means accessible parking, short terms, low-traffic times, a comfortable learning environment with other seniors, courses that encourage community involvement, classes held in wineries, libraries, seniors' centres etc. Everyone involved is a volunteer, and money generated by the program would go back into the program. It's flexible and self-sustaining.

1520

So why am I asking for the government to seriously consider supporting this program and expanding the idea across the province? It's simple: This program can fill a void in things that are offered for our elders at very little cost. As I said earlier, research shows that it is good for our brains to be stimulated by learning. Education at any age is like exercise for the brain, but it is extremely important as we age. Studies suggest that staying mentally active as we age may limit memory and cognitive decline.

We have so many professional people retiring now, with so many more soon to follow. How great would it be to take advantage of the years of experience and knowledge by bringing that hands-on experience into the lives of others in our community? There are people in this room today who will soon be moving into retirement who would be great teachers or facilitators of courses on

government or public affairs, and it would be such a waste to not tap into this resource.

In closing, I hope the Legislature will support my resolution to give serious consideration to supporting and expanding this wonderful learning experience across the province. I know that seniors or elders in my riding would jump at the chance to get involved. As my mother-in-law always says, “If you don’t use it, you will lose it.” So let’s not lose this great opportunity to enrich the lives of our seniors.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): It gives me great pleasure to welcome to the House the honourable Shelley Martel, member for Sudbury East in the 34th, 35th and 36th Parliaments, and the member for Nickel Belt in the 37th and 38th Parliaments. Welcome, Shelley.

Further debate?

Mr. John O’Toole: I also welcome Shelley. She was very highly respected when here as the health critic. She was probably one of the best.

I would only say that this proposal that Mr. Johnson from the city of Kawartha Lakes has introduced, I would be supportive of it 100%. In fact, our caucus would be supportive of it 100%. I’m sure all members would be, quite honestly, and I guess I have a bit of a prejudice to it all. I’m probably one of the oldest ones here, and I hope to continue serving.

I consider this chamber one of the highest institutes of learning that I’ve ever had the experience of working in. Quite honestly, I feel humbled each day, even today, with a Ph.D. professor here, and earlier today we had a couple of doctors on fighting disease. We had the privilege last week of being in a conference on aging in Quebec City, and it was quite informative in terms of active living. As you said, “Stay active. Use it or lose it.” Those were very appropriate comments.

I’m speaking primarily because our critic for colleges and universities, Mr. Wilson, is in the chair, and he gave me the opportunity and the privilege to speak as long as I wish for this afternoon. He’s the Chair, so I get as much time as I really want.

Now, this is in a climate—it’s very appropriate timing, because today I was invited to the University of Ontario Institute of Technology. The president of the university, Ron Bordessa, is retiring. Dr. Bordessa is a friend. I would say that I know him quite well. I’ve apologized; I have sent my best wishes to him, and I know Wayne Arthurs and probably other members of the Legislature from Durham and other places will be there, because Dr. Bordessa was highly regarded. I think he came from York University prior to that. He’s a great and wonderful guy who’s taken the University of Ontario Institute of Technology to the next level.

It’s quite interesting, too, the climate here on this looking at and respecting institutions of learning—which we all do; other people say other things, but we all do. We may have different approaches to things, but we all respect institutes of learning.

There’s a very interesting celebration: 10 years of the University of Ontario Institute of Technology. I was very

happy to be part of a government that created the first university in I believe it was 40 years. Prior to that, it was Trent University, which was also under a Conservative government—not to take any credit, because these are usually unanimously supported moves for creating institutions.

In greatest respect, I can remember the process, because it’s actually in my riding, or it was in my riding at that time. The founder, the person who founded it and planted the very first seed of this project and this vision, was Dr. Gary Polonsky. I give him the greatest credit and the greatest respect.

There’s a wonderful article, which I’m looking at here. It says:

“To University of Ontario ... founder Gary Polonsky, a handshake means a promise kept.

“The inexhaustible chief cheerleader for UOIT”—referring to Gary—“already a successful education executive as president of Durham College, made the solemn promise a decade ago to then-Ontario Premier Mike Harris when he shook his hand and vowed to make what was little more than a dearly held idea a bricks and mortar reality.

“Today, as UOIT marks 10 years in Durham region, Mr. Polonsky can take time to reflect,” and he does in the article I’m reading.

He gives full respect to Jim Flaherty, who is now the Minister of Finance—hopefully he returns as Minister of Finance—because he pushed that through cabinet. There’s no question, no discussion: Polonsky had the vision, Flaherty had the energy and the rest is history to the extent that the cabinet of the day supported that. Dr. Polonsky, as the founder, and then Dr. Bordessa taking it to a whole new level is commendable.

These are access points to further learning at all age groups. I finished my degree as a mature student. I started as an immature student and had to take a sabbatical—in fact, this is the real story. I was more interested in playing hockey than in studying, but I did eventually finish. There’s every evidence that even today I think I’m a better member through learning and understanding than I was in 1995 when I was first elected.

The new president—this is another important announcement today; I’ll make a more formal definition of this when this actually happens—Dr. Tim McTiernan, the replacement for Dr. Bordessa, will be the third president and vice-chancellor of the University of Ontario, UOIT, effective July 1, 2011. That has been formally announced, and I congratulate and commend him. Actually, I believe he is from the University of Toronto. He has “more than 25 years of senior-level ... administrative experience spanning the areas of innovation, research administration and commercialization” at the University of Toronto. So he has a great deal of experience, and I’m sure he’ll take us to a whole other level.

I look at the intent here. What we’re trying to do is engage people in lifelong learning and deal with the issue of the aging tsunami. I really believe that when you stop doing something, like being elected, you’re never doing

it again. It's a frightening revelation when you think of it. When you say, "I can no longer cut the grass, drive a car or be a member," that means it's the last time you're doing it. Each day we have is a gift, and I think learning is part of growing, and actually growing to understand yourself, at the end of time.

I have great respect for the people I work with in my community. Last month, I guess it was, we celebrated volunteerism. I knew the Rickard family, a highly regarded family in the community, farm families but also community leaders in the general, broadest sense. I was so impressed, because Brenton Rickard, one of the leaders at the Newcastle Community Hall, which was the Massey family fortress, if you will—Massey tractors was in Newcastle, and that's where they lived. They donated the Massey house in Newcastle, a beautiful building. Brenton Rickard was chair of that for many, many years.

Brenton passed away a couple of years ago, but his wife, Jean, received an award for 61 years of volunteerism. She's as active and articulate today as she ever was, but she's much more gracious. There's none of this talky stuff at all. It's so revealing why they're so highly respected.

I look through my riding, and I know Peter Evans, who was head of the Clarington Older Adult Centre Board: a visionary, a writer, kind of an artistic type of fellow who unfortunately passed away—I'm not sure. But Angie Darlison is executive director of the Clarington Older Adult Centre Board.

They have day programs that you have to line up to subscribe for. It's so active, and they're seniors. In fact, I'm a member of the Clarington Older Adult Centre, and some say I should spend more time there. I believe you've got to stay active, and that's what they're doing for people. They're involved with travel, art, photography, literature—as you said, dance, tai chi—

Interjection.

1530

Mr. John O'Toole: Heaven forbid—world politics; and just general debates. They do have guest speakers, as you're suggesting. It's a great forum within the communities to have these retired, knowledgeable, experienced, life-learning people—artists, whoever they are—coming and lecturing to people and getting some sort of legitimization for it: a certificate.

I would love to have a Ph.D. in aging. That would mean you have to have eight years. I'd have to continue to be participating in something progressively, to demonstrate that I could get a doctorate in learning.

When I look around the House, and I say this respectfully, there are a number of members leaving this time. I know some of them and have known some of them for a long time, and I worry for them. If they don't have something to compel them to see life as full, encouraging and full of hope, then I think that it's another step towards aging. I would say wish them well. I won't mention their names. I'm sure there'll be appropriate tributes at the time.

One of them is Wayne Arthurs. He's a good friend of mine. I served with him on regional council. He was the

mayor of Pickering. He was a high school teacher, I believe; a great guy. We happen to think about some things differently. It turns out that I'm right, he's wrong, but it's not that simple. We, through learning, quite honestly, make a better contribution. In that respect, that applies to everybody in the House here.

This opportunity here for Eldercollege is something we should pass to celebrate the idea of lifelong learning and to make a contribution in our own communities; to sow the seeds so it continues to take place. It calls for looking at other jurisdictions that already do it, whether it's in Vancouver or other cities. In fact, in Nova Scotia it's quite popular, because they have an aging population. Maybe it's only focused on culture or folklore, but there are examples today where this is in practice—so we don't have to reinvent the wheel—and it makes use of resources that are in our communities today.

I want to put a few other names on the list here. I have Don Welsh, who is the board chair of the Clarington Older Adults Association; Vi Ashton: She was my best coach when I was a councillor. She'd call me and give me what for on most stuff. Jenny Yorgason, who used to work for one of the members here at one time, is the executive director of community care in Port Perry, and Sally Barrie is with community care. They are important. They have day programs for people who are aging. That's part of what we're talking about.

Some of the people involved on the boards are Moe Richards, Jane Moores and Muriel Moynes, all people I know. Al Strike, a retired lawyer—a brilliant guy. If there's ever been a project built or money raised, Al Strike's name was involved in it. These people are still making a contribution to our community.

I think that we should all look forward to serving our communities as long as we are capable. This is one more way of making sure we do stay involved, engaged and capable. At the end of it, you get a degree or certificate. Lord knows we each give out certificates every week to someone for something they've achieved. This is one more way of making everyone in the community feel valued.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak, and I will be supporting Mr. Johnson's bill.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It is my honour to rise in support of the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock's bill, and I speak, as well, for my colleague from Beaches-East York.

Certainly this is a worthy cause and something to be supported. It brings back a charming individual from my past, when I think about Eldercollege, because this was a lady who was Ukrainian and was part of my congregation. I've actually spoken about her before in this House, because she was one of those tireless volunteers that the member from Durham talks about.

She passed away quite a while ago, now; she was in her 90s when she did pass on. The first third of her life was spent in absolute terror. She was a survivor of the

Holodomor. The second third of her life was spent raising children, and it looked like the third third of her life was going to be spent looking after her husband, who had Alzheimer's. We all felt for her because she was one of those busy people who you asked to do something because they're the ones who'll get it done, despite all the other constraints on their time.

When he passed on, her life really started. The first thing she did was visit some of her children out in BC and went to Eldercollege. She also travelled. She just gained; the last 10 years of her life were, she said constantly, the best 10 years of her life because she used them to the fullest. She travelled. She took courses. I remember her coming and sharing about some of those courses with her United Church women's group, about how she learned about the opera. She'd even sing us a little aria or two in Ukrainian and English. It was wonderful. There's an example of somebody who really was served by Eldercollege, but she had to go to BC to get that service. So, of course, it would be wonderful to have it here. I understand Canterbury College and the University of Windsor are very interested in hosting this.

Obviously, some study needs to be done. Obviously, some committee time needs to be spent on something like this. The first thing that came to my mind, when I think 55-plus—I don't know anybody 55 to even 65 who is in any way retired or who has time for Eldercollege. This is perhaps the new reality. Of course, not to be partisan about it, but there's only about a third of us now that have a defined benefit pension plan, so there's not a lot of people who can afford to retire at 55. I remember, back in the day of my parents' generation, when churches would have armies of volunteers of 55-plus, many of them, of course, who were women who worked at home all their lives and then continued to work for the church when their children grew up, but also those who just genuinely retired from work and were available for volunteer work. That volunteer pool is largely drying up now for many service organizations. This is sad. We all know that now, as you do the Tim Hortons or Walmart shopping, you are as likely to see somebody post-55 or 65 even performing those functions of a young student because they need the money; because they can't afford to retire. Or, if they finally do retire, they have such health issues that they're incapable of doing something like Eldercollege.

I only hold that out because that just seems to be part of our new reality in Ontario, for whatever reason. I can safely say that among folk whom I know who are 55 to 65, which is the bulk of my friends, there ain't no one retiring any time soon, mostly for pecuniary reasons, but also because they like what they do and they're engaged in their work and they want to keep working.

So I would want to see—and I'm sure I'm not alone in this; I understand that Canterbury College would want to see this—some studies done to show how many people, what pool of people, might take part in this and who they are and where they are, and whether it's feasible from that standpoint as well. Certainly, there's no question, as

the member from Durham said—it's always engaging to listen to the member from Durham, by the way. He speaks a lot in this place, so we're engaged a lot with him. He's enthusiastic. Of course, learning is lifelong. Of course, it is. We all know that. In fact, I was speaking to my friend from Beaches—East York, who was, I just learned, to do a doctorate one day. Great, except that when you're working here 12 hours a day, when do you find the time?

However, we all want to—and having done my doctorate, I have to say that I'm distanced enough now that I'm really at the stage where I wouldn't mind going back and hearing a lecture, but I don't want to do the work. That's the thing. I really don't want to have to turn in essays or write exams any more. Again, Eldercollege is a perfect place for that. It's the perfect place to take up a course—something you're interested in. The onus is not on doing any kind of work. You're there for the fun. You're there for the learning. Of course, you're there, also—let's be frank, because that's something that we should mention about Eldercollege—for the socialization and for the networking, because it's fun, and many of our elderly, particularly our elderly women, if their spouses pass on, are very, very isolated. If they're healthy enough to be part of Eldercollege, they're often living alone. This gives them a chance to get out into the world and do something for them, purely for them. It's a wonderful program in that regard.

Another elderly volunteer that we had at the church, who really runs the church still—she's always there. I would hazard a guess that she's probably in her 80s now. I caught her going in to take tai chi. She has just taken up tai chi in her 80s. I thought that was amazing. That's brilliant. Finally, I said to her: "Joan, you're doing something for yourself, how wonderful." Because she always, all her life—and very typical of many women of that age—doing things for other people. This gives them a chance to focus on themselves for a change, and again, I don't have the stats to back this up, but I would imagine that most of the students enrolling in Eldercollege are women, which is also an interesting aspect of it.

1540

I'm going to leave some moments for my colleague, but yes, absolutely, I totally support the member from Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock on this. Maybe it's just that I'm a big-city kid, and maybe there are more people who would take advantage of it in smaller communities—who knows?—but I would like to hear from him, perhaps in the time he's got left, if there has been any study done on the pool of possible students for Eldercollege in Ontario; where they're located, would Canterbury College be the place to go? Of course, then there's the overwhelming and overarching question of, will this government fund some of it? Because as much as we would want to see Trillium or anyone else contribute to the program, at the core of it, it would need some money from government.

So those two questions: (1) has he had discussions—again, he's part of the government—with his own cabinet

ministers about this, and are there funds possibly available; and (2) are the students really out there who would take advantage of this, particularly around Canterbury College and the University of Windsor, since they have indicated some interest in the program? Why not start there, where there is some interest?

I like to think that there would be an Eldercollege at the University of Toronto so that we in the Legislature could, on our lunch hours, go over to a lecture. Perhaps after work, instead of imbibing wine and goodies with lobbyists, we could actually learn another language or something across the park there. I'm interested in hearing from the member on that. Suffice it to say, we're supporting it.

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

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: I'm more than pleased to rise in support of my colleague from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock's bill, and I'm going to share my time with the member from Essex.

This particular bill takes me back to the days of when we used to have adult and continuing education—I remember those days—where, if you look at the history, the first ESL programs and the first literacy programs were run by the school boards to engage people in learning so that they could continue on with their education. In some cases, they also took upholstery classes, or maybe they took bridge classes or dancing or computers or small engine. I can remember myself over the years as a young mother having the opportunity to go to my local school and take a number of courses over eight to 10 weeks, usually on a Tuesday or a Thursday evening. It gave me a chance to learn something new, get engaged with some new folks and, of course, the socialization. But, more importantly, it made me use my grey cells. I think this is something that the member has identified: If you don't use it, you tend to lose it.

It's interesting, if you look at the statistics, especially now in an aging population, how important, in terms of health promotion and prevention, the whole issue of continuing education or adult learning really is. To play a game of bridge is not an easy thing to do; you have to use your brain because math is involved—yes, there's some good luck in cards. But there's also the opportunity to have another language.

There has been extensive research done that speaks to Alzheimer's and dementia—that helps to delay the onset. There are two courses you can take: One is dancing and the other, believe it or not, is painting. These are two activities that stimulate the brain synapses in such a way as to help with the delay. One, obviously, is dancing, which is called patterning; and the other is using your hands, which is another way of patterning as well, with your brain.

We know the research is there where we can make a difference in lives in terms of prevention and having the opportunity to delay the onset, but at the same time, we also know that in an aging population, isolation is a very serious issue, and lack of transportation to get to many

places you might like to go becomes a serious impediment to that learning. So when my colleagues spoke about the issue of rural and other opportunities, for example, libraries, community centres—in my case, I have seniors' centres—this is exactly what we need to be able to do to encourage more people to engage in lifelong learning or education.

We also know that the health reports say—again, it's the research—that if a person is engaged socially, if they're not isolated, if they in fact get up and get out, they are healthier.

They tend to not only engage their brains, they tend to eat together, they tend to socialize in a multitude of ways. That is health promotion; that is another way to keep people from being in isolation and from being lonely, because loneliness tends to add a great deal of stress, and then you get into mental health issues as you're older.

I'm not sure that I'm particularly enamoured of the “elder care” name since I fit into that category, so maybe we have to find another name for it, I say to my colleague. Again, I think it goes back to the member from High Park. The world has changed, and when we tend to think of elders, we have to define them: What are they? Who are they? Today, I think an elder is quite different from an elder of 50 years ago. Today you have people who—certainly in my case, in my community, a lot of them are engaged in computers. It's a whole new world, being able to access computers, and they would like to and would enjoy more computer learning. But again, I don't think they consider themselves old. That's certainly something that we would have to consider.

I also wanted to have a chance to speak about the opportunity to reach out, in terms of the courses, in a variety of other ways. As I said, I'm a strong proponent of adult and continuing education. We seem to do a fairly good job when it comes to engaging young people back into our school system who, for one reason or another, haven't fit into the system and have dropped out. But we have to encourage people to continue to upgrade their skills in a whole host of ways so that there's new technology, new opportunities and maybe a new career. Again, as has been indicated, we are not the same folks we were many years ago. Our opportunities are multi-fold in that we can do so many things. We're going to have so many different kinds of jobs, we're going to have so many different kinds of opportunities. Again, to engage, to explore and to have success is something that should be available to everyone in our society, not simply to a particular age group.

I'm very encouraged by the opportunity that's being presented here in this bill and I sincerely hope that it doesn't become a struggle between colleges and universities in education, in terms of how we can make this happen. If, in fact, we believe that this should happen—and I do, and I think everyone in this House does—then the question should be, what's the art of the possible and how do we make it happen? Because it's in the best interests of society as a whole.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity. To my colleague, thank you.

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

Mr. Michael Prue: My friend was very kind to leave me a few minutes and, really, that's all I need to speak to this.

The reality is that the member has come up with a very good idea. Like so many good ideas on Thursday afternoon, I await something to happen with it or to it finally, but it's an idea that needs to be studied, and as an idea for the long term, it's probably a very good thing to happen in this province and in this country as we continue to grey. That is what is said of the baby boom generation, of which I am a very proud member. There need to be opportunities for all of us to keep ourselves fit and mindful of the world, events, new opportunities and things to learn.

I'm also aware that in a place like the city of Toronto there are many opportunities for people to take—after-work courses and summer courses. The Toronto school board offers a great many opportunities, as do community colleges. But they are not specifically geared to those people over 55 or 60 years of age; they're geared to a very broad audience.

Unfortunately, it's been my experience, and in discussions with the school board, that there never seems to have been enough money to operate the courses that they need. They have people who are willing to train, they have people who are willing to learn, but there never seems to be enough opportunity for money for them to carry out what they know they can do. They have spoken to me many times, school trustees, saying, "We get a per capita formula for young people, we get one for students of high school age, but if somebody's older than that, if somebody who never had a chance to go to high school, if somebody who came from another country who never had a chance to study these specific items and wants to gain some Canadian experience or some Canadian educational experience, the money that's available for them is simply not there." Therefore, they cannot offer, say, a course on a Shakespearian play that one might take in high school, that somebody maybe from—I'll pick a place—Afghanistan had never had an opportunity to read or to study. If they wanted to read or study that so that they could immerse themselves in our culture, then they don't have that opportunity.

1550

The reason I'm bringing that up is because if this idea is to come to fruition, and it should, then we have to look at how it is going to be paid for. We have to look at whether we are expecting these Eldercollege students to pay for it themselves, in which case, yes, some will take the course, but too many will not. Do we expect funding to come from private resources? Then we had better pull out those private resources and get them ready. Or do we expect government to shoulder some of the burden? I'm not sure what is planned here or even what is possible, because this is early stages, but I would suggest that any idea worth doing is worth doing well. In the end, there is probably going to have to be some money attached to this

if it is to be everything it can be and the success that this member, I know, wants it to be.

To the University of Windsor Canterbury College, which put this forward, I'm looking forward to taking a course there, in my retirement perhaps, one day, too.

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

Mr. Bruce Crozier: I'm pleased as well to stand today in support of my colleague from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock and his resolution on Eldercollege. Like my colleague from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, I, too, talk to seniors, for two reasons: One, I am one; the second is that all my friends are ones, too. So I can appreciate what this might mean for myself, my friends and others.

I want to say at the outset, too, that Dr. Lloyd Brown-John, from the University of Windsor, who is the driving force behind this effort at Canterbury College, is a friend, someone who I have known over the years. He's a great expert in wine and scotch, so I can think already of two courses that he might facilitate that I might be interested in.

But it goes far beyond that, of course. When my colleague from Etobicoke mentioned the name "Eldercollege," I kind of think that has a certain amount of respect to it, you know? You respect your elders and that sort of thing.

But it is a concept that may be new to some of us. It is non-credit courses that are provided, as has been said, for persons over the age of 55, in locations and at a cost that would encourage a number of people to participate.

I want to point out, too, that the keys to Eldercollege are fourfold, as Lloyd Brown-John points out:

(1) An authentic relationship with an institution of post-secondary education—that's available in Windsor, where this idea is being proposed, but certainly also, as my colleague from Parkdale–High Park said, here in the city of Toronto or, of course, anywhere where there's a college or a university, but I think it could even be, by extension, Internet courses that could be conducted by the Eldercollege;

(2) A diverse array of courses—not taught but facilitated—open to any person over the age of 55, and I think that's an important distinction, that it is not a course that's taught where you have to have intermediate testing, and as has been pointed out, you don't have assignments or exams, but you are able to learn from the facilitator;

(3) Courses held in locations convenient to senior citizens, taking into account limited mobility; and

(4) Partnerships with private sector sponsors and participants ranging from management of senior residences to restaurants and community service facilities.

So I think there are lots of options that we can look at to facilitate these courses, and I'm sure that the subject matter is simply unlimited; that it goes beyond the first two that I mentioned that Dr. Brown-John is very expert in. It's kind of one of these things where you think of it and we can do it. And if the person who thinks about a particular course isn't in a position to facilitate it, they

very well might know someone who does, or if the idea is put out there and they reach out, that there would be somebody with some expertise in the area of interest that would facilitate that.

One of the reasons that I'm very interested in the initiative that's coming from Canterbury College, of course, is that it's in my area. Canterbury College is in Windsor, but certainly would serve the areas of Essex county. In fact, Dr. Brown-John has suggested a number of places in the county that the courses could be presented in. He's thinking of five campuses: in the south part of Essex county, in Leamington, Kingsville, Wheatley, Essex, Harrow and Cottam; in the north part, there's Tecumseh, Lakeshore, Tilbury and Comber; on the west side, there's Amherstburg, LaSalle and Malden; in the central west, of course, is Windsor; and central east is Windsor, as well as even into the Chatham-Kent area.

One other area that I suggested that I can think of is that these courses now, with Skype that we have on the Internet, could be virtually taught over the Internet.

So I agree—in fact, I'll emphasize what's been said by all—that education should be a continuing thing, age should not be the deciding factor and that the opportunity to continue to learn—and it's been suggested that some might be retiring from this place; I'm one of them. I think this is one of the great things that I will be able to look forward to, to continue to keep my mind active and do some things that I haven't been able to do over the last 17 years, and perhaps extend my field of vision.

I'm looking forward to this. I hope we adopt this resolution. I think it's going to be used all across this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The honourable member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock has two minutes for his response.

Mr. Rick Johnson: I greatly appreciate the comments that were made this afternoon by the members from Durham, Parkdale-High Park, Etobicoke Centre, Beaches-East York and Essex. You raised a number of good questions.

The member from Durham spoke about volunteerism and how important it is. Of course, the way this program is being talked about by Dr. Lloyd Brown-John is very dependent upon volunteerism, so that'll be key.

The member from Parkdale-High Park talked about age 55. I know I'm personally working on the freedom 75 piece now for myself.

Location of programs is going to be crucial, and where this can be so successful in rural Ontario is, as the member from Essex says, spreading it out into areas all over an area and offering courses; taking the courses to the people who are interested in taking them.

The member from Beaches-East York talked about funding. I think having support for this resolution gives me a little bit more ammunition to go to the ministry and talk about what kind of supports can be offered. I've had conversations with the senior secretariat about this, and I believe that there's support there to see this happen.

The member from Etobicoke Centre hit on one of the key things, and that was the socialization aspect of what

this could bring, of getting people out and involved and trying to combat some of that isolation that takes place.

To the member from Essex: I just want to thank you for staying on a Thursday afternoon. Normally you'd be on the highway somewhere between here and Windsor, and I greatly appreciate you staying to speak so kindly about this resolution.

The member from Etobicoke said, "So how do we make this happen?" I think that's the key thing. We have an opportunity to tap into the expertise that exists in our communities.

I thank you all for your comments today and I look forward to really becoming a champion for this program and making it happen.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The time provided for private members' public business has expired. It's time to vote.

IMITATION FIREARMS REGULATION AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA RÉGLEMENTATION DES FAUSSES ARMES À FEU

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We'll first deal with ballot item number 10, standing in the name of Mr. Dickson.

Mr. Dickson has moved second reading of Bill 189, An Act to amend the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act, 2000 with respect to the sale of imitation firearms.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Dickson?

Mr. Joe Dickson: I'd like to please refer this bill to the committee on justice policy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Is it agreed that the bill be referred to the committee on justice policy? So ordered.

RADON AWARENESS AND PREVENTION ACT, 2011 LOI DE 2011 SUR LA SENSIBILISATION AU RADON ET LA PROTECTION CONTRE L'INFILTRATION DE CE GAZ

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will now deal with ballot item number 11.

Mr. Moridi has moved second reading of Bill 182, An Act to raise awareness about radon, provide for the Ontario Radon Registry and reduce radon levels in dwellings and workplaces.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Moridi?

Mr. Reza Moridi: I would like to request that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Agreed that the bill go to the Standing Committee on Social Policy? So ordered.

ADULT EDUCATION

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will now deal with ballot item number 12.

Mr. Johnson has moved private members' notice of motion number 75.

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

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Orders of the day? The minister without portfolio.

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Phillips has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House is adjourned until next Monday at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1602.

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Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
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Hampton, Howard (NDP) Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Kenora–Rainy River Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
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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
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Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	

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