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Monday 30 May 2011

Lundi 30 mai 2011

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 30 May 2011

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 30 mai 2011

The House met at 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by a moment of silence for inner thought and personal reflection.

Prayers.

WEARING OF CARNATIONS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent to wear carnations today in the House in honour of multiple sclerosis day at the Legislature

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

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: I would like to welcome to the Ontario Legislature today members of the Society of Management Accountants of Ontario, fellow CMAs. They're sitting in the east and west lobbies—I think they got split up somehow—Janet Treasure, Caroline Kolch, Larry Tomlin, John Hsu and Scott Miller. I want to welcome them to the Legislature.

I would also like to welcome Michael Scott, a student from the University of Toronto who is working in my office as an intern this summer. He is seated in the east gallery as well. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'd like to introduce in the House today Bill and Liz Murphy from Kanata, who, in an auction, bought this day at Queen's Park with—I'm not their MPP, though. They're actually from Kanata. But they were supporting the Bonnechere Union Public Library, which is in my riding, of course, and we're thankful to have their support.

Joining them today is Bill's brother, Geoff, and his sister, Margaret Imbleau. Welcome them all to the House and Queen's Park, please.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to welcome Mr. John Clifford, chair of the MS Society board of directors; Mrs. Kim Steele, who is the manager of strategic initiatives; Mrs. Barbara Dickson, who is a person living with MS; as well as Mrs. Norine Thomassen, who is a caregiver to a person living with MS. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Carol Mitchell: I'm very pleased to rise to welcome everyone involved today in Foodland Ontario's celebration of local foods. I encourage all members of the Legislature to come out and enjoy all the good things that

grow in Ontario. Thank you to all the farmers, processors and producers who are in attendance and later today.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: We're happy to have here today Eleanor McMahon with us on the first day of Toronto's Bike Month. She's the CEO and founder of the Share the Road Cycling Coalition and a respected advocate for policies supporting safe cycling; also Hamish Wilson, who has been another long-time advocate for bike lanes in Toronto.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I'd like to welcome the chair of the Melanoma Network of Canada, Annette Cyr, and also Dr. Rosen and Mr. Munn and one of the activists, Jeff Lyon, in the east gallery here. Welcome.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I'd like to welcome my friend Maggie Conway, who's here today. As well, I'd like to welcome two of the hardest-working women in North Bay: my constituency staff, Amber Livingstone and Pauline Carriere, who are down today. I welcome them to the Legislature.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I would like to introduce, and I'm pleased to welcome, the family of page Rachel Santini from York South-Weston. I'm pleased to introduce her mother, Barbara Santini; her father, Peter; her sister, Sara Santini; her cousins Daniella Ricci, Laura Ricci and Amanda Ricci; her grandmother, Luisa Martin, and her grandfather, Ceaser Martin; her grandmother, Corrada Santini, and her grandfather, Filippo Santini; and also her teacher, Michael Iacobelli. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: Could I welcome to the Legislature three interns who are working both at the Ministry of the Attorney General and at aboriginal affairs—Kaylee Silver, Lindsay Jenner and Christian von Donat—who are in the gallery today.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I would like to introduce Dr. Brian Stevenson, the president of Lakehead University, who is about to come in at any moment.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am very happy to introduce Josh Morgan and his master's of public administration students from the great University of Western Ontario to the House today.

Mr. David Caplan: We're fortunate today to have four interns from the Ontario Medical Association joining us: Greg Oman, Rebecca Robb, Melissa Gifkins and Bailie McGurn. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Bill Mauro: I have three people I would like to introduce today visiting from Thunder Bay's Lakehead University: the president and vice-chancellor, Brian Stevenson; the vice-president of external relations, Lee Gould; and the vice-president of administration and finance, Mike Pawlowski.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would also like to reinforce the welcome to Eleanor McMahon of Share the Road, and I'd like to welcome Brian Smith, who's the executive director of greenwood community services. He's here because he bid on lunch with me, and I look forward to having him in the House today.

Hon. Margaret R. Best: Good morning. I understand that there is a Mr. Bruce Cosburn in the Legislature today, and I would like to take this opportunity to welcome him to the Legislature.

Mr. Mike Colle: I would like to introduce "Brother Jeff" Lyons, who's here today. He has done a lot of great work fighting prostate cancer over the years. He's now taken on the battle of fighting melanoma. Welcome, Jeff.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On behalf of the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and page Caleb Jones, I'd like to welcome his father, Bruce Jones; his mother, Ruth Jones; and his sister, Bethany Jones, to the Legislature today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Seated in the Speaker's gallery today, in recognition of MS day here at Queen's Park, I'd like to welcome Cathy Topping and Pat Chatten to Queen's Park today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Seated in the Speaker's gallery this morning, I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome a good friend of mine, Don Cosens, along with friends Charles Humber and Ed Ralph. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN HOUSE

Mr. Peter Kormos: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: In view of recent news reports, would the Speaker now and finally impose an absolute ban on BlackBerrys in the chamber to protect the privacy of members?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I remind the honourable member that the Speaker is but a servant of the House. If the Speaker had his way, notwithstanding it is a great Ontario company, there would be no BlackBerrys in this chamber.

VISITORS

Hon. Charles Sousa: I apologize, but I do see some prominent members of my community—Tony Belas and Fernanda Pereira—who have arrived, and I would just like to welcome them to the House.

1040

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is for the Premier. This weekend, the Ontario PCs released our plan to give Ontario families tax and hydro bill relief on the way to balancing the books. Changebook puts forward an income-sharing plan that will save a typical two-income

family \$476 of their taxable income. We have a plan to save 5% more of the tax they pay on income up to \$75,000. We have a plan to save families more than \$275 on their hydro bills. Premier McGuinty and his team don't have a credible plan to get control over reckless spending, to balance the books or to offer families relief. He refuses to release a plan publicly.

Why won't you come clean with Ontario families, who already know you'll balance the books by increasing taxes?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I appreciate the question raised by my honourable colleague. I'm not sure it is fair to describe what was released during the course of the weekend as a plan; I think it's really more a case of 229 risky promises, characterized as well by a \$10-billion hole. There was a lot of negativity and a lot of pessimism that emerged from that particular weekend.

I just want to take this opportunity to congratulate Ontarians on the great work that they've been doing. They have, in fact, been building together. Ontarians, during the course of the past eight years, have built better education in the province of Ontario, they have built better health care and they have built a stronger economy. That's what happens when you work together and continue to build together.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: For eight years now, Premier McGuinty has raised taxes. He has invented new taxes. He has even become the first Premier in Ontario history to use one tax grab to hide another tax grab, during the HST eco fee disaster.

Premier McGuinty is incapable of coming up with a plan that does not include tax increases. An Ontario PC government will balance the budget and lower taxes as part of our Changebook. Why not show Ontario families that, to balance the provincial budget, you'll hit them with a tax increase that puts an even bigger hole in their family budget?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: It saddens me to have to report that, in that list of 229 risky promises, there is—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Leeds will withdraw the comment. I heard it earlier under his breath, and I would appreciate him not using that.

Mr. Steve Clark: I withdraw.

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, that negativity and pessimism can't help but emerge from time to time.

In that list of 229 risky promises, characterized by a gaping \$10-billion hole, sadly, there is no plan there to create jobs. Worse than that, there is a plan to get rid of 50,000 clean energy jobs in the province of Ontario.

We think we know where Ontarians stand on this particular matter. Not only do they want clean air for their children to breathe, but they want those new clean energy jobs. They want us to seize those new manufacturing opportunities and be at the forefront here in—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just remind all the members that we do have a number of guests who are here visiting the Legislature today, and they too would like to hear both the questions and the answers.

Final supplementary.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Premier McGuinty thinks he'll get away with his secret plan to raise taxes if he just follows the same steps he took in the past. In 2003, and again in 2007, he swore up and down that he wouldn't raise taxes. But after the election, what did he do? He raised taxes. As Dr. Phil says, the best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour.

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We'll start with the member for Simcoe–Grey and the government House leader. If they want to have a cross-floor discussion, take it outside of this chamber.

I heard that the Minister of Community Safety couldn't hear the question, because I heard him comment, "What did she say?" So I would just ask that the government members be respectful of the questions and that the opposition side be respectful of the answers.

Please continue.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: The fact of the matter is that you don't want to change, but Ontario families want change. The choice they face on October 6 is a McGuinty Liberal carbon tax and a 2% increase in the HST, or an Ontario PC government that lowers taxes so that families have more to share with their loved ones. Why can't you be honest about your plan to raise taxes?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, my honourable colleague says that they are—for months, in fact years, they've spoken out against the health premium, but now they're going to keep it. For years, now, they've been telling us they stand firmly and foursquare against the HST, but now they're going to keep it. This is what I'd ask Ontarians to keep in mind as we join the debate, which I think is going to be very important and very earnest.

The Conservative Party is telling us they intend to find \$2.3 billion in cuts by way of savings. They want to find \$2.3 billion in cuts by way of savings. The last Conservative government claimed that they would find \$500 million in cuts by way of savings. I want you to remember what happened back then to our schools and our health care. Imagine what's going to happen when they quadruple the number of cuts they intend to find inside government services.

TAXATION

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is back to the Premier. Let's be clear: Premier McGuinty is going to raise taxes to pay for his reckless spending—there's no question—and the downgrade by the Fitch rating shows that bond agencies don't believe the Premier has the self-restraint to stop reckless spending. So Premier McGuinty

is going to do what he always does: He's going to raise taxes. He raised taxes after a pledge not to raise taxes. Not even a written guarantee protects Ontario families from Premier McGuinty.

An Ontario PC government will lower taxes. How can you keep raising taxes for Ontario families who already have sacrificed too much?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to take the opportunity to congratulate and thank Ontarians. Because of their efforts, our schools are back on track, our health care is back on track, our economy is back on track, jobs are coming back and we are leading the nation in terms of recovery from the recession. We're back on track.

What we have today is a proposal on the part of the Conservative Party of Ontario—the PCs—to go ahead with a dangerous, reckless and risky plan that has at its centre a \$10-billion hole. We know what that is going to mean. It's going to compromise and jeopardize our economic recovery, it's going to jeopardize our schools and it's going to jeopardize our health care.

Ontarians don't want to go back. We've worked so hard together to get on track. We want to keep moving forward. We want to keep building together.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Here is the contrast: An Ontario PC government will lower taxes; Premier McGuinty will raise taxes. He can't help it; it's what he does.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The Minister of Education, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the member from Peterborough will please come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): You just did say something.

Please continue.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: The Premier can't help it. It's what he does; it's just in his nature. He raises taxes, and he's not going to do anything to stop his reckless spending. So there's no other thing to do; he has to raise taxes. Even the Premier has been saying he's going to keep doing what he has been doing. That's code for more reckless spending and more tax increases. Ontario families are looking for change: change that gives them the relief they need and the more time together that they cherish.

How did you get to be so tired and so out of touch with all the families out there who need a change, relief and some respect?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: It is true: We intend to continue to work with teachers and with students and with moms and dads to further raise those test scores and graduation rates. It is true that we intend to work with our doctors and our nurses and all our health care professionals to improve the quality of care we deliver to all our families. It's true that we intend to continue working with our businesses, both big and small, employers and workers, to further strengthen this economy, to create more jobs, to land more foreign direct investments and to ensure that we have the economic capacity to continue to

support important social programs as well as our schools and health care. So it's true: We intend to pursue a positive, optimistic direction on behalf of Ontario families.

1050

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

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Not even a global recession could stop Premier McGuinty from raising taxes, and he needs the money now more than ever because he's not going to stop reckless spending on pet projects. Premier McGuinty can't stop raising taxes. Well, we can, and we will.

The choice Ontario families face on October 6 is Premier McGuinty, who will increase taxes and throw the money away on reckless spending and waste, or an Ontario PC government that will save them more of their taxable income.

Premier, why do you think Ontario families will sacrifice four more years for you to raise their taxes over and over again?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: What Ontario families are not prepared to sacrifice is the progress they've made in their schools, the progress they've made in their health care and the progress when it comes to turning this economy around.

We are inherently positive, optimistic, successful, determined, resolute builders. That's what we do in Ontario. They don't get that. They don't understand who we are. That's how we've enjoyed the successes. It hasn't just been our government alone, so we came up with a plan. At the end of the day, Ontarians came together, we committed ourselves to improving our schools, we committed ourselves to improving our health care, we committed ourselves to standing up for our economy. That's the success we've had; that's the success we'll continue.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member from Leeds, it would be useful if you were in your seat.

I heard somebody say that it's getting a little rowdy. I think it would be great, as we enter our final week, if we could have one question period with silence.

New question.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. Last week, I announced that a New Democrat government would restore Ontario's general corporate tax rate and focus on the priorities that matter to families: making life affordable and ensuring health care is actually there when you need it.

In the same week, the Liberal Premier of British Columbia said her government would increase corporate tax rates to give more help to people. My question is, is she a reckless, job-killing rookie, or is she wondering whether family budgets should come before the corporate bottom line?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I appreciate the question from my honourable colleague, but I'd like to think we're

bringing something here which she fails to recognize is absolutely essential to govern in the 21st century, and that's balance. We have to ensure that we have in place a strong economy to support our schools and our health care and our social programs, all of which I know she supports. We have to ensure that we have an economic environment here that is inviting to business, that is inviting to our entrepreneurs to continue to invest.

I am proud to report on a couple of facts. First of all, we are second only to California in all of North America in attracting foreign direct investment into our province. Secondly, we are leading the country when it comes to our businesses investing in new equipment and new technology. They are enhancing their productivity, and they're hiring more people.

In April, we had the highest job-creation month in the last 22 years in our province.

The fact of the matter is, we're getting the balance right.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: In October, families are going to have a choice—a choice between corporate tax cuts and backward tax schemes that reward the wealthiest Ontarians, or New Democrat proposals to make life easier for all Ontario families.

Eight years ago, the Premier offered a similar critique of these corporate tax giveaways. What changed? Why did the Premier decide to side with the Conservatives?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I'd ask my honourable colleague to kindly look at the big picture in terms of what we've done. We have not just reduced the tax burden on our businesses, and we have not just reduced the tax burden on our families, which I would ask her to acknowledge at some point in time, but we've done a number of things that help families with pocketbook issues.

For example, we have in place—the first of its kind—the Ontario child benefit. It's helping 1.3 million Ontario children. It's \$1,100 per child.

Full-day kindergarten: That initiative alone is saving a family thousands of dollars on an annual basis in terms of their child care costs that they otherwise would have had to pay. At the same time, we're putting in place a program, the first of its kind in North America, that gives Ontario kids a leg up on the competition. It's giving them a head start in their studies at school.

Those are the kinds of initiatives that we're putting in place as a matter of balance: a strong economy, strong social programs, strong public services.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I haven't been leader of the New Democrats for all that very long, but I've been on the job long enough to know that people in this province are feeling squeezed, and they need some help.

Today's news reports that CEOs at Canada's top largest 100 companies saw their compensation jump by 13% last year. That's \$700,000 a year. Most families would have to work a decade to see that kind of money.

Why is the government funding tax relief for CEOs getting six-figure raises but refusing to help families struggling with the cost of hydro and home heating bills?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: On the matter of pocketbook issues, again, I'd ask my honourable colleague to acknowledge that we have put in place a permanent income tax cut. The average family is benefiting from a permanent income tax cut this year of \$355 and every year going forward—I said \$355.

We have in place a new energy and property tax credit; it's up to \$1,025 every year. We have a new Ontario senior homeowners' property tax grant that's \$500 annually. We doubled that from what it used to be before. We have a clean energy benefit that's reducing our electricity bills by 10%. We've also doubled student assistance.

Again, I want to report to my colleague, and I'm proud of this, that we are the fastest job creator in the country. In April, we created more jobs—over 50,000—in one month than we have in the last 22 years.

I'd like to think we're going in the right direction.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Premier. After eight years in office, the Premier seems to have forgotten the people who sent him here. This is what they're telling us. Larry Vanee writes: "My family and myself are really struggling with the rise in cost of everything. Our hydro bill has doubled since January, the price of fuel makes it difficult to get to work and the price of basic food makes it difficult to eat healthy."

Why does the Premier think a tax cut for CEOs getting six-figure salary increases is more important than taking the HST off Larry's hydro and home heating?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to tell you what Mario Velasco said. He's one of the first people hired by CS Wind to build wind towers in Windsor. Before being hired, he had been working at temporary jobs. This is what he said: "I have two kids at home, pay rent and lots of bills. So this job is going to help a lot with that."

I think one of the most important things we can do together to help the people of Ontario, and to help families specifically, is to put in place the kinds of measures that we have, which are helping to create new jobs here. In particular, we're seizing an exciting new opportunity in clean energy technology and manufacturing. We're positioning ourselves at the forefront of North America. We're creating thousands of new jobs.

I think one of the most important things we can do for our families is to give them that opportunity, give them that hopefulness, reinforce their sense of optimism and create jobs for them.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This is about the Premier's priorities. Tina Carter writes this: "The price of everything seems to keep going up. Even groceries are getting hard to buy, but wages are not going up at all...."

"I have two children ... and both my husband and I work full-time jobs...."

"It should not be this hard."

If Tina works a decade, she might make as much as the average CEO is collecting in his bonus cheque. Why is the Premier making corporate tax cuts a priority but telling people like Tina that he can't provide HST relief for home heating and hydro bills?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to remind my honourable colleague—at some point, I hope that she will admit to this: She asked us for months on end to reduce electricity bills by 8%. We said that was insufficient, and we reduced them by 10%. That's 10% off the whole bill; that's 2% more than she had proposed. So I'd ask her to admit to that at some point in time.

I want to remind my honourable colleague as well that our plan is working even in her hometown of Hamilton, which I'm proud to report. During the recession, unemployment there was at 9.1%. This last month, unemployment in the city of Hamilton was down to 5.8%. Time after time, I have stood in this House and talked about our partnerships with businesses in Hamilton to create jobs in that very community. Our plan is working, even in her own community, and I'd ask her at some point in time to admit to the success that we're enjoying by building together.

1100

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Wine gets better with age. After eight years of Liberal majority rule, this government is more like socks—it's time for a change.

We need change in Ontario because this government has not been listening to people like Marion Roth, for example. Marion says this:

"We are going down fast and at the rate everything is going up (except his wage) we may lose our house by the end of the year...."

"Stress levels are unbelievable. Choices of food or oil for the furnace, or can we pay the hydro and water bills this month are things we have never had to worry about before."

The Premier will be facing voters like Marion Roth very soon. Does he have any explanation for his misguided priorities for her?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I met a fellow by the name of Mike Walker, who's working at Samco, a solar stand producer. This is what he said: "My daughters (10 and 13) always speak of the environment, its protection and ways we can do our part. I found myself out of work during the recession and, coincidentally, the growing solar industry provided me with a job opportunity that is close to my children's hearts."

So I think that we've hit the sweet spot. What we have in Ontario now is a growing industry that is not only cleaning up our air, it's not only generating revenues, but it's also, at the same time, creating jobs for moms and dads so they can go home and look their kids in the eye with a sense of pride and optimism.

We are inherently builders. Right now, we're in the middle of building an exciting new clean energy industry. We're going to be at the forefront in North America.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is to the Premier. An Ontario PC government will attack waste and rein in runaway spending. Premier McGuinty will not. He'll just raise taxes again to pay for his reckless spending sprees, like his secret deals with public sector union bosses.

Premier, Ontario families make sacrifices to pay your tax increases, only to find out you throw money away on secret raises and secret bonuses, the latest being a secret bonus to get jail guards to show up for work. It's not a matter of if there will be more reckless spending on secret deals, but who's next and how much?

Why should Ontario families pay millions for you to spend recklessly on your sweetheart deals?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think what we should focus on by way of those preparatory remarks is the reference to public sector union bosses, because that harkened back to another time that we had in the province of Ontario. Every once in a while they can't help but allow that negativity and that pessimism and that anger to emerge and reveal itself. That's not who Ontarians are.

I want to, again, consider what Ontarians have been able to accomplish during the last eight years by working hard and building together. They've turned our schools around: The kids are doing better, and we've had no strikes. They've turned our health care around: Ontarians are getting more access to more care than they've ever had before. They've turned this economy around: They've pulled ahead out of a very difficult recession, and jobs are coming back.

That's who we are—not that negativity, not that—

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

Mr. Norm Miller: I guess the Premier has forgotten about his \$17-billion deficit.

The secret OPSEU pay increase was a pretty reckless use of money that Ontario families sacrificed to pay; the 10% merit bonuses to eHealth executives—reckless. Paying jail guards a bonus to show up for work is just plain reckless.

The choice Ontario families face on October 6 is more reckless tax increases so Premier McGuinty can continue his reckless spending, or an Ontario PC government that will lower their taxes and stop the reckless spending sprees on your sweetheart deals.

How do you justify increasing taxes even more to pay for your reckless spending sprees?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: If we're going to use the word "reckless," I think we have to use it in the context of those 228 promises, and I think we have to use it to describe that \$10-billion hole that's going to put our fragile economic recovery at risk. It's going to put the progress that we've achieved together in our schools and our health care at risk.

I don't think Ontarians want to go there. I think they want to keep moving forward. I think they want to keep building together. I think they're tired of the past. They've work so hard to get their schools back on track, they've worked so hard to get their health care back and they've worked so hard together to get our economy back on track.

They want to keep moving forward. They want to continue to be optimistic. They want to continue to be positive. They see a bright future ahead for themselves, their children and their grandchildren. They know that the way to get there is not through anger, envy and resentment; it's by continuing to build together.

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Mr. Peter Kormos: To the Minister of Labour: According to a major Workers' Action Centre report released just a few weeks ago, one in three low-wage workers have had wages unfairly withheld or outright stolen by bosses. One example is Lillian Namukasa, who left Uganda to make a new life in Canada as a live-in caregiver for two small children. But after working full-time for two years she was paid just \$2,100 and then fired without cause.

As the minister who says he's responsible for working conditions in this province, how can he allow something like this to happen in Ontario?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Let me be clear, and to all those who are most vulnerable in the workplace: It's this government that has taken a number of initiatives to reach out and to protect those very most vulnerable. Anyone who is out there working and is not getting paid—it's totally unacceptable. We recognize that and we encourage every effort to resolve it. That is why, since we came into power, we've doubled the number of inspectors who are out there; we've increased the number of prosecutions. When you were in power and that side was in power, over the 12 years they were there, only 97 prosecutions occurred. We've had over 1,200. As a result, we've recovered \$65 million. We'll continue to do that.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Ms. Namukasa and Ms. de Jesus think that's hokey. Vivian de Jesus is another woman. She cared for an elderly woman and her two adult children with disabilities for 10 years. For the last two years she lived with the family, working 132 hours—three times the statutory work week. Again, how on earth can this minister responsible for working conditions in this province allow these kinds of abusive employment practices to exist? He's been minister while this has been going on on his watch. These women find him irresponsible; we find him disgraceful.

Hon. Charles Sousa: It is not allowed. That's the point. That's why we're out there making investigations. That why we're being proactive in our investigations. I should say that it was this side of the House that introduced laws to further protect those live-in caregivers, not that side.

In fact, in 2009, we introduced the Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act. This was to ensure that

live-in caregivers are properly protected under the law. What did we do? We included bans on all fees. We prohibited any practices such as withholding documents and we prohibited reprisals. We want to enhance education and outreach. We've introduced a number of ways to reach those most vulnerable in 23 different languages.

I say this to those who are feeling intimidated: Call the ministry. We will react. We will ensure that their issues are covered and we will do everything in our power to protect them.

LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

Mr. Bill Mauro: My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, last week and on several occasions, the Leader of the Opposition indicated that if their party is elected he would eliminate LHINs, or local health integration networks, and not replace them with anything. He has also implied that there's a large cost associated with the operation of the LHINs as compared with the previous system, and that by eliminating LHINs he would somehow be able to fund some of the 229 promises he has made so far as the election nears.

Can the minister please tell the House the cost associated with the work that the LHINs do, the cost associated with the work done by what the LHINs replaced and the role that the LHINs play in our health care system?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Scrapping the LHINs will take away the local knowledge, the local expertise and the local voice that have resulted in much better health care for the people of Ontario: lower wait times and better access to care. LHINs streamline health care so it works for the patients.

We know what the PC platform really means. It's a dark, pessimistic and angry plan to close hospitals, fire nurses and cut services. While they may have been distracted over the past few months on damage control related to some of their candidates, we have been focused on getting better health care in local communities.

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LHINs cost about \$70 million a year—that's about the same as the previous regional authorities that they replaced—with much better results. We now have true local health care decision-making—

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

Mr. Bill Mauro: Minister, in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, the North West LHIN represents local decision-making by the people of Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario. The Leader of the Opposition wants to remove that local decision-making, take it away from Thunder Bay and bring it all back to Toronto. In other words, Toronto knows best.

He would also be responsible for the loss of a number of good jobs in my community. But again, most importantly, he would greatly reduce northerners' ability to shape their own health care delivery.

Right now in northwestern Ontario, wait times for cancer, cataract, hip and knee are some of the best in the province. But apparently the Leader of the Opposition thinks that Toronto knows better than Thunder Bay and northern Ontario.

Minister, can you tell this House what the loss of local decision-making would mean to Thunder Bay and all communities across this province?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We have seen what happens when health care is managed out of Queen's Park: Hospitals are closed and there is no understanding of local conditions.

Alberta eliminated regional health authorities, with unfortunate results. As the Ottawa Citizen wrote, "That province lost a grip on what was good for the community."

Our government is not the only voice in support of our LHINs. In fact, Dr. Wilbert Keon, a card-carrying Conservative, said that scrapping the LHINs would be "the stupidest move" he's ever heard of, saying it would "undo years and years of progress."

I'm proud of the accomplishments of our LHINs.

The angry, the ill-thought-out plan of the Hudak PCs will take us backwards. It will bring all decision-making back to Queen's Park because they think Toronto knows best.

SEX OFFENDERS

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: My question is to the Premier as well. Our platform, Changebook, puts forward the plan for an Ontario PC government to use GPS technology to monitor registered sex offenders and other high-risk offenders. A Tim Horton PC government will protect our communities by making sex offenders wear GPS bracelets that track their whereabouts.

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister of Health, Minister of Consumer Services, Minister of Energy, member from Eglinton–Lawrence, member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan, member from Ancaster, Minister of Community and Social Services, Minister of Health for a second time, Minister of Energy for a second time.

Please continue.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Premier McGuinty will not. However, he will reimburse the cost of a GPS system that the chair of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board expended while on a road trip to South Carolina.

Why has Premier McGuinty made it a priority to pay for a GPS system for bureaucrats, but not for GPS monitors to keep our community safe from registered sex offenders?

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: What I am worried about is a proposal I heard to place the prisoners from our system into our neighbourhoods, our schoolyards, our business

areas, amongst our families, senior citizens and so on. I was very alarmed to hear that because I know in the province of Alberta they considered and abandoned that particular measure. They did not even proceed with it because of two things: One, they obviously saw that it's very dangerous to have individuals convicted of sex crimes, convicted of such things as violent assaults, break-and-enter, or drug peddling in our neighbourhoods, our schoolyards, our parks and so on. I'm very worried that somebody would even float this idea—

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I was actually talking about GPS monitoring. Maybe you didn't get the question. Okay? Premier McGuinty has famously said that crime isn't a priority for his government, and it shows. For eight years, he had the chance to make use of technology like GPS technology or create a website of where registered sex offenders live. He didn't, he won't, and he can't.

The choice facing Ontario families this October is very simple: the McGuinty government saying that crime is not a priority to keep communities safe from registered sex offenders, or an Ontario PC government that protects families who work hard and play by the rules from those who don't.

How did you get so out of touch with the priorities of Ontario families? Why don't you listen to member Jim Brownell? He'll straighten you out on these answers.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Speaking of making crime a priority, this government has put 2,300 more police officers on Ontario streets. It has invested nearly \$90 million in 30 new OPP detachments, communication centres and forensic identification centres, mainly in rural and northern parts of the province. It has established a first-of-its-kind \$51-million guns and gangs strategy. It has invested \$20 million to date in the highly successful Toronto anti-violence intervention strategy, invested \$6 million to date in the provincial anti-violence intervention strategy and recently announced an additional \$16 million in funding over the next two years. We have increased the budget of the Ontario Provincial Police by more than 50%, and since 2003 we have seen a consistent decline in crime—

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

CYCLING POLICIES

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Today marks the launch of Bike Month in Toronto. The minister knows that we badly need a provincial bike policy to fund cycling infrastructure, promote bicycle tourism and promote safe cycling. Last fall, you said the government would release a cycling policy in a few months. We only have a few months before the writ is dropped. When can we expect a bike policy?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm very happy to answer this very friendly question from the member opposite. I

was thrilled over the weekend to be in the Warton-Tobermory area, where there was a community ride to celebrate the paved shoulders on Highway 6 that we were able to complete. I joined Eleanor McMahon and Adam Belanger, who were organizing the ride with members of the community across the age range. I rode beside a 6-year-old boy, and we had people much, much older riding on the shoulders of the road that had been paved, with the signs by the side of the road saying, "share the road."

That's what we envision for the province: On secondary highways where tourism and economic development and safety work together, we can have a network of paved shoulders and municipal bike paths that will allow people to cycle safely around the province of—

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

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I know you enjoy riding the bike; I understand that. But I was asking where your bike policy is, and you didn't comment on that. You know that Ontario has not updated its cycling policy since 1992. You also know that Quebec has a 4,000-kilometre province-wide bike network. You know that. You also know that the president of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies urged you to develop and permanently fund a provincial policy on cycling infrastructure, stating that this would have a substantial impact on the health and well-being of Ontarians.

When will Ontario finally release an adequately funded Ontario bicycle policy?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm very happy to tell the member opposite that we are in the process of reviewing that cycling policy, which hasn't been reviewed since 1992. As I said, we paved the shoulders on Highway 6, and I'm looking forward, in the very near future, to announcing other roads that we are going to be able to extend the shoulders of, because we know that there are many roads around the province.

We're looking at other jurisdictions. Quebec has got a route verte across the province. We'd like to have a similar network of cycle paths across the province. We've worked with municipalities. The transportation demand management program has put \$750,000 into municipal infrastructure for active transportation.

I'm very, very much looking forward to being able to release a new cycling policy in this province. Active transportation is a part of what we must do.

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RENEWABLE ENERGY

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: My question is for the Minister of Energy. Building a strong, globally competitive clean energy economy is a critically important part of Ontario's economic future overall. We do live in the 21st century, after all. Recently, Ernst and Young released a report indicating that new investment in clean energy globally reached \$243 billion in 2010 alone, a massive 30% growth rate.

I feel that the PC Party's determination that Ontario should have no part of a quarter-trillion-dollar global market that grew 30% last year is backwards, narrow-minded and economically reckless.

I think the minister owes Ontarians some assurances that job-creating investment in Ontario's clean energy economy remains robust and that we're open for—

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

Hon. Brad Duguid: I think the member is absolutely right: It makes no sense to close Ontario down to one of the most cutting-edge and fastest-growing industries in the entire world, but nonetheless, that's exactly what the Leader of the Opposition is proposing to do.

It's a reckless plan. It puts thousands of jobs at risk. It puts thousands of livelihoods at risk. It kills hope and opportunity for thousands of Ontarians, many of whom have been lining up on weekends and even in the rain to seek jobs in our clean energy economy in communities right across this province.

I was in LaSalle just last week welcoming Uni-Solar to Ontario. They're investing \$12 billion to refurbish an old manufacturing plant. They're employing 80 people, creating jobs that will be in place by August. They're excited by what we're building here in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I can tell you that in southwestern Ontario, workers and investors alike are taking the Leader of the Opposition's threat to their livelihood extremely seriously, and they frankly feel betrayed.

In my riding, Steve Bilodeau, who runs GSL Group in Wallaceburg, says that he stands to lose up to \$4 million as a result of the uncertainty that the PC Party has cast over the clean energy economy.

Destroying that economy does nothing but put thousands of Ontarians out of work and threatens Ontario's reputation on the international stage. The ripple effect that this will have on future international investment cannot be ignored. Can the minister commit to Mr. Bilodeau and his workers in Wallaceburg that he will stand up and fight for their future and the future of thousands like them in Ontario?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Absolutely. Of course we're going to fight for their future and the future of the thousands of Ontarians who are benefiting from our clean energy policy.

I want to tell the member that she can pass along to Mr. Bilodeau and his workers that this party is the only party in this province that's standing up for the creation of those jobs, that's standing up to ensure that we build a vibrant clean energy economy here in this province.

I can understand why the workers and investors in that plant feel very concerned about the irresponsible comments and the reckless promises of the Leader of the Opposition. I've had investors say to me that going down that PC path would make Ontario an absolute international laughingstock. We're not going to allow that to happen. We're going to stand up for the investments

being made in this province. We're going to stand up for our clean energy—

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

SKILLED TRADES

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is to the Premier. In 2010, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities used time allocation to ram through legislation to create the Ontario College of Trades, which limits and restricts skilled tradesmen. Tradespeople must now be a member of the college of trades, despite the fact that they had no opportunity to vote on it. Now we hear from your ministry that the college of trades will levy a work tax of \$125 per person per year on all our half-million tradespeople and \$1,000 on each employer.

Will the Premier confirm to this House that his college of trades will be collecting over \$50 million in new work taxes from tradespeople and employers across Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm pleased to take the question. What I can say is that we're very proud of the fact that we have a new college of trades in the province of Ontario. We're working hard in Ontario to elevate the status of our trades. We think it's important that they have their own college that helps to regulate their activities and establish standards. For a long time, teachers have had that privilege and responsibility; so have doctors, lawyers, accountants, engineers, architects, nurses and the like. What we've done now is we've elevated the status of our trades to ensure that, as young people and parents in particular consider their options in the future, we want them to more and more consider opportunities to be found in the trades here in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Hillier: I take it from the answer that we've just uncovered a new secret tax grab from this McGuinty government. But how can this Premier have the gall to tax these tradesmen but also have the gall to bring in this college of trades, denying them a vote? This new \$50-million tax grab is nothing more than an insult of Liberal arrogance.

We already know about your waste at the WSIB. Now your friend Patrick Dillon of the Working Families Coalition sits atop the patronage trough at the college of trades, the highest at the appointments council. Premier, are you imposing this reckless and secret new \$50-million tax because you don't care about workers, or because you're quarterbacked by your friend Pat Dillon, or both?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: If never really takes us that long to get to the core. It is anger, it is resentment, it is negativity, it is pessimism. It's never that far below the surface in that party, and that's kind of a sad commentary.

I want to say to my honourable colleague that this new college of trades has the same responsibilities and the same privileges as do other colleges—again, whether those are nurses, doctors, lawyers, accountants or engin-

eers—so they can establish criteria to determine, for example, their membership. They can and will establish criteria to determine fees that are—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The honourable member from Lanark understands the standing orders. You asked the question; I would ask that you give the Premier the courtesy of giving the answer. If you're not satisfied with the answer, you can file a late show.

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I was saying that this particular college, like all the other colleges, has the responsibility to, in fact, determine the criteria for its membership. If there are going to be membership fees, they decide on that as well.

What I can report is that no such decisions have been made by the college to this point in time. When they do make that decision, I'm sure my honourable colleague will respect that.

CHILD CARE CENTRES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. An Ontario Municipal Social Services Association study released this month paints a dire picture of the challenges faced by licensed child care providers in rural and northern communities. In the past two years alone, 52 rural and northern child care centres have closed, and 200 licensed child care centres are at immediate risk of closing. According to the report, "The combination of a declining population, insufficient funding, and the more recent introduction of the full-day early learning ... has put stress on the licensed child care systems in these areas."

My question is: Why are the McGuinty Liberals standing by while families in rural and northern communities are losing their child care centres?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Education.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: Our government has been very aware, first of all, of the importance of child care services in the province of Ontario. That is why our government moved to provide \$63.5 million to sustain child care in Ontario when the federal government abandoned them. I would say to the honourable member that I would really encourage her to contact her federal colleagues and make sure that they make the point that Ontario families are paying the bill that the federal government should be paying here in Ontario. Because we did that, we were able to ensure that 8,500 child care spaces were maintained, that 1,000 child care workers kept their jobs in the province of Ontario and that thousands of families continue to enjoy—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This minister knows very well that the all-day learning program the Liberal government brought is directly responsible for these centres being at risk. That is absolutely the case—their own policy.

As the report states—and this is the municipal services—

Interjections.

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The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. The members from Don Valley East and Thunder Bay–Atikokan. The Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Please continue.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: As the report very clearly states, "Quality, licensed child care benefits children developmentally and physically." It is simply not right that families in rural and northern communities are left without access to child care centres.

When will the McGuinty Liberals recognize the unique challenges that children and families in northern and rural communities face and make sure that they put the funding in place to help them with the younger children that they now take care of because the older kids are in all-day learning?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I'm very concerned; it certainly sounds like the NDP do not support full-day kindergarten for families. We know that full-day kindergarten will save families \$6,000 per year per child. What I can also say—and I know that I've given this response to the NDP in the House before—is that we've recognized that there is an impact of full-day kindergarten. That is why our government is implementing \$51 million in transition funding. By the way, that's funding that the NDP voted against. We're also providing \$12 million over the next five years to child care facilities to enable them to refit and retool their operations for their new, younger clients. So that's \$51 million for transition funding. That's \$12 million over five years—

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

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr. Dave Levac: My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Minister, residents of my community continue to be concerned about the safety of their streets. I've worked with the police, the police chief, the police services board, city hall and citizens alike, and they do a pretty good job locally of making that happen. They want to know, though, that their government is making the necessary investments to get tough on crime and get tough on the causes of crime.

I understand that the McGuinty government has made a number of significant investments to strengthen our police services across Ontario. I note that these are investments that target particular concerns of my constituents such as guns and gangs, sexual exploitation of children, and human trafficking, to name just a few.

Can the minister tell me what investment this government has made in community safety and getting the results that we need? What have we achieved?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Well, we are using taxpayers' dollars, first of all, to track down violent criminals, to prosecute them and to put them behind steel bars

and high walls where they belong. We have put 2,300 new police officers on Ontario streets, including 200 more OPP. We've invested millions in fights against dangerous sex offenders who prey on children on the Internet.

Two weeks ago, I had the pleasure of joining my colleagues in Belleville and Guelph to announce expansion of the guns and gangs strategy to those communities. Since 2005, we've invested tens of millions of dollars across the province to step up the fight against dangerous guns and gangs, and the results have been remarkable: hundreds of gangsters off the street, thousands of firearms and other weapons recovered—

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

Mr. Dave Levac: Minister, I appreciate that, and I know community leaders do. But I think that leads me to an important question I have to ask you. I can tell the minister that my constituents do feel a greater sense of security knowing that these offenders, many of whom are convicted violent offenders who prey on children and women, are behind bars in secured facilities like the one in my city. They are overseen by hard-working, dedicated correctional officers.

In this regard, my constituents were shocked to learn last week that the Leader of the Opposition is planning to ship thousands of inmates to our parks and our neighbourhoods—every day, 40 hours a week, among our neighbours, our friends and our children—to rake leaves and cut grass on roads and in neighbourhood parks. They are shocked. They say it's ill conceived, and they say it's ill advised. They say it's fraught with the many risks that are out there from these very people—

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: Well, first of all, there's a significant difference between what is proposed over there and what we are doing. We are putting 2,300 more police officers on the streets. In other words, we want to put police officers in our neighbourhoods, in our schoolyards and in our business areas throughout the province. The Conservatives want to put more prisoners on the streets, in the neighbourhoods, in the parks and everywhere else in this province.

I can't believe that. It reminds me of the movie *Cool Hand Luke*, where the sheriff says, "Clearly what we have here is a failure to communicate." Well, clearly what we have here is a failure to think this policy through properly. I simply cannot believe they've come up with this bizarre scheme, which the province of Alberta said no to—

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

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Mr. Toby Barrett: To the Minister of the Environment: Minister, last month I asked you about the Edwards landfill in Cayuga regarding a series of provincial orders requiring 37 items to be complied with by May 20.

These orders follow years of questions and petitions and process due to concerns about the ongoing operation of the landfill and its impact on the local environment.

Haldimand Against Landfill Transfers, HALT, has worked to protect the landfill's surrounding area for close to a decade. They wrote you requesting that the site be closed until the 37 items are complied with. You didn't close the site. The May 20 deadline has now passed. Can you tell the House and can you confirm that all 37 items have now been complied with?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I'm so happy that my critic for the environment has asked me a question today after the release of strange book on the weekend. They have a plan over there that says, "You know what we need to do with landfills? Take all that stuff that we've been safely diverting away from landfills and dump it into landfills." Now he comes into the House today and says, "Well, our party is for getting paint and tires and waste electronics and what we should do is put them in the landfills."

On this side of the House, we believe that people want to do the right thing. They want to divert. We want to take those dangerous items that can endanger our children and our ground water and get them out of landfills so we don't have the type of compliance issues that we have in Cayuga.

I say to the member that our ministry is here to protect the people in his community, that we will do whatever we need to do to ensure that the laws of the province of Ontario are respected. But we are absolutely adamant that we are keeping harmful—

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: Back to Edwards: These are significant issues with asbestos and leachate spill contingencies. Local residents were already skeptical, given your history of reckless ineptitude on waste diversion and waste management. Now we hear that Terrasan has filed for bankruptcy, ending speculation that they would purchase Edwards out of receivership. People are asking me now where the money will come from to ensure the upgrades are completed.

Minister, what assurances can you provide the people in Haldimand county that Edwards won't revert back to the pre-February 10, 2011, status before your environmental orders were issued?

Hon. John Wilkinson: Ever since the weekend, everybody has been asking me, "Why do they have a plan over there to take hazardous, dangerous material and dump it back in the landfills?" That's why we have the problem in the first place. On this side of the House, we are committed to protecting the environment. People want to do the right thing, and that is exactly why we have worked to upload that responsibility from our municipalities. What did we get on the weekend? That they want to download waste back to the municipalities. When was the last time we had a government downloading to municipalities? It was that government over there.

We have been working in partnership with our communities like Cayuga to make sure that people are protected. They don't want to see this leachate. They don't

want to see tires in the back forty and in the ditches. All of those materials today—we have the hope of having them transformed into new resources and into new jobs. All of those green jobs in recycling are going to be—

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

PROMOTION DE LA SANTÉ HEALTH PROMOTION

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée.

Interjection.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Elle est presque prête.

Le quatrième Colloque international des programmes locaux et régionaux de santé se tiendra dans la région d'Ottawa du 27 au 30 juin. Ce colloque s'inscrit dans un mouvement international d'éducation et de promotion de la santé, et, comme son nom l'indique, il donne la parole aux artisans du changement.

Comment expliquez-vous que les gouvernements de tous les niveaux au Canada et à l'étranger s'impliquent dans ce colloque sauf l'Ontario, qui brille par son absence?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Merci pour la question. I will do my best to respond. I am more than happy to look into the details of this particular question. As you can imagine, we get requests for funding for many, many conferences, and frankly, we are doing everything we can to put all of the money possible into front-line care.

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I will look into this particular situation.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Je veux souligner que le colloque sera l'occasion de souligner 25 ans de la Charte d'Ottawa pour la promotion de la santé. Il sera l'occasion de rendre compte de l'action des réseaux francophones en santé en situation linguistique minoritaire. Les francophones de l'Ontario ont répondu à l'appel en masse. Nous serons la plus grosse délégation au colloque. Le gouvernement fédéral, les autres gouvernements provinciaux et des pays d'Europe ont tous répondu à l'appel. Comment est-ce qu'on peut expliquer l'absence du gouvernement ontarien à un colloque de cette importance, coprésidé par des Ontariens et qui se tient en territoire ontarien?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Merci encore. Again, I will look into this particular conference and have a better understanding of why it was, if, in fact, that is the case.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED

Mr. Reza Moridi: My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. About one in seven people in Ontario has a disability, and it is anticipated to grow to one in five within 20 years due to our aging population. By 2036, the number of seniors is projected to be more than double the 2009 number of 4.7 million.

This week is accessibility week, and it gives us all an opportunity to rededicate ourselves to building an access-

ible Ontario for people with all kinds of disabilities. To the minister: How is this government addressing accessibility to make Ontario fully inclusive?

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Je voudrais remercier le député pour cette question.

Each May we recognize National Access Awareness Week to honour achievements in building an accessible Ontario for people with all kinds of disabilities. Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act our government is creating standards to break down barriers for people with disabilities, obstacles that stand in the way of them and opportunity.

I want to recognize the many people who could see beyond the hard work to the opportunity in our accessibility plan: knowledgeable, industrious and dedicated Ontarians who gave their time to serve on the standards development committee and my advisory committee. They are helping us to turn accessibility from an inspiring concept into an achievable reality.

This legislation—

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

Mr. Reza Moridi: I know that we all benefit from the work Ontarians are doing to make our communities fully accessible. I appreciate the advice I received from the accessibility advisory councils in my riding of Richmond Hill. They inform me of the accessibility needs in my community now and provide feedback on how our government can help. I understand that time is needed for businesses to adapt to new accessibility standards as they are developed and implemented. However, some are still concerned that there is a cost associated with becoming accessible.

To the minister: What are the economic benefits for businesses that provide accessible services?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Ontario's businesses have told us that accessibility is the right thing to do, but we also say it is the smart thing to do. The world-renowned Martin Prosperity Institute predicts that improving accessibility could bring Ontario up to \$1.6 billion in tourism. Retail sales could grow by another \$10 billion. Whether it's a parent of a child, a colleague or a neighbour, I am willing to suggest that everyone in this House knows someone who has a disability. Congratulations to them and to all members of the House for helping us build an Ontario full of opportunity.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: When I introduced Brian Smith, I misspoke when I mentioned the name of the organization that he leads. I called it greenwood; it should have been Wood-Green. I apologize.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. That is a point of order.

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

The House recessed from 1145 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Jim Brownell: I'd like to introduce Peter and Rita Mayer from the riding of Mississauga–Erindale, who are the parents of my executive assistant, Amanda Mayer.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I'd like all to join me in welcoming a good and close friend of mine, Mr. Bob Holden, a retired CAW worker.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like all members to join me in welcoming today to the Speaker's gallery Mr. Steven Marshall, MP from the Parliament of South Australia. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

RETURNS FOR LEUKEMIA

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm pleased to stand today. Over the weekend, across the country, the Beer Store promoted the Returns For Leukemia fundraiser. I took part for a while yesterday afternoon at the Atherly Road Beer Store in Orillia. I want to thank a number of people: Hilary Loba, Dan Loba, Ben Teeter, Randy Scott, Steve Gatcke and Jeanette Conway, who are all members of UFCW Local 12R24.

The Beer Store, of course, is made up of companies like Molson, Labatt, Sleeman, Moosehead and Brick. More importantly, this is an important fundraiser. I think that yesterday alone in the Beer Store in Orillia, \$2,500 in empty beer bottles was brought back. That money all went to the leukemia foundation. We don't have the statistics from yesterday, but last year across our country, over \$1 million was raised for leukemia research, and I think that's an amazing thing.

It was amazing to be there and watch how many people had actually collected their bottles to bring them back on that one particular day. Of course, now they can bring their wine bottles back as well.

I think it's great, and I just wanted to thank the Beer Store organization for a great fundraiser. It's growing each and every year. I encourage all MPPs and MPs across our province and country to take part. It's a great community fundraiser, and I appreciated being part of it as well.

HAMMER HEADS PROGRAM

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I am very pleased to rise in the House today to talk about the importance of providing youth employment opportunities for at-risk youth from priority neighbourhoods around the province of Ontario.

Recently I had the opportunity to meet with representatives from the Hammer Heads program, which plays a vital role in my riding of York South–Weston by providing youth training opportunities.

The program works in collaboration with all the affiliates of the Central Ontario Building Trades. The focus of the program is to prepare the participants, based on the current needs of the construction industry. By giving youth hands-on training in multiple trades, Hammer Heads tries to find the best career fit for each individual participant. Programs such as these can help create careers that are life-changing, with long-term jobs. I want to take this opportunity to thank the staff at the Hammer Heads program for their hard work and dedication.

To ensure their success, it is vital that we continue to encourage employers around the province to give back to their communities by providing employment opportunities for youth. With continued support, these types of initiatives will help brighten the future for at-risk youth in my riding of York South–Weston and throughout the province of Ontario.

PARAMEDIC SERVICES

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased to rise today to recognize the Dufferin EMS on their remarkable score following their inspection by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. I'm proud to say that the Dufferin EMS ranked as one of the top ambulance services in Ontario. Comments from their inspection included: "flawless" personnel records; the vehicle maintenance records are "the best we've ever seen"; and they are "flawlessly meeting the service plan."

In fact, they were told that the review of the Dufferin EMS was the best ever handed out by the ministry inspector, who has done more than 400 of these inspections. He even went so far as to say that the Dufferin EMS was "a real diamond."

The Dufferin EMS was reviewed on how well their staff performed, response times, overall patient care, vehicle maintenance, policies and procedures, attention to detail and working relationships. The ambulance stations in Orangeville, Grand Valley and Shelburne were also inspected, and a team of inspectors rode along with the paramedics for two days.

Director Tom Reid, Paul DePrince and the whole team at the Dufferin EMS are to be commended for their outstanding dedication to ensuring that ambulance services for the residents of the county of Dufferin meet top safety, maintenance and patient care requirements. Your commitment to exceptional service is to be recognized and applauded.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Mr. Dave Levac: Today, all of us are wearing carnations to signify a visit by very special people in the House. The Multiple Sclerosis Society, or MS Society, is talking to all our members in the House today, with some issues they are bringing for us in the House to debate, to discuss. We want to say thank you to them, first and foremost for being here, and for providing us with the

information that they find is an important part of the continued battle that individuals are faced with in terms of MS every single day.

To the caregivers, the loved ones, the staff and all the volunteers who give of their time, their energy and their love to provide for people with MS, we want to thank you out loud. We want to thank you for bringing us your issues. We want to thank you for providing us with some direction and some suggestions and recommendations that the government of the day—or any day—could recommend and seriously take into consideration to provide for their needs, so that topics that were raised would be passed on to those who are responsible for providing the services at the government level.

Again, it's important for us to acknowledge that they have been speaking, and what I found extremely impressive is that they weren't speaking specifically only about MS. They were talking about all the people who are faced with these challenges in day-to-day life. So on behalf of all of us, I offer our deep gratitude to all the visitors who have come here today to provide us with those issues dealing with MS.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'm also proud and honoured to rise today in support of MS Awareness Month and the MS Carnation Campaign. I thank all members who have shown their dedication to people affected by MS by wearing a carnation today. Today, volunteers from the MS Society are at Queen's Park meeting with MPPs from each political party to raise awareness about multiple sclerosis.

Research shows that women are three times more likely to be diagnosed with MS than men. Many Canadians living with multiple sclerosis are mothers, and more young people and children are being affected by this disease every day. That's why the MS Carnation Campaign takes place over Mother's Day weekend.

For over 60 years, the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada has provided hope and help for people with MS across Canada: hope through their extensive national research campaign, and help through services that make life better for people suffering with MS and their families today. Please join the MS Society in making every day better for people living with MS and in working toward the day when we finally eradicate MS.

MELANOMA

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Today I had the pleasure of attending, along with many of my colleagues, the Melanoma Day breakfast held here at Queen's Park. It was an opportunity to meet the leaders who are at the forefront of the fight against skin cancer. We were joined at the breakfast by people like Annette Cyr, chair of the Melanoma Network of Canada, who is not only an advocate for skin cancer prevention but also a two-time survivor of melanoma.

Ontario has the highest rate of melanoma in Canada. One of the 10 most frequent forms of cancer, melanoma affects one in every 74 people, but if caught early, it can be treatable. The key is knowing the symptoms and signs of melanoma. In addition to early detection, prevention is also extremely important, and educating people about this bad disease.

1310

Last year, I co-sponsored a bill with MPP France Gélinas that would help reduce the incidence of melanoma through prevention. Bill 31, the Skin Cancer Prevention Act, called for regulation of tanning bed usage, including a prohibition on the usage of tanning beds by people under the age of 19. Many organizations expressed their support for the bill and hopefully, before we end the session, the bill will pass and become law in the province of Ontario, because it means a lot to many people across the province; also, to protect many youths and young people from getting melanoma cancer.

Today we're here to support the melanoma organization, which is working very hard on behalf of all of us in the province of Ontario to protect the youth and the people of this province.

HEALTH PROMOTION

M^{me} France Gélinas: On behalf of New Democrats, the creators of medicare, we believe that the second stage of medicare needs to be rolled out. What do we mean? We mean keeping people well, promoting health and preventing diseases.

Today, I, as did many of my colleagues, had the pleasure to meet with the Melanoma Network of Canada, and we all agree: We can prevent people from developing skin cancer and melanoma, a type of skin cancer, which could save us up to \$1 billion in health care costs alone, not to mention the human costs of developing skin cancer.

I, with the member from London-Fanshawe, co-sponsored Bill 31, a private members' bill that would ban the use of artificial tanning beds for youth under the age of 18 and would regulate the industry in order to prevent skin cancer in our youth. This is the second time that I have introduced such a bill. The first time, it died after second reading on the order paper, and it looks like the bill will die again this time.

More and more scientific reports link artificial tanning beds with increased health risks, but we see a health promotion minister, in charge to protect our youth from cancer exposure, who is missing in action. This is really unfortunate.

FARMERS' MARKETS

Mr. Bob Delaney: Today, Foodland Ontario hosts its celebration of local foods: the fifth annual outdoor farmers' market at the Ontario Legislature. On behalf of members and staff alike, I'd like to thank everyone who helped plan and deliver today's event.

Farmers' markets in Ontario are booming. Families take pride in choosing fresh, high-quality farm products directly from the producer during the growing season. It's a weekend outing and a community hub for city and farm folks alike, where some city cash gets exchanged for fresh local food, baked goods, flowers, jams and many more farm products.

The province and Ontario farmers want to continue and expand this retail trade. Ontario has invested \$80 million to support such initiatives as Foodland Ontario and the Ontario farmers' market strategy.

Farmers' markets across Ontario have grown to almost 200 in number, with estimated sales of \$641 million last year. Farmers' markets added more than 300 additional shopping days last year alone. This helps Ontario farms thrive, puts local Ontario food on the table in places like Mississauga and in neighbourhoods like my own neighbourhoods in Mississauga—Meadowvale, Streetsville and Lisgar—and it entices both mainstream and new Canadians to shop local and cook local, this year and every year.

UNITED JEWISH APPEAL

Mr. Mike Colle: Yesterday, I joined with about 10,000 residents of the greater Toronto area in the 44th annual United Jewish Appeal Walk With Israel. The United Jewish Appeal raises hundreds of thousands of dollars every year to ensure that people who don't have supports get that support, whether it be children or the elderly in our community. It also raises money for projects in Israel, like the Bat Yam program, which is a school that helps new immigrant children outside of Tel Aviv with their education. I know there are many Canadians who volunteer at that school, and last year at this time, myself, Monte Kwinter, the member from Willowdale and Minister Hoskins were able to visit this school.

Anyway, it was an incredible day—10,000 children and grandparents walking. There was one gentleman who has walked all 44 years on this great walk. They raised money for important community causes that help people in need in the Jewish community.

I want to thank all the organizers of this walk and all the participants, especially many of my residents of Eglinton–Lawrence who were on it. I say mazel tov to all of you who participated. It was a wonderful community event right down at Coronation Park.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I beg leave to present a report on the Municipal Property Assessment Corp. from

the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Sterling presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations. Does the Chair wish to make a brief statement?

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: The Auditor General reviewed MPAC, or the Municipal Property Assessment Corp., in his 2010 auditor's report. Perhaps the most outstanding fact that he brought forward was that he found that in one in eight cases, the Municipal Property Assessment Corp. assessment of value of people's homes was out by at least 20%, which is a significant variance for an individual property owner. The municipalities would be less concerned about that than the individual who is being over-assessed because there would be ups and downs; some people would be over-assessed by 20% and some would be under-assessed by 20%. Basically, it would be a wash for the municipality in terms of the revenue they receive. However, the homeowner who is hit with the 20% extra would, in effect, be subsidizing those who were under-assessed by 20%.

So the major recommendation of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts was to ask MPAC to report to the committee on when and how it will investigate this particular problem and, where warranted, adjust the property assessments accordingly. In other words, the public accounts committee wants MPAC to address this issue and they want a report to the public accounts committee on how it's going to do this and when it's going to do this.

With that major recommendation, I would adjourn the debate.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Sterling has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Debate adjourned.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I beg leave to present a Report on the Family Responsibility Office from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Sterling presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations. Does the Chair wish to make a brief statement?

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: The Family Responsibility Office has, over a long period of time, encountered great difficulty in doing its job; that is, collecting money for single parents, mostly women, for the care of the children—and the care of a former spouse, as well.

The committee makes 16 recommendations with regard to the Family Responsibility Office.

In over 80% of the cases, when people are phoning in to the Family Responsibility Office, they're not even getting a voice mail response.

This office has had a great deal of difficulties, over the Liberal government from 1987, when it was first set up, to the New Democratic government, to the Conservative government and now to the present Liberal government.

This is the first time in history that the public accounts committee has made a recommendation to try to deal with this issue in the future. The auditor has reviewed the Family Responsibility Office on three occasions: once, about 1995-96; the public accounts committee dealt with it then. As well, in 2003 and 2004 the public accounts committee dealt with the Family Responsibility Office, and they made recommendations back in 2004. I was the chairman at that particular time, because I have been the chairman of the committee since that time. In fact, Ms. Sandals and Mr. Zimmer, who were also on the committee in 2004, are still on that committee and have served the committee very well. But they, as well as myself and other members of the committee said, "You can make recommendations and you can follow up those recommendations all you like, but the system doesn't seem to be working."

1320

So the committee has made what I would call a historic recommendation. I'm going to read the recommendation in total: "In 2010 the auditor completed his third value-for-money audit of FRO—the Family Responsibility Office—"since it was established as the support and custody orders enforcement program in 1987 and concluded that FRO was still not successfully fulfilling its mandate of collecting unpaid child and spousal support payments. Accordingly, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts attaches importance to a future review of the office. The standing committee therefore recommends that early in the next Parliament, the Ministry of Community and Social Services request that a government motion be introduced to establish a select committee under standing order 112(a) to undertake a comprehensive and comparative review of the Family Responsibility Office."

We can make recommendations. The auditor can continue to examine and audit the Family Responsibility Office, but all members of the committee feel that it's broken and it has to be fixed. Therefore we are making this recommendation that in the next Parliament there be a select committee set up of all members of the Legislature—because we all learn about that very much from our constituency offices—and that we look at a new model looking at other jurisdictions.

With that, I will adjourn the debate on this report.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Sterling has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Debate adjourned.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I beg leave to present a Report on Non-Hazardous Waste Disposal and Diversion

from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Sterling presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations. Does the Chair wish to make a brief statement?

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: This particular report comes from the auditor's report of last December, that is, December 2010. The auditor noted that in 2004 the government of Ontario set a goal to divert 60% of Ontario's waste from landfills by the end of 2008. But the combined residential and ICI waste—industrial, commercial and institutional waste—is only at about 24%, not 60%. The overall diversion rate for residential waste has risen to about 40% while the ICI sector rate is only at about 12%.

We, the public accounts committee, have put forward many, many recommendations with regard to this particular function of government. There is a Waste Diversion Act in place which was last amended in 2002. The main recommendation of the committee is to ask the ministry to provide the future committee of the public accounts with any information, including any proposed regulatory or legislative changes. In other words, in this particular area there is a feeling by the committee that reform is necessary as well.

With that, I would adjourn the debate.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Sterling has moved the adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Debate adjourned.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I beg leave to present the Report on Public Accounts Committee Best Practice: Assistive Devices Program from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Sterling presents the committee's report. Does the Chair wish to make a brief statement?

Mr. Dave Levac: Oh, he does.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: The member for Brant says, "He sure does."

This is the second report from the public accounts committee on best practices. This was a practice—in other words, presenting reports on best practices of the committee—that was first initiated by our committee in the past year or so. It's the committee's intent that the best practices be reviewed by the next public accounts committee. They would then not be starting from zero when they undertook their deliberations in the next Parliament as we go forward. I believe we're the only public accounts committee in Canada and perhaps internationally—I'm not certain of that—that actually is trying to journal or log its best practices for the use of a future public accounts committee in this Parliament.

This particular follow-up recommendation is about the assistive devices program. As I mentioned when I presented the report on the assistive devices program in the past few weeks, the committee felt that there was something wrong with how the management of this program was taking place. We had a hearing in March and, instead of preparing our report at that time, my committee instructed me to write a letter to the deputy minister and ask him to again appear in front of the committee, with any changes or reviews of the program that he might have. We were not satisfied with the answers that he had provided to the Auditor General in response to his report as to how they were addressing the great over-expenditures in the assistive devices program. The deputy came again to the committee in November, and by the time the deputy minister appeared in November, he had already made changes to the program which had effected savings of some \$7 million already.

We believe that the whole notion of corresponding with the deputy minister or the director or whoever is responsible for the program and then inviting them back to the committee after the first hearing has worked in this case and has really led to significant changes in the program. So we recommend that this practice be considered by public accounts committees as we go forward. With that, I would conclude my remarks.

Report presented.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I want to, at this moment, thank the members of the public accounts committee, who work hard every Wednesday in this Legislature—have worked hard. Particularly, as I mentioned before, I'd like to recognize Mrs. Sandals, Ms. Gélinas, Mr. Ouellette and Mr. Arnott, who are present in the Legislature, who have worked on my committee, and Mr. Arthurs as well. Ms. Sandals has been there from the first, as well as Mr. Zimmer, and I would really like to recognize her diligence and preparation in coming before that committee, because all members of the committee had to read significant reports and have to understand the issues. Over the last eight years that I've chaired the committee, I must say that it has been absolutely a pleasure for me to have Ms. Sandals there on the committee because she knows about what she talks with regard to these matters. She has worked very, very hard.

As well, Ms. Gélinas, who is a newer member to the committee—I think she has been with us for a couple of years now, and that's "new," particularly when I talk about legislative experiences, having been around for ages and ages, I think since Queen Victoria. She has worked very hard on the committee as well.

The preparation that members of the PAC committee put in is significant, but the work and the results that they have attained have been significant as well.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): To you, Mr. Chair, thank you for your efforts and all the committee's efforts. It has been a pleasure to see how the public accounts committee has worked. If only every committee in this

Legislature could operate in the same manner, things might be much different.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg the indulgence of the House to allow the member from Eglinton–Lawrence to introduce some guests who have just arrived.

Mr. Mike Colle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the indulgence. We have a group that came here to the Legislature to hear member Sterling speak. They came all the way from the region of Lazio in Italy, and they are the Sindacato Pensionati Italiani. In English, that is the Italian pensioners' union. Benvenuti a tutti to Ontario and to Canada. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Welcome to Queen's Park today.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT ACT (RENT INCREASES), 2011 LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI DE 2006 SUR LA LOCATION À USAGE D'HABITATION (AUGMENTATIONS DE LOYER)

Mr. Sterling moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 204, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 with respect to the exemption from rules relating to rent increases / Projet de loi 204, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation en ce qui concerne la dispense d'application des règles relatives aux augmentations de loyer.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: In 1991, the NDP government passed a bill which exempted any residence that was occupied after November 1991 from rent control at all. Therefore, any increase by a landlord to a tenant is legal.

I only became aware of this last week when a constituent came in and said that they had suffered a 25% increase in their rent.

The original intent of this particular section was to encourage building, at that particular time, of rental units. I believe that this exemption is no longer needed, that there is a high enough vacancy rate, and that tenants who occupy units that were built after 1991 deserve the same protection as tenants who live in older buildings constructed prior to 1991.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that pursuant to standing order 6(c)(ii), the House shall meet from 6:45 to 12 midnight on Monday, May 30, 2011.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Ms. Smith has moved government notice of motion number 70. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1334 to 1339.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Dickson, Joe	McNeely, Phil
Albanese, Laura	Gerretsen, John	Meilleur, Madeleine
Arthurs, Wayne	Hoskins, Eric	Moridi, Reza
Bartolucci, Rick	Hoy, Pat	Naqvi, Yasir
Bentley, Christopher	Jaczek, Helena	Phillips, Gerry
Best, Margaret	Jeffrey, Linda	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bradley, James J.	Johnson, Rick	Ramal, Khalil
Brown, Michael A.	Kular, Kuldip	Rinaldi, Lou
Brownell, Jim	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Caplan, David	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Chan, Michael	Levac, Dave	Smith, Monique
Chiarelli, Bob	Mangat, Amrit	Van Bommel, Maria
Colle, Mike	Matthews, Deborah	Wilkinson, John
Delaney, Bob	Mauro, Bill	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dhillon, Vic	McMeekin, Ted	Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Those opposed?

Nays

Gélinas, France	Miller, Paul
Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 45; the nays are 4.

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

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

PROTECTION FOR PEOPLE
WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Sylvia Jones: This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas supported-living residents in southwestern and eastern Ontario were subjected to picketing outside their homes during labour strikes in 2007 and 2009; and

"Whereas residents and neighbours had to endure megaphones, picket lines, portable bathrooms and shin-

ing lights at all hours of the day and night on their streets; and

"Whereas individuals with intellectual disabilities and organizations who support them fought for years to break down barriers and live in inclusive communities; and

"Whereas Bill 83 passed second reading in the Ontario Legislature on October 28, 2010;

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

"That the Liberal government quickly schedule hearings for Sylvia Jones's Bill 83, the Protecting Vulnerable People Against Picketing Act, to allow for public hearings."

I, of course, support this petition and am pleased to affix my name to it and give it to page Melanie to take to the table.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Nickel Belt.

"Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients" under certain conditions; and

"Whereas," since October 2009, "insured PET scans" are being performed "in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

"We ... petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the" people of the northeast.

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Jonathan to bring it to the Clerk.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr. David Caplan: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas in January 2009, Health Canada approved the medication Soliris on a priority basis for patients with paroxysmal nocturnal hemoglobinuria (PNH); and

"Whereas PNH is an ultra-rare, progressive and life-threatening blood disorder for which there were no therapeutic options until Soliris; and

"Whereas Soliris is the first and only proven effective treatment for PNH, significantly benefiting patients around the world;

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

"To urge the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to immediately provide Soliris as a life-saving treatment option to patients with PNH in Ontario through public funding."

I have affixed my signature to this petition.

MILLER'S SCOTTISH BAKERY

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition that's intended for the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It has 1,339 signatures, and it reads as follows:

"A Petition Against OMAFRA Regarding Miller's Scottish Bakery in Georgetown.

"We, the undersigned, do not agree with OMAFRA's legislation. Miller's Scottish Bakery is a bakery, not a meat processing plant."

I agree with the statement in the petition.

TAXATION

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have another petition from the people of Nickel Belt.

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

"Be it resolved that Dalton McGuinty immediately exempt electricity from the harmonized sales tax (HST)."

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Caleb to bring it to the Clerk.

FIREARMS CONTROL

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: I have an important petition. It reads, "To stop unlawful firearms in vehicles," and it's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the growing number of unlawful firearms in motor vehicles is threatening innocent citizens and our police officers;

"Whereas police officers, military personnel and lawfully licensed persons are the only people allowed to possess firearms; and

"Whereas a growing number of unlawful firearms are transported, smuggled and being found in motor vehicles; and

"Whereas impounding motor vehicles and suspending drivers' licences of persons possessing unlawful firearms would aid the police in their efforts to make our streets safer;

"We, the undersigned citizens, strongly request and petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass," this bill, "entitled the Unlawful Firearms in Vehicles Act, 2008, into law, so that we can reduce the number of crimes involving unlawful firearms in our communities."

I certainly agree with this petition, and I'm delighted to sign it.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I have a number of petitions that read:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the McGuinty government is pushing ahead with the installation of so-called smart meters and mandatory time-of-use billing ... despite the flaws with the program; and

"Whereas 21 energy distributors, including provincially owned Hydro One, said that the rush to make time of use mandatory ... doesn't give them time to fix all the problems with the meters, fix bugs with the software to run them, and to fix the inaccurately high bills they produce as a result; and

"Whereas the Ontario Energy Board, in a letter of August 4, admitted that energy distributors 'may encounter extraordinary and unanticipated circumstances during the implementation' of time of use, and said that 'these matters need to be addressed';

"Whereas relying on computer technology that the energy industry says is not ready isn't reliable and is making families pay too much on their hydro bills;

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

"To call upon the McGuinty government to suspend the smart meter time-of-use program until billing problems are fixed and Ontario families are given the option of whether to participate in the time-of-use program" or not.

I affix my name in full support.

PARAMEDICS

Mr. Jim Brownell: I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas paramedics play a vital role in protecting the health and safety of Ontarians; and

"Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in servicing Ontarians; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario annually recognizes police officers and firefighters with awards for bravery; and

"Whereas currently no award for paramedic bravery is awarded by the government of Ontario; and

"Whereas Ontario paramedics deserve recognition for acts of exceptional bravery while protecting Ontarians;

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

"Enact Bill 115, a private member's bill introduced by MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery."

I support this petition, shall sign it and send it to the clerks' table.

SPEED LIMITS

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a petition regarding the speed limit through the village of Humphrey and Seguin township. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the current speed limit as posted through the village of Humphrey in the township of Seguin is 70 kilometres per hour; and

"Whereas Highway 141 passes through the village, consisting of an elementary school, fire hall, municipal

office and works department yard, a community centre, including library and arena, as well as a newly developed 25-unit subdivision; and

“Whereas the posted speed limit in the village of Rosseau, 15 kilometres east of Humphrey, is 50 kilometres per hour, does not have a school on the highway but has been deemed to be worthy of a reduced speed limit;

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

“That the government of Ontario reduce the posted speed limit within the boundaries of the village of Humphrey to 50 kilometres per hour.”

I support this petition.

TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

Mr. David Zimmer: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas to many Canadians, traditional Chinese medicine is medicine, period. They rely on these practices, such as acupuncture and Tuina, which are rooted in thousands of years of Chinese medical tradition, and depend upon the availability of traditional Chinese medical products for their day-to-day health needs. Also, it is the duty of the Ontario government to ensure that the health professions, such as TCM and acupuncture, are regulated and coordinated in the interest of public safety, that appropriate standards are developed and maintained. That is why we believe it is in the interest of both Ontario government and the TCM profession to work closely to overcome the challenges and to ensure fairness in the regulation of TCM and acupuncture...;

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

“To immediately dissolve the remaining distrusted members of the transitional council.

“To immediately create a new transitional council of the College of TCM Practitioners and Acupuncturists of Ontario which would be made up largely of representatives of the TCM community.”

1350

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads:

“Whereas Ontario families are struggling to help put their kids through university;

“Whereas students in Ontario graduate with an average \$26,000 in debt and have the highest tuition and largest class sizes in the country; and

“Whereas Ontario tax dollars should be kept in Ontario to help Ontario students, not sent overseas;

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

“To call on the McGuinty government to cancel its plan to give foreign students scholarships of \$40,000 a

year and reinvest these funds in scholarships for Ontario students.”

I affix my name in full support.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr. David Caplan: I have a petition—1,000 names in addition to the 20,000 that have already come in—that reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas nearly 5,000 pedestrians were killed or hurt in collisions in 2007 according to the Ontario Road Safety Annual Report; and

“Whereas aggressive driving and speed were factors in nearly half of Ontario traffic fatalities in 2007, between 2000 and 2007 more than 2,500 people were killed in speed-related collisions,” according to the Ontario Road Safety Annual Report; and

“Whereas a recent Harris/Decima survey commissioned by the Ontario Road Builders’ Association shows that 67% of Ontarians support the use of safety cameras to measure speed; and

“Whereas 76% believe that the Ontario government should make it a priority to crack down on aggressive drivers; and

“Whereas 69% feel an increasing number of aggressive drivers, especially speeders, have made our roads more dangerous than ever; and

“Whereas 82% of Ontarians are confident that greater enforcement of the speed limit in community safety and construction zones would help to improve safety; and

“Whereas safety camera studies in Norway, the UK and New Zealand have been proven to deter and prevent road traffic collisions and related casualties” according to the British Medical Journal, 2005; and

“Whereas safety cameras are being used currently to deter speeders in several North American jurisdictions including Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec, Colorado, District of Columbia, Illinois, Maryland, Ohio, Tennessee, Utah and Washington; and

“Whereas there is no question that Ontarians believe safety cameras are the way to help police crack down on aggressive drivers who continue to ignore the speed limit and put lives at risk;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to implement the enactment of Bill 136, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act with respect to safety cameras, which supports the use of safety cameras to measure speed near schools, community centres and construction zones on provincial highways and local roads.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition, and I have affixed my signature to it.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a petition to do with the paving of shoulders on provincial highways. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas pedestrians and cyclists are increasingly using secondary highways to support healthy lifestyles and expand active transportation; and

“Whereas paved shoulders on highways enhance public safety for all highway users, expand tourism opportunities and support good health; and

“Whereas paved shoulders help to reduce the maintenance cost of repairs to highway surfaces; and

“Whereas” the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka’s “private member’s Bill 100 provides for a minimum one-metre paved shoulder for the benefit of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists;

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

“That” the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka’s “private member’s Bill 100, which requires a minimum one-metre paved shoulder on designated highways, receive swift passage through the legislative process.”

I support this petition.

IDENTITY THEFT

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: I have a petition that was given to me by the Consumer Federation of Canada, and therefore it’s very important. It’s to the Parliament of Ontario and the Minister of Government Services. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“(3) The consumer reporting agency shall only report credit inquiry records resulting from actual applications for credit or increase of credit, except in a report given to the consumer.

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

Since I agree, I’m delighted to sign it.

DOG OWNERSHIP

Mrs. Julia Munro: “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.”

As I am in agreement with this, I have affixed my signature to give it to page Caleb.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ENSURING INTEGRITY IN ONTARIO ELECTIONS ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 ASSURANT L’INTÉGRITÉ DES ÉLECTIONS EN ONTARIO

Mr. Bentley moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 196, An Act to amend the Election Act with respect to certain electoral practices / Projet de loi 196, Loi modifiant la Loi électorale en ce qui concerne certaines manoeuvres électorales.

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

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I’m very pleased to rise on this bill. It is short in terms of its number of words, it is specific in its terms, but it strikes at the very heart of our democracy. It addresses essential, fundamental issues, such as, is everybody going to be able to exercise their right to vote free of interference, free of disruption, and free of practices which would disentitle people from exercising their very cherished right to vote?

Sometimes when we stand in a place like this, when we stand in a place of such history, when we stand in the place of the province of Ontario’s government, and we’re all elected members, we can forget how precious democracy is. We can forget how important what we have here in Ontario and Canada really is. We can forget how it is something that is cherished throughout the world, but held by fewer than cherish it. And, oh, there are countries and there are places where democracy is said to exist, but realistically exists in name only.

Didn’t you hear during the run-up to the recent federal election how some people were concerned that we were having another vote, or we were having a vote, or, “Gosh, those elections, sometimes they get in the way of

government"? Well, in fact, it's the renewal of government. It's the right of the people to whom we report to actually have a voice in who is representing their views, the views that those people hold.

1400

You'll remember during those discussions in the run-up to the recent federal election, at the same time that some people were saying, "Gosh, I'd rather not get an election call" or "I'd rather not receive a brochure" or "I'd rather not be bothered with the signs," there were others in other parts of the world who were anxiously, desperately, decidedly placing their life, their freedom, everything they had, at risk so that they could obtain what we take for granted too often, what we have here in Ontario, in Canada, so that they could have a real right to cast a ballot that wasn't prejudged, predetermined, rigged, where the outcome wasn't decided before the ballots had even been cast, where the outcome wasn't jiggled from what the ballots would otherwise say it should be.

We have something in the province of Ontario that's very precious, and that is why, from time to time, the government of Ontario will take steps to address the right to vote, to address the way in which we're able to vote, to address the means by which we can vote. Essentially, what we're trying to achieve—and governments of all political stripes have, I know, looked at this through the same lens—is the right of every elector to cast their ballot freely, in a way that appropriately and completely reflects their wishes.

I want to address this specific bill, but I just want to say at the beginning, whatever election it is that you have a right to cast a ballot in, whether it's a municipal one, a federal one, a provincial one, whatever the polls might be saying, whatever individuals might be saying, cast your ballot. Exercise that very precious right. Make sure that you exercise the franchise that has been given by the Fathers of Confederation, a franchise that has been given by those who established democracy in this province, a franchise that has been defended over the years by men and women risking their lives in all parts of the world, a franchise that has been given so that we can enjoy what so many people in the world would love to have and sometimes we take for granted. Cast your ballot.

I know turnout rates are not as high as we would like them to be. Lots of different strategies have been thought of to encourage more people to cast their ballot. There are lots of different ideas on how to get people to go to the polls. We actually had a vote on one in the last election. There are lots of different ideas, but at the end of the day, it's something that doesn't take a long time, that's not terribly complicated. It's your way to have a direct input on those who will be governing, a direct input, through them, to policy, and a direct say in your future. And who among us would not want a say in our future? Who among us would stand and say, "I don't want to have anything to do with my future. I'll let others decide my future for me"? Nobody.

Virtually everybody—there may be the odd exception—takes the right to comment, sometimes with a cer-

tain colour, about how governments of the day are doing and the things they should be doing or the things they should not be doing, or how they might have failed to take your advice. Well, casting a ballot is the most effective way to make sure you're heard, the most effective way to make sure your advice is heard, the most effective way to influence the results.

We have voter turnout rates of just over 50%—it should be 100%—and it's particularly a challenge among young people. If you have a room of 100 people, if those 100 people are 50 and older, chances are pretty good that 75 of them are going to the polls. If you have a room of 100 people aged 18 to 25, chances are pretty good that about 25 will go to the polls. That is a very significant difference. It doesn't necessarily speak well for the future.

We want everybody's voice, and I say that in a non-partisan way. I always encourage people to go to vote; I always encourage them. Whether their reception has been rosy and joyous or somewhat more measured, I always encourage people to go vote, make sure they cast their ballot and—I'm sure, like every other member—give them whatever information they require to be able to exercise their franchise.

That brings us to the very short piece of legislation we have before us today. Here, we're addressing what I really hope isn't an issue but I fear might be, what I really hope is not something that we need to address, but we need to make sure that we can address it if necessary.

We've heard the stories. A number of people in this Legislature have actually been quoted in the press. A number can relate stories, either that they were told or some that they might claim to have witnessed, of voters, during the recent federal election, receiving calls—they're always calls, aren't they? They're always the anonymous. The allegations are that people would receive calls from those representing themselves to be Elections Canada officials.

Remember, I am relating stories, not evidence; that is for somebody else. I am relating allegations. Very clearly, they're allegations. I want to make it clear to all: They're allegations, but they're allegations you have to take seriously. They're allegations you cannot ignore. They're allegations you cannot let sit because they would, if true, strike at the very heart of what is so cherished in this place: the heart which is democracy and the right to freely exercise your vote.

So I turn to the bill. The bill addresses these allegations that were made that people representing themselves to be Elections Canada officials would phone somebody up and say, essentially, "Guess what? Voter turnout has been really heavy at your poll, so we need you to go to a different place to cast your ballot. We need you to go somewhere else to cast your ballot." The stories are more than a few: of people who went to the somewhere else and found that, in fact, there was no polling station there. In fact, the original polling station was the right polling station.

If there was one story, it would be bad; if there were two stories, it would be bad. But there are many in

different parts of the province and different parts of the country. They represented themselves to be Elections Canada officials. Others represented themselves to be—allegedly. I'm only repeating allegations, only repeating stories, not reporting, not suggesting that I'm repeating evidence. I leave the evidence collection to others. But others reported that they received a call from somebody representing themselves to be from a certain party. That caller gave them information which turned out not to be true and, in some cases, inhibited, prevented, made more difficult a person's right to vote; or they represented themselves to be from a party and started delivering a message which might have been rude, insulting, suggesting badgering or cajoling, all courses of conduct that nobody would condone and nobody would suggest was appropriate, no matter who's doing it. It's just not appropriate.

1410

This was a concern, because it was alleged to have occurred not just in one place but in quite a number of places. So you turn to the legislation to say, "Well, that's bad, so somebody is going to investigate and they'll take whatever appropriate action," because you have to investigate. Let's be clear. We've tried to be very careful here, counting the stories and counting the allegations. You have to investigate, and somebody does that. It might be the Elections Canada officials, it might be the police, it might be others; somebody else investigates to determine the accuracy of the allegations. That's important, because lots of stories are told, but you have to determine the accuracy of allegations. So I leave that to somebody else. I leave that to another to do, as is entirely appropriate. Let somebody else figure it out.

But the legislation governing the federal election has specific prohibitions of this type of activity. If the investigation reveals a factual foundation, then action can be taken specific to the allegation. In certain other jurisdictions in the country, in certain other provinces, the legislation contains specific prohibitions. Of course, when these allegations were made, it didn't take us more than a second or two to turn to our legislation just to make sure: Do we have something here that will protect us? You can imagine the surprise when we realized, no.

You can always take a prohibition and argue an interpretation, and the election legislation in Ontario contains a number of prohibitions of conduct, which is specifically called—it's not my term—a corrupt practice. So you can take a look at the legislation and say, "Well, I might be able to squeeze it in here. I might be able to argue it's covered over there. I might be able to sidewind it in the other one." But standing back and taking a look at that, we just knew—absolutely knew—that if that allegation had been made during or at the conclusion of an election in the province of Ontario, one of the first questions people would have asked, one of the first places they would have pointed—they would have said, "Well, government, Mr. Attorney General, do we have anything in our legislation that covers it?" You can't stand up and say no, because we would have been put on

notice. It would have been drawn to our attention. So we needed to address it specifically, and that's what we're doing.

I'm going to get to the provisions in just a second, but I can already hear the naysayers. I don't anticipate any in this chamber actually, but out there you can anticipate what people might say—the "might" is essential. They might say, "Those who wish to break the law will always be ingenious," and yes, they will. So we look to have the strongest possible laws to act as a deterrent. We look to have the strongest possible laws to make it clear to society we're prepared to stand up for fundamental principles. We also look to have the strongest possible laws so that when people do break the law, they can be brought to justice. When they do things that they shouldn't do, they can be brought to justice. When they take the steps that should not be taken, they will be brought to justice surely, swiftly, cleanly and clearly.

You take a look at the legislation and this conduct which was alleged, which was rumoured, which was spoken about, in some cases by those sitting beside others receiving calls, and this conduct wasn't specifically addressed. So you look around for other places. Could it be covered by the Criminal Code? Well, there are provisions in the Criminal Code that can address some of it. There are provisions in the Criminal Code that might be able to be used to address this. Those provisions have a history, have a purpose, have a reason that they were placed in there, and their implementation has been the result of many, many decades of use and interpretation by the courts. They've acquired a judicial history, a case history that in some instances makes it challenging to apply to the type of allegation that's made in 2011 and might need to be used, might need to be the subject of legislative sanction.

When we took a look at the legislation, we also noticed that not only were some of these allegations not specifically covered—and to some extent that's not surprising, is it? Because, realistically, people become ingenious, don't they, in the ways they're going to break the law? The use of phone banks, the use of the Internet, the use of automated calls, the use of computers, Twitter, Facebook, this and that and the other thing, makes it quite a bit easier today to make many calls than it ever used to be. It makes it quite a bit easier to make calls anonymously. It makes it quite a bit easier to make calls from places that aren't in the province of Ontario or even Canada. The level of disguise that can be used through electronic means is quite a bit more sophisticated than it has ever been.

So we took a look at the allegations about the stories, about the complaints and the concerns. We took a look at the legislation. We said, "Ah, that's wanting. It has not got specific prohibitions." We took a look at other pieces of legislation like the Criminal Code and said, "Well...." I mean, lawyers are always ingenious. We can be ingenious. We can be determined. We wanted to be certain, not just determined. We wanted to be accurate, not just ingenious, and the two can go together, but in advance

there's never a guarantee that ingenuity will lead to the result that everybody would think was appropriate. So we took a look at the legislation and we said we needed something else.

That's how we came to draft two provisions, and they're interesting provisions. I just want to talk about two.

The new 96.2: "A person who, inside or outside Ontario, prevents another person from voting or impedes or otherwise interferes with the person's exercise of the vote is guilty of an offence and on conviction is liable to a fine of not more than \$5,000."

Now, very significant there: a person "inside or outside Ontario," we're prepared to prosecute. Yes, there are challenges; there are jurisdictional challenges. There always are. But as members of the Legislature will know, Canada has asserted jurisdiction for offences committed elsewhere. Ontario can assert jurisdiction for violations within its territory for offences committed elsewhere. And you say, "Well, you might never find them." It will be the rare offence committed in the province of Ontario that doesn't have an Ontario connection of some sort, and so you follow the trail. You swim the river. You may not have the direct perpetrator, but who is that perpetrator in touch with? How were they in touch with them? What was the benefit for somebody outside the borders of the province, even the country, thinking that they would engage in this type of alleged activity?

You can think that there's got to be a trail there, and the signal very clearly is that we're going to find you. If it happens, we're going to find you. We're going to get you. We're going to trace it, and just when it's most inconvenient, just when everybody thinks it's gone away, just when all is quiet—"Oh, we got away with it"—zap.

1420

"A person who, inside or outside ... prevents ... impedes or otherwise interferes with the person's exercise of the vote...." That's the essential part, isn't it? Prevents, impedes or otherwise interferes with the person's exercise of the vote: That's what this is all about. It's the exercise. However you exercise it, exercise it. Exercise is always good. However you exercise, exercise is always good.

Here is a little bit of what I was talking about before, a little bit of how it's not just the direct perpetrator; it can be those who have aided, abetted, counselled, procured, assisted. Subsection (2): "A person who, inside or outside Ontario, does anything for the purpose of aiding another person to commit the offence described in subsection (1), abets another person in committing it, or counsels or procures another person to commit it is a party to the offence."

That's what I was saying. You might think that you're out of the jurisdiction, you're safe, but there will be a connection. It can be found. The criminal courts are replete with those who thought they got away with it years ago, but they've been found.

A second offence is being brought in. It's called "impersonation." Section 96.3: "A person who, inside or

outside Ontario, falsely represents himself or herself to be any of the following is guilty of an offence and on conviction is liable to a fine of not more than \$5,000...." It's not the interference here, it's not the impeding, it's not the preventing; it's the representation, and more properly the false representation, that's at issue here. It doesn't matter whether it succeeds. It doesn't matter whether it prevents, impedes or interferes in. It's the false representation, because we take this as potentially striking at the heart of.

Who are those people who one cannot falsely represent themselves to be?

"1. An employee or agent of the office of the Chief Electoral Officer." It's a pretty broad range of people performing all sorts of very important work.

"2. A person appointed under this act.

"3. A candidate or a person who is authorized by the candidate to act on his or her behalf.

"4. A person who is authorized by a registered party or registered constituency association to act on its behalf."

Now you can start to see how these specific, tailored provisions address the allegations, the stories, the other issues that were said to arise, might be investigated—leave that to others. So we can specifically address them. You don't have to get creative about other provisions and other statutes designed for other purposes. We can specifically get at them through this—a very broad net which will stand as a specific, direct, complete code of what you can't do to address those issues. These two provisions, of course, stand with all the existing prohibitions, which are numerous.

You heard me speak of a couple of penalties—\$5,000—but here's the overriding penalty: "(97.1) If, when a person is convicted of an offence under section 90, 94, 95, 96, 96.1," or the two I just read, "96.2 or 96.3, the presiding judge finds that the offence was committed knowingly"—knowingly, which is a state of mind, and my friend opposite will know from criminal law days this is an aware state of mind—"the person is also guilty of a corrupt practice and is liable to one or both of the following:

"1. A fine of not more than \$25,000, instead of the fine that would otherwise apply.

"2. Imprisonment for a term of not more than two years less a day."

You say, "Well, okay." The existing penalties in the act are a \$5,000 maximum or six months in jail maximum, or both. So what we've done for all that are corrupt practices here is to raise the fine: five times as big a fine and two years less a day, which is the most jail that a province can provide, under the Constitution—or both.

You say, "Well, that's not very much for somebody making hundreds of calls." Well, then you get into the definition of "offence," because it will be argued that every call is potentially a separate offence. So you can see it gets potentially very expensive, very quickly.

We're bringing these specific offences within this piece of legislation forward and we're asking the House to consider—and I know I've spoken for a few more

minutes than you might have anticipated it would take, and I just have a few more to go. It's a few more than you might have anticipated, because I know it's a sentiment shared that the right to vote is cherished; it's essential; we want people to exercise it freely, without interference, without being impeded. We want to make sure that we have the proper support for that.

A number of steps have been taken by this government and by the House with respect to the right to vote over the past several years—a number of different and specific steps. You'll remember we brought in some amendments for the municipal elections just a few years ago to make sure that at the municipal level, voters were appropriately supported in their exercise of the democratic franchise. We brought in some changes within the province of Ontario over the past several years that, likewise, were brought in to address some very important and significant issues, issues which affect either how you exercise your franchise, the circumstances in which you exercise your franchise or the times when you can exercise your franchise. Just let me address a few.

You'll remember that in 2007, the government introduced legislation to modernize provincial elections, provide some additional ways to cast a ballot and to enhance both access and the integrity of elections. One of those involved a number of advance poll days. Remember just a few minutes ago, I spoke about everybody exercising their franchise. We want to make sure everyone gets out to vote. Well, now there are going to be a lot of extra days on which you can vote—a lot of extra days. We're going to cover just about every possibility. So it won't be any more of that, "Oops, I missed the one advance poll day and I can't go on election day." There will be lots of opportunity to get in there, lots of places to go, opportunity to get in and cast a ballot, which really doesn't take very long most of the time. People will have that chance to vote, and you'll be able to get that voting percentage up, we really hope.

1430

One of the other things that was done in that legislation was to give the Chief Electoral Officer the ability, at their instance, to test some new voting methods in by-elections. We've heard lots of different talk over the years about how people wanted to be able to vote by this method or that method. Well, now that the Chief Electoral Officer will be able to test them in a by-election, as opposed to a general election, it enables the Chief Electoral Officer to better manage the new method, better manage any issues that arise and have a better sense of assessing its ability to increase voter turnout without those other issues that can sometimes be of concern—misrepresentation by voters of who they are and other things such as that.

It also put in place during that period of time some voter identification requirements to make sure the person presenting at the polls is actually the person who's supposed to present at the polls. So there were some additional identification requirements that were imposed. Those are just a few of the highlights of that time.

Of course, the permanent register of electors was brought in at the time. It used to be that every time you had an election, you sort of ran around and redid the list. We all thought that maybe we could do it a little better than that. Now we've got a permanent register of electors that can continually be updated, refreshed and corrected, so you're always building on a base that's being forever strengthened.

In 2010—and I don't want to forget this; I want to make specific reference to it—the Select Committee on Elections, an all-party committee with representatives of every party in the House, worked very hard; it heard lots. It came together with the Election Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010. It gave some additional flexibility to Ontarians in how they would actually cast their ballot. One of those provisions allows Ontarians to cast their vote by special ballot. Again, it also gives some additional flexibility to the Chief Electoral Officer, who again is the one who's doing it full-time, to design a voting process that's responsive to the needs of voters, some who have special needs, some who have special issues. It gave voters with disabilities access to voting equipment that would enable them to independently mark a ballot. Remember, what we're trying to do here is make sure that everyone has the right to exercise their franchise and that that franchise freely represents their wish.

Those are just a few of the changes that we've made in the past. The one that we're proposing today, asking the Legislature to continue today and consider today—and I hope we have enough time for that consideration. I know everybody will want to speak at some length on these issues, and I hope we have that opportunity to have a good, full debate. But I really do commend and hope that the members will see and that all will agree that it's important that we have these protections in place in time for the upcoming provincial election. As I say, they are based on stories, and stories are only that. They're based on allegations, and allegations are only that. But you have to make sure that you ask yourself the question: If it did happen, how could we deal with it? That's why we're introducing this.

We did move fairly quickly to introduce this. We moved fairly quickly, and I thank the members of the House for their consideration in that. We moved fairly quickly, and I'm looking forward to the debate which will ensue. I'm looking forward to the good comments of my colleagues.

I want to say a special thanks to two, and by thanking two I don't exclude the many. I want to thank, first of all, my parliamentary assistant, the MPP for Willowdale. I'm not allowed to say his name, David Zimmer, am I? But I did. He has worked for so long on the issues affecting the Ministry of the Attorney General. He has been at the forefront of so much legislative change. He has really been a standard-bearer for so long. I really want to thank him for his work.

I want to thank the government House leader, who has a lot to do with elections and election legislation. I want to thank the government House leader for the input on this.

I want to thank the MPP from Guelph, MPP Sandals, for the work that she has done.

I want to thank the members on the opposite side of the House, as well, who, over the years—as passionately as we can address issues like this, we all stand as one when it comes to protecting the right of people to vote, to making sure people can freely exercise their franchise and that their franchise reflects their wish. I thank them for the great advice and input given to many over the years.

As I say, I look forward to the debate as it continues, and I'll be listening intently, whether fastened to my seat or attending to other duties.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Questions and comments.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I very much appreciate the opportunity to comment on the minister's remarks. One of the key things that he mentioned that I just want to jump in on was the different aspects about giving people a reason to vote. Quite frankly, I say the same thing to all parties: If you want people to vote and get more actively involved, give them a reason to get involved. Give them a sense of understanding that they make a difference, and that will have a big impact.

I know during the past federal election, there were a number of calls that had gone out, particularly in my riding, where the individuals were asked by a bogus organization to make contributions to buy a sign—not only that, but they could vote online. These are the sorts of things that have a huge impact that didn't come out in any of the discussions and debates. I know it had a huge impact locally, in Oshawa, on what was taking place. They were calling up individuals—they got a database from somewhere; I'm not quite sure where—on behalf of the specific parties, and falsely stating to the individuals that they could buy their sign online, which was unheard of, or they could vote online, which was something brand new and completely contrary to what had taken place.

I'm reading a Globe and Mail headline which says, "Joe Volpe Turfs Campaign Worker Caught Trashing Green Pamphlets." The reason I mention that is because there are all sorts of other aspects that take place in campaigns. We're replacing signs on a regular basis. There are all sorts of things. But deliberately targeting somebody to go elsewhere is substantially beyond the norm. We want to make sure that that's addressed and taken care of.

Quite frankly, I know that the one concern in the minister's speech is those targeted outside the province of Ontario. If you're dealing with those organizations that target outside, possibly an additional subline—I can't remember if it was section 92 or 97 where you spoke about that—whereby those individuals who specifically target organizations or entities outside the province could receive an additional fine. It would be a disincentive for at least going outside the province.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments and questions.

Mr. Peter Kormos: We're looking forward to participating in this debate.

I enjoyed the comments of the Attorney General.

I am concerned about the manner in which the government brought this legislation forward. It's going to pass before the House adjourns for its summer break and the election period. I don't know what the government has in mind. Warren Kinsella is going to have to revise and publish a second edition of his book *The War Room* once this legislation becomes law. You're coming close to putting him out of business, for Pete's sake, and I say that with a lot of regard and respect for Warren Kinsella.

1440

Of course, we saw just yesterday an illustration of dirty tricks, if you will, with one Conservative candidate from down Niagara Falls way. We still don't know the whole story to the story, but there's probably a story inside a story inside a story there. The impression one is increasingly getting is that was a dirty trick—

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: —as noted.

I'm also going to be talking about the bill that was discussed here two Thursdays ago, Mr. Arnott's Bill 195. I was very disappointed when I read the Hansard of that and saw the government's line on it. The spokesperson is someone for whom I have great regard, and I'm confident that the government spokesperson, during the debate on Bill 195, was following marching orders. He could indeed invoke the Nuremberg defence, if required to, because the comments that were made were peculiar in the context of, especially, the Sorbara report—and that was the committee that he and I participated in. Thank goodness I'm not the main person—Howard Hampton is. But I substituted for the member for Kenora-Rainy River.

The issue about—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Further comments and questions.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm very happy to speak in support of Bill 196. I think that we have to acknowledge the evolutionary nature of public policy as we have this discussion and that there's always an ongoing need to monitor our policies and make sure that we keep up with society, that we keep up with technology and we keep up with the needs of Ontarians. In fact, that's what's at issue here: ensuring the right to freely exercise the vote, as the Attorney General has said so eloquently.

Unfortunately, we find ourselves in circumstances where there are allegations and stories of practices that we perhaps have not got the right protections in place for, and that's what this is about.

When I think about the right to vote, I always think about my paternal grandmother, Eva Crummer, who was born in 1888. She didn't have the right to vote until she was nearly 30. It was my grandmother who impressed upon me how critical it is to exercise your vote, to make your voice heard. So when I knock on a door and a young person comes to the door and says to me, "I don't vote" or "I don't care," I always push back, because it's not about whether he or she votes for me; it's about making his or her voice heard. If he or she does not do that, then

someone else will express his or her voice in the place of that young person.

We want everyone in this province to have the habit of voting, and so we want to remove every barrier. We want to create every opportunity and make sure that any new technology or any new practice that sounds slick and clever at the time, that might get in the way of people voting—that we make sure that all those practices are fair and that we have in place the protections that make sure that every single person in this province who is eligible can get to the poll and vote as he or she wishes.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to provide a couple of minutes of comments on Bill 196 in response to the Attorney General.

I was here, as the member for Welland mentioned in his comments and questions for my colleague the member for Wellington–Halton Hills, for the discussion we had a couple of Thursdays ago on his Bill 195 at private members' business.

It's interesting to note that the Attorney General talks about stories and rumours and innuendo. We had that debate that Thursday afternoon, and we didn't talk about rumours and innuendo. We talked, in our party, about the Chief Electoral Officer and comments that Mr. Essensa made to improve and strengthen our legislation. He wasn't talking about new technologies and new tricks. He wasn't talking about stories or innuendo. He was talking about strengthening our election laws and dealing with collusion.

It's interesting that we have two pieces of legislation, numbered consecutively, 195 and 196, introduced within one day of each other—and the fact that one had such resistance by the government. The member for Willowdale, in his speech that Thursday, used the word “mischievous” dozens of times when he talked about Bill 196. I can quote some stories about the other bill—

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Bill 195.

Mr. Steve Clark: Sorry, 195. Thank you, Madam Minister. I can do the same thing on the other bill. So it's interesting that we're having this debate when we could have brought both bills together and brought them forward. That's what we're missing here.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The minister has two minutes to respond.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I thank the members from Oshawa and Welland, the Minister of Transportation and the MPP from Leeds–Grenville for their comments. The Minister of Transportation said it so eloquently in relation to her grandmother: It's that very precious right, a cherished right.

My colleague from Oshawa spoke about a number of different issues. That's right: Whatever the issues are, whatever the allegations are, let's make sure we have the appropriate legislative tools to address things that would interfere with, impede or prevent exercise of the franchise.

My colleague from Leeds–Grenville spoke about other pieces of legislation. That debate is for all of us, and that

debate, I understand, occurred. Today we're debating this; we're debating these provisions. I know we'll all give our full attention to these provisions and hopefully agree at the end, on an all-party basis, that they are appropriate—that whatever may be in the minds of others about other things that should be done, they are appropriate.

I want to thank my colleague from Welland for his comments as well. He might have given us a little flavour of some of the comments he will have later on the question of jurisdiction. It's always challenging when a jurisdiction—a state or province or country—asserts jurisdiction beyond its borders. But it really is not asserting its jurisdiction in some other place. It's saying that if you're in another place and you purport to interfere with ours, then we'll find a way to attach liability to that, directly or through parties who will.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm pleased to join the debate this afternoon in the Ontario Legislature with respect to second reading of Bill 196, An Act to amend the Election Act with respect to certain electoral practices. It stands in the name of the Attorney General and was introduced in this House on May 17.

I think it's important to point out that it was introduced by the Attorney General after the official opposition was informed that the government would be bringing forward no new legislation before the end of the session. Unfortunately, our party, I believe, was not consulted before the bill was introduced. Normally, you would expect that on changes to the Election Act, there would be some sort of process that would involve all three political parties to discuss proposed changes before introduction of the bill, as has been the case most times in the past, to the best of my knowledge, when the Election Act has been changed.

I'm pleased to follow the Attorney General. I listened to his speech, and he was his usual eloquent self; he certainly expressed his views well. But I don't believe he addressed all the relevant and salient points with respect to this issue, and most of all the way my Bill 195 was defeated in the Legislature on May 19, I guess was, the last Thursday this House sat.

This bill is fairly straightforward. This bill that the government has introduced, Bill 196—really just a couple of pages—“amends the Election Act to add new sections 96.2 and 96.3. Section 96.2 prohibits interference with voting. Section 96.3 prohibits impersonation of electoral officials, candidates and persons authorized to act on behalf of candidates, parties and constituency associations.

“Several offences under the act, including the ones described in new sections 96.2 and 96.3, constitute ‘corrupt practices’ if committed knowingly. The existing penalty for a person who is found guilty of a corrupt practice is a fine of not more than \$5,000, imprisonment for a term of not more than six months, or both. The maximum fine for a corrupt practice is increased to

\$25,000 and the maximum term of imprisonment to two years less a day.”

Of course, the Attorney General, in his comments this afternoon, indicated and wanted to lead the House to believe that it is his intention to create the best election law possible, with strong penalties to enforce the revisions he is proposing, but the very same arguments could have been made about Bill 195, my bill that was, again, brought forward recently and defeated by the government members.

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The Attorney General, in the context of his remarks, talked about the fact that this bill is based in response to allegations—that was the word that he used. He said that they’re not proven, and went to great lengths, at the start of his remarks, to indicate that they were merely allegations, innuendo, hearsay—let’s put it that way. But the fact is, the government is obviously wanting to be seen to be responding to these allegations and ensuring that those kinds of things that were alleged to have happened do not happen in the next provincial election, which is fine enough, but we have to call them what they are: allegations. In fact, my bill, Bill 195, was based on advice that we received at a select committee of the Legislature in testimony from the chief elections officer. It was not based on innuendo; it was not based on allegations; it was not based on hearsay. It was based on factual information that was brought forward at the committee, and I know that the member from Willowdale is well aware of that as well.

Before I continue to expound on this bill, I think it’s important to point out that I intend to share my time with my colleague the member for Leeds–Grenville, who’s done a great job on this issue as well and has done a lot of work to bring forward the public interest with respect to this particular issue.

On May 19, this Legislature debated Bill 195, my bill, An Act to amend the Election Finances Act to ban collusion in electoral advertising. During that debate, the member for Willowdale made some very interesting remarks. He said that Bill 195 was, in his opinion, “just a fuzzy piece of legislation, brought in in a political year as we’re approaching a political and obvious election.” The member continued, “I say at best it’s confusing, or mischievous and redundant.”

My question to the member for Willowdale is, was he describing my Bill 195 or was he describing the government’s Bill 196? Bill 196 could well be considered a confusing, mischievous and redundant effort to distract the public from the Liberals’ own electoral mischief-making and their shameful vote on May 19 against my Bill 195, which would have gone a long way towards putting an end to collusion in advertising during election campaigns. They rejected that sensible bill. Instead, they rushed ahead with Bill 196.

I think it’s very interesting to note that my Bill 195 was introduced on a Monday, and the very next day, Bill 196 was brought forward in the Legislature, in spite of the fact that the government House leader had advised

the official opposition that there would be no more legislation brought forward by the government before the end of the session. That’s what we understood. So why did they bring this forward the day after my bill was introduced? Interesting, very interesting—and somewhat fishy. They tried to distract the public from Bill 195, our legislation, so that their friends in the Working Families Coalition would continue their plan of unfettered advertising, limited only by the funds that they can extract from the membership of the unions and the organizations comprising the coalition, and even from those who, like my wife, Lisa, a public school teacher, would rather have their union dues not spent on political ads.

Perhaps the Liberals thought they needed to shield the Working Families Coalition, its dubious advertising campaigns and the Liberal Party itself from Bill 195. It’s clear they believed that they shouldn’t be constrained from campaign spending limits designed to create a level playing field for all political parties. Working Families and other so-called third parties now have no limits on the amount that they can spend to support or attack a particular candidate or party during an election, and we have seen the Working Families advertising. As recently as last week, I saw one of the TV ads. I’m not sure if it’s a new one or not, because I hadn’t seen them previously, but the fact is, they are clearly targeting our leader, Tim Hudak. Parties, on the other hand, are limited to total campaign spending of approximately \$8 million, according to the Canadian Press.

I want to return again to the member for Willowdale, who complained that my Bill 195 did not contain a definition section. It would have been “impossible to enforce,” he said. But reading the government’s Bill 196, it would appear that it too lacks a definition section. It sets out specific fines for those guilty of a “corrupt practice,” yet the bill makes no mention of collusion in advertising designed to skirt our election spending limits. Many people would consider that to be one of the most unfair practices of all, yet this bill makes no mention of collusion in advertising.

The member from Willowdale also claimed, incredibly, that “collusion and implied hanky-panky going on behind the scenes” is already dealt with. But that’s at odds with the facts, and what the member—who should know better, as a member of the bar. I believe he does know this. He should have known it, at least, because he should have listened to the chief elections officer when, on May 7, 2009, the chief elections officer testified before the Select Committee on Elections. Do you know who was a member of that committee at that time? Why, none other than the member for Willowdale. So the member for Willowdale, of all people, should know that Greg Essensa, the chief elections officer, told the committee that he believes that a review and update of Ontario’s election finance laws is in fact warranted.

He also explained that, under current law, third parties are free to co-operate and coordinate their efforts with recognized parties. I quote from his remarks from Hansard: “there is no specific provision that prohibits a third party from co-operating or coordinating its adver-

tising with either a political party or one of its candidates, provided that the party/candidate is not actually controlling the third party's advertising." Based on Mr. Essensa's testimony, it would appear that the member from Willowdale was completely and flatly wrong when he said the collusion was already dealt with—wrong, wrong, wrong.

Mr. Essensa also tells us that there are already more stringent requirements in place federally, in British Columbia, in New Brunswick and in the province of Quebec, and that there were also regulations being proposed in Alberta at the time of his testimony. Again, I quote Mr. Essensa's testimony from Hansard: "It is, or will be, an offence in these jurisdictions to collude for the purposes of circumventing spending limits for political parties, candidates and third parties."

With my Bill 195, the McGuinty government had a real opportunity to show it was serious about strengthening our elections law to ensure fairness and transparency in our provincial election campaigns. Unfortunately, the Liberals rejected that opportunity, choosing instead to follow their own selfish political interest, in essence turning a blind eye to collusion in electoral advertising as long as it benefits them.

So instead of addressing a very real threat to the fairness of our elections, instead of ensuring that our democracy is on a level playing field for all parties, the McGuinty Liberals have instead decided to go after what they apparently believe to be a much bigger threat: the poll clerks who they fear might wilfully miscount ballots. Why has the McGuinty government decided to target our poll clerks, our returning officers and our dedicated elections staff and volunteers? Do the Liberals genuinely believe that there is an epidemic of corruption on the part of those who count their ballots?

Interjection.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I submit and suggest to the government House leader that she read the bill, because if she read the bill, she would see this:

"Section 92 of the act is repealed and the following substituted:

"Wilful miscount of ballots"—and all kinds of suggestions that they don't trust the poll clerks. These are the people who, notwithstanding their own political views and notwithstanding sometimes difficult circumstances, are, in almost every case, dedicated, committed, patriotic people who believe in fairness. I have confidence in the people who count the ballots in the province of Ontario, especially in the riding of Wellington—Halton Hills; I trust them.

For the McGuinty Liberals to make these people the issue at a time when our procedures, our checks and balances and democratic traditions have long been established, it seems to me to be another sign that Bill 196 was just a desperate attempt to muddy the waters in the days leading up to the debate on Bill 195.

In my remarks on May 19, I noted:

"As Canadians, we rightly value—indeed, we treasure—our democratic rights. Willingly we carry out our responsibilities as citizens in a democratic society....

"In order to maintain the fairness of our elections, we have established spending limits. We have them, among other reasons, so that well-funded special interests cannot determine the outcome of elections, so that big money cannot buy an election. We have campaign spending limits so that one party cannot gain an unfair advantage by flooding the airwaves with advertising to the point that the other parties and other perspectives are unable to compete. I believe these limits are necessary and in the public interest"—and I support them.

"We believe, and we assert, that the Ontario Liberal Party has attempted to gain such unfair advantage through an alliance with the so-called Working Families Coalition. In the last two provincial elections, the Working Families Coalition has funded multi-million-dollar ad campaigns attacking the Ontario PC Party, its leaders and its candidates, we believe to the direct benefit of the Ontario Liberal Party. We suspect they'll do it again this fall if given the chance.

I went on to say that "these organizations have every right to participate in the election, and their members individually have every right to support whoever they want. But do they have the right to collude with one political party, coordinating their advertising to support that political party, to get around the campaign spending limits that the other parties must obey by law? I submit that they do not."

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To be clear, we do not oppose the principle of the government's Bill 196. Voter suppression tactics of any kind are not acceptable, and there's no place for that kind of dishonesty in Ontario politics. At the same time, however, we do take issue with the government's apparent belief that there has been an epidemic of corruption in our elections that would require a bill of this kind. If this government were actually serious about ensuring the fairness of our elections, they would amend their bill to include the substance of my Bill 195. That, more than anything else, would give this government some much-needed credibility on this issue. It would show that it's actually serious about playing by the same rules as the other parties must observe.

In my remarks on Bill 195, I said that for the Liberal Party to be able to get around those spending limits would for them be hugely advantageous. Through their votes against Bill 195, the Liberals sent a very clear signal to voters that there are in fact links between Working Families and Ontario Liberals. That, we suggest, amounts to collusion. Any fair-minded person looking at the weak arguments presented by the member for Willowdale on May 19 would draw the same conclusion.

Fortunately, this government has extended itself another chance to get it right. So I call upon the government members to amend Bill 196 to include our anti-collusion measures. If they did that, I think they would find the official opposition inclined to support them. If they don't do that, if they continue to turn a blind eye to collusion in electoral advertising—or, worse, encourage it behind the scenes—people will continue to ask, "What

do they have to hide?” Again, we need to remember that this issue goes beyond Working Families and what we believe may well be their efforts to collude with the Liberal Party in 2011. The issue goes far beyond that. Fairness requires us to consider all external organizations with undue capacity to influence the outcome of elections, not only in 2011 but beyond. The people of Ontario rightly expect us to uphold the highest standards of fairness. They expect all parties to obey the law, to obey it in letter as well as in spirit. They expect the same of individuals, be they elections officials or individual campaign volunteers.

Again, we do not oppose the principle of Bill 196. It’s just unfortunate that the government’s approach appears to be a partisan approach, as we saw in their decision to defeat Bill 195. Yes, we must reject voter suppression, dishonesty and corruption of all kinds during elections. Behaviour of that kind must be condemned and the law must be upheld. But fairness also demands that we close the loopholes, especially those benefiting special interests and one political party—namely, the Ontario Liberal Party. That’s what the people expect of us. That’s why they’re calling on us and why we’re calling on this government to amend its bill, to strengthen it by including our anti-collusion measures.

Just to reiterate, I think it’s important to point out that on May 19 this Legislature debated Bill 195, An Act to amend the Election Finances Act to ban collusion in electoral advertising. During that debate, the member from Willowdale made some interesting remarks. He said that Bill 195 was, in his opinion, “just a fuzzy piece of legislation, brought in a political year as we’re approaching a political and obvious election.” The member continued, “I say at best it’s confusing, or mischievous and redundant.”

My question to the member for Willowdale, which remains unanswered, is, was he describing my Bill 195 or was he actually describing his own government’s legislation, Bill 196, which we are debating today? We know that Bill 196 could well be considered a confusing, mischievous and redundant effort to distract the public from the Liberals’ own—and I’ll say it again until you support it—electoral mischief-making and their shameful vote on May 19 against my Bill 195, which would have gone a long way towards putting an end to collusion in advertising during election campaigns.

They rejected my sensible bill. Instead, they rushed ahead with Bill 196, introduced the very next day after my bill, which was designed to be little more than a smokescreen. They tried to distract the public from Bill 195 so that their friends in the Working Families Coalition would continue their plan of unfettered advertising, only limited by the funds they extract from the membership of the unions and organizations comprising the coalition. Perhaps the Liberals thought they needed to shield the Working Families Coalition, its dubious advertising campaigns and the Liberal Party itself from Bill 195, but it’s clear that they believe that they shouldn’t have been constrained by campaign spending limits

designed to create a level playing field for all political parties.

Working Families and other so-called third parties now have no limits on the amount they can spend to support or attack a particular candidate or party during an election. Parties, on the other hand, are limited to total campaign spending of approximately \$8 million a year in the case of an election, according to the Canadian Press.

I want to return to the member for Willowdale, who unfortunately isn’t in the chamber at the present time, who complained that Bill 195 did not contain a definition section—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I’d ask you to withdraw that comment. I’d ask you to withdraw the reference to the person’s—

Mr. Ted Arnott: That the member from Willowdale is not in the chamber?

Interjections.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Oh, he’s—I do withdraw. I’m glad he’s here. I hope that he’ll respond to the comments that I make in the opportunity they will have when there’s a two-minute reply.

The member for Willowdale complained that Bill 195 did not contain a definition section. It would have been impossible to enforce, he said. But reading the government’s Bill 196, it would appear that it, too, lacks a definition section. It sets out specific fines for those guilty of a so-called corrupt practice, yet the bill makes no mention of collusion in advertising designed to skirt our election spending limits. Many people would consider that to be one of the most unfair practices of all, yet this bill makes no mention of collusion in advertising. It avoids the issue altogether.

The member for Willowdale also claimed incredibly during the course of that debate that “collusion and implied hanky-panky going on behind the scenes” are already dealt with. But that’s at odds with the facts, and the member, who is a member of the bar, likely knows that. He should have known that, had he listened to the Ontario Chief Electoral Officer on May 7, 2009, when he testified before the Select Committee on Elections. The member for Willowdale has been a member of that committee, so the member for Willowdale of all people should know that Mr. Greg Essensa, the Chief Electoral Officer, told the committee that he believes that a review and update of Ontario’s election finance laws is warranted. He also explained that, under current law, third parties are free to co-operate and coordinate their efforts with recognized parties. I quote Mr. Essensa’s remarks from Hansard: “There is no specific provision that prohibits a third party from co-operating or coordinating its advertising with either a political party or one of its candidates, provided that the party/candidate is not actually controlling the third party’s advertising.” Based on Mr. Essensa’s testimony, it would appear that the member for Willowdale was flatly wrong when he said that collusion was already dealt with.

Mr. Essensa also tells us that there are already more stringent requirements in place federally, in British Col-

umbia, in New Brunswick and in Quebec, and that there were also regulations being proposed in Alberta at the time of the testimony, that being in 2009. Again I quote Mr. Essensa's testimony from Hansard: "It is, or will be, an offence in these jurisdictions to collude for the purposes of circumventing spending limits for political parties, candidates and third parties."

With my Bill 195, the McGuinty government had a real and genuine opportunity to show that it was serious about strengthening our elections law to ensure fairness and transparency in our provincial election campaigns. Unfortunately, the Liberals rejected that opportunity, choosing instead to follow their own selfish political agenda and political self-interests—in essence, turning a blind eye to collusion in electoral advertising as long as it benefits them. So instead of addressing a very real threat to the fairness of our elections and instead of ensuring that our democracy is on a level playing with other parties, the McGuinty Liberals have instead decided to go after something that they apparently feel is a much bigger political threat, and they of course brought in this bill to do that.

But why has the McGuinty government decided to target our poll clerks, our returning officers and our dedicated elections staff and volunteers? Do the Liberals genuinely believe that there is an epidemic of corruption on the part of those who count our ballots? These are the people who, notwithstanding their own political views and notwithstanding sometimes difficult circumstances, are in almost every case dedicated, committed, patriotic people who believe in fairness. For the McGuinty Liberals to make these people the issue at a time when our procedures, our checks and balances, and our democratic traditions have long been established—it seems to me that Bill 196 is just a desperate attempt to muddy the waters in the days leading up to the debate on my Bill 195.

In my remarks on May 19, I noted that we as Canadians rightly value—indeed, we treasure—our democratic rights. Willingly we carry out our responsibilities as citizens of a democratic society. In order to maintain the fairness of our elections, we have established spending limits. We have them, among other reasons, so that well-funded special interests cannot determine the outcome of our elections, so that big money cannot buy an election.

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We have campaign spending limits so that one party cannot gain an unfair advantage by flooding the airways with advertising to the point that the other parties and other perspectives are unable to compete. I believe that these limits are necessary and that they are in the public interest.

We believe and we assert that the Ontario Liberal Party has attempted to gain an unfair advantage through its alliance with the so-called Working Families Coalition. In the last two provincial elections, the Working Families Coalition has funded multi-million-dollar ad campaigns attacking the Ontario PC Party, its leaders and its candidates, we believe to the direct benefit of the

Ontario Liberal Party. We suspect and believe that they will do it again this fall if given the chance.

I went on to say that these organizations have every right to participate in the elections, and their members, individually, have the right to support whoever they want. But do they have the right to collude with one political party, coordinating their advertising to support that political party to get around the campaign spending limits that the other parties must observe by law? I submit again that they do not.

To be clear, we do not oppose the principle of the government's Bill 196. Voter suppression tactics of any kind are not acceptable. There's no place for that kind of dishonesty in Ontario politics. At the same time, however, we do take issue with the government's apparent belief that there is some sort of an epidemic of corruption in our elections that would require a bill of this kind.

If this government were actually serious about ensuring the fairness of elections, they would amend their bill to include the substance of Bill 195. That, more than anything, would give the government the much-needed credibility that it lacks on this issue. It would show that it's actually serious about playing by the same rules that the other parties must observe.

In my remarks on Bill 195, I said that for the Liberal Party to be able to get around those spending limits would, for them, be hugely advantageous. Through their votes against Bill 195, the Liberals sent a very clear signal to voters that there are, in fact, links between Working Families and the Ontario Liberals. That, we suggest, amounts to collusion. Any fair-minded person looking at the weak arguments presented by the member for Willowdale when my bill was defeated would draw the same conclusion. Fortunately, this government has extended itself another chance to get it right. I now call upon the government to amend Bill 196 to include our anti-collusion measures. If they did that, I think they would find that the official opposition is inclined to support them on this bill. If they don't do it, if they continue to turn a blind eye to collusion in electoral advertising that they in fact may be encouraging and involved with, people will continue to ask, what do they have to hide?

Again, we need to remember that this issue goes beyond Working Families and what we believe may well be their efforts to collude with the Liberal Party in 2011. The issue goes far beyond that. Fairness requires us to consider all external organizations with undue capacity to influence the outcome of elections, not only in 2011 but beyond.

The people of Ontario rightly expect us to uphold the highest standards of fairness. They expect all parties to obey the law, to obey it in letter as well as in spirit. They expect the same of individuals, be they elections officials or individual campaign volunteers or the members of the Legislature who are so privileged to serve here.

Again, we do not oppose the principle of Bill 196. It's just unfortunate that the government's approach appears to be a partisan approach, as we saw in their decision to

reject Bill 195. Yes, we must reject voter suppression, dishonesty and corruption. Behaviour of that kind must be condemned and the law must be upheld. But fairness also demands that we close loopholes, especially those benefiting one political party and the special interests that support them. That's what the people expect of us and that's why we're calling upon the government again to amend its bill and to strengthen it by including our anti-collusion measures. If they don't do that, the people will want to know why. Ultimately, I'm confident that the voters will hold this government and this Liberal Party accountable on October 6.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm so pleased to have the opportunity, and I'm glad that the member for Wellington–Halton Hills gave me the opportunity to share his time as we talk about Bill 196.

I want to commend him. I had the opportunity to speak in the chamber on May 19 regarding his bill, Bill 195. I have to tell you: Many of his points that were brought up today were extremely important. I know that I was very disappointed that this government came forward and hammered down Bill 195 because I believe we had an opportunity to do some good.

Here we're talking about this bill; there are about 16 or 17 of us here in the chamber. People at home must wonder what the heck is going on here. We're talking about two bills brought in about a day apart from each other; from a public perspective, both talk about providing fairness. They must really wonder what the heck we're thinking in this place.

We've got a couple of days left. We do have an opportunity to do some good work, to have some co-operation among the three parties. I think the member for Wellington–Halton Hills brings up an extremely good point: that we have an opportunity to bring the good from Bills 195 and 196 forward.

I mentioned during the debate on the 19th that I was at the Canadian Club, sitting at the back, listening to Premier McGuinty speak at his event on Friday, April 15. There was one thing that I agreed with him on: He mentioned that the beauty of a true democracy is the fact that the people are always right. When they're behind that ballot box and have the opportunity to cast their vote, that's when true democracy takes place. So you want to have, as a government, legislation behind that democracy that is fair and even for all. Again, I want to commend Mr. Arnott, the member for Wellington–Halton Hills, for bringing forward his debate and also talking about some of the issues that came forward that day.

The Attorney General: You could almost put the start of his speech behind music. It was almost like a public service announcement, a call to arms of wanting to vote, the importance of voting and the importance of exercising your right—

Mr. Peter Kormos: Very Liberal: Vote early and vote often.

Mr. Steve Clark: As the member from Welland notes: Absolutely.

The other issue that the Attorney General mentioned was that the goal of Bill 196 was to have, I think his words were, the “best election law possible” to ensure that there were stronger penalties, to make the law stronger. I think the same could be said for Mr. Arnott's bill, Bill 195.

We all have election stories—provincial, municipal and federal. I'll get to some of those federal stories. But I can remember, as a young person who decided to run for municipal office, granted, and not knowing any of the laws, going into the clerk's office just hours before nominations closed in 1982 and quickly reading the laws.

In those days, I had to get 10 signatures, and I remember having these large electoral books for the three wards in Brockville and taking them to a nearby refreshment establishment and going through them and making sure that—I think at the time I had to have the signature of 10 electors. We made sure we had 11; we wanted to make sure that we had a little room to spare.

Mr. Peter Kormos: You took them to a beer hall.

Mr. Steve Clark: Absolutely. I think I got asked that night by the local newspaper about my platform, which I didn't have at the time. I certainly didn't have a wonderful Changebook that I could give people on the campaign trail that provided them relief and a guarantee for the programs that they expect while rooting out fraud and waste in the system.

But I gave it a lot of thought, and I remember, being a student just having graduated from university, that I decided to have a brochure. I attended a little shop. It was a taxi stand and a place where he did passport photos. He took my picture for my campaign brochure, and his camera didn't really like my glasses, so he actually gave me a set of glasses with no lenses in them. He took this picture of me, and that was on my 80 or 100 brochures. I got 10 lawn signs, and we knocked on doors from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. We wanted to make sure that we adhered to all the laws. This is a true story, not like some of the other innuendo and allegations that have been thrown out with this bill.

1520

One of the things that I found out partway through the campaign—this is an interesting story—is that there was a document called a Vernon's directory. I think it cost about \$300 at the time, and it listed all the people and it had a reverse telephone. It didn't have any of those technology issues that have been discussed. It wasn't a demon dialler; there wasn't the Internet in those days, back in 1982. This was just a true book. I didn't have the \$300 to buy it, so we went to the library. I remember getting caught by Margaret Williams, who's now just retired as chief librarian at the Brockville library, saying, “You can't photocopy that. That's against copyright laws. You can only photocopy up to 10%.” So within an hour, I managed to mobilize about 11 friends, and we pumped that photocopier full of quarters and had our Vernon's directory that we used as our manifesto for that election. It's funny.

During my provincial election, my by-election, many, many years later, last March, when we were out cam-

painging, I actually decided—and again, I checked all the election laws, made sure that I adhered to everything that was in black and white—to tour the polls on election day. I didn't wear blue; I didn't have any buttons. I walked in, I greeted the poll workers, thanked them for their work and left. At one point during the day, my campaign manager called me—this was just last year during the provincial by-election. I understood that the Liberal Party had put in a complaint against me during the election. They actually called Elections Ontario and registered a complaint, not that I was breaking any laws—I wasn't breaking any laws—but that I was being too nice. That was actually a complaint that was put in: I was being too nice in the polls. Strange, but true.

Federally, just this last election, there were some stories that were brought up, so I'll share my federal election story. One Saturday morning, my wife looked out and thought it was strange on a Saturday that our sign, our sign for Mr. Brown, our Conservative candidate in Leeds–Grenville, our MP—he's been our MP for seven years—was crooked a little bit on the front lawn. So I went out to my front lawn to pull that sign out, and you know what it was? It was actually a Green Party sign. Someone had come, yanked my sign out and tried to put a Green Party sign on my front lawn. It was the only sign changed on the whole street.

Because I didn't want to break any laws, I made sure I gingerly placed it by the side of my house, made sure that the sign folks from that Conservative campaign called the Green Party and gave them back their sign, and we were able to put our sign back. There wasn't any great furor; there wasn't any front-page news; there wasn't any press release or any email from any parties alleging there was any wrongdoing. It was simply replaced, given back for them to put on another lawn, and another sign for my chosen candidate, our MP, was placed back.

There are lots of stories that we can talk about for elections, municipally, federally and provincially. But I think we all agree in the chamber that ultimately the legislation that's going to govern how we as candidates operate and how third parties operate has to be fair. We had the chance two Thursdays ago with Mr. Arnott's Bill 195 to do that, and as he said earlier today, we have an opportunity to perhaps make Bill 196 stronger by recognizing some of the good points that were in Bill 195.

To try to quote from the Attorney General, he said something—and I'm paraphrasing; it's not a direct quote—that it's based on rumours, and rumours are only that. It's based on allegations, and allegations are only that. It's based on innuendo, and innuendo is only that. As we talked about, the bill that we proposed, the bill that was presented a day before Bill 196, the bill that the member for Willowdale called “fuzzy,” “redundant,” “mischievous” and whatever, was based on the Chief Electoral Officer. It was based on the need for some changes.

If you want to talk about mischievous, mischievous is the email that the Liberal Party sent out May 17, where

they actually tried to talk about “American-style dirty tricks in the federal election.” This email from your party claimed that it was “by federal Conservatives.” They touted in the email that they're introducing tough new legislation that will mean stiff penalties and jail time if anyone breaks the rules during Ontario's elections. The email:

“Here's what you need to know:

“It will be illegal for anyone to give voters false information or impersonate a candidate, campaign worker or an Elections Ontario official.

“Those caught breaking the law will be fined up to \$25,000 and get nearly two years in jail.” Then they go on and try to smear our leader, Ontario PC leader Tim Hudak.

When you talk about stories and innuendo and allegations, there's your email. There's what you did as a party to try to promote Bill 196. You should be ashamed of yourselves.

When we had the discussion about Mr. Arnott's bill to try to make some real changes, you couldn't do it.

You talk about issues in the federal campaign. I've read the Globe and Mail story from Jill Mahoney: “Joe Volpe Turfs Campaign Worker Caught Trashing Green Pamphlets.” That wasn't Stephen Harper; that was the Liberal Party and the Green Party. It says right here. It goes through the whole story.

Interjection.

Mr. Steve Clark: I don't know what they're doing over there.

Clearly, when you read the story, it talks about the fact that a campaign worker was dismissed and, in fact, as part of the canvass, that brochures were removed from mailboxes and replaced with federal Liberal Party pamphlets.

As part of the comments and questions, perhaps the parliamentary assistant would like to address that, whether this is the type of dirty tricks—this is the story or the innuendo or the allegation that you're trying to address. So I hope that one of the baker's dozen across the floor will provide that clarity. I think it's very important, because if you don't, then stories are only that. Innuendo is only that. It's very clear with the legislation. Our legislation was talking about the Chief Electoral Officer.

I'm going to take the opportunity to read a few quotes that I believe are pertinent regarding the Working Families Coalition as regards the original appeal to Elections Ontario that our party provided. According to the Elections Ontario report, which was prepared by the law firm of Torys LLP, Dalton McGuinty's former chief of staff, Don Guy, the Liberal campaign director in 2003 and 2007 and now in 2011, was among the senior party members to meet with Working Families. Let me quote:

“While we have concluded that the Working Families Coalition was ‘independent’ of the Ontario Liberal Party within the parameters of control and agency ... the WFC's use of consultants with known Liberal connections who were simultaneously providing services both to the WFC and the OLP and, where the very person run-

ning the OLP campaign, Don Guy, is president of the polling research firm hired by the WFC”—get this—“certainly constitutes, in our view, grounds for [the] concern which warranted this investigation.”

Let’s talk about what Chief Electoral Officer Greg Essensa said in 2009. Here’s a quote:

“The fourth public policy area for consideration is, should Ontario adopt stricter registration and anti-collusion provisions? Under the Election Finances Act, there is no specific provision that prohibits a third party from co-operating or coordinating its advertising with either a political party or one of its candidates, provided that the party/candidate is not actually controlling the third party’s” agency.

1530

Furthermore, the Torys report, commissioned by Elections Ontario, says, “The third party advertising regime is new to Ontario. The first election under the regime disclosed a number of rough edges, particularly in circumstances where there is potential for conflicts of interest/collusion between registered parties and third parties.”

That’s not a story. That’s not an allegation. That’s not innuendo. That’s the Chief Electoral Officer, who placed that concern clearly on the table in 2009. This wasn’t something that happened as part of the May 2 federal election. It wasn’t a story from the federal campaign trail. It wasn’t a mischievous email that was sent out by the Liberal Party. This was the Chief Electoral Officer, talking about deficiencies in the system, things that needed to be changed.

Mr. Vic Dhillon: Making it up.

Mr. Steve Clark: He’s not making it up, member opposite.

Interjection: It’s in Hansard, so we’re not making it up.

Mr. Steve Clark: Unlike some of the debate from the Attorney General, we definitely aren’t making it up. Mr. Dhillon can have his own comments and put them on the record later.

I would like to talk just very briefly about the penalties that are in this legislation, section 92 of the act. I know there was discussion when my colleague from Wellington–Halton Hills brought it up, when he referenced deputy returning officers and poll clerks. He is absolutely correct: Section 92 in this bill says:

“Wilful miscount of ballots

“92. Every deputy returning officer or poll clerk who wilfully miscounts the ballots or otherwise wilfully makes up a false statement of the poll is guilty of a corrupt practice and is liable to a fine of not more than \$25,000 or to imprisonment for a term of not more than two years less a day, or to both.”

Just to let you know, if this legislation passes, the way you’re targeting poll clerks and deputy returning officers—under a Tim Hudak PC government, those terrible criminals will have to clean graffiti and rake leaves along highways and pick up trash. They’d be required to do that

up to 40 hours a week, not watch premium cable or high-definition channels.

I know that the Minister of Community Safety expressed a concern about criminals in neighbourhoods. We’re talking about penalties to this act.

The public service announcement that the Attorney General presented as the opening bid was extremely nice. He could have done the same speech, I suggest, on Thursday, May 19, for Mr. Arnott’s bill, because many of the things he spoke on were stories, whereas Mr. Arnott presented his bill based on actual concerns from the Chief Electoral Officer. It just shows how out of touch the Attorney General is with this bill and that there is political motivation on their side. Clearly, the email sent out the day this bill was presented proves that, as well as the comments from government members on May 19 for Mr. Arnott’s bill. If we’re truly going to get this bill passed and go through the process in the last three days, you could have done better.

I want to quote the Attorney General from earlier this afternoon—it’s actually a long quote, so I’ll ask you to bear with me—when he referred to the existing Election Act: “You take a look at the legislation and this conduct which was alleged, which was rumoured, which was spoken about, in some cases by those sitting beside others receiving calls, and this conduct wasn’t specifically addressed. So you look around for other places. Could it be covered by the Criminal Code? Well, there are provisions in the Criminal Code that can address some of it. There are provisions in the Criminal Code that might be able to be used to address this. Those provisions have a history, have a purpose, have a reason that they were placed in there, and their implementation has been the result of many, many decades of use and interpretation by the courts. They’ve acquired a judicial history, a case history that in some instances makes it challenging to apply to the type of allegation that’s made in 2011 and might need to be used, might need to be the subject of legislative sanction.”

If I took that quote and put it into Hansard, it could very easily have been made by the Liberal government the afternoon of May 19, when Mr. Arnott’s bill came forward. It could have applied so much, not just to what the Attorney General was talking about with his own bill, but chapter and verse to the other one as well.

The Chief Electoral Officer specifically said that the law was not strong enough. This is a far more powerful statement than what the Attorney General called stories; he talked about rumours, allegation and innuendo by unnamed sources. That’s not what the Chief Electoral Officer put on the record. According to Mr. Essensa, the existing provisions of the Election Finances Act are inadequate to ban collusion between political parties and third parties.

If the Attorney General took his own advice and looked for other places where it could be addressed—for example, the Criminal Code—the provisions there, quoting the Attorney General this afternoon again, “have a history, have a purpose, have a reason that they were

placed in there, and their implementation has been the result of many, many decades of use and interpretation by the courts. They've acquired a judicial history, a case history that in some instances makes it challenging to apply to the type of allegation that's made in 2011...."

Again, the question you have is: Why do the McGuinty Liberals vote against banning collusion by third parties for the purpose of circumventing advertising limits? Why would they talk one way in the Legislature one day, and then change their minds? If they are truly motivated by a desire to improve election fairness with this bill, like they say they want to, why don't they sit down with us as three parties, decide that we're going to ban collusion, that we're going to set limits that apply to everyone that make this a fair bill for all parties, make the playing field known to them? It just doesn't make sense.

1540

I was so pleased to have the opportunity, along with the member for Nepean–Carleton, to speak on Thursday regarding Bill 195. Because if you're sitting at home and you're watching us and you're saying to yourself, "Why isn't Mr. Arnott's bill a good idea"—some of the sections are right out of Mr. Essensa's recommendations, adding clauses, for example, that state: "A statement that, in engaging in third party election advertising, the third party is acting independently of and not in collusion with a registered party, a constituency association or a candidate." Who would oppose that? If you really sit down and think about the intent of the legislation and the intent of what we're talking about, why wouldn't you vote for that?

If you look at the Working Families Coalition—and I have spoken to a number of folks in my riding on the street. Some people haven't met our leader, Tim Hudak, before. There are some that haven't met him. They look at that ad—they don't know the ad. They don't know what meeting is being talked about. They don't understand the slant of that advertising.

Clearly, we're not talking about rumours along the election campaign. We're not talking about a prank of taking a sign down on somebody's lawn and adding another one or taking a brochure out of a mailbox. We're talking about collusion between political parties. When the election official says that the law needs to be strengthened, that the loophole needs to be stopped—you look at Hansard on the 19th and you look at those three bills that were presented that day. The member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell presented a bill, Bill 153, An Act to amend the Municipal Elections Act. When that bill was brought in, there was a mistake. They moved the election date up, but they didn't move the start date. It was a mistake. Everyone in the chamber recognized that it needed to be fixed. We came together, it passed second reading, and I'm sure the government that will take over will consider that change prior to the municipal election.

I brought up another issue that came up with people not filing their expenses and having to spend \$3,000, \$4,000, whatever the case may be, going to a judge and

getting brought back, being that the judge would reinstate them as a member. We're going to find pieces of legislation that have loopholes or changes that need to be made before the next election. Mr. Essensa, in his 2009 report, talked about a loophole from the 2007 election that needed to be fixed. Mr. Arnott very appropriately brings that forward for discussion. The Attorney General—again, stories are just stories. Innuendo is innuendo. If you truly wanted to move forward and provide a bill that the three parties, I think—and I could be wrong. You are going to all have your chance to make your comments—two minutes, an hour, whatever the case may be—on the bill.

I think we do have an opportunity in these last three and a half, four days to make changes that people at home would sit back and say, "Yeah, we understand that. We need to strengthen our laws. We need to make them fair. We need to establish limits. We need to stop collusion. We need to stop fraud. We need to stop people from providing these tricks, from making these funny calls, from dealing in election fraud." I don't think anyone in this chamber has an issue with that. But let's stop talking about redundant, mischievous—let's cut the crap. Let's sit down and take Bill 195, Bill 196, take the time here, rather than sitting until midnight every night, and let's make the changes.

Mr. Arnott, in his address on the 19th, talked about his wife, who's a teacher, who obviously supports him. However, some of the unions have decided to take money out of people's pockets with the express purpose, in his riding's case, to defeat him. In my riding's case, it's the same way. The average person can't understand that. They think it's wrong. They think there need to be some rules to prevent that. What we tried to do here in our party is to put that forward. The NDP talked about it as well and generally supported it. They certainly don't get the money from these types of campaigns.

We've come a long way since I remember knocking on doors as a 22-year-old, buying 10 signs and having a little bit of a hokey brochure, with funny glasses. But the principle is still there. When you put your name on a ballot and you knock on a door and you offer people support, you expect that everybody is going to play it straight. I don't think anyone in this room argues that it shouldn't be straight.

Mr. Arnott and our party believe that we can strengthen this bill if you listen to us, if you listen to the Chief Electoral Officer.

I think that the Attorney General, while he voices a good PSA, while he rallies the troops and rallies the 17 members in the chamber—people of Ontario expect better. They expect that we can sit down and that we can work on a bill that provides balance, that strengthens laws, that closes loopholes, that provides something that we can all be proud of in the last days of our sitting in the Legislative Assembly.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Comments and questions?

Mr. Peter Kormos: I listened carefully to the comments by both of the Conservative members.

I'm going to be speaking to this bill next. I suspect I'm going to use the hour that's allowed me.

The debate has turned rather sombre, and that's maybe entirely appropriate, because in many respects it's a very unfortunate debate. The debate around this particular bill, this modest bill, says so much about what has become wronger and wronger about this Legislative chamber and the process that is imposed on us here, in most cases most unwelcomely.

Look, let's not kid ourselves. The Arnott bill will not eliminate the capacity of the Working Families Coalition to campaign against any particular political party that they choose.

I want to talk about the impact of the Arnott bill. The Arnott bill will simply affect the issue of collusion.

It was amazing that there were some smart people in this Legislature saying, "I don't know what 'collusion' means." As a matter of fact, one of that member's own colleagues said, "I'll tell what you I did: I looked it up in the dictionary." What an enlightened thing to do. What a tremendous start to understanding what the word means.

We learned a little bit about some of the Volpe scandals, and I have been reminded of that one. Then we of course heard from the member for Brampton West, who heckled his way into the debate, somehow wanting to align himself with Volpe, rather than engaging in the kind of—and perhaps when we get back to the responses, because as I recall, during one Joe Volpe's leadership bid there was some very stinky stuff going on, and allegations and some concerns about significant corruption.

1550

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments and questions?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm pleased to comment on the debate on Bill 195, and I would point out that, although you would never know it if you are listening, this is a debate on Bill 195—

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Bill 196.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: On Bill 196. See, even I'm confused, because these guys are stuck two weeks in the past. They're stuck on something that has already been defeated. What we need to focus on is Bill 196, because Bill 196—

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: You voted against it.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I wasn't here when you were debating 195; be quiet.

What does amaze me in all of this was that somehow the member from Wellington–Halton Hills thinks that his bill is the centre of the world.

I would like to talk about the federal election, which I really think is much more pertinent, because when you look at what happened on May 2, some things went seriously awry in my riding and many others.

On May 3, the Liberal members in their caucus meeting—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Order.

Go ahead.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: They discussed the matter of election fraud and voter suppression, which the members

opposite apparently think is some sort of rumour. Later, I will talk about the fact that it wasn't. And then there was the matter of amazing processing speed, because a policy went to cabinet, it went to legislation and regulations, and within two weeks we were tabling a bill to stop election fraud and make sure my constituents know where to go to vote without somebody impersonating Elections Canada. I think that's a serious matter.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to have an opportunity to have a comment on the debate on Bill 196 and the speeches from the members from Wellington–Halton Hills and Leeds–Grenville. I note that the member from Guelph made reference to Bill 195. That's the bill we should be talking about: the member from Wellington–Halton Hills' private member's bill, which really did deal with more substantive issues, and that was the issue of the Working Families Coalition and their collusion with the Liberal Party of Ontario. Really, the reason it's dealing with more substantive issues is that it's giving an unfair advantage to the Liberal Party, where they would spend some \$5 million to \$10 million on nasty advertising.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: You've already seen it.

Mr. Norm Miller: I saw one of the ads last night as I was watching the news. The reason it's unfair is that it's outside of Elections Ontario rules and it's money that the other parties won't be spending. Most other provinces have rules about this. They have rules about third party advertising and limits on it—\$200,000 or \$300,000 in total, and requirements to report that. I think that's fair, because then it's a level playing field where all parties are spending the same money. One party is not buying an election based on being able to spend lots more money than the other parties, and that's the situation we have in Ontario right now. The government used its majority to whip the vote and defeat Bill 195, An Act to amend the Election Finances Act to ban collusion in electoral advertising, because obviously they have this unfair advantage, so why would they want to deal with this very real situation? But if you want to have fair elections in Ontario, you'd bring in rules to do with third party advertising. Sadly, in Ontario we don't have those rules, so we have an unfair situation.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to thank the members from Wellington–Halton Hills and also Leeds–Grenville for their comments.

Accusations, fabrications and hearsay run rampant in elections, whether they're municipal, provincial or federal. My question is: How is this bill going to distinguish between truth or fabrication? How is it going to be enforced? How many resources will be required to uncover, prove and prosecute individuals under the act?

I, for one, am in favour of any reform that will improve the legality and the honesty of the election process, but I have my doubts. I'll tell you why: because over the

years, I've watched many, many, many elections, whether it's municipal, provincial or federal, and some parties—I won't mention any one in particular—will even fabricate things against themselves to say that the other party had done it, whether it be filling a dumpster with signs of their own, saying that the other party did it, or there's someone in the election polling booth that votes Liberal and they're Liberal-leaning, and they may have done something that's questionable. I've seen these things happen 100 times over the years, and has anyone really been prosecuted? No.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Oh, but it's a big deal now.

Mr. Paul Miller: But now, all of a sudden, after a federal election where one particular party got bad results, they come out and say, "Well, we've got to have all of this reform now to protect us in the fall." Why didn't they do it four years ago? Why didn't they do it eight years ago?

With all due respect, these things come up—the timing is just unbelievable of how these things come up. The last week before we break, they come up with this thing that wasn't even supposed to be on the books, and it comes out because they're worried that somebody might do something illegal. They might want to look in their backyards, because their record isn't exactly stellar in the last elections I've seen.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Leeds–Grenville has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to thank the members for Welland, Guelph, Parry Sound–Muskoka and Hamilton East–Stoney Creek for their comments and statements on the floor.

I want to go back to something that my friend the member for Wellington–Halton Hills said at the very start. The government opposite had indicated to us that there were no pieces of legislation that were coming forward. Yet, within one day of Mr. Arnott presenting Bill 195, this government tables Bill 196.

Fact: The only reason that this item is on the agenda—the story, the innuendo, the allegation—is because of this man right here. This man right in front of me tabled that bill to provide a level playing field in our elections, to take what Greg Essensa, the Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario, says needed to be done. He put it on the floor, and the government opposite not only put this bill—even after they said that there was nothing else on the table, even though they said, "We're done with legislation; there's none left to come." The minute our bill gets put on the table, their bill gets put on the table. They voted down our bill, and we have this debate today talking about stories and innuendo and allegations.

Again, the question you have to ask is, why are the McGuinty Liberals voting against—or had voted against, on May 19—banning collusion and circumventing limits? If they are truly motivated and have the desire to improve things, wake up and do both.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Kormos: First, just to put this in context about what's going to happen during the course of this

debate, this is a second reading debate. That means that rather than examining the minutiae of the bill, one talks about the broad principle—the very broad, broad principle—of the bill. This is a bill, of course, that amends the Election Act with respect to certain electoral practices, which opens up the discussion to electoral practices. Then it further goes to talk about corrupt practices, which means that it extends and expands the conversation to one of corrupt practices, and that means that a discussion of Bill 195 is entirely relevant and parliamentary and necessary.

People are telling war stories, and not inappropriately, about their political activities. The first election campaign I worked on was in 1965. I was 13 years old. I haven't missed one since. Even this weekend, I was over at the Conservative convention down at the Toronto Congress Centre. I pulled in there on Saturday, and I saw these really wild-looking kids with green hair and yellow hair and costumes, and I thought, "There's surely some stoners in there to boot." It was just impossible not to be the case. And I thought, "By God, the Conservative Party has changed since the last time we attended one of their conventions." That was the John Tory leadership convention down in London two or three years ago.

1600

These kids were not necessarily Tories. Not to say they weren't; I'm not sure. They were at their own convention; it was an anime convention. I went and talked to the registration desk—I was intrigued. These young people were at the registration desk—mostly young people; in any event, much younger than me. These are fans of those highly stylized Japanese cartoon-making and cartoon films.

Pokémon apparently is one of the characters. So you had people there dressed up like Pokémon, and they were posing, because people wanted to take photographs. They wouldn't just stand there like those old-fashioned, old-country grandparent photographs. They would actually go into their karate poses or their ninja poses and stuff. They'd fix this pose and hold it for the cameras. It was quite fun to watch and, quite frankly, more exciting than certain parts of the Conservative convention.

These kids—young people, not kids—were mostly from all over North America; 16,000, I'm told, which was 10 times the number at the Conservative convention. I'm told there's a broader comic convention downtown at the Metro Convention Centre, which draws an even bigger crowd, because it doesn't just deal with this highly stylized Japanese genre of cartoon but covers the whole gamut of Marvel cartoons and stuff like that. That would be much cooler because it would be downtown, right? At this convention, these people were out there, isolated in the Toronto Congress Centre. They'd be downtown interacting. Heck, many of them would look perfectly normal in downtown Toronto, and I say, God bless them. They were a delightful group of people, and I enjoyed talking to a couple of them and to their organizers, seeing as I had never seen anything like that before in my life, and I've seen a lot of things. I'm not suggesting I haven't

seen peculiar things before, but that wasn't peculiar. These were people having a good time.

It was peculiar, though, by the time I got to the north convention hall of the Toronto Congress Centre where the Tories were, because these people were engaging in their own political process, and I have a great deal of respect for that. As you know, opposing parties visit each other's conventions. It's not the first Conservative convention I've been to—I've been to a couple of Liberal ones—and we make generous comments about that party to the press, trying to be complimentary, I say sarcastically, about that party, but not wanting to overdo it because you don't want to detract from the fact that it's their day. So this weekend was the Tories' weekend.

You should know, though, because the Liberals have had a policy convention of some sort and the Tories had theirs this past weekend, that the New Democrats are having one in due course, and that's going to be exciting, because Andrea Horwath is going to talk about real solutions to real problems—affordable ones and practical ones and ones that work.

I don't see the Arnott legislation in the context of, as I say, Working Families. Working Families would exist even if Arnott's legislation became law. It simply wouldn't have the capacity to make connections, to have that nexus with the Ontario Liberal Party or the machine or the caucus and the Premier's office.

I'm concerned about how this legislation came forward. You heard it discussed here in the House, in response to ministerial statements on the day of first reading of this bill, that the government House leader was compromised by her own Premier's office. The government House leader, at the caucus meeting prior to introduction of this bill, government Bill 196, had firmly and clearly stated that there was no more government legislation coming forward, and I'm certain she believed that. She did not mislead us, because she didn't know otherwise.

There's a book that I know some of the members have read by Professor Frankfurt from Princeton University. He's a professor of moral philosophy there, and his book is on bull spit. What Professor Frankfurt does is he distinguishes between lying and bull-spitting by pointing out that when you're lying you know what the truth is and you choose not to tell it, but when you're merely bull-spitting, you're flying by the seat of your pants. You have no idea what you're talking about, but you want people to believe you anyway. I suppose I've seen a lot of both here in this chamber, but of course it's unparliamentary to indicate that somebody lied. But surely it's not unparliamentary to say that somebody bull-spitted. I've had occasion to do that numerous times without interjection by the Chair.

So here we are with legislation that we were told didn't exist, legislation that the government insists is non-partisan—and I agree with them.

I should indicate that New Democrats are going to support the bill.

This isn't how you introduce or process legislation that deals with elections. I recall the major amend-

ments—I believe they were major—to the Members' Integrity Act that were passed some time ago. That was a process whereby all three parties sat down, looked at the various proposals—in that instance, they came primarily from the Integrity Commissioner, then Coulter Osborne. We discussed them with our caucuses. We got some analysis by staff. That bill was developed collaboratively by all three parties and then passed in not quite a wink of an eye but pretty darn close. A bill like that has to be tripartite. It has to be non-partisan, and it shouldn't be anything less or more than that. I suggest to you that the election amendments have to fit into the same category and have the same standards.

Mr. Essensa has been quoted at length, particularly, if not only, with respect to his attendance before the Sorbara committee, the select committee struck by the Premier's office. Mr. McGuinty wanted a committee. Mr. Sorbara had time on his hands at the time, you'll recall. I'm sure he wanted something to do. Mr. McGuinty appointed Mr. Sorbara his election reform guru, his election reform czar. There was an effort by the government, as there always is, to make a little bit of fanfare and talk about how there was going to be a thorough review of elections and election funding here in the province of Ontario. I remember Mr. Sorbara chairing that. I remember the member for Willowdale, the parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General, sitting on that committee as the government member. The long-serving member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills was a Conservative representative. Howard Hampton, former leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party, the member from Kenora–Rainy River, was the New Democratic Party member of that committee. It was truly a tripartite committee, which became interesting in relatively short order because Mr. Sorbara then realized relatively quickly that the opposition could have control of the committee—one member from each opposition party and one member of the government and the Chair, of course, having no vote. I should indicate that the member for Kenora–Rainy River didn't attend one meeting. I acquiesced—I'm sure he takes great delight that he didn't have to attend those meetings. I take great delight that his name appears on the report rather than mine. We soon learned, however, that this wasn't about an open discussion about election reform or election finance reform. This was little more than a wish list by the Premier's office. Anything that wasn't on the Premier's office wish list wasn't going to be discussed; it wasn't going to form part of any legislation.

I acknowledged pretty quick—I said to the Chair, Mr. Sorbara, “Gosh, I guess I was naive to think that this is what the Premier's office said it was going to be.” Here I am, at my age and being here as long as I have, naive. Am I still naive? Of course. I was naive. I'm not saying we were misled. If I did, it would be unparliamentary, wouldn't it? But I sure as heck want to. I know I can't say it, but I want to so badly. It's pounding inside my head. It's on the tip of my tongue.

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The Premier's office said that this is going to be an open debate and discussion around real election reform.

Heck, the Conservative member was excited. He's been around here a long, long time. He's had a lot of ideas in his own right. The New Democrats were excited. You know what's interesting? Mr. Essensa appeared before the committee on several occasions, and it was mostly attendance by invitation only. It wasn't open. There was no ad put in the paper saying there's a committee discussing election reform. Sure enough, in the report of the committee, submitted by Chair Sorbara—here's his signature: Greg Sorbara, MPP, Chair, submitted to the Speaker of the House in June 2009.

On page 33, third party advertising—this doesn't come from Mr. Arnott's speech in support of his bill two Thursdays ago. It came from the Sorbara committee report, the Premier's man, his hand-picked fixer in this context. Page 33, third party advertising—it's not very long. I'm going to read it. It's important that this be on this record:

"Amendments made in 2007 to the Election Finances Act included new sections 37.1 to 37.13, which address third party advertising during an election period (i.e., beginning the day the writ for an election is issued and ending on polling day)."

Of course, let me interject: That has implications and ramifications for even the Arnott proposal because, as I said, the Arnott proposal would not end the Working Families Coalition and their advocacy for what they see as the interests of their members.

Back to the text of the Select Committee on Elections report:

"These provisions included the following requirements:

"—Third party advertisers spending more than \$500 on election advertising must register with the Chief Electoral Officer.

"—All registered third party advertisers must report on their expenses and contributions within six months of polling day.

"—Contributions made for third party advertising purposes in the period that begins two months prior to the issue of the writ and ends three months after polling day must be reported."

Those were the amendments made to the Election Finances Act back in 2007. It's not particularly onerous stuff, is it? It's pretty mild stuff. It's the bare bones. It doesn't control how much a third party can spend on advertising even during the writ period, and I'll get to that in a few minutes because that was discussed fecklessly and futilely by members of the committee.

The report by the select committee goes on:

"The 2007 general election was the first election to be held with these provisions in place."

The report then points out—very, very important. Please, Speaker, this is incredibly important:

"In his presentation to the committee on May 7, 2009, Chief Electoral Officer Greg Essensa identified the following issues for the committee's consideration:

"—Should Ontario adopt third party spending limits (following the lead of Canada, British Columbia and Quebec)?

"—Should Ontario adopt third party contribution limits?

"—Should Ontario attempt to limit third party advertising spending to the amounts a third party raises prior to and during an election?

"—Should Ontario adopt stricter registration and anti-collusion provisions?"

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: "I don't know what collusion means," he says. Please. The parliamentary assistant didn't say that when he approved the report. He was a signatory to the report. He signed off on it. If Mr. Sorbara was the Premier's man, the member for Willowdale was Sorbara's man.

I suspect the parliamentary assistant felt the same frustration that the Conservative member and I did. We thought this was going to be a pleasant experience. We thought that we were going to have some broad-ranging, freewheeling discussions about election and election finance reform, that we'd look at legislation from across Canada, maybe even beyond—no intention to travel, please; it's not necessary. But we soon figured out pretty quick that the Chair, Greg Sorbara, MPP, had his marching orders from the Premier's office, and any effort to use even the force of the majority was going to be futile. It simply wouldn't happen.

Now, back to the report. This is what the committee proposed:

"Proposal

"The committee considered the proposal that Ontario's electoral legislation

"26. Include provisions that apply to third party advertising similar to those in place in other Canadian jurisdictions."

Well, hallelujah. That committee wrote Mr. Arnott's bill, because the proposal put to the committee by Essensa was: (1) third party spending limits, following the lead of Canada, BC and Quebec; (2) third party contribution limits; (3) to attempt to limit third party advertising spending to the amounts a third party raises prior to and during an election; and (4)—this is the big one; this is the paramount one; this is the operative one; this is the one that has caused so much fuss here since Bill 195 was debated for second reading—Essensa put to the committee the adoption of stricter registration and anti-collusion provisions.

For the life of me—and perhaps the Conservatives have not done themselves a service by being so specific in identifying this Working Families Coalition. I know they've done it during question period; they do it out on the campaign trail; they do it in media. And there's no doubt about who that group is targeting; there's no doubt about that. You've got to be from another planet not to understand that. I would no doubt find that uncomfortable. I don't blame the Conservatives for wishing that weren't the case. But unless we're going to ban third party advertising entirely—and I'm not an advocate of that, and we should be very, very careful about where that takes us—

Mr. David Zimmer: Hear, hear.

Applause.

Mr. Peter Kormos: By the parliamentary assistant—then there will be times when the Liberals will suffer at the hand of third party advertisers, the New Democrats will suffer at the hand, and the Conservatives will suffer at the hand.

Come on, give me a break. Do you really think the Canadian Federation of Independent Business is out there touting NDP candidates? Please. And if and when they do, I'm going to start worrying about our policies. Do we really think that the chamber of commerce is going to—and the chamber should. I don't know if I've ever told you, but quite a few years ago now, the Dunnville Chamber of Commerce—you know where Dunnville is?

Interjection: Oh, yeah.

Mr. Peter Kormos: It's a beautiful, small town on Highway 3, out on the lake. It's a very Conservative town. They invited me to be their guest speaker at their annual chamber of commerce dinner. I went down and I gave my speech about how, when workers don't have jobs, or when jobs aren't unionized, workers aren't making decent pay; and if workers aren't making decent pay, they don't buy goods in local shops and those local shops don't exist. The chamber of commerce is sitting there, going, "That's strange. He's advocating unionism and higher wages, but he might have a point." They weren't sure. But 12 months later, I get invited back again—same chamber of commerce, same annual dinner. I made the same speech, only this time I railed a little more, and I think I mentioned the S-word a few times—you know, socialism.

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I was actually invited back yet one more time. So maybe I should be careful. Chambers of commerce have good reason to support New Democrats, because New Democrats fight for workers, fight for better pay for workers, fight for jobs and fight for unionized workplaces. When workers have jobs and better pay, when they're unionized so they can negotiate better pensions, they've got more money in their pockets to spend in their local economy. Go figure. So there you go. New Democrats understand.

Again, the parliamentary assistant says that the complete abolition of third party advertising—that would be interesting, but you've got a problem there, don't you, Parliamentary Assistant? The parliamentary assistant has a problem, because you've got the constitutionality of that. Remember? That was discussed. Because you have some jurisdictions that in fact tried to do that, or tried to, if I recall correctly—help me, when you stand up for your 20 minutes. Some jurisdictions imposed such miserably low spending levels, like \$100, that effectively it was a denial of speech, which, of course, is a constitutional issue.

So it appears that you can't exclude third party advertising, but you can regulate it, just like Essensa advocated to the committee: one, imposing spending limits—and they have to be reasonable ones; it can't be \$1,

because that would effectively mean you're denying them the right to do it. You impose reasonable spending limits. You can; that's constitutionally sound, because Quebec learned that, as I recall the evidence before the committee; two, adopt contribution limits; three, limit third party spending to the amount the third party raises prior to and during an election, so in other words, it can't work year in, year out, building up a huge war chest; and then finally, adopt stricter registration and anti-collusion provisions.

The committee recommended that that be included in Ontario's electoral legislation. Hell's bells, that's exactly what the member from the Conservative caucus did, from the riding of Wellington–Halton Hills, with his bill. Why aren't they applauding him? Why are they shooting him down?

Which takes me, just as a little aside but still very much on point, to private members' business. It's easy to get a private member's bill in here that advocates for yet one more day, a day for—name your social group, name your ethnic group, name your community; a day for owners of CCM bicycles. CCM Bicycle Day. And those bills pass, and, quite frankly, those bills often get third reading status in the horse trading that happens at the end of the season. That's coming on us too. I don't know why—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'd ask those who are engaged in conversation to take it elsewhere.

The member for Welland, will you continue?

Mr. Peter Kormos: Thank you kindly, ma'am.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We apologize.

Mr. Peter Kormos: The apology is accepted. I really don't mind that much. But I do appreciate your assistance, Speaker. This is a rowdy group.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Now we're listening. It's only going to get worse.

Mr. Peter Kormos: They're going to get hard to handle in short order.

The problem is, why wasn't a bill that's legitimate, like the Arnott bill—it could have been criticized by the government. Why couldn't the government see its way clear to pass it in principle, because the vote on second reading is in principle and in principle only? It seems to me that—I know that the parliamentary assistant is a very skilled lawyer, but sometimes his skills take him over the line into pettifoggery. I think I witnessed some of it when I read his comments in response to this bill, including the fuzziness—and this is worth reading twice. My apologies to the parliamentary assistant. I really do apologize; I don't intend to embarrass him.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: But you're going to.

Mr. Peter Kormos: No.

"My second point is that the bill is flawed." This is the parliamentary assistant referring to the Arnott bill. "Here's where it gets really fuzzy." Talk about ill-defined words: "really fuzzy." That's a real good legal term. Was that third year law school or the remedial year or the Law

Society of Upper Canada retraining you have to take now?

Hon. Carol Mitchell: Come on, now. We're listening.

Mr. Peter Kormos: I know that.

"When you read through the bill, it talks about collusion and it talks about express or implied knowledge. There's no definition section in the bill, so nobody knows exactly what one means or what the bill is intended to capture by the word 'collusion'; neither does it define what the bill is supposed to mean by 'express or implied knowledge' of third party advertising expenses."

But a little while later, his learned colleague the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock assists the parliamentary assistant. Be careful, because the parliamentary assistant is sort of that country lawyer who walks up in front of a jury—you see a little bit of straw in his boots and cow dung—

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: —be quiet—and everybody thinks he's a bit of a hick, right? The parliamentary assistant will want to affect that demeanour from time to time, but he's sharp. He knows exactly what he's doing. It's legal legerdemain. It's the old David Copperfield stuff: "Look up there while I'm doing something over here." I think that's what the parliamentary assistant was trying to do. He was trying to befuddle us, trying to muddle or muddy the waters.

But his colleague the member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, sitting across the way from him yet still in the same party—I'm not sure; I suspect that when his colleague stood up, the parliamentary assistant thought, "I'm going to get some support for the position I advocated here and the arguments that I made." But his colleague cut him off at the knees. Amazing. Don't these guys talk to each other? His colleague says, "'Collusion'—I looked it up. It says that it's 'a secret agreement between two or more parties for fraudulent, illegal or deceitful purposes.'" Well, bingo. Good for the member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock who, to his credit, is not a lawyer. He picked that little nugget up right out of there and captured it.

You've had occasions where people talk to you about the whole basket of dirty tricks, the whole bag of dirty tricks that are used during elections. As I say, we're in support of the bill. I'm not sure it's going to be as effective as the government would want us and the people to believe, and I'll tell you why. One, it's a prosecution under the Provincial Offences Act. When you've got the overt throwing of an election—that type of fraudulent activity—surely you want that to be a Criminal Code offence, don't you, Speaker? You want it to have criminal implications, and especially criminal consequences. If somebody is corrupting an election—I confess I haven't studied US legislation, but it seems to me that the Americans have done their share of corrupt elections, and if somebody is found with dirty hands, I suspect they'd find pretty effective ways of prosecuting that person, depending, of course, on who won and whether that person was doing it for the winner or the loser.

So we've got a couple of problems, and to be fair, the Attorney General was quite candid in identifying some of them. One of the first problems—and the member for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek raised it—is who is going to enforce this? As I recall—and the parliamentary assistant is going to be speaking in short order—the Chief Electoral Officer doesn't have investigators; he doesn't have an investigative team. That means there is no specific body with expertise that's going to be investigating these sorts of allegations, and that means we have to rely on the police to do them.

Well, police have a problem. One, this isn't the sort of thing that police tend to be comfortable with. It's not Criminal Code stuff. Cops like the Criminal Code. They understand that. They understand how to investigate, how to collect evidence to prosecute and, indeed, how to participate in the prosecution. The other problem is that there simply aren't enough cops.

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Do you use the municipal police in the municipality in which the alleged offence occurred or do you use the OPP?

People should take a look at the Election Act itself. You retain section 98.1 of the Election Act, which is under the corrupt practice section, that, "No prosecution shall be instituted under this act without the Chief Electoral Officer's consent." Well, wait a minute. What does that mean? That means that it's going to be a rare day—because there are any number of pieces of legislation that require either the Attorney General's consent or, in this case, the Chief Electoral Officer's consent. Why would a prosecution require that officer's permission? How can that prosecution in any way be deemed independent, then, of the electoral officer itself, whose own people will be the people who will be most likely to be charged with miscounting a vote?

That section in Bill 196 that the Attorney General pointed to over and over again, that section that makes it illegal to wilfully miscount the ballots or otherwise wilfully make up a false statement of a poll—it's the Chief Electoral Officer to whom that person is accountable, that person is the Chief Electoral Officer's staff person, and you go down the line. And yet you need the Chief Electoral Officer's permission before you can prosecute? Does that make you comfortable? It raises some serious questions for me.

Then you've got the issue of jurisdiction—and I appreciate that the Attorney General has clearly thought about that. It seems to me that the legislation is caught between a rock and a hard place, or at least the drafters were. On the one hand, they write, "A person who, inside or outside Ontario, does anything for the purpose of aiding another person to commit the offence described in subsection (1)"—which is, "A person who, inside or outside Ontario, prevents another person from voting or impedes or otherwise interferes with the person's exercise of the vote...." If we're talking about phoning people up and misdirecting them to a poll, I'm not sure that constitutes the offence. Is it impeding the person? It's frustrating the person. Do you understand what I'm

saying? Impeding is when you lock the doors of the person's house. Impeding is where you physically block them—not frustrating.

Try to understand, the legislation talks about impeding. I've talked about the scenario that we read about—true or not, it was reported often enough—that people were being phoned up and told, “Your polling area is on the other side of town.” Is that impeding? I'm not sure. It could be just frustrating.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: You've putting up a barrier.

Mr. Peter Kormos: No, you're not preventing them from going to the right voting booth.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: You're sending them to the wrong place.

Mr. Peter Kormos: But you're not making them go there.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: But you're telling them that's where—

Mr. Peter Kormos: You're influencing them, yes. I'm just worried about that. A smart lawyer like Mr. Zimmer is liable to—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): However edifying the internal conversation, I would respectfully invite members to please direct comments through the Chair.

Mr. Peter Kormos: It was the Minister of Transportation who started it, Speaker. You should know that. If she hadn't provoked me, I wouldn't have been drawn into the conversation and I wouldn't have broken the rules. Here we are, three days before we break for the summer, and she's setting me up.

I'm not sure. The issue of extra-jurisdictional authority or out-of-province jurisdiction—because he talked about pan-Canadian jurisdiction. We've been told of non-Canadian call centres being used in the course of elections to do blasts—getting check marks: “Do you intend to support this candidate or this candidate?” We've learned about them coming from the United States. Does the Attorney General want us to believe that a dirty tricks call centre operating out of the United States would be impacted by this legislation? I don't think so. So when he was speaking, I interjected, “Extradition.” What's the provincial extradition power here? In a federal offence, in a Criminal Code offence, you've got extradition power, don't you? If it's a call centre in another province—again, it's not uncommon at all for Manitoba call centres, Quebec call centres, east coast call centres to be used in provincial and federal elections, but here we're talking about provincial elections—what jurisdiction is there over a call centre that commits the act in New Brunswick? With respect, I say “none.”

It's going to make it harder for the tricksters to operate—no mistake about it. But then the tricksters—I was talking with a lawyer, a very good lawyer, a very smart guy; this time, not the parliamentary assistant. You thought I was talking about him. It could have been him, but it wasn't.

We were talking about the whole concept, and this ties into the whole business of punishment—penalties. It's a

long-time premise that the penalty is not a deterrent to the crime; it's the likelihood of apprehension. As we were talking and developing this, he explained to me: “Look, impaired driving convictions and the serious consequences that flow don't seem to—we've reached some sort of ceiling in terms of stopping impaired driving. What really stops impaired driving is if there's a R.I.D.E. check on every street corner, because people's likelihood of apprehension increases exponentially.”

So will dirty tricksters still engage in this sort of stuff when there's minimal likelihood of apprehension, never mind of prosecution and conviction? I don't know. Politics are a big-stakes business, and dirty tricks—again, I'm just amazed at the story that appeared late last night in the Toronto Sun, where a Conservative candidate had a vulgar photo of his private parts posted on his Twitter site. The person in charge of his Twitter site or whatever it was saw it within 20 or 30 minutes and took it down, but sure enough, the Toronto Sun found out about it before that.

But hold on. Then you've got a very bizarre article in the Toronto Sun where the communications director for the Ontario Conservatives said that the photo of Lepp's junk—I consider them jewels, not junk—was “inadvertently taken by Lepp's BlackBerry when it was in his front pocket. The photo was posted after someone took it from the candidate for the riding of Niagara Falls.”

Now, the pictures—they say “pictures” here; I don't know whether that's accurate, because I don't know whether there were more than one—are “too graphic to reproduce in the newspaper.” Oh, please; it's the Toronto Sun. When were they ever squeamish about stuff like that? Maybe a doctor could include it in his medical column in the Globe and Mail. In any event, the picture, “too graphic to reproduce in the newspaper,” is “of a man naked from the waist down, showing a close-up of his penis and his crossed legs.”

Look at me. You've never known me to carry a BlackBerry. I'm not a fan. Don't own one, never used one and, after this, never will. So we're to believe that the BlackBerry was in his pants pocket.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: But he's naked from the waist down.

Mr. Peter Kormos: But he's naked from the waist down, and then, as one very clever government member told me today, it's dark down there; where does the lighting come from? But the story gets weirder, because one of the statements is that this Conservative candidate was jostled by protestors. Again, I was there.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Did you see the protestors?

Mr. Peter Kormos: Yes, I saw five very young Liberals standing out in front of the placards, but they were out way down by the road. They were very young Liberals, with those Brylcreem-style signs, one after the other. Then we're told that the cellphone was stolen by—

Mr. Jeff Leal: Protestors.

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Mr. Peter Kormos: No, by the anime people. The latest version of the story is that he was jostled by these anime kids with their Japanese—

Mr. Paul Miller: Ninja.

Mr. Peter Kormos:—ninja things, right? I spent an hour waiting for the policy platform to be released yesterday—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Honourable members, I would just share with the chamber that I've had at least one visit from the table officers here inviting the honourable member to please come back to the topic.

Mr. Peter Kormos: I appreciate your gratitude to the table officers. You're not supposed to rat them out like that, Speaker. Honest. Nobody likes a rat. Good God. What were you like in high school?

I'm talking about dirty tricks, and I'm increasingly suspicious. There's a story behind the story behind the story behind the story on this one. At this point, I'm not sure that this wasn't a dirty trick, and we don't know by whom, of course. It could have been by a civilian, but it's the sort of thing that could be so politically damaging that when it's done, especially to a novice candidate, it would certainly fall under the category of dirty tricks.

So where do we find comfort in the legislation? Besides, that story was never going to get on Hansard if I hadn't done it today. You know that, Speaker. You understand that. Okay.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: What a tragedy.

Mr. Peter Kormos: There are records that have to be kept.

There's nothing in this legislation that talks about dirty tricks in the broadest sense. Does destroying lawn signs—and we know why people destroy lawn signs: one, because the cost of replacing them has become huge. Those corrugated plastic ones that are about three and a half feet by three and a half feet are 15 bucks apiece. That can really beat the daylight out of a campaign if they start coming down in the dark of the night. It's also demoralizing for that campaign, although it can have a counter-effect. Does this bill address anything akin to that?

Does this bill address anything akin, quite frankly, to stealing—as it appears, there's at least a newspaper report of a Volpe worker taking literature out of the mailbox, and that's not entirely uncommon. There isn't anybody here who isn't aware of that having taken place. Does this bill cover that conduct?

Does this bill cover the overt dishonesty in campaigns that are used in push polls, for instance, to change or influence a voter's perception of a particular candidate on entirely speculative, if not outright fabricated, information? I don't think so.

Why didn't the Attorney General come to the opposition parties? Why didn't the Attorney General tell his House leader that the bill was forthcoming? Why didn't the House leader say, "Look"—and as soon as she learned about the bill, she called us. She did. She called us the night before the bill was introduced for first reading, at around 6:30 or so at night, trying to get a hold of both the opposition House leader and myself, to let us know the bill was coming. I appreciate that from her.

But why, unlike in other instances, like amendments to the Members' Integrity Act, wasn't the bill simply shared with the other caucuses so that they could take it to their caucus? It seems to me that that's the way you do this type of legislation, because the Attorney General is correct: It's not partisan; then why treat it as if it was? And why be so brutal about Bill 195 that comes through an opposition member, when for that bill to have survived the vote would have only meant that it got second reading? The author of that bill would know that there isn't a snowball's chance in Hades—I notice that there are children here; I'm watching my language: Hades, hell—of that bill having received third reading. It wouldn't have had time to go to committee. Instead, there was a rather vicious attack on the private member's bill during the course of that brief one hour—less than one hour—allotted to debating it from the government. Again, I don't shoot the messenger, by any stretch of the imagination. That's a tactic that this government has used, especially in private members' public business.

Why does that happen? Why can't the government encourage members, backbenchers of all political stripes, to come up with good, substantive stuff instead of celebrating another—we could have ouzo day. Charlie and Mary down at the Fireside in Welland would love it if we declared ouzo day: "Today is ouzo day." I'd be there with Charlie every ouzo day, right on the dot at 11 in the morning. There's far too many of that type of bill. Yet there's been some incredibly creative and smart stuff that has come forward in this chamber.

I'm not suggesting that it go to third reading, but the important thing is that it go to committee. We've got committees that sit idle weeks at a time with nothing to do.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: It's true. We've got committees that sit idle months at a time that should be considering private members' public business, at least to have public hearings and to consider how amendments—if it's an opposition member's bill, from the government; or if it's a government member's bill, from the opposition—might make the bill a little better. It may not pass that round, but it may become a part of government policy when they introduce a new round of legislation after, let's say, a throne speech or a budget. That would be fine, too. There's nothing wrong with that. It has happened more than a few times.

If people suggest that we've done lots of committee time here, well, let me tell you, there was a time here when you did a lot of committee time. There was a time here when private members' public business received far more thorough consideration. There was a time here when committees had the power—and a member had the unilateral power, if a committee was sitting idle, without the need of a super majority from the committee—to bring a matter of interest in that committee's jurisdiction for consideration by that committee; perhaps a matter within the scope of a particular ministry that that committee was accountable to or a particular policy issue or a

particular social issue or problem out there in the real world. That's been crushed here.

Look, I'm not telling stories out of school. I go to committees, and I see modest committee hearings, more modest than I've ever seen before.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Not more modest than under the previous government.

Mr. Peter Kormos: The previous government has unfortunately set the new standard.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The previous government set a very low standard.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Well, that's right, and you haven't aspired beyond it.

See, she's doing it again, Speaker. She's a provocateur.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: I apologize; a bona fide provocatrice.

The problem is, committees are sitting idle, and they should be doing work. Opposition backbenchers have got lots to do, especially when you're in a small caucus, because you're the critic of everything. There's a whole lot of skilled government backbenchers who don't have a whole lot to do. They're not parliamentary assistants. They're not ministers. Ministers are busy; I know that. Parliamentary assistants can be busy or not be busy, depending upon how they fit into their ministry's plan. But there's a whole lot of government backbenchers who have talent here. There's a few who don't, but that's okay. That's the bell curve, and the bell curve applies here as well as it does out there in the real world—because this certainly isn't the real world. There's talent in here that isn't being utilized, that isn't being exploited, that isn't being put to work. And there's a level of partisanship—and I know that from time to time I become partisan—here that makes this a far less meaningful place than it could or should be.

But we'll see. There's going to be an election on October 6. I am excited about it. I hope that Ontarians are. I think they are. It's going to be a tough, mean-spirited campaign. It's going to be rife, it will roil, with dirty tricks, all of those not covered by this specific legislation.

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The war room operators will be in full swing. You've got an opposition party that figures it's got government in its sights and that the government has been crippled; that the government's back has been broken. You've got a New Democratic Party that's excited about a leader who's different, who does things differently, and a New Democratic Party that's going to roll out policy and a platform in short order and in due course that won't just have people chattering around the water cooler, but will have people excited and finally feeling some hope.

The other issue around this bill, Bill 196, Speaker—and I know you would never do to the table what your predecessor just did here in this chamber. You're not that type of person.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Oh, my goodness, what do we have here?

Interjection: The parliamentary assistant is back.

Mr. Peter Kormos: We're coming up now to the contribution by the parliamentary assistant. People are waiting with bated breath. He's got the textbooks piled high so that the notes are closer to the surface. I think I'd better put my waders on. People ask why I wear cowboy boots in here. It's because sometimes that stuff gets pretty high, and it's wet and it's warm. Farm folk understand what I'm talking about.

How is this bill going to get committee hearings? I don't understand how that's going to happen. Because when we reach second reading vote, of course, as you know—look, I think, as a matter of due diligence, it's the rare bill that should not have committee hearings, and this bill may not require a whole lot. I suggested that already to the government House leader—perhaps, and I don't want to bind myself here, only an hour or two.

Surely we have to have Mr. Essensa come in here and put his fingerprints on this. Do you want to pass this legislation without doing due diligence, without having some of those fundamental questions asked of the people who've been advocating the bill—either the civil service—don't think for a minute that the Attorney General was sitting down at his keyboard working late into the night, burning the midnight oil, typing up Bill 196. It's policy development. I suspect it came out of the Premier's office. It may well be somebody's wish list. It could well be Greg Essensa's, the Chief Electoral Officer, wish list. Well, say so. Let us know. What's with the secrecy? What's with the clandestine style? Just straighten up, speak up and speak out. We won't know that unless and until we have committee hearings, and I, for the life of me, don't know where we're going to fit those in. The House is sitting Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

I understand that the government House leader has plans for Tuesday and Wednesday night here for the House. We're going to be addressing the firefighters' bill later this evening, and I've told the firefighters already that that's going to be a very brief third reading debate, at least as far as I'm concerned, because we made that commitment to them.

Is this government really going to pass this bill on third reading without the due diligence of committee? Because it's happened a few times—more than a few times—and regrettably, almost inevitably, it has come up to bite you on the butt a year, two years or three years later, and then somebody says to you, "Why did you vote for that? Why didn't you have committee hearings?" People will say, "I don't know. The Premier's office wanted it that way." Well, it ain't going to be the Premier taking the heat; it's going to be you, because if this bill doesn't do what it says it's going to do—and I'm not convinced that it does. I'm not convinced that it's not just a little bit of huff and puffery, although, for the life of me, why the Attorney General wants this as his legacy legislation just boggles the mind. Perhaps the parliamentary assistant can explain that, but he shouldn't be required to speak for the Attorney General. Maybe he

doesn't feel comfortable. Maybe he just plain shouldn't speak for the Attorney General.

Interruption.

Mr. Peter Kormos: What do I have in my hands now? It's like a sheriff serving a writ—notice for time allocation on Bill 188, McMichael Canadian Art Collection Amendment Act. What's going on here? We had told the government we were going to collaborate on that bill because it's an important piece of legislation that has to be passed before the House rises.

A time allocation motion on Bill 181? It's the firefighters' bill. We had a committee on it. We told the firefighters—heck, I just told them this afternoon that we were going to wrap that up tonight. Maybe the leader of the Conservative Party is right: You guys just can't help yourselves. You're hard-wired now.

We had a very funny slide when Hudak was talking about how you can't blame a raccoon for breaking into your garbage if you don't put the clamps on the garbage lid, and there's a raccoon looking around a tree, and it said, "Just like you can't blame the Premier of Ontario for raising your taxes," because it's instinctive. It was very funny.

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: No, it's not funny.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Sophie, you should have seen it. It was very funny. You would have laughed.

In any event, what's with the time allocation motions? And now a time allocation motion on Bill 196.

Mr. Norm Miller: Where are the committee hearings?

Mr. Peter Kormos: Hold on; let's check for committee hearings. This is offensive. This is really repugnant. For the AG to open with his melodramatic democracy and voting speech—no committee hearings. That's absurd.

In the context of this kind of legislation, these people should be ashamed of themselves that they won't even sit down with the opposition and talk about having a committee hearing for an hour or two in the evening, or having a committee meeting for an hour or two at 8 in the morning, if need be, or 8:30. We've got till 10:30, when question period starts. You people should be ashamed of yourselves. We've told you we support the legislation.

I also made it clear to the government House leader that we expected, on the basis of due diligence—do you understand what that means? It's not members of the Legislature; it's trained seals voting for a bill because they're told to, and not even being sure that they're asking the right questions of the right people, which could happen at committee hearings.

This is ending this session on a very, very foul note—a very, very foul tone. All I know is that this is what will motivate New Democrats to campaign like the devil and elect more New Democrats than ever before, and I suspect it might be motivating to the Conservatives as well, although I don't want to speak for them.

Time allocation when we haven't even finished the leads—time allocation. By God, I said it to the press: You know how legislation progresses through the House,

and if you want co-operation from the opposition parties, then you've got to be collaborative and you've got to talk to them. It has become clear—I told the press this last week—that you guys couldn't organize a drunk-up in a brewery, and this bungled bill is an example of that. This is sad. Shame on all of you.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Comments and questions?

Mr. David Zimmer: We've had a couple of hours of debate, speeches from the opposition totalling about two hours. But the basic point here—and I made the point the other day, and I've got a copy of Hansard. I made this statement: "So I say to the members opposite, I say to the members of my own caucus, how, when the question is posed that way"—that is, on eliminating voter interference—"can you possibly cast a vote against a motion that renews this chamber's collective commitment to stamping out voter suppression? That's the heart of our democracy, and we as democrats, we as people living in a free society, we as people who base our governance on the result of free elections in the fullest sense of the word—I say to the members opposite, whether they be in the third party, the official opposition or, indeed, my own party members, how can" anyone "possibly go on record as voting against a motion that says we're all renewing our pledge to free, unencumbered elections? We will not stand for any form of voter suppression."

So, why two hours of speeches opposing this? Let me just quote from the Guelph Mercury, May 20. It says, "Bentley wants the new law in place before" October 6.

"At first blush it seems a no-brainer that all parties would want to support....

"But they're not."

It goes on to say that the legislation appears "to acknowledge concerns shared by many Ontarians in the wake of May 2" and they want steps taken to address these. This is the core of it from the Guelph Mercury: "The only people opposed to an effort to crack down on such underhanded tactics should be those who stand to gain from them." Enough said.

1700

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments and questions?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm very pleased to comment on my colleague's speech. I'm always entertained to hear Mr. Kormos speak on any piece of legislation.

Here we are, a couple days left in this Parliament, and after eight long and painful years, they find some legislation to bring in on making the election system better. They're going to, in a very democratic way—surely, I was wrong; they're not going to time-allocate this. They are going to time-allocate this after eight long years. They had all that time that they could have to bring in this bill if it was so important, and after eight years, here they are. They're going to time-allocate it at the last second.

Why would they be time-allocating it? Because Bill 195 said it all. Bill 195, my friends, my seatmate brought in back on May 16. I can tell you, it's just an embarrass-

ment to this government that after promising the people in this Legislature they wouldn't bring in more legislation, they bring in a bill the very next day. After voting Bill 195 down, they bring it in and try to humiliate the House and make fools of themselves on it.

I think that says it all. I don't know whether people are going to support this or not. In the end, I've got a bunch of comments. I'll be speaking myself in a few moments on the bill and I have a lot of comments—actually, newspaper articles—to read into the record on some of the activities that took place during the federal election from members of what I guess used to be the official opposition federally and now they're a party in disarray. We'll look forward to that. Again, I thank the member for his speech and look forward to further debate on this.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Comments and questions?

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to thank the member from Welland. Once again he has outdone himself with the depth of his knowledge and his research.

Frankly, I can understand his frustration about this bill coming in at the last minute. I can also understand his frustration with time allocation. I can also understand his frustration with committees around here. In four years, now that this session is coming to an end, after hundreds and hundreds of amendments that this third party brought forward in committee, and the one committee I served on in particular, I think maybe two saw the light of day out of hundreds. Why is that? Because there are five Liberals on the committee, two Conservatives and one NDP. Mr. Kormos put forward his comments that there are a lot of good things that come from this side of the House that fall on deaf ears and they don't make it to first base. Then, further on, you'll see them. Maybe a few months down the road, they suddenly appear. Some of the things that you brought forward suddenly appear in a government bill and they're running and telling the public how wonderful this is and it looks extremely familiar to what we put in and it's almost to the word, almost copied. That really amazes me, and the public really doesn't understand this situation because they don't understand how committees work because a lot of them don't sit in committees. But they see the frustration on the faces of the opposition members on committee that they don't get anything done unless it's done by the government of the day. If it's their idea, it goes through. If it's anyone else's idea they squash it, even if it's a good idea.

This is another example of something not being debated. It's being brought forward at the last minute. The only reason this bill is being brought forward is because of the results of the federal election. They feel that there's some hanky-panky going on that might hurt them again.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments or questions?

Mr. Jeff Leal: The member from Welland, when he wasn't, perhaps, referring to George losing his Tory briefs over the weekend, did spend some time talking about a very important issue, a fundamental right that we

have in terms of voting in elections. But it's interesting: Not only is this an issue here, it's an issue in the United States. Back on May 18, I picked up a copy of USA Today, and in the back, in its opinion forum, they talked about the GOP's 2012 game plan to keep voters at home. It said:

“Across America, Republican lawmakers have talked a big game about cutting budgets, but they also are seeking reductions to something much more fundamental: Americans' voting rights. From coast to coast, the GOP is engaged in what appears to be a coordinated, expensive effort to block voters from the polls.

“The motivation is political—a cynical effort to restrict voting by traditionally Democratic-leaning Americans. In more than 30 states, GOP legislators are on the move,” from rewriting Florida's election laws to “new rules for photo identification in Ohio, Wisconsin, North Carolina and more than 20 other states.”

When you take the time to read this full article, you certainly sense that as legislators, we have an obligation to make sure that people have the sense of confidence that they can go to an election polling station, participate in the election process, and that that process has a great deal of integrity involved in it. That's the democratic hallmark. Anything that we can do collectively to improve it—there had been some allegations made during the federal election, and this bill—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. The member from Welland has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Peter Kormos: This is ironic in so many ways, because the Liberal Party has for a long time held the crown for being the dirty tricksters of electioneering, not just in my time but I can recall what my father and grandfather had to say about it. It brings to mind as well the phrase that I recalled from down home just the other day: whoever smelled it probably dealt it. So these guys come up with token election reforms, when the meaty stuff, when the stuff that's going to make a real difference, when the stuff that's going to hinder their ability to twist, torque and turn election returns, remains to the back burner, remains ignored. Strange, ain't it?

It sure is peculiar that the government, when it had the opportunity with the Sorbara report and its recommendations, would not have provided a more exhaustive set of amendments around anti-corruption, because the recommendations were there. They were most certainly there. Why the government wouldn't have worked so far with the federal justice ministry, which is eager to pass new Criminal Code provisions—we know that Rob Nicholson, the Tory federal justice minister, loves the new Criminal Code provisions. Why we don't have Criminal Code provisions that apply to federal and provincial and municipal elections boggles the mind, because it would be clear, then, who has to investigate and who prosecutes and on what standard. You wouldn't need the sign-off of the Chief Electoral Officer, which, as I say, is a dangerous, strange thing, because many of the people who are going to be investigated under this legislation will be

employees of his. Is he going to be that eager to sign off on them when he basically approved them—or she; it's a he now, but it could be a she—by employing them?

I don't know why the government just doesn't end the debate now and then call it again—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. David Zimmer: Let me try and stay away from the rhetoric that we've heard for the last couple of hours and talk about what's actually in the bill.

As the Attorney General noted, the bill, if passed, will help to protect the integrity of our elections and ensure that Ontarians have the right to freely exercise their vote without interference.

I say to members of this chamber, the right to vote is at the very foundation of any democracy, but this right is most meaningful and effective if the vote can be exercised freely and without interference.

Ontario's Election Act prohibits a number of corrupt practices, such as bribery and wilful miscounting of votes. However, the act in its current form contains some loopholes that may be vulnerable to exploitation. This leaves our voters at risk. This leaves their free and unfettered choice at risk. That's why our government is advocating these much-needed amendments.

1710

The proposed amendments would make it illegal for any person, either within or outside the province, to attempt to interfere with an elector's ability to vote in a provincial election. The bill would also outlaw impersonations of election officials, candidates and persons authorized to act on behalf of candidates, parties and constituency associations. The law would apply to those who commit the offences directly, as well as to those who counsel, aid and abet the activities; in other words, someone who hires or asks another person to call a voter with misleading information. These two amendments seek to prevent interference with voting through false statements or other activities, as well as the impersonation of Elections Ontario officials.

Finally, the proposed legislation would permit steep fines and long prison sentences for those offences, as well as various other corrupt practices, under the Election Act. What this means is that in addition to the two new offences we've articulated in the bill, the penalties for other serious wrongdoing related to provincial elections will also increase considerably.

For example, a person who deliberately miscounts ballots, a person who knowingly votes twice, a person who bribes another person to vote a certain way or who wilfully provides false residency information to an elections official would also face fines of up to \$25,000 per offence and a prison sentence of up to two years less a day. Previously, the fine for committing a corrupt practice under the act was \$5,000 and a minimum of six months in jail.

I believe that the new tougher penalties reflect the seriousness of these actions as well as the determination of our government to stamp out election fraud in this

province. That's what the voters of Ontario expect. That's what they will get with this bill.

We know that strong penalties can be and are an effective deterrent, and by being very specific with regard to the fraudulent activities that we want to target, we are making it easier for law enforcement officials to investigate activities and to lay charges. We bring a whole new level of clarity to this area.

I echo the sentiments expressed by my colleague the Attorney General and by other members of the House who may be concerned about allegations of election fraud taking place in their ridings during the recent federal election.

Of course, we know that election fraud is not new. Certainly, the history of elections in democratic societies is rife with examples of dirty tricks, pranks and hoaxes during elections, in all jurisdictions and at all levels of government. Given this history, we've heard a lot of people asking, "What are we doing now in Ontario to stamp this out?" We read in the press about what's going on in other countries throughout the world—in the Middle East, in Southeast Asia, in African countries—and sometimes some of the tactics that we have experienced here in Ontario are in many ways bordering on what we're seeing in those countries. People are saying, "Why do we, in our very advanced and sophisticated democracy, even tolerate a hint of this kind of activity?" This bill is designed to address that question and to stamp out that kind of activity.

The fact is the act of wilfully misleading citizens in order to prevent them from voting has not been a significant issue in Ontario during the past provincial elections, but given the recent allegations of these sorts of activities that the Attorney General just described, the stuff that went on in the last federal election, it's absolutely incumbent on this Legislature to stamp this activity out right at the start so that the culture of this kind of activity doesn't seep into our culture. We want to nip this in the bud right now, and that's what this act is designed to do. We felt an obligation that we had to take this opportunity to respond immediately, quickly and with clarity.

What we found was that because we don't currently have the legal protections against these kinds of activities, Ontario voters are particularly vulnerable to them, and more so than in other jurisdictions that we've analyzed. We found that in Ontario, it's not specifically illegal to wilfully mislead a voter in order to prevent them from voting in an Ontario provincial election. That is something that just cannot be allowed to stand. We demand and we require a clear legislative statement that that conduct will not be permitted. Our law, as it currently stands, contains a gap, and to address it we have put forward a bill that would impose hefty fines and tough penalties on anyone caught committing the alleged fraudulent acts.

This bill will protect voters. This bill will protect their right to exercise their most fundamental democratic right. We are acting as swiftly as possible to prevent the same

thing that happened during the federal election recently from happening during future provincial elections.

We got a sense of what might happen if we do not stop this kind of behaviour in its tracks, and that's what this legislation is designed to do. It's preventive legislation. It sends a clear message that that's not how we do elections in Ontario. We are working very hard to prevent individuals from once again making our citizens targets and from attempting to tamper with the democratic processes that we all—that all members of this House, on the Liberal side, on the Conservative side and the NDP side—recognize.

We are adopting the best practices. In reviewing our laws, we looked at the policies that other provinces and territories already have in place for dealing with election fraud, as well as what protections exist at the federal level. What we found is that many provinces and territories do indeed have some legal protections already in place to defend voters from the kinds of activities that went on in the recent federal election. For example, many provinces, including British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Quebec, and Newfoundland and Labrador, have laws that prohibit a person from impeding an elector's free exercise of their vote during a provincial election. For instance, New Brunswick prohibits a candidate or an agent or a representative of a candidate or a representative of a political party from knowingly giving incorrect information regarding the polling station where an elector may vote. When we look to western Canada, Alberta and British Columbia have laws that prohibit a person from impersonating an election official.

We also looked at the existing federal act. The federal act specifically prohibits any person, inside or outside of Canada, from preventing or attempting to prevent an elector from voting in a federal election. Given the circumstances of the Quebec-based telephone calls at the heart of the recent allegations arising out of the most recent federal election, we felt this was an important provision.

This idea of prohibiting anybody inside Canada or outside Canada is very, very important. In this highly technologically communicating society—computers and BlackBerrys and call centres—business gets done and calls get made in Ontario for banking arrangements or ordering products, and these calls may come from anywhere around the world. So the same thing, the same difficulty, the same challenges can be brought to bear with respect to interfering with voter processes: false information generated to voters onto their computers and BlackBerrys from offshore locations. This is something that, as I have said earlier, we have got to just nip in the bud while it's still young and in its infancy. We have to send the right message so that Ontario continues to become a model of the democratic process.

1720

The amendments we are proposing are a culmination of the very best of practices across Canada to ensure that we capture a broad range of fraudulent activity that undermines the democratic process.

Another very important objective of our proposed laws was to specifically address the problem of phone banks, and I started to make reference to this earlier in my remarks. The problem of phone banks, whether they are based within or outside of the province, poses a serious threat of interference with voters during election campaigns.

How have we addressed this? Well, we've addressed it in a couple of ways. For example, each time a person violates any of these new provisions—that is, each time they interfere with a voter's ability to vote or they impersonate election officials, the candidate or the representative of the candidate—that could constitute an offence. What this means is that two phone calls telling a voter to go to the wrong polling station could potentially be the subject matter of two separate charges.

The Ontario law would also explicitly apply to anyone who directs or hires another person to commit interference or engage in interference with the voter's right to freely and without interference cast their vote. Let me give you an example.

A company that hires a number of employees to place misleading calls could also face charges for every fraudulent call placed, and every charge could result in a conviction and a penalty. If you add up all of the financial penalties for all of those calls, that's quite a disincentive to engage in that activity.

Taken as a whole, and reflecting on the matter, I am very pleased to say that the amendments provide a very comprehensive and an up-to-date approach to dealing with election fraud. If passed, the law would ensure that Ontario voters enjoy protections that are among the strongest that you'll find in the country and, indeed, in the democratic world.

There's also another element to this legislation because, as we all know, Ontario and Canada were built on immigrants, immigrants coming from many parts of the world, with many, many immigrants coming from those parts of the world where the exercise of democratic rights is a challenge, if not problematic.

One of the things that attracts these immigrants to Canada and Ontario, among other things—obviously our economy and our education system. But when I talk to immigrants from some of these parts of the world, one thing that always stands out in my mind—and I see them in my constituency office time and time again. They come in, they're studying very hard and they know they're going to become a citizen in six months, a year or two years, and often they say to me that one of the things that they are looking forward to—their heart just sings and their mind reflects on this ability to cast a vote, which is something that, depending on what country they've come from, has been problematic and challenging to do so.

We want to give the right message to all of the new voters coming into the country, especially from those countries that I referred to before, that, in fact, you can vote how you want to vote in Ontario and that nobody is going to interfere with you. If you want to vote Con-

servative or NDP or Liberal, that's your absolutely unfettered right, and nobody, by any means—by subterfuge, by tricking you or sending you to the wrong polling station or giving you misinformation, or robocalls coming in, misdirecting you or giving you false information that impedes your process—none of that is going to happen in Ontario. When we establish that kind of core, rock system, we are laying the very strongest foundation for our continuing democracy, especially with new Canadians who have come here from countries where the democratic process is somewhat more challenging. That's one of the reasons they came here, in addition to schools, jobs, education and health care.

Let me say a few words about penalties. After weighing the benefits and drawbacks of the various approaches across Canada and adopting the policies that we felt could give our citizens the best possible defence against fraudsters, we wanted to make sure that the proposed laws would be backed by a set of tough penalties. As I noted earlier, we're proposing to raise the fine for the definition of "corrupt practices" under the Election Act from a maximum of \$5,000 to \$25,000 and a maximum prison term of six months to a term of two years less a day. The new offences would be treated as corrupt practices, so these new penalties would apply to them as well.

In other jurisdictions across Canada, penalties related to these offences vary greatly, but generally include some combination of jail and fine. For example, at the federal level, the maximum penalty is \$5,000 and up to five years' imprisonment; Nova Scotia is \$2,000 and up to two years in prison; Labrador—\$5,000 fine or a six-month sentence; Saskatchewan and Alberta have the same fine and a two-year jail term; and British Columbia is \$20,000 and/or two years in jail. So if passed, our penalties would be among the toughest in the country. We'd send the clearest, loudest message to potential perpetrators that Ontario takes election fraud seriously by building on the very best of what is in place across the country. To address the troubling developments that occurred in the recent federal election, to nip this kind of attitude, this kind of conduct in the bud so it does not become a part of our political culture, is incumbent upon all of us as legislators here.

Electoral modernization has been and will continue to be a priority for our government. As I said in my remarks a couple of weeks ago in Hansard, and as I said earlier in one of my two-minute replies, all members of this Legislature, of whatever political stripe and party, have an interest in doing everything they can possibly do to enhance the democratic experience that Ontarians have in this province, especially during elections. It puzzles me why anybody in this chamber could possibly, on any level, object to this idea of strengthening our democratic institutions by ensuring and building and supporting and making stronger our electoral voting processes. That seems to me to be, as the Guelph Mercury said, a complete no-brainer. I challenge anybody to go on the record, to cast a vote against this. It just doesn't make—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Comments and questions?

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to have a chance to comment on the speech from the member from Willowdale on Bill 196, An Act to amend the Election Act with respect to certain electoral practices. I know the member—at the beginning of his speech, anyway—was talking about the integrity of elections and how this bill was going to be fixing loopholes in the current election rules. I would simply say that if he wanted to fix loopholes, what he should be doing is amending this bill and adding on a section that deals with third party advertising, so that there are some rules governing groups like the Working Families Coalition—the Working Families Coalition, of course, being the name of a group that's funded by a number of different unions very closely associated with the Liberal Party, and its main goal is to defeat Progressive Conservative candidates in the election. The situation in Ontario is a situation where the Working Families Coalition will spend \$5 million to \$10 million outside of the election rules so that it isn't a level playing field. So if they really wanted to make a difference in the rules to do with elections, they would make that amendment to this bill.

1730

Frankly, this bill is based on some activities that happened in the federal election. I don't doubt they happened. That was a case of phone calls being made to people, telling them to go to the wrong poll. I still don't know how that would benefit anyone, but that seems to be the main motivation for this bill. Is it really going to make a difference? I don't really think it's going to make much difference, unless they choose to amend it. Of course, they have brought in a time allocation motion now, so it's not even going to go to committee. I don't know how they're going to amend it if they're not going to committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

Mr. Peter Kormos: I listened carefully to the address by the parliamentary assistant, who has done a most capable job of putting this legislation in the best possible light. He once again has been relied upon by the Attorney General and by the Premier's office to do the best he can with sometimes—and in this case, I believe—broken tools, but that's the sign of a good craftsman. Anybody can do it if they've got all the power saws and the Porter-Cables and the Deltas and the whole nine yards, but if you watch one of these old-timers, a carpenter or a machinist or a millwright with a ball-peen hammer and a pair of vise-grips, then you see artistry, not just the display of highly technical and sophisticated tools.

Here the PA, the member from Willowdale, has done it again. He has pulled a rabbit out of a hat for the Premier's office. He has done it from back there in the corner as well, which goes to his sense of commitment and pride in doing a good job. So I say to the parliamentary assistant: job well done. We wouldn't have expected anything less from you. I just look forward to

coming back here on October 6 when you're in a position to tell some of those people who make you do some of these sordid things to go pound salt, to find someone else, because you will have had significant seniority by then.

I'm making assumptions. I'm assuming that you're one of the Liberals who will come back. I may be wrong about that. I know that there are going to be Liberals who don't come back; that's a certainty. Some of them are being said goodbye to over the course of Tuesday and Wednesday night. But the member for Willowdale will be back, I'm sure, and it's good to see him in action again.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

Mr. Jeff Leal: I did listen very carefully to my colleague the member from Willowdale. He does have an interesting background. Prior to coming here in 2003 he was one of Toronto's most distinguished attorneys, practising law in this great city in a wide variety of areas and developing a stellar reputation—not only as a lawyer and as a legal scholar, and providing commentary on a wide variety of topics, but he certainly added to the debate this afternoon on this bill, Bill 196, and the kind of changes that we'd like to make here.

This whole issue of third party advertising is rather interesting. I asked legislative research not too long ago to do a bit of a background paper on this, and interestingly enough there was a strange third party coalition that took out ads against the Rae government in 1995, criticizing him for his anti-business behaviour, and there was always some speculation about who was behind that interesting coalition.

It's also interesting that during the debate about generic drug legislation in the province of Ontario, lo and behold, an interesting coalition formed during that. One Mark Spiro was involved, and Shopper's Drug Mart and some of the largest drug-dispensing organizations in the province of Ontario. That sort of came right out of the blue, so to speak, and was targeting Liberal MPPs right across the province. If one wants to have a healthy and fulsome discussion about third parties I think it's important that we discuss all these third party coalitions that seem to crop up from time to time. I think it would be a good idea and we would improve the—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Further comments?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'll myself have the opportunity to speak to the bill in just a couple of minutes. It's always interesting to hear the member from Willowdale speak. I'm not going to give him quite as many compliments as the previous couple of people have given to him, but certainly, he does a lot of hard work on behalf of his caucus and he leads, as a point person, on a number of pieces of legislation that come through this Legislature. Again, I said I'll be speaking to it myself in a few minutes.

I'm really curious about the time allocation motion that's been brought in without any committee hearings.

That's what I found so strange. I guess I would consider that to be undemocratic, that we're dealing with a bill that is supposed to be all about improving the election system and then we turn around and we're going to time-allocate a bill that they have had eight long years to bring forward.

It wasn't just the federal election; there's been hanky-panky going on for decades. But after eight years, when they had other opportunities—look at all the millions of dollars that were spent around that referendum we had on the voting procedures in the province. This wasn't brought up at that time. But we bring it in at the last second and we time-allocate it in the last couple of sessional days here at the Legislature. I'll have an opportunity to bring that forward.

I also wanted to speak quite a bit about the Working Families Coalition and third party advertising, because you're absolutely right. All you had to do was support Bill 195. That's what that was referring to. I look forward to the opportunity in a few minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Willowdale has two minutes to respond.

Mr. David Zimmer: I come back to the point that I made in the two-minuter before. We've had several hours of debate here. The core question is: Why wouldn't all members of this chamber—whatever their political persuasion, whatever their political party—be supportive of a piece of legislation that strengthens and builds on and enhances the integrity of the election process? That's good for all of us. That's point number one.

Point number two: The reason this legislation was brought on as quickly as it was is because in the recent federal election, it became clear that there were these voting practices that were interfering with the integrity of the individuals' right to cast their vote. I think we all have an obligation—again, whatever the political stripe here—to be nipping that kind of conduct in the bud so that that kind of conduct does not seep into our political culture and somehow become sort of, “Well, you know, everybody does it. It's out there.” Then the thing starts to get out of control. There's an obligation for us, when we see something developing like that on the horizon that will interfere with the free and democratic voting rights, to nip it in the bud.

The third point I want to make is that all of those new Canadians who are coming here from countries where the democratic electoral process is somewhat more challenging and problematic—it's what I hear that they expect. We want to make them the best possible citizens that we can.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm pleased to rise and speak to Bill 196, An Act to amend the Election Act with respect to certain electoral practices, brought in on May 17 by the Attorney General.

“The bill amends the Election Act to add new sections, 96.2 and 96.3. Section 96.2 prohibits interference with voting. Section 96.3 prohibits impersonation of electoral

officials, candidates and persons authorized to act on behalf of candidates, parties and constituency associations.

“Several offences under the act, including the ones described in new sections 96.2 and 96.3, constitute ‘corrupt practices’ if committed knowingly. The existing penalty for a person who is found guilty of a corrupt practice is a fine of not more than \$5,000, imprisonment for a term of not more than six months, or both. The maximum fine for a corrupt practice is increased to \$25,000 and the maximum term of imprisonment to two years less a day.” That’s fairly strong sentencing, and we’ll see—I’m assuming this bill is going to pass—how the courts will look at this.

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We basically support the goal of maintaining integrity in the election process, and unfortunately this bill falls far short of ensuring that all parts of electoral processes are conducted with integrity. The bill fails to address third party advertising, such as that of Working Families, which brings disrepute to the election process. The bill fails to address the concerns of the disability community, supported by the PC caucus during consideration of Bill 231, the Election Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010. The bill is overly broad. It will be difficult to enforce and is therefore unlikely to ensure integrity in the process. It’s the enforcement and the security around it that’s important to us.

I understand that the Attorney General feels that this can be handled appropriately. However, because the election is coming up very quickly, it will be difficult, I think, for even Elections Ontario to deal with this. With only six days left—actually, now only three days—until the House rises, and considering that this bill was slapped together after media reports suggested corrupt practices during the recent federal election, it’s questionable how serious the Liberals are about ensuring integrity in the election process. Integrity is not a Liberal strong suit. Liberals support the Working Families Coalition. I’ll get into that in a couple of minutes, but Liberals support secret sweetheart deals. Liberals support breaking promises. How can we believe a Liberal will support integrity now? Ted Arnett’s Bill 195, An Act to amend the Election Finances Act to ban collusion in electoral advertising, will bring more integrity to the election process.

The problem is how this process was done. I want to read a few of the newspaper articles from this recent election. They all basically zero in on people from the federal Liberal caucus. But I do want to spend some time on Mr. Arnett’s bill. I think he did this with a lot of thought. Bill 195 was all about third party advertising and collusion. It was to be a complete process. I think the member from Peterborough had mentioned a few minutes earlier that if we’re going to bring forward a bill on third parties, we have to bring forward a complete bill forward. The reality is that Mr. Arnett’s bill did that, and the government members were whipped in here to vote this thing down. One day later in this Legislature, all of a

sudden, we get Bill 196 out of nowhere. I’ve seen some newspaper and some TV ads around election signs missing and some flat tires in one riding up here. It doesn’t matter what riding in the country you go to; you’ll find someone who has taken a sign down or cut a sign with a knife or something, or maybe even stole some, but we just couldn’t see how severe it was. Was it really that severe in the federal election to warrant the Ontario government to bring in this last-ditch effort to divert attention away from Bill 195? That’s the way it appeared to be.

A lot of my constituents are talking about this now, because they’re very familiar with the Working Families Coalition and the amount of money that’s being—we know now that it’s being diverted to slam and demonize our leader. It has started already. They’re in collusion, of course, with the Liberal Party of Ontario. It’s as simple as that. I don’t think the Liberals are even denying it anymore. The reality is that this is a piece of legislation that would have solved that. If something isn’t done with the attempt at the Working Families Coalition, other coalitions will develop with other organizations supporting other parties, and it will be worse than the American political system. The reality is, if we had adopted Bill 195 and supported it and done away with these third party advertising organizations—and he mentioned something about the pharmacists and other groups—that would have saved that. But the way we’re going now, we’re going in a very declining level of electioneering as far as I’m concerned, and I think it’s going to be very difficult for elections in the future.

If we are successfully elected—and I’m quite confident right now that our party will do very well in the upcoming election—I think this is something that our party would like to address, as something very similar to what Bill 195 says. I personally would love to see that brought forward, as a government member, and actually do away with this kind of what I consider to be very dirty politics.

I wanted to read a couple of articles, while I have a bit of time here, about some of the things that came about as a result of election 2011. One is from election 2011, and the headline is, “Liberal Volunteer Charged in Connection with Theft of Tory Signs.” It’s by Kathryn Carlson. Here’s the story:

“A Liberal volunteer in a key battleground riding will confront a judge nine days after the federal election, facing criminal charges in connection with the theft of Conservative campaign signs.

“The drama unfolded last weekend in Brampton West—Canada’s most populous riding, where Liberal incumbent Andrew Kania is again squaring off against rival Conservative candidate Kyle Seebach. There, Rachpal Singh Grewal, a 47-year-old Grit volunteer, was arrested after police stopped his vehicle on a local Brampton street and found ‘several’ Tory placards, Peel Regional Police confirmed.

“The arrest was made public on Monday by Mr. Seebach’s campaign manager, Mitch Wexler, and Mr.

Kania has since said his volunteer claims to have been framed.

“[Mr. Grewal’s] belief is that volunteers with Conservative candidate Kyle Seeback planted the signs in his truck after an argument,’ Mr. Kania said. ‘There was some verbal altercation, he went into a home and left the doors of his car unlocked. He says he has a witness who will support that.’” Can you imagine someone leaving a car unlocked in Brampton?

“Sgt. Zahir Shah said police had been acting on a call from the ‘member of the public’ when authorities stopped Mr. Grewal, who Mr. Kania said had no official role with the campaign or local riding association.

“‘We’ve had complaints in past elections about signs being damaged or stolen, but this is the first gentleman in this election that’s been charged, at least that I’m aware of,’ Sgt. Shah said.

“Mr. Grewal was charged with possessing stolen property and will appear in a Brampton court on May 11—one week after the federal election, which promises to be a tight race in the Ontario riding, where just 231 votes separated Mr. Kania and Mr. Seeback in the 2008 election.” Of course, we know the spread was much higher than that—in the thousands.

“‘This is a serious matter,’ Mr. Kania said. ‘We expect volunteers to follow the law, period.’

“Conservative leader Stephen Harper has visited Brampton three times so far in this campaign, and has been actively courting the vulnerable Liberal riding in an effort to usurp the seat. The riding is relatively new on the federal scene, having been carved out in 2003, and is also host to NDP candidate Jagtar Shergill and the Green Party’s Avtaar Soor.

“Today, more than half the riding’s residents are visible minorities—including a sizable South Asian community, which the Tories are wooing as part of their controversial strategy aimed at wresting ethnic votes from the Liberals.

“The riding made headlines earlier this month after it was reported that Snover Dhillon, a Toronto businessman facing fraud charges, was helping out with Mr. Seeback’s campaign.

“A telephone message left for Mr. Seeback was not immediately returned on Tuesday.”

That was from the National Post.

Then we go back over to the Joe Volpe campaign: “Joe Volpe Turfs Campaign Worker Caught Trashing Green Pamphlets.” I think we’ve heard a little bit of this already today in some of the debate.

“A Liberal Party volunteer has been dismissed after removing Green Party campaign flyers from mailboxes and replacing them with Liberal materials while door-knocking with Toronto incumbent Joe Volpe.

“The actions of an unidentified man canvassing with Mr. Volpe, who has long represented Eglinton–Lawrence, were captured in a series of photographs by a Green Party supporter on Friday.

“‘The moment that there is an indication that that sort of stuff happens, that’s it. I don’t engage in, I don’t

condone, I don’t encourage that kind of behaviour,’ Mr. Volpe said in an interview Monday.

“‘The canvasser’s no longer with us. End of story.’

“Despite the dismissal, Green candidate Paul Baker is preparing a complaint to Elections Canada, noting that Mr. Volpe was nearby when the flyers were trashed.

“‘What I guess disappoints us is that Joe was there.... He may not have been robbing the bank, but it seems he was driving the getaway car,’ he said. ‘In our minds, there’s no doubt that he was aware.’

“‘However, Mr. Volpe said he did not know of the volunteer’s actions at the time. ‘You leapfrog over each other. I go to a door, he goes to another door and another canvasser goes to another door. You work essentially in isolation.’” It sounds like Mr. Volpe knew nothing about these pamphlets disappearing.

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“Orla Hegarty, Mr. Baker’s volunteer campaign manager who took the photographs, claims that Mr. Volpe also removed Green Party pamphlets from mailboxes and replaced them with Liberal materials. She said she did not manage to photograph him doing so.

“‘It was just horrifying to me. I couldn’t believe I was seeing it,’ said Mrs. Hegarty, a part-time math and statistics college instructor. ‘They were both going along and removing the flyers.’

“Mr. Volpe strongly denied that he removed flyers. ‘I’ve never done anything like that and for that volunteer to say that is a complete falsity, complete fabrication,’ he said.

“Ms. Hegarty said she began taking photos after noticing Mr. Volpe’s handler throw away a Green flyer that she had distributed in the area earlier on Friday afternoon.

“Before leaving, Ms. Hegarty confronted Mr. Volpe and said he responded with a shrug. Mr. Volpe said he was unclear at the time what she was talking about.

“Mr. Volpe, who declined to provide the volunteer’s name, complained that his campaign has had ‘all kinds of dirty tricks played on us,’ including vandalism and theft of signs and harassing phone calls originating from the U.S.

“‘Now we’ve got Green Party trying to create another story. Well, we’ve got a campaign to run and we do it properly,’ he said.” We know how properly he did it; he lost.

It’s amazing. We’ve got these stories about the federal Liberal campaigns that basically, there’s all kinds of accusations. The reality is the Attorney General brought this Bill 196 in based on the federal election campaign. He didn’t want to see this happen provincially. I can show you examples of where it wasn’t the mean old Conservatives or the Green Party or the NDP; it was the Liberal Party that did the dirty work in these campaigns. They might have done the dirty work but the reality is, they were humiliated across the country, humiliated here in Ontario and in Quebec. Basically the federal Liberal Party hardly exists anymore and it will be a couple of years before they find a leader and all that sort of thing. I

think what this really was was a bit of a diversion. They're trying to draw attention that maybe the Liberals lost because all these mean-spirited people were working against them.

The reality is that Bill 195, Mr. Arnott's bill, was the kind of legislation this House really needs, the kind of positive influence on the election process it needs. We know the government turned that down. We know they were whipped into shape to make sure that they voted against a bill that impacted a group like the Working Families Coalition, and as a result of that, we're stuck with this time-allocated, undemocratic type of bill that we're going to bring forward in the next little while.

Anyhow, those are my comments today. I know the bill is time-allocated. I don't know when we're going to actually wrap this up, but I think that at some point, maybe after October 6, we'll go back and take a serious look at Mr. Arnott's bill, Bill 195.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Miller: A quick comment on the presentation by the member from Simcoe North: I tend to agree with him on the timing of this bill. I agree with that. I've also said, how are they going to enforce this bill? Certainly there has not been a lot of enforcement in the past about fraudulent things in elections. They have trouble identifying the perpetrator, they have trouble identifying the time, they even sometimes have trouble identifying the location. They certainly don't have the people to enforce it. I guess it would be the police that would have to do it. The police are already telling us they're short hundreds of officers throughout the province provincially as well as in the municipalities. I don't know, really, how they're going to enforce this, how they're going to find the people who did it.

It's just another last-minute bill. We didn't really get to debate it enough. There's not a lot of input. It's time-allocated again. Here we go again: Another bill going through without proper debate. I'm sure there could have been some good input from the opposition parties but obviously we're not going to have that opportunity. We've got a couple of days to go until the end of the session.

Basically, once again, I think the democratic process in this province has been kicked in the teeth again because we are getting something rammed through again that we certainly haven't been able to debate. We feel, once again, that it's just a last-minute fix to make the people who lost federally feel better that something's being done because they feel they've been wronged in some way, shape or form in the election because they lost. That's what this all boils down to. It's unfortunate.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments and questions?

Mr. David Zimmer: The parties opposite are opposing this legislation, but what does the public think? So let me just—I've got some media releases here. Here's one dated May 26 from Metroland publications: "Those who follow politics know that dirty tricks have long been a

staple of US politics, where political views have traditionally been more polarized than in Canada. With a right-wing government holding a majority and a left-wing party moving into opposition in Ottawa, it appears Canada is poised for an increasing political divide and, potentially, more vicious elections."

Here is the important part of the quote: "Queen's Park is to be commended for taking steps against election fraud now, in advance of the October 6 vote. To allow dirty tricks to proceed unopposed is simply asking for trouble."

That's the point that I made in my earlier remarks.

What does the Guelph Mercury tell us? Now, that's a highly respected regional newspaper. On May 20, it said, "Bentley"—referring to the Attorney General—"wants the new law"—referring to this bill that's before us—"in place before the next provincial election, set for October 6.

"At first blush it seems a no-brainer that all parties would want to support—or at least be seen to be supporting—such an initiative.

"But they're not."

It quotes what various Tories said and what some NDP members said.

"But it does appear to acknowledge concerns shared by many Ontarians in the wake of" the May 2 federal election "and take steps to address those.

"The only people opposed to an effort to crack down on such underhanded tactics should be those who stand to gain from them."

That's what the public is thinking.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm pleased to compliment the member for Simcoe North, who spoke very eloquently on this issue this afternoon, and just again draw the attention of the House to this nasty, nasty piece of work that was sent out by the Ontario Liberal Party the day that their Bill 196 was introduced. This is what they sent out all across the province on their so-called OLP Wire. "We saw American-style dirty tricks in the federal election by the federal Conservatives. Today we're introducing tough new legislation that will mean stiff fines and jail time if anyone breaks the rules during Ontario's election. Here's what you need to know"—and it goes on and on.

Then it says, "We know that the same people who ran the federal Conservative campaign are running rookie leader Tim Hudak's campaign.

"Right now it's looking like the Hudak PCs will try to block the passage of this legislation. Either way, we'll know by their actions where they stand and what their own plans are for the upcoming Ontario election."

The member for Willowdale just now indicated that he believes that the Conservative Party is voting against this legislation. In fact, a number of our speakers have repeatedly stated that we are not opposed to the principle of Bill 196, but at the same time, we would draw attention to Bill 195. Much of the government's arguments that

have been made in respect to Bill 196 are actually valid for Bill 195.

Bill 195, the bill I brought forward in the Legislature about 10 days ago with respect to election finances, is something that is in the public interest. I think most of the members who have thought about this listened to the debate this afternoon. I know some of them are probably checking with their consciences about this because they know full well that the arguments that we're making with respect to Bill 195 are sound and solid. Any fair-minded person listening to this debate would agree with that.

Unfortunately, the Liberals are relying on the Working Families Coalition to give them a boost now that they're down in the polls, and that's the only reason that they're opposed to Bill 195.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Guelph.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'd be pleased to comment on the remarks by the member from Simcoe North. I think what has distressed me about this debate is the implication by the opposition that, "Oh, well, it's just dirty tricks. We always have people knock down signs. We always have people move them from one lawn to another. We always have sign-slashers. We always have people handing out literature that's negative to one candidate or another. This is just business as usual."

Well, what went on in the federal election was not just business as usual, and I would point out that it also has nothing to do with, "Oh, it's just sour grapes. Their federal cousins didn't get as many seats as they thought, so it's just sour grapes." Actually, the ridings in which the attempt to suppress the vote was the worst, the most offensive, were the ridings in which Liberals actually did the best. In fact, it's not sour grapes from my constituents that Liberals lost the riding; Liberals actually won the riding. It's not just sour grapes; it was something that was

substantively dirtier than the normal dirty tricks—if you can call dirty tricks normal—because I'm used to those in my campaign or in my seatmate's campaign. It was something that was different. It was deliberate election fraud aimed at trying to impede voters from voting.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Simcoe North has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'd like to thank the members from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, Willowdale, Wellington–Halton Hills and Guelph for their comments on my speech a little earlier.

Look, the members opposite are not sure how we're voting on this bill, so they're trying to say that we're not supporting it, and they did so with that pathetic release they put out the day they introduced the bill. All we're trying to say here, and to sum this thing up: Yes, we know dirty tricks take place, and that bill, Bill 196, is a good step in the right direction. We're not saying that it's a bad thing; we're not saying that.

However, what we are trying to say is, why did you turn down Bill 195? For God's sake, what reason was there? It stopped third party advertising and collusion, and you turned it down. You were whipped into it. How can you possibly stand on that side of the House and criticize the provincial PC caucus or the federal Conservatives for anything when you turned Bill 195 down? You should be ashamed of yourselves for working with this Pat Dillon and this Working Families Coalition and the embarrassment they've brought to electioneering in the province of Ontario.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): It being past 6 of the clock, this House stands recessed until 6:45.

The House recessed from 1803 to 1845.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
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Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion and Sport / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé et du Sport
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
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Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
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Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB) Gélinas, France (NDP) Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Oakville Nickel Belt Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP) Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Kenora–Rainy River Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB) Hudak, Tim (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB) Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB) Jones, Sylvia (PC) Klees, Frank (PC) Kormos, Peter (NDP) Kular, Kuldeep (LIB) Kwinter, Monte (LIB) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB) Leal, Jeff (LIB) Levac, Dave (LIB) MacLeod, Lisa (PC) Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock Dufferin–Caledon Newmarket–Aurora Welland Bramalea–Gore–Malton York Centre / York-Centre Glengarry–Prescott–Russell Peterborough Brant Nepean–Carleton Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
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Mauro, Bill (LIB) McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB) Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	

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Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Perth–Wellington	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	
Vacant	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	

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