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of Ontario

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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 8 December 2011

Jeudi 8 décembre 2011

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

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Deborah Deller

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Thursday 8 December 2011

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Jeudi 8 décembre 2011

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Please join me in a moment of silence and reflection, especially at this time of year, for those less fortunate.

The House observed a moment's silence.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

**HEALTHY HOMES RENOVATION
TAX CREDIT ACT, 2011**

**LOI DE 2011 SUR LE CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT
POUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU LOGEMENT
AXÉ SUR LE BIEN-ÊTRE**

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 7, 2011, on the motion for second reading of Bill 2, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to implement a healthy homes renovation tax credit / Projet de loi 2, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts en vue de mettre en oeuvre le crédit d'impôt pour l'aménagement du logement axé sur le bien-être.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jeff Leal: I did listen intently to what I thought was a very fine speech by the new member from Northumberland–Quinte West. He follows in the footsteps of a lot of very distinguished members from that riding.

First of all, we remind ourselves of the Rev. John Foote, VC, who represented that riding and of course was a member of the Frost and Roberts executive councils. He was the gentleman who, as padre, evacuated wounded Canadian soldiers from Dieppe in 1942.

He was followed by the Honourable Russell Rowe, who was a former Speaker of this Legislature and whose portrait is on the first floor of this august body; then by people like Joan Fawcett, who was always closely associated with the development of the Big Apple in Colborne, Ontario; Howard Sheppard, who had a great career here, and who went on to distinguish himself with the Hamilton mutual insurance company in Port Hope and Cobourg; Dr. Doug Galt; and, of course, a friend to many in this House over the last eight years and a good friend of mine, Lou Rinaldi, who served this riding so ably over eight years—a former mayor of Brighton, Ontario. He and his family own Brighton Speedway, which has

always been a great source of entertainment for many people in that area.

Certainly, we welcome the new member, a teacher at Campbellford high school and a beef farmer. We know that he will make a contribution to this chamber over the next number of years. I certainly welcome him and his family, who were with us yesterday when he delivered his maiden speech, which is always a very special occasion when a new member comes into this House. I wish him all the very best over the next number of years.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Interjections.

Mr. Rob Leone: Are we good?

Mr. John O'Toole: Go for it.

Mr. Rob Leone: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Sorry for the confusion. I thought it was me and apparently it still is, so that's a good thing.

I'd also like to congratulate the member for Northumberland–Quinte West on his maiden speech and welcome him to this place. As one of our new 16-member rookie camp here, the MPP for Northumberland–Quinte West is certainly a valued addition to our team on this side of the House. He is a teacher and a farmer, both honourable professions.

Mr. Speaker, I met his family a while ago—a very strong family man—and I note that his great-grandfather, I think, was a member of this place many, many decades, maybe a century or more, ago.

I want to commend the member for his maiden speech. He had a great speech. He talked about his riding and about what it means to be in this place. I think we are all privileged, being 107 members of 13 million citizens of Ontario. When you put that number in that contrast, 107 people who get the privilege of serving in this Legislature, it really is truly an honour, and I look forward to working with the member for Northumberland–Quinte West as we move into our Christmas break and come back in the new year.

It's always a great occasion to have a maiden speech and to be able to deliver it in this place. I love how he drew on the history from himself and from his riding. It's always a great opportunity to have that linkage from our past and remember that we are privileged people. We are serving the people of Ontario, and I look forward to doing that with the member.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Vanthof: I would also like to take this opportunity to comment on the maiden speech of the mem-

ber from Northumberland–Quinte West. I really enjoyed the speech. It was obvious how proud you are of your family, how proud you are of where you came from. As a fellow farmer, I feel that down here, just like you did.

A lot of things you mentioned in your maiden speech were things that were the same in your riding as in my riding and in much of Ontario. You really laid out the goals you had for your riding, and I think deep down we all have goals within ourselves for our ridings. A lot of yours and mine matched. The water power thing is a big idea in Timiskaming–Cochrane.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Funny how that is, John.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yeah, it's funny how a lot of our things match.

But it really shone, though, how much the member—I think he represents all the members in this House, how much we truly believe in this system, how hard we are all willing to fight and argue. But we are all looking for the same goals: to make life better for the people of Ontario, make life better in our ridings—

Mr. Monte McNaughton: More affordable.

Mr. John Vanthof: More affordable—I'll use that one.

But your speech really touched a chord in me. I think it touched a chord in anyone listening. Especially for rural people, it really touched a chord. I think your past as a teacher showed, because you taught us all something with your speech. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Good. Glad to hear that. Pleased to engage in response.

I had a chance to hear the speech yesterday afternoon, and I want to say to the member, as one who has been here a few years, that the kind of politics in which we engage in our society today is substantially different, and I hope that he would join that group of people who want to see it revert to a more civil discourse. I think he mentioned in his speech, which I thought was commendable, that kind of discourse taking place. There are debates in this House that will generate some heat; a few that might even generate some light on the circumstances surrounding the province and what is needed to solve the challenges that the province has.

But I can say I've seen evolve over the years a different kind of politics that I know he will want to challenge. The personal attacks we tend to see all over now in politics around the world may have been there to a certain extent before, but they are creeping into our society now.

0910

I can recall a somewhat more civil discourse that took place when I arrived here, and Mr. Davis—Premier Davis—was the Premier at the time. There were a number of people who had served a number of years. Yes, there were some, as I say, heated exchanges, but I think there was a good deal of respect when the debate was over amongst members and a sense of collegiality which I think is beneficial. There are those who don't think

that's beneficial; I happen to think that is beneficial. So I was encouraged to hear the member say that he wanted to see the Legislature in its minority situation work well together, and I think that's a commendable sentiment.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

The member from Northumberland–Quinte West, you have two minutes to reply.

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: I would like to just thank the fine member from Peterborough for his kind comments and making due note of the distinguished members who have served my great riding of Northumberland–Quinte West in the past. You know, I honestly believe that those individuals have given Northumberland–Quinte West the best service that they could provide. They've obviously served with distinction. I'm very humbled to follow in their footsteps, and I will not let them down.

To the member from Cambridge, my esteemed colleague Rob Leone, I greatly appreciate Rob's kind contributions and sentiments in working with him and others in this hallowed chamber for the betterment of every Ontarian.

For the member of Timiskaming–Cochrane, thank you very much for those kind words. It really does come from the heart as I'm sure it does from every member who stands in this chamber. They have a passion, they have beliefs that they want to stand up for, and they have to represent their constituents in a dignified manner. I just want to let you know that I'm obviously thankful to be here working with such fine individuals.

For the honourable Minister of the Environment, thank you very much. You're absolutely right: One of my hopeful legacies is going to be one of civility. Obviously, heated debate is something that does occur. However, we must be mindful that we have to always be respectful of the individuals with whom we are dealing. You and everyone else here are elected officials, and our constituents expect the best.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would like to take this opportunity to remind the House of yesterday's agreement concerning the rotation of the debate on this bill. The official opposition will now be skipped until the next round.

Further debate? The member from Peterborough.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I want to wish you my sincerest congratulations on being named Speaker in this House. I do know that you will do an incredible job. Of course, I believe your predecessor, the honourable Alvin Curling, was a Speaker and certainly did a very admirable job when he was in the Speaker's chair. Your great history of public life here in Toronto, representing Scarborough so ably, many years on council there, then moving on to Metro council and now here at Queen's Park—your community is truly proud, Mr. Speaker, of all your accomplishments over the last many years.

I had better get to the bill here, Bill 2, dealing with the healthy homes renovation tax credit. You know, I've had the opportunity over the last couple of weeks—I know I

said in a two-minuter that I visited my friend Vance Robbins, who operates Anden kitchen and bath in Peterborough. He and I had a great discussion about this bill. There are a significant number of seniors in Peterborough riding. I had the opportunity to chat with many of them during the 28-day campaign and over the last eight years that I've had the wonderful privilege of representing them in the riding of Peterborough, and to visit Activity Haven, which, in co-operation with the federal government—we've done some major renovations. They're located on Bernardo Avenue in Peterborough. I think they've got about 3,000 or 4,000 members. They have activities there each and every day and a wide variety of programs to keep seniors active. I had the opportunity to chat with them about the healthy homes renovation tax credit—and it doesn't matter whether you spend \$100 or \$500 or \$1,000, you can take advantage of the healthy homes renovation tax credit.

I do know, as I said, Vance Robbins at Anden kitchen and bath and Drew Merrett, who operates Home Hardware in Peterborough. In fact, Drew Merrett is the son-in-law of a former distinguished member from the riding of Peterborough, Mr. Gary Stewart. I've had the opportunity to meet with Drew, and he's anxious to see seniors come into his Home Hardware, a very successful one. In fact, over the last year he's installed solar panels on the top of his Home Hardware operation. Anybody that is in the Peterborough area over the next couple of weeks, it's located on Lansdowne Street West. They have customer service that is second to none. So I would encourage everybody to drop by Drew Merrett's Home Hardware and get some pre-Christmas bargains.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I hope Drew is watching today.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Drew, in fact, may be watching this morning. He could very well be.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Send him a Hansard anyway.

Mr. Jeff Leal: I will do that. As my friend the member from St. Catharines said, I will send Drew the Hansard. I will send Vance the Hansard, too.

But I also want to talk about my friend Gus. Now, Gus has a kitchen and bath operation on Erskine Avenue. As many of you may know, Erskine Avenue is in the south end of Peterborough. It's been an expanding business over the last number of years. I was in to see him about a week ago; I was looking for a new bathroom sink. I said to Gus, "What do you think about this healthy homes renovation tax credit?" and he said, "Jeff, this is a very positive thing for our business." He said, "I've got a large clientele of seniors that come in every week and they're looking for the opportunity to get those new showers and bathtubs that are easily accessible when you have mobility problems." He was really supportive of this, along with our tax changes in the province of Ontario. Gus told me it took a lot of time for his accounting to look at ways that he was filing a tax return with the government of Canada, a tax return with the province of Ontario. He indicated that it's good news that we've amalgamated

things together. Now, as a small business operator, he just files one tax return.

During the campaign, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to visit the new Mapleridge seniors' centre. It's a brand new centre that was constructed on Brealey Drive in Peterborough. The land was donated by the Batten family, a long-distinguished family in Peterborough. They donated the property. The federal government, working with my federal colleague, Mr. Del Mastro, myself and the city of Peterborough—and the dollars that were raised at the Mapleridge seniors' centre. I mean, I've gone to some of their fairs where they've been selling wonderful muffins and fresh apple pies, and just want to congratulate all the great work that they've done over many years to raise those dollars.

They opened a brand new centre on Brealey Drive. I got the opportunity to be there for the official opening, along with my good friend Councillor Jack Doris. Jack and his good buddy Glenn Padgett were here at Queen's Park just recently to hear the speech from the throne: a real opportunity for those two gentlemen who have been in public life for many years in Peterborough, to come here and have the opportunity to see the throne speech. I must say, in Jack Doris's case, he is a cousin of my good friend the member from Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole: Exactly. Good member. He was the mayor.

0920

Mr. Jeff Leal: He was the mayor of Peterborough. But I must say that Jack, for many, many years, was a well-known Progressive Conservative, but in the last couple of years, he joined the Leal bandwagon to make sure there was effective representation here at Queen's Park. In fact, Mr. Doris was the federal Progressive Conservative candidate in the federal election of 1972. He was a great admirer of Bob Stanfield. But I must say that Jack and Sheila and their family have seen the light; they had that Saul on the road to Damascus conversion, and now they're with us to provide progressive leadership for the great folks in Peterborough riding.

Let me get back to the bill here. I think it has a lot of very positive aspects. It will help seniors stay in their homes longer. I know when I chat with the local CCAC in Peterborough, they're very supportive of this measure.

We also have a lot of folks in Peterborough who want to have the opportunity to have a mother or dad come back into their home. This will give them the opportunity to renovate their home and retrofit it for a senior mother or father to bring that family back together, which is so important.

It will also relieve pressure on our long-term-care home costs and support 10,500 jobs per year, which I would say is a very conservative estimate for the impact of this particular initiative. It certainly will continue to support the home renovation sector here in Ontario with approximately \$800 million.

We also look forward of course—part of our platform is to add three million more hours of home care in the

province of Ontario. We look forward to making that happen over the next number of years.

If passed, this bill will become effective October 1, 2011. So I say to the residents of Peterborough riding, anybody who was involved in any home renovation projects for seniors after October 1, keep those receipts. Put them away in a safe spot in order to make the claim on your 2011 income tax.

This program, of course, will be funded through our fiscal measures, adding no more to our fiscal outlays here in the province of Ontario, and it will be offset by savings in other areas that we all contemplate will happen in the next little while.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, this is a take-up similar to that of the federal 2009 home renovation tax credit. Up to 380,000 people benefit from that credit each and every year. I know my friend yesterday, my colleague from York West, certainly outlined to people in this chamber all the things that can be done: grab bars, easy-access showers, a chairlift to get upstairs.

Just recently, I was in the home of Tom Symons, the founding president of Trent University, and because of Tom's mobility challenge, he has installed a chairlift in his home on Park Street. In fact, the Symons home was right beside a former Speaker's home: John Turner, who was the Speaker here from 1981 to 1985.

You can see that this credit is historic, as my friend from Trinity–Spadina would say, an historic development here for the province of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: I first want to sort of—it might be my only time today, but I have a very important announcement. I wish everyone to pay attention. Last night, there was the press gallery party here, and I had a phone call, and it was my daughter calling from England. She just had a baby last night.

Applause.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Was it a boy or a girl?

Mr. John O'Toole: It was a little boy, yes. I'm very proud. She lives in Sevenoaks, which is in Kent, just outside London. She's a teacher there. I'm very happy. This is her third child. Her name is Marnie Lines, and I thought that was more important.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Boy or girl?

Mr. John O'Toole: It was a little boy. Now she has three boys.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: How much does he weigh?

Mr. John O'Toole: I believe he was eight pounds, but they do everything in metric, I guess.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: You mean the imperial system is gone in England? Is nothing sacred?

Mr. John O'Toole: Yeah, the imperial system. Anyway, I found that the most wonderful Christmas gift is to have a healthy grandchild—our ninth grandchild.

When it comes to this senior credit here, I might need it before many other people here. I would qualify, except perhaps I have—the problem is there are too many arcane

little rules around it. You can't increase the value of your home; that doesn't make any sense at all to me.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: You've got to do a crappy job.

Mr. John O'Toole: Yes, you have to hire somebody who's not competent, I guess.

In fact, many seniors that I talked to during the election were quite concerned about paying their electricity bill. I thought the NDP, a couple of weeks ago, had a very good idea. Tim Hudak, our leader—we had the same idea in our playbook. That was to give all consumers the HST off their hydro bill. I think that credit would have gone a long way to making life more affordable for everyone in Ontario. That bill, although it passed—because the opposition is now the majority in the House, and we voted united, together, which is a good thing.

Here's another bill that doesn't really help anyone except by raising money for the government; it's a tax.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd just like to start off by congratulating the member for Peterborough on his third maiden speech and for the tour of Peterborough. Thanks very much.

Actually, Speaker, I've heard some debate across the floor about, "Well, you don't have to spend the \$10,000; you can spend \$2,000 or \$3,000." I don't know what you can get for 2,000 bucks, but not too much these days.

On the \$10,000, if you had the \$10,000, and if you could even borrow the \$10,000—most seniors can't get a lot of loans from the banks to borrow, anyway, but if you could get the \$10,000, you're going to pay \$1,300 on HST—that's a great savings—and they're going to give you \$1,500 back. So you've got 200 bucks in your pocket, and by the time you pay the hydro bill for the week, you've got nothing.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Historic.

Mr. Paul Miller: It's historic, all right. It's the best shell game I've seen in a while.

Of course, then they'll say, "Well, you guys should vote for it." Because it's something for the public and we naturally like to help them, we'll vote for it, even though they're being tricked again.

Once again, we've got a half—I don't want to say the word—a half you-know-what bill with no substance and a lot of malarkey. We'll be more than happy to—probably I'll have to stand up and put on that face I put on when I have to vote with you all the time; I'll be very upset. I'll have to go and have an Alka-Seltzer or something after because I'll be upset. And it will happen again, I'm sure, to the glee and pleasure of the members.

By the way, if you want to be serious about it, I don't know what \$10,000 is going to do for the people who live in those reserves up north. You know they're living in tents. They're starving. They're living in sheds. Let's be a little realistic. If you want to really help the people of this province, take the HST off the renovation costs and take the HST off the builders that are doing it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments? The member for York West.

Mr. Mario Sergio: Thank you, Speaker, and congratulations. That looks very nice; I wish you would stay there for a long time.

I have to congratulate our member here, our colleague from Peterborough, for a well-thought discussion on Bill 2. I have to say that—and thank God—we have some 600, 700 nursing homes that we put our seniors in because they have needs to be in there.

At the same time, for seniors who are not at that particular stage in their life and they are still living in their home, and they want to live in their home longer and, hopefully, have a safer and healthier life, I think we should do everything we can to allow them to live longer in their home. As the member for Peterborough was saying, it doesn't matter how many seniors this would benefit; it does not matter. There are other benefits in there that include all the seniors, all the low-income seniors, the middle-income seniors.

I think my friend the member from Trinity–Spadina should be familiar with those benefits, but for his information, just in case he is not aware, seniors already enjoy a number of other benefits, such as \$625 a year for the Ontario seniors' home properties, and the Ontario energy and property tax credit: \$900 to a maximum of \$1,025. They already enjoy 10% off their hydro bill. Of the low- to middle-income seniors, 93% don't pay any more provincial taxes, which is a saving of \$355 a year, and a new home—

0930

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you.

Mr. Mario Sergio: Mr. Speaker, my time is up. Thank you so much for your time.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you for the tour of Peterborough. I go to Peterborough often for business and know a lot of people in the member's riding. I know the Dalliday family very well—a very good family, Gary and Pete Dalliday.

Mr. Jeff Leal: They're friends of mine, too.

Mr. Todd Smith: Yes, they're friends of mine, too. We'll have a chat about you when I see them next; that's for sure.

I did get a nice Christmas card from the member a few days ago. He has a lovely family, and I know they're going to enjoy their gifts from the Home Hardware store there, as I know that's where the member will be doing most of his shopping.

I would also like to congratulate my colleague Mr. O'Toole from Durham on the birth of his ninth grandchild. That's something else. Way to go. Unbelievable.

Hon. James J. Bradley: He doesn't look that old.

Mr. Todd Smith: I know, but he is that old, sir, and that's why he is concerned about this healthy homes renovation tax credit, or, as I like to call it, the wealthy homes renovation tax credit, because you have to have a lot of money in order to take advantage of this. If the government over on the other side has \$60 million or so

to throw around on seniors, I think it should be a little bit more focused on something that's actually going to provide help to seniors.

As I said yesterday and several times in the House when I've had the opportunity to comment on this wealthy homes renovation tax credit, the seniors in Prince Edward–Hastings just don't have \$10,000 at their disposal to improve their homes. What they would rather have is what we proposed during the election campaign and what we've teamed up to do with our colleagues from the NDP: to provide a break on HST on home heating fuel. That's the way to go. That's going to create more money in the economy. It's going to create jobs and sustain the jobs that we have.

So we need to give some relief to families who can't afford \$10,000 on home renovations right now, especially at this time of year, when perhaps they'd go shopping at the Home Hardware in Peterborough. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Member for Peterborough, you have two minutes to respond.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to sincerely thank the members from Durham, Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, York West and Prince Edward–Hastings in providing some commentary on the remarks I made this morning.

It's 9:30. I'm just told that people are lined up right now in front of Drew Merrett's Home Hardware on Lansdowne Street West. I gave him the opportunity of a little free publicity. I'm told they're lined up at Gus's and Anden's. They're all flocking this morning to take advantage of this healthy homes renovation tax credit.

But on a more serious note, my good friend the member from Prince Edward–Hastings had mentioned the Dalliday family. Two weeks ago they had a fundraiser for Tim Dalliday in Peterborough. Tim has just received a liver transplant that he was waiting for for a very long time. Karen and I had the opportunity to join with Gary and Donna and their families at a fundraising event at the historic Montreal House in Peterborough, which in fact is right across from my constituency office. All of the community came together in Peterborough to raise money for Tim Dalliday, for his wife and their family, to make their Christmas a little better as he recuperates from the liver transplant that was performed by a great medical team right here in Toronto.

But I do know, Mr. Speaker, that when I get home this evening to Peterborough, I'll get a report from some of these small businesses that we gave a little publicity to this morning, encouraging those seniors in the Peterborough riding—perhaps this morning they're at an event at Activity Haven or Mapleridge seniors' centre—to get down to Home Hardware, Home Depot, Rona, all those great businesses in my community, to take advantage of the healthy homes renovation tax credit and make their homes ready for seniors. Thanks so much.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The member from—I've got a problem there—

Interjection: Mississauga–Streetsville.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member from Mississauga–Streetsville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Good morning, Speaker. I would think that after all the time that we'd served together, if I can remember Scarborough–Rouge River, perhaps you can remember Mississauga–Streetsville.

Interjections.

Mr. Bob Delaney: It's the day before Christmas and the spirit of goodwill will pervade throughout the House.

It's a pleasure to get up here and to greet my fellow members and to congratulate the member from Durham on his ninth grandchild. Speaker, this is a member that I've had the privilege of serving opposite for a long time. He's a good hockey player and he keeps talking about being a senior, but he can still play hockey like a guy who is merely a fraction of his age. It's always a pleasure to go into the dressing room and get ready to play with the member from Durham.

We're here to talk about something that's important to me as a member of the baby boom generation and important to a lot of my constituents in our neighbourhoods of Lisgar, Meadowvale and Streetsville, and that's this healthy home renovation tax credit. The need for that tax credit is driven by some of the demographics we see here in the legislative chamber on this, the Thursday before the Christmas recess, and the demographics that we see in our communities, not merely in western Mississauga but all across the province of Ontario.

Those essential demographics are basically this: For every senior in our communities now, every person aged 65 and over, when we, the baby boomers, are ourselves mostly in our senior years—and I say that because on January 1, 2011, the first member of the baby boom generation, that generation born between the years of 1946 and 1966, turned 65 years old, on New Year's Day of this year. The baby boomers are gradually and quickly moving into their senior years, so we have to be ready. Those decisions that we make as a Legislature now are going to have a great deal of impact on the generation that follows the seniors who are now the ones who will be the beneficiaries of the healthy home renovation tax credit.

For every senior alive today, when the baby boomers are themselves mostly seniors, there will be two. For every octogenarian person, aged 80 or above, alive today, when we, the baby boomers, are ourselves mostly in our 80s—a frightening thought for all of us—there will be three. What are we going to do? Should we be building more and more facilities for our seniors? Yes, we have to do that as well. But where do seniors really want to age? When we've asked them that, when they've come to our meetings, they've been virtually unanimous: They'd like to age at home. They'd like to age in the place that they raised their children and the community they have lived in for the last however many years. Seniors would like to age at home.

That's basically what this healthy home renovation tax credit is all about. It isn't about making your home more saleable, because that's not what seniors want to do.

What they really need to do is to say, "I don't get on as well as I did; I need a ramp to be able to get up to my house. I can't negotiate the stairs; I'd like to be able to build a ramp." That's the sort of thing that the healthy home renovation tax credit is there to do: help them build a ramp. If you're having trouble getting up the stairs, it helps you build a lift that gets you up the stairs. Even in things that are smaller—for example, most staircase railings are more decorative than they are functional. How can we take some of the things in our homes that may be decorative and make them functional, like reinforced stair railings? It's not a big thing, but it's an important thing. The healthy home renovation tax credit would enable people to do that as well.

Speaker, the cost of the healthy home renovation tax credit is offset by savings in other areas. I think Ontarians grasped, during the election, when our party came out and we offered the fewest promises of the three, and our promises were all fully costed and the others were not, and our promises were the lowest cost platform of the three—the highest, by the way, were the Conservatives: 10 times the price of the programs that were offered by the Liberals; 10 times. So, it was a frugal platform, and this is one of the things that we say, "We can fund this by finding savings in other areas."

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Now, I've talked about some of the things that you can do with the healthy home renovation tax credit. You can also make your bathroom a lot more functional. A lot of times, seniors say, "I'd like to have a tub that I can get into and get out of. This mitigates the need for people to need to come in to assist me with bathing and whatnot." But it also is part of a whole series of measures that make life more liveable for seniors.

For example, all seniors—indeed, all Ontarians—received a permanent cut in their Ontario personal taxes on January 1, 2010: important to remind you. Many seniors had themselves removed permanently from the Ontario tax rolls in 2010: another benefit. The Ontario clean energy benefit takes 10% off of your electricity bill. Now, some of the other parties are saying, "Well, we want to take the HST off of your electricity bill." Well, in other words, what they want to do is increase your electricity cost by 2%, and we're against that. We don't think that seniors should have their electricity costs raised. We took 10% off, and not just off the electricity portion but off the whole thing. Off the entire thing, including the distribution cost, and they conveniently forget to mention that. We took 10% off the whole bill, period.

The other thing that seniors have is their senior energy and property tax credit. What does that amount to? It amounts to all of the HST on some \$13,750 worth of things that have not been taxed before. For seniors, that covers a lot of the HST, or probably all of it, that you'll pay in being able to use the tax credit proposed in this bill.

There's also the sales tax credit. Each and every year, each person is eligible for a sales tax credit equivalent to all of the HST on \$6,250 worth of purchases that had not

been taxed before. You add that to the senior energy and property tax credit and what you've got is all of the HST on about \$20,000 paid for for a senior couple.

Now, the other guys just keep wanting to rebate you the same thing twice, but they don't tell you what they're going to cut in order to do it. They don't tell you how much they're going to raise your taxes in order to do it. We're not going to raise your taxes. We've said that very clearly: We're not going to raise your taxes. The Conservatives say that they're going to raise your taxes, but we're not going to raise your taxes.

If, as a senior, you're helping your grandchildren get through university, you should know that your grandchildren, beginning next year, have a 30% tuition cut: another thing that's going to ease some of the pressure that you may feel to help your family members, your children and your grandchildren get along.

So this particular tax credit, Speaker, the healthy homes tax credit, is just one of a whole series of measures that are income-tested. Some of the members opposite have talked about, "Oh, well, we should take the HST off of both electricity and gas." So who are the major beneficiaries? They're not going to be you, if you're a senior, because you already have your HST taken off of that. But they will benefit you if you have a monster home. I don't think asking people of very modest means to subsidize more tax credits to the very wealthy is a good idea, and when I went out door-knocking in the neighbourhoods of Lisgar and Meadowvale and Streetsville, my neighbours didn't think so either. That's why they voted for us and our platform and not for them and their platform.

This healthy homes tax credit, this tax credit that allows you to renovate your home, as a senior, to make it a little bit easier to stay there; to make it easier to get up and down your stairs; to make it a little bit easier to install a ramp so you can get in and out of your house; to make it a little bit easier to get around inside your house; to do the things that you, as a senior, know that, as you can't get along and get around as much as you used to—how you spend that tax credit is something that's up to you. Make your life simpler, easier. Make your house more manageable your way. It's not prescriptive. It's one of the things that allows you to custom-tailor how your tax credit is going to get spent in your circumstances, in your house, on your time and on your terms.

Combined with the permanent reduction in taxes, combined with the fact that for most seniors, they've been pretty much permanently removed from the tax rolls—if you're below about \$40,000 worth of income you no longer pay any income tax at all—combined with the fact that the senior energy and property tax credit plus the sales tax credit give you back all of the HST on nearly \$20,000 worth of purchases made, I think this is a good addition and a good thing to support.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: Now, I would say the member from Mississauga–Streetsville was very kind in his response in how fortunate I am to have another grandchild.

But when he got into the hockey part, he didn't tell the whole story: He was actually the goalie. We actually had a pretty good team until you got to the blue line, and from there on it was a bit—but it got tweaked. He was very attentive. He always let everyone get a goal, so that they felt included. No, but he was a good team player, and we did have a lot of fun and hopefully will again. But the issue there is Jean-Marc Lalonde, who was a member here before, a great and very popular member: His main duty over there was to arrange the hockey and the games and the tournaments and stuff like that. He's no longer with us, so I don't know whether there will be more hockey, to be honest.

But on the bill itself, I think he's really kind of again missing the point. It's sort of like trying to do everything for everyone and doing nothing for anyone. That's what I see this bill doing. It sounds good because I have heard from seniors that they're finding it difficult. With the cost of living and whether it's the price of gasoline, municipal taxes, your hydro bill, your cable bill, if you aren't making \$30,000 a year today, you are probably the working poor today, honestly, if you have house insurance, auto insurance. The auditor's report told us everything is costing more—pretty well everything. He went right down the list. Energy was the most critical file by the Auditor General. If you went down to the next part, it was auto insurance.

I would say that the track we're on is that seniors do need help. This bill doesn't do it. In fact, I think it's right backward. Why can't you, if you're spending \$10,000, increase the value of your home? What's so wrong about that? You know, our member from Mississauga–Streetsville is a well-intentioned, kind-hearted person. Thanks for the good remarks, but you should read the bill again and have a look at it because, really, it doesn't do what you think it does.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Just a couple of things to my friend from Mississauga–Streetsville: I appreciate all the comments you made and all the other Liberals are making around this.

But I'm not quite sure, when you say it is not prescriptive, that it is correct. You're saying people have a choice, and you make it appear like they can if they want to, and they don't have to if they don't. The simple point I make to you is that it's not a matter of choice; it's a matter of affordability. And so if you can afford it, my suspicion is that they will do it. I would. If I don't have the money, I just won't be able to. So your notion about not prescriptive is entirely wrong, is the one point.

Connected to that, I say that if this program only serves 1% of the population, do you not feel a tad guilty about the one-percenters versus the 99% of the seniors who won't be eligible and won't be able to take advantage? In other words, do you feel somewhat bad or guilty that only the very wealthy will have access to a program that you argue is a good program?

I would like you to comment on that because those two points are, in my mind, very important. I hope you

and the Liberals would distance yourselves from the one-percenters, and that you are with the other folks, the Toronto protestors that have been saying that we are with the 99%. Again, the one-percenters. I'd like to know where you stand on that one.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to make a brief comment in response to the remarks that were offered by the member Mississauga–Streetsville. I really appreciate the member's comments about the impact or who will benefit from the proposal from the opposition members that it's a too simplistic view about taking the HST off home heating, that it really does not have the desired effect that's being purported, that it's going to be some sort of relief across the board for everyone. If you look at it from a public policy point of view, every expert will tell you that those who will benefit the most from that type of relief are those who own big homes, who use a lot of heating. So I think the same arguments about choice that the member from Trinity–Spadina was making will apply to the proposal that has been presented here.

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What the healthy home renovation tax credit does, in fact, is that it's a targeted relief to seniors to attain a certain goal, the goal being that the seniors can continue to live in their own home as long as possible. I think that is what we are trying to achieve.

Just giving a broad tax relief which is not targeted in any way whatsoever and, in fact, is going to undermine conservation—that's your proposal—because it's going to make it easy for people to just burn as much oil as possible to heat their homes, is not going to reach any goal whatsoever. Therefore, I'm very supportive of the healthy home renovation tax credit.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments? The member from Barrie.

Mr. Rod Jackson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll take a moment just to congratulate you, too, on your new position as Deputy Speaker.

I'd just like to take a couple of moments, too, to speak to the healthy home tax credit. As my colleague mentioned, it's probably better termed the wealthy renovation tax credit. Let's just call it what it is.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Are you with the one-percenters or the 99-percenters?

Mr. Rod Jackson: Let's go with the 99-percenters on this one.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Member for Trinity–Spadina, come to order.

Mr. Rod Jackson: Let's call this what it is, really, which is window-dressing for the Liberals. This isn't addressing anything of any substance. It's more of what we've seen in other stuff; it's smoke and mirrors.

What we really need is to create relief for everybody across the board. If we really want to help seniors, let's get more long-term-care beds, more home care for seniors. My own grandmother is 90 years old, and my grand-

mother is not going to be able to use this tax credit to any sort of advantage to herself whatsoever, nor will any of the seniors whose doors I knocked on.

When I knocked on seniors' doors—and I knocked on 50,000 doors in this election, for several months. Over and over again, what people showed me was their hydro bill and their heating bills. We don't have a choice in Ontario about whether or not we heat our homes. We offered a program, along with the NDP, that will give people broad tax relief—seniors of all income levels. Wealthy seniors will do their renovations regardless. Poor seniors will no more readily be able to pay the \$8,500 portion than the \$10,000, under this bill, than they would have before. It only helps a very small group of rich and poor, and there will only be a small subgroup in the middle that this will actually benefit.

We need broader relief for everybody in this economy. Further to that, do we really even know how much it costs? We're talking about \$135 million a year. What is it, really? What do you mean by this?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member from Mississauga–Streetsville, two minutes to reply.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have to say to my colleague from Durham—who has been an old friend for a while, and we do enjoy needling each other in the Legislature—the thing that the member for Durham has to remember is that you never let your goalie get in the last word. Do you know the hardest thing about the shot from the member from Durham? It's waiting for it to arrive. We of the goal-tending fraternity refer to it as the “dying quail wrist-shot.”

To my friend from Trinity–Spadina: I think my colleague summed it up exquisitely. If I remember his words correctly, he said, “You can if you want to, but you don't have to if you don't need to”—perfect. That's exactly right. That's all it is. If you actually need to do this sort of thing, you can.

This is a bill for the 90% who do need help—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The 99%.

Mr. Bob Delaney: The 90%, 99%; let's call it what we wish—with simple things like ramps; like reinforcing your railings; with lifts; with a tub. This is the sort of thing that you need to do; you've got your choice to do it.

Now, you see, Speaker, the member for Ottawa, he gets it. He gets it: This is for people of modest means, to enable them to make their homes more accessible to themselves as seniors to allow them to do the thing that they want to do, which is to stay in their homes. They don't believe the member from Barrie—by the way, congratulations on your election. The member for Barrie is proposing measures that aren't going to help seniors stay in their homes. He may not want his seniors to stay in their homes, but we do, and that's the reason for the healthy homes renovation tax credit—simple things like tubs, lifts, ramps and things that help you stay in your home as a senior.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm very happy to be able to stand to talk about the healthy homes renovation tax credit because I think it is something that needs to be put in a context of a number of issues that we're confronting as a society. I think it's plain to all of us that there are quite a few people coming—

Mr. John O'Toole: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I was wondering about the rotation. The last speaker from the Liberal side had their 10 minutes. It actually should have gone to our member.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I didn't see your member standing.

Mr. John O'Toole: He was getting up. I'm not trying to be difficult. I'm raising a point that the floor actually belonged to our side.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to cede and speak after.

Mr. John O'Toole: If I could get him to stand quickly, that would be good. Thanks.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The chair will recognize the member from Cambridge.

Mr. Rob Leone: Thank you. Merry Christmas. Thanks for that gift. I appreciate that.

I'm happy to stand here on behalf of our PC Party here in the Legislature to talk about the healthy homes renovation tax credit. I share a lot of the comments on this side of the House with respect to this bill and with respect to the fact that our seniors have to have \$10,000 to be able to afford a renovation of the kind that they are looking for. If we look at how much these lifts cost, they're very expensive. Any modifications are very expensive. You have to have that money in the bank before you can actually do that.

Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, if you have the money in the bank to spend on a renovation of this nature, you're probably going to do it whether there's a tax credit or not because it's about improving the quality of life and sometimes even improving longevity of life. Folks who have the money to do that are going to do it, whether they have the tax credit or not.

I want to spend some time talking today about the beauty of this place, Mr. Speaker. We are, as I mentioned earlier today, 107 men and women who have the privilege and distinction of serving in this place. Out of 13 million Ontarians, 107 people. When I heard Speaker Peters actually say that—former Speaker Peters, I should say, Mr. Speaker—for the first time, that, I think, was the moment where it started to sink in for when I became a member of provincial Parliament.

This whole thing was a long journey, a journey that all of us had to make. We've all had different twists and turns. But it was at that moment, sitting in this place, this beautiful place, looking at the great features of this Legislature, looking at the eagle and the owl and all the sculptures and all the carvings of the wood in this place, that it really started to sink in that I was the member of provincial Parliament for Cambridge.

Before I came to this place, Mr. Speaker I was a university professor. I have a Ph.D. in political science, so I

had a long interest in studying parliamentary institutions. A lot of my favourite theorists are still at the back of my mind when I come to this place.

For example, A.V. Dicey was a man who was very well versed in our parliamentary institutions. He talked at length about the supremacy of Parliament, the supremacy of our parliamentary institutions. We are in a place that makes the laws on behalf of the citizens of the province of Ontario. We do that every day that we sit here, and we talk to constituents when we're not in this place. And so, thinking about that in the beauty of this building, that we are a supreme body making laws on behalf of Ontarians, really strikes me even further, Mr. Speaker.

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Blackstone talked also about the supremacy of this place. He suggested that our Legislature and parliamentary institutions right across the world have a capacity to do anything, and he cited the example: do anything except make "a woman a man, and a man a woman." That was his famous quote, and I think modern technology even allows us to do that, if we so permit.

That just speaks to the power of what we do in this Legislature, the power that we have as legislators, talking about laws and policies and regulations that govern citizens. It is a very important thing. We are very privileged to have a seat here to talk about those things that are important to our constituents and are important to the future of the province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, another one of those famous philosophers that I like to follow is a gentleman by the name of Edmund Burke. Edmund Burke had a famous speech at Bristol that he gave in 1776; 1776 was a long, long time ago, certainly a longer time—we weren't around at that time. Maybe the member from Durham was around back then, but I'm not really sure.

But, Mr. Speaker, he talked about the role of the MP—he was talking about British Parliament. He talked about that role as having a dual function: a function of representing constituents in your riding, and the other function being representing the interests of the whole, representing the interests of the entire country. He was talking about Britain, but we can extrapolate that. Not only are we, as MPPs, here in this Legislature representing our constituents, but we're also governing the whole of the province of Ontario, which makes my seat in this place even more special, given all that I have learned in my educational career.

Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what I've been doing since I was elected as representing my constituents. I created—we have a resolution passed in this House that talks about holding the government accountable for their infrastructure announcements, particularly related to hospital expansions. I tabled a bill yesterday that is called the Protection of Child Care Centres Act. Hopefully, we can talk reasonably about moving that to second and third reading going forward. These are important aspects of what I have done in this House to represent my constituents, and I hope to continue to do that in my seat here.

Mr. Speaker, I have achieved a lot of success in my 32 years of age. I have a Ph.D. in political science, as I men-

tioned earlier. I achieved the highest academic honour. I ran a small business, and I even published my first book this year.

But, Mr. Speaker, the one thing that I'm most proud of is being a husband to my wife, Kate, and a father to my two boys. My oldest boy's name is Alex—Alexander. He's a bright kid. He just turned four in November, and he is already reading. He actually got to read his first book to his class last week. My youngest boy's name is Aiden. He is only seven months old, Mr. Speaker, and he—I just got a video from my wife this week—has started to commando crawl, which is a very big milestone in his life and something that, unfortunately, I had to see on video and not in person.

So, Mr. Speaker, that speaks to a lot of the sacrifice that members in this House have to make to actually be in this place. I think it's very important to understand that we do make a sacrifice to be here, but we are doing that because of the privilege that is awarded to us by our constituents, and that sacrifice in the name of public service, to talk about the future of the province of Ontario, is a very important thing that we should never lose sight of.

And despite all the partisanship we often see in this place—and we hear that a lot, that our politics has become too partisan—we should never lose sight of the fact that each one of us in this place has made a tremendous sacrifice to be here, and we should always be considerate of others who have made a similar sacrifice as well.

That sacrifice came to my parents as well. I want to give special mention to my parents, who immigrated to this country, like many Ontarians did, in the 1960s. Why did they immigrate to Ontario? They came here to give a better life to their kids and grandkids. You know, when I look my kids in the eye, when I see their faces, I want to be able to say that I gave to them and made a similar sacrifice to make sure their lives will be better, Mr. Speaker.

That's the reason why I decided to run to be MPP for Cambridge. I am so blessed to have the privilege to serve my constituents and be able to look my children in the eye and say that I have done everything that I possibly could in my life to make theirs better. We should never lose sight of that goal of making our children and our grandchildren have the future that we had—at least as good, if not better. We should be doing that on a daily basis and considering that as we go forward.

We all make a tremendous sacrifice. We all have ideas about how we can improve life for Ontario. I look forward to having those debates about the future because that is, in essence, what we do here.

Finally, I want to say thank you to the people of Cambridge and North Dumfries for giving me the opportunity to serve here. I'm proud to serve my great riding that is formed by the city of Cambridge and the township of North Dumfries. It's a great place to live, work and raise a family. I look forward to discussing ideas that will improve their lives in addition to improving the lives of all people in this great province.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I have to say, I enjoyed the comments made by the member from Cambridge. I liked the tone by which he delivered his speech.

I want to say that there are a lot of Italian-Canadians that historically have been Liberals, of course—God bless. In the 1970s, we had quite a few Italian-Canadian MPPs, which was a change based on the politics of the 1970s. Many within the Italian community turned to New Democrats as a solution to many of the social and economic problems, particularly as it relates to workers' compensation, of course, welfare and pension-related issues. So we were able to draw a great deal of support.

Sadly, I have observed that there are many young Italian-Canadians that have gone to the Conservative Party, and I'm a bit alarmed by that. I'm hoping there will be a day when they will come back to the NDP and find a home with us, of course, a party that speaks to social and economic justice issues, and that connects to 99% of the population, by and large.

But speaking to the tone of the member from Cambridge that I liked, he talks about the humanity that speaks to the politics of the Conservative Party because they say—and we disagree with it—they're worried about people, and I like that part. That's the progressive part of the Conservative because, for so many years, the libertarian component of the Conservative Party has frightened me a little bit. So when I hear that human part of the Conservative Party, that progressive part makes you feel good. God bless.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I want to commend the member for Cambridge on his maiden speech and welcome him to the Legislature. I think that most of us—all of us—never lose that sense of awe when we walk into this beautiful building.

But I also do want to comment, Mr. Speaker, on the healthy homes renovation tax credit, because that is what we're talking about this morning. I want to put it in the context of a number of changes and initiatives that have to happen in our society if we're going to accommodate the number of people who are aging—and I among them—the number of baby boomers who are going to need to have options. I believe that this tax credit is about options.

The member from Trinity-Spadina, I think, spoke about only the wealthy. This isn't only about the wealthy. This is about people who need choices. I think of my own parents, 85 and 83. They're determined to stay in their home. They're going to need a bit of encouragement to spend the money that they're going to need to spend in order to be able to stay in their home that they've been in for 48 years, that has stairs, and they're going to need some support. That's what this kind of initiative is about.

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I think about Edna Beange, who is a member of the Don Valley West community; she lives in Leaside. She is

a former East York councillor. She has spent years working on initiatives with businesses to make them more senior-friendly, to make them more accessible to people who are living in the community and need to have access to businesses.

Along with our Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, along with the property tax and energy tax credits, along with the funding for long-term care and supportive housing—all of those things, all of those initiatives create the context within which this home renovation tax credit is being introduced because people need choices. There are going to be more and more people who need those choices.

We all need to make sure that we provide them, and that's what this is about.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rod Jackson: It's a great privilege actually to be able to stand and welcome my fellow member from Cambridge to the House. I know that it is a place that we all hold in high esteem, and we're all very proud to be here.

It was also really nice to be blessed with my first lecture from Dr. Leone today. I only hope that by the end of the session, I get a passing grade.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Maybe the Liberals will start to listen to him.

Mr. Rod Jackson: So today I received a lecture from Dr. Leone, and I got an infomercial from the member from Peterborough earlier. You never know what you're going to find in this House, and that's part of the beauty of it: listening to all the other voices that we hear in here. I think listening is key.

I said earlier in my maiden speech that we don't really understand ourselves what we're saying if we don't listen first. So I think it's really key that, as the member from Cambridge brought up, it's an opportunity for us to listen to each other and have good, informed debate and listen to what each other has to say so that we can serve our communities as best we can.

In the short time I've known the member from Cambridge, I've known him to be very thoughtful and to put his best foot forward in helping his constituents. In the very short time we've been in this session, he has been a busy guy and, certainly, I've enjoyed watching him. I know I will enjoy working with the member over the next hopefully two and a half to four years—

Interjections.

Mr. Rod Jackson: Forever; for eternity.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Order.

Mr. Rod Jackson: You just never know what you're going to end up with in this House, as I mentioned before.

I would like to thank the member from Cambridge for his great maiden speech on the fly and for all your hard work. I look forward to working with you over the next several years.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments? The member from Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and may I say congratulations to you? I haven't said that yet. You look good there.

I want to congratulate the member from Cambridge on his maiden speech. I was totally blown away; I didn't know that he had a doctorate in political science. I have to admit that I was bit shocked: I thought you had to come from the left to get a doctorate in political science and teach in a Canadian university. But welcome, nonetheless.

Of course, sharing an Italian last name lets me speak about my ancestors who came over. Quite frankly, my father was an Italian-Canadian who was always an active volunteer for the New Democrats. In fact, at my dining room table at home, the English side of the family were the Conservatives, and the Italians were the New Democrats. We shared one thing in common, of course: We both didn't like Liberals. But those are the voices I grew up with.

It's also good, and I want to echo my friend from Trinity–Spadina in saying this, to hear that Progressive—progressive—Conservative voice, because that's the voice I grew up with. It was certainly not a libertarian voice; it was certainly not socially conservative. It was fiscally conservative, but it was socially progressive. That's something that it would be nice to see really reflected in conservatism generally in Canada, not just in Ontario. So I welcome that voice in this chamber as well.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I might get to like you guys.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Absolutely, absolutely—and to uphold, of course, as we all should do, this chamber itself, and just to say that it is of course an honour for all of us to serve. And, really, thank goodness we have various voices in this House, because I think we can all agree that we don't want a one-state solution in any of our jurisdictions.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. The member from Cambridge, you have two minutes to respond.

Mr. Rob Leone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the member for Trinity–Spadina, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the member for Barrie and the member for Parkdale–High Park.

I have to say to the member for Parkdale–High Park: I wish I was at your dinner conversations, because I know it probably was highly contentious to have both sides, and certainly you're an outspoken member of this House. That would have been pretty entertaining to see.

The member for Durham actually came beside me today and said that I should read you the title of my book—and it might do members of that side of the House some good to read it. It's called *Approaching Public Administration: Core Debates and Emerging Issues*. It's co-edited by my good friend Frank Ohemeng from the University of Ottawa, and it's available from Emond Montgomery press. If you're really excited, I can sign

you a copy. Maybe we could do a book signing outside this chamber, Mr. Speaker, and we could go forward there.

I really want to thank all for the comments that I've received on that maiden speech. The member from Barrie actually let the cat out of the hat that I actually wrote that about five minutes before I had to say it, so I apologize if I made any mistakes. But I do want to say that I miss the lectures, so if I get to do that more often in this place and inform members on both sides of the House of some information that I might have stored inside myself, I'm willing to share that at any given moment, in as non-partisan a fashion as possible—when possible, I should say; certainly not totally there.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Family is obviously a very important thing to me in my life. I know a lot of members in this place share that, and we should always respect and honour them as often as we can.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The time for debate has come to an end. This House now stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1017 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I'd like to introduce the family of page Lila Kloppenburg to the House today. It's David and Marnie Kloppenburg, and son and former page Sam Kloppenburg. Welcome to the House today.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: All the way from the city of Thunder Bay is Harold Wilson from the chamber of commerce of Thunder Bay. We welcome you back.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to rise today to welcome Joseph Rumi, who is the director of fine art at Rumi Galleries in my colleague's riding of Mississauga South. He's joined today by his wife, Laura MacDonald Rumi, and they're in the east members' gallery.

Miss Monique Taylor: Today, I would like to introduce our dear friend James Moffat, who's a retired leader with the sheet metal workers and the building trades union. Jim continues to dedicate his life on behalf of Ontario's workers.

Mrs. Teresa Piruzza: I rise today to welcome Tina D'Agnillo, mother of the page captain today, Christian D'Agnillo, from Windsor. Welcome.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: It is my pleasure to welcome Sarbjit Deol, Mandeep Bhatti, Gurpreet Singh, Pawandeep Randhawa and Amandeep Singh. Mr. Deol is a prominent community activist who has made significant contributions to promote sports among youth.

They are seated in the east members' gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: In the members' whatever-side gallery—I've been here for 21 years; I should know east from west—are both Victoria Hunt from OECTA and

Craig Brockwell from OSSTF. I'm sure they're looking forward to 6 o'clock tonight.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Today, the kids from the high school up in Espanola are touring our wonderful working area. They're not in the room, but they are touring. They will be here this afternoon. I hope everybody welcomes them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): In the Speaker's gallery is my recently adopted younger brother. Joe Peters is here to visit us. Thank you, Joe.

I guess I should make sure that that's not an official record. He's not really an adopted brother, but might as well be.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Are you correcting your record, Speaker?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm challenged as the Chair. The short answer is, I am correcting my record in case my other brothers hear about this.

It is now time for oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question for the Premier: Premier, 63 days after Ontario families told this government that they want to see action when it comes to our jobs crisis and our debt crisis, to actually reduce the size and cost of government, you have failed to bring forward one new idea to address either crisis. Let me ask you, Premier: Is there some big announcement you're making today about cutting spending, or are you just going to pack it all up for the Christmas holidays?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm pleased to receive the question. I was hoping that there would be a question of this variety today. I just want to review some of the things that we have done thus far, which I would have thought would have commended themselves to the Leader of the Opposition and his party.

First of all, Speaker, there is our healthy homes renovation tax credit. My honourable colleague wants to create jobs; this will do that. My honourable colleague, and his colleagues as well, I know, want to support seniors in their homes; this will do that. My honourable colleague is determined to help us better manage government costs; this will do that too.

So I'd ask my honourable colleague to lend his support to this very specific initiative.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: The Premier may have been hoping for a question of that variety, but I was not hoping for an answer of that variety, Mr. Speaker.

Premier, 63 days: Usually in their first 100 days, governments burst out of the gate, full of vinegar and vim, to take on the challenge of the day: the debt crisis—I was careful on that—the debt crisis, the spending crisis.

But what we've seen is a Dalton McGuinty government limping out of the gate: not one good idea to rein in runaway government spending. I don't know if you're tired, if you're out of gas, but surely a big announcement today—don't pack it all up for the Christmas holidays when you haven't addressed the urgent spending crisis in the province of Ontario.

Will you, this last day, at least agree to bring in a public sector wage freeze to save the taxpayers \$2 billion?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm always very appreciative of the characterizing of my honourable colleague's questions. But I think really it's important to focus on the specific initiatives. So, again, there's our healthy homes renovation tax credit.

Now I want to talk about our southwestern Ontario development fund. Again, my honourable colleague says he's interested in creating jobs, and this will do that. He's interested in strengthening the economy; this will do that as well. This will be largely modelled on the eastern Ontario economic development fund, which was very supportive of a—I think it was Deslaurier Cabinets in the city of Renfrew. It's very important to my honourable colleague opposite—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Town, town.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Town of Renfrew; I apologize.

Speaker, in the eastern Ontario development experience, I think we've created some 12,000 jobs. We've—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: —about 50 million tax dollars into close to half a billion private sector dollars. We want to do that in southwestern Ontario as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Speaker, that precisely makes my point. There is no question in which Dalton McGuinty doesn't say, "We're going to throw more money at it. We're going to throw more taxpayer dollars out there."

Premier, at the beginning of this session, you had to admit that the deficit number you put out there during the campaign was not an accurate number. The deficit went up to \$16 billion. It's already up this year, and all we hear from you is \$2.5 billion in more program spending.

Speaker, we are in a debt crisis in the province of Ontario—we're simply out of cash—and not one new idea from this tired, out-of-gas government to rein in runaway spending. Well, we do: a public sector wage freeze—\$2.5 billion in savings—to say to our public servants, "You don't get a pay increase next year when we're coping with significant challenges today."

If you're out of ideas to rein in spending, will you accept? Do the right thing and save taxpayers money.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Last day.

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm just waiting with bated breath for one of the "spend" questions to come, so I look forward to receiving that.

Again, I say to my honourable colleague, we're moving ahead. We'd like to move ahead, Speaker, with the healthy homes renovation tax credit. It creates jobs, strengthens the economy and meets the needs of our seniors in their homes.

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We would like to move ahead with the southwestern Ontario development fund. I know there are a number of members in my honourable colleague's caucus who would be very, very supportive of some of the measures and the jobs and strengthening of the local economy that it would create.

But I'm convinced, Speaker, notwithstanding the tone of my honourable colleague's questions, that we are, in fact, on a lot of common ground, and we can find a way to move forward together.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier, Speaker: Premier, when it comes to reining in the size and cost of government, you're bereft of ideas. In fact, all you do is spend answers from the Premier of the province of Ontario—\$2.5 billion. You're digging the hole even deeper, on top of an expanded deficit of \$16 billion. And then a scathing auditor's report—420 pages detailing Liberal waste, mismanagement and economic incompetence. When's it going to come to a stop?

Premier, I ask you, please tell us that this is not going to be a lame-duck session when it comes to reining in government spending. Put your big idea on the table today. If you won't, take ours: a public sector wage freeze. Let's get the hard work under way.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, I want to remind my honourable colleague again of our two specific initiatives that are on the floor here today that I honestly believe ought to commend themselves to him in his determination to help us better manage our costs.

When it comes to our healthy homes renovation tax credit, we have found the money from within. When it comes to the southwestern Ontario economic development fund, we have found the money from within. They have proposed that we take the HST off of home heating costs; that's a \$350-million cost. We have no idea where they were going to find that money.

I think we should remove ourselves from the abstract to the concrete. We have some concrete initiatives, some practical, pragmatic proposals, and I would urge my honourable colleague to support those.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Speaker, I just don't think that the Premier gets it. Families are looking for change. They're looking for change to rein in runaway government spending and ideas to create good private sector jobs to get Ontario growing again. We brought forward both: a mandatory public sector wage freeze to save \$2 billion and modernizing our apprenticeship system to create 200,000 jobs in the skilled trades. And all we got from

this tired government was a do-nothing session that didn't save one penny for taxpayers and didn't create jobs for apprentices across this province.

Premier, are you that much out of gas? Will there be big news today? Surely you're not closing down the session and packing up for Christmas with a lame-duck session of the Legislature to address the debt crisis in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, we are always interested in the views held by the leader of the official opposition and his colleagues, and we work hard to reconcile competing views within that caucus.

For example, the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has approached the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities asking him to give him some information about building a new university campus in that riding. Speaker, that is a very—

Interjections.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: It's a very legitimate request. I commend the member opposite for his commitment to post-secondary education as the foundation for new jobs and growing our economy. But would I ask the two seatmates to share this information, because it's hard, from one question to the next, to figure out where they're coming from on these things.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: We actually held out hope at the beginning of the session where he talked about how the Drummond report was going to be the silver bullet, that Don Drummond's report would be the silver bullet to rein in the size and the cost of government. But now we see in the throne speech and since nothing more than weasel words. They're backing away, Mr. Speaker, saying that—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to ask the member to withdraw that one word.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Withdraw, Speaker.

Now we're seeing them back away. Now Drummond is going to discuss his findings and inform a debate and include other opinions. I think you're actually backing away from the Drummond report. You started out going in that direction, and now you're running the other way.

Not one new idea in the session—you're closing the doors down; a lame-duck session in the Legislature—to control the debt crisis in the province. We put our ideas out there. We will continue to fight, even if the session closes, for a mandatory wage freeze and modernizing the apprenticeship system. We're going to fight for families who send us to Queen's Park every day.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Order. Let's try to be balanced, please.

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, I want to acknowledge the viewpoint put forward by my honourable colleague. I cannot, of course, support his speculation about the due consideration we're going to be giving to the

Drummond report and any other advice that we're going to get.

But I want to lend some assurance to the backbench who find themselves connected to my honourable colleague that we will continue to give due consideration to their requests. I encourage them to keep those coming to our ministers on this side of the House. I want to let them know that, notwithstanding the fact that their leader wants to shut them down, we will do what is necessary to represent the public interest for all Ontarians in held ridings and in unheld ridings across the province.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, over the last three weeks, New Democrats have tried to work with the minority government and have tried to get results for people, but we're getting a sense that the Premier either isn't listening or just really doesn't get it.

Later today, I'm going to be moving a motion that puts the brakes on the Premier's corporate tax giveaways and focuses on better ways to create jobs in the province. The Premier says he wants to save some money. Will he back our plan?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We've had an opportunity to talk about this several times now, and I reminded my honourable colleague that, for example, in NDP Manitoba, they cut corporate taxes on seven separate and consecutive occasions. This is not a matter of ideology; it's a matter of doing what we need to do to strengthen our economy and ensure that we are competitive.

I remind my honourable colleague again that we cut taxes for families by some \$12 billion, and for our businesses, our job creators, by \$4.5 billion or \$5 billion, so we've tried to bring a thoughtful, balanced approach to this. At the same time, we've put in place benefits that help our families, whether those are different kinds of tax credits that benefit our seniors, the Ontario child benefit for needy families where there are children present, and our clean energy benefit as well. So we've tried to be very balanced and thoughtful in meeting the needs of our job creators and families alike.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, it's incumbent upon me to remind the Premier that, in fact, Manitoba stopped their corporate tax reductions in 2008 when the recession started hitting and went to a more targeted approach, exactly what we're suggesting.

In fact, it wasn't so long ago that this Premier himself insisted that corporate tax giveaways would not create jobs and would not bring investment. And if media reports are correct, there are members at his cabinet table who actually still believe that.

The Premier is telling Ontario families that there's no money left for their priorities. Why is he blowing hundreds of millions of dollars in corporate tax giveaways that even his own cabinet ministers disagree with?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: You know, Speaker, I came across something the other day which I thought was

rather interesting: Moody's Analytics has projected that Toronto's banks will have more employment in their financial services industry than London by 2017. We're at about the 300,000-job mark now in Ontario when it comes to our banks, and they're projecting that over the course of the next six years we will grow to some 375,000 jobs.

Speaker, we want to make sure, as we talk about businesses and corporate tax cuts in the abstract, that what we're really talking about is, what do we need to do to ensure that there are secure jobs for our families to support those moms and dads who can be hopeful about their future? That's fundamentally what informs our tax policy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, after eight long years, the people of this province don't have jobs to go to today, never mind in 2017, and that's the Premier's responsibility.

In the throne speech, there was a promise made, and it was made by this government. They said that they were going to be working together and being open to different ideas in this minority Parliament. Now, if the Premier is arguing that there is a budget crisis and that it's going to hit families hard, then he should be keeping an open mind about his billion-dollar corporate tax schemes. When a family is told to keep an open mind about the cuts that they're going to have to face, why has the Premier closed his?

1050

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, again, I say to the leader of the third party that I'm convinced that we have a lot of common ground and that we're going to continue to find ways forward together. For example, on our Accepting Schools legislation, I happen to believe there's a lot of common ground for all the members in this House.

Today my colleague will be introducing the family caregiver leave legislation. That would make Ontario the first province to provide a guaranteed eight weeks to care for an ailing relative. I think, Speaker, there is going to be a lot of common ground on that initiative as well.

So I will continue to keep an open mind on all the ideas put forward by my colleagues. I'm convinced there's a lot of common ground, and I know that at heart, we all want to grow this economy, we want to protect our schools, we want to protect our health care and we want to build a bright future for all Ontarians. I will continue to be informed by that.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier again. You know what? To make this minority government work, the Premier needs to keep an open mind. Earlier this session, a majority of members in this Legislature passed a bill that would take the HST off of home heating.

My question to the Premier is: Because it's the will of the majority of people in this Legislature, will he allow this bill to pass?

Applause.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: This would be a spend question, and I notice that the official opposition are supportive of this. That is a \$350-million initiative, for which my honourable colleagues have yet to identify the source of the savings.

We have a different plan: It's our healthy homes renovation tax credit, which actually creates jobs. It stimulates the economy. It helps our seniors in their homes and it takes pressure off the health care budget. It seems to me that is the better way for us to move forward, and I would urge my honourable colleagues to support that measure instead of theirs.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, the Premier is obviously not paying attention. We've talked about stopping the corporate tax cuts; in fact, we're bringing a motion this afternoon. That was part of my first question.

The Premier is talking about working together. He has a lot of words about that. But too often what people are seeing is the same old arrogant and out-of-touch government. Everyday people are feeling squeezed because it's tough economic times. Will the Premier and this Legislature finally decide to take the people and put them at the front of the priority list?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Well, Speaker, that's exactly what we're doing. I think, Speaker—I mean, what do Ontarians expect of us today? I think they expect us to find a way to move their agenda forward; I think they expect us to understand that we find ourselves in a trying economic period; I think they recognize that that challenge was not created within the province of Ontario. There is a global economic crisis that continues. They want us to find a way to protect their schools and their health care. They want us to find a way to invest in a stronger economy and in creating more jobs.

So, Speaker, we are doing more to protect our kids in their schools, we're doing more to create more jobs for Ontarians, and we're doing more to protect seniors and give them greater hope about staying in their homes longer. Those are exactly the kinds of things that Ontarians want us to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, Ontarians and Ontario families, they're all facing really tough times right now. I mean, saying that the economy is in bad shape doesn't really indicate that the Premier gets what it does to everyday families. We're one of two provinces that are seeing wages fall, and unemployment remains very high in Ontario. Meanwhile, the cost of everyday life continues to climb. We have the highest auto insurance rates in the entire country. We have the highest electricity rates in the entire country.

We really do need to start putting people first. I think this Legislature says it wants to do so. I don't know why

the Premier doesn't want to do so. When will the Premier accept that he doesn't have a monopoly on power and scrap his plans to leave everyday people falling behind while giving a break to those who need it the least?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, we have a difference of opinion in terms of how we need to get there, but I'm convinced we have the same overriding objective. My honourable colleague makes a passionate plea for us to do more to help families in their homes. Well, I want to refer to two initiatives that address that very specific need and objective that I believe we share.

First of all, we are going to find a way to ensure that we reduce tuition by 30% for students who are going to our colleges and universities, which I think hits the mark insofar as we're both concerned.

As well, we want to help seniors in their homes. We've heard time and time again that, if at all possible, they would like to live out as much of their lives as possible in the safety and security and comfort of their own homes. But they want to make some changes to their homes, so our healthy homes renovation tax credit will help us do just that.

AGENCY SPENDING

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: My question is to the Minister of Tourism and Culture. The Auditor General recently released a scathing report on the Trillium Foundation. In 2010-11, the foundation paid out \$111 million, which was supposed to go to support organizations that are essential to Ontario families and that enhance our quality of life. The auditor found that the provision of grants was not objective and often involved a conflict of interest where the person reviewing the grant application was linked to the organization that had applied for that same grant. Minister, this borders on another Collegiate type scandal. How can you have let this happen on your watch?

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you for the question. First and foremost, I would like to thank the Auditor General for the important work he does. The Ontario Trillium Foundation is one of Canada's leading grant-making organizations. Each year, the foundation makes decisions on about 1,500 grants, with the help of over 300 volunteers from urban and small communities. These grants help thousands of small, medium and large non-profit organizations across Ontario.

The foundation's work helps build healthy, vibrant communities through investments that improve our environment and promote sports, culture and recreation. We have an action plan in place and we will continue to monitor the foundation's progress.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Speaker, we now know that the minister has read the website, because that's the opening of the website. But what about the scandal? What about the application for these funds that are going missing?

Minister, the auditor found that many of the most worthy projects were not provided funding. The auditor

found that at every stage, the process for provision of grants was less than adequate and that oversight was weak to non-existent.

As Ontario families struggle, I found it shocking to learn that an organization with one staff member received \$120,000 to develop its own strategic plan. Other organizations failed to show they produced any work, or failed to spend the grant money they were given or to use the money for its intended purposes. With many worthy organizations struggling to survive, why have you allowed this slush-fund mentality to develop?

Hon. Michael Chan: It's not only that I read the website; I'm also aware of what the opposite member has said in the past. Speaker, the member opposite has, time and time again, said great things about the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the work that they do to support important projects within his community and riding. Just recently, the member opposite was quoted as saying this about the foundation: "Once again, the Trillium Foundation has identified and helped to fund a project in our community which will have a major impact on the lives of some people."

Speaker, the member opposite clearly understands the great work of the foundation, but for political gain he's willing to throw them under the bus.

Since 2007, Speaker—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

SMART METERS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Yesterday, the environmental commissioner said that the Ontario Power Authority was still developing a system for measuring the impact of smart meters, so, "I can't report how much energy the time-of-use system is saving." That's disturbing, considering Ontario families are spending over \$2 billion on smart meters.

Minister, did you seriously launch a multi-billion-dollar program without any way to judge whether or not it works?

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Hon. Christopher Bentley: I'm delighted we have millions of technology units like smart meters in Ontario homes. It was on time and on budget, and for over three million people they're working. Just what are they doing? They're helping homeowners identify when to use energy and when not to, helping to match energy use with the cost of that energy and helping the local distribution units identify when lines are out and when they're not out. As we build on that system, we'll be able to further use the technology to help residents and businesses identify when they can save money and help redirect and direct our conservation efforts for the best possible use, an enormously strong platform that we can use for even better effect in the future.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Even years later, this minister can't tell us whether or not these meters are reducing en-

ergy consumption. That's what the Environmental Commissioner has told us.

At the same time you were installing smart meters, you cut the very programs that would have helped people reduce their home energy use—home retrofit programs. How are cash-strapped Ontarians supposed to save electricity if you spend all their money on measuring their use instead of helping them actually spend money to reduce their use?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: It's actually the opposite: The time-of-use through the smart meters will actually help residents. We've already seen some evidence of that with Toronto Hydro. Already, it's going to help consumers and businesses save money on their bill. We can do an even better job in the future of giving them the information to assist them.

But one of the other things that the Environmental Commissioner said is that the conservation efforts already of homeowners and businesses have saved over \$1.7 billion from peaking capacity. That means we don't have to fund that type of generation. You know, the cheapest and the cleanest power that we have is the power we save. I join with the Environmental Commissioner. We can do even more on—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Mrs. Teresa Piruzza: My question is for the Minister of Energy. Ontario's clean energy economy is employing thousands of people across the province. Jobs are being created. In fact, Windsor has several clean energy manufacturing facilities.

Despite the opposition's constant calls to destroy Ontario's clean energy sector, companies like CS Wind are succeeding. Earlier this week, I had the privilege to visit CS Wind along with the Premier. We met the employees who are receiving world-class training—proud employees, many of whom were not working this time last year. But employment in the clean energy economy goes beyond manufacturing. Many people in other sectors are benefiting from the investments in clean energy. These are not part-time, minimum-wage jobs.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Minister of Energy.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: Thanks to the member for Windsor West for standing up for good jobs. You know what? We've got SunEdison in Newmarket, KB Racking in Guelph and Mississauga, Ontario Solar in Windsor, Schletter in Windsor and Northland Power in Newmarket. They're employing: construction jobs, engineering jobs, operations and maintenance jobs and other manufacturing jobs—spinoffs, such as architects, software, legal, trucking, steel facilities, manufacturing, accounting, financial.

It's time you stand up for jobs. They're all over the province, Speaker.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

I noticed a class up in the gallery and I'm going to ask that we continue to use our inside voices.

Supplementary?

Mrs. Teresa Piruzza: Thank you, Minister. I'm pleased with the many jobs that are being created in our community and throughout this province in this sector.

Minister, this week, the opposition has been very critical of the temporary jobs created in our emerging economy. Many of these temporary jobs are construction jobs that are building the manufacturing plants—real jobs, important jobs. In fact, CS Wind has created 400 indirect jobs. This includes good construction jobs for my constituents. We're proud of these workers and their contribution to Ontario's clean energy economy.

Mr. Speaker, would the minister set the record straight and share the number of direct and indirect jobs that will be created in Ontario's clean energy economy?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: You know, Speaker, she's absolutely right. We're already at 20,000 jobs, direct and indirect, and we're on our way to 50,000, and you can see them all around the province.

But let's be very clear: When they talk about indirect jobs, they are talking about construction jobs. And who is involved in construction, Speaker? The trades, including journeypersons and apprentices. I thought they'd be interested in that. I thought they'd be interested in the carpenters, the labourers, the millwrights, the electricians, the pipefitters, the steamfitters and the ironworkers.

You know, a construction job feeds a family. A construction job supports a community. A construction job contributes to the economy of the province of Ontario. I love construction jobs, Speaker. They are great for the economy, great for families and they are a very strong part of the future—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question?

HOSPITALS

Mrs. Jane McKenna: Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Premier, your government defeated a motion from former Burlington MPP Joyce Savoline in 2007. She asked for the expansion of Joseph Brant hospital to be made a capital priority and have funding released. Ten of those who voted the motion down sit across the aisle today. One, the honourable member from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale, said, “You don't just write a cheque for \$40 million without the plan being in place first. That, in fact, would be irresponsible.”

Four years later, the province's share of cost is rumoured to be \$200 million. In the name of being responsible, will the Premier table a detailed plan showing costs, timeline for completion and how his government plans to pay for all the hospital projects he promised?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Infrastructure.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I thank the member for the question. The members opposite would know that the province has built 18 new hospitals; it's announced a number of additional hospitals over the last number of months. This is after that government closed 28 hospitals across the province.

This government created Infrastructure Ontario, which has a very unique way of procuring, paying and financing for hospitals. When they're in a competitive process they don't tell the whole world what their expected budget is. They have a process that generated, in all of their processes, \$750 million in savings across this province in infrastructure projects.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Jane McKenna: We keep hearing about how all the relevant project details can be found online. But any details you find are fuzzy at best. The Premier's Building Together documents contain no mention of investment in Joe Brant—in fact, no hard timelines or costing for any hospital construction or expansion plans at all.

1110

The Auditor General's report, on the other hand, has plenty of juicy detail: gross mismanagement, glaring incompetence and wasteful spending. Will it take another brutal AG's report for the Premier to recognize a multi-billion-dollar train wreck concerning vital health care infrastructure?

Premier, when are you going to put your big-boy pants on and do what you said you were going to do?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The comment does not bring the best out in us. I would ask the member to withdraw that last part.

Mrs. Jane McKenna: Withdraw.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I think we can do without the editorials. I'm asking all members to kind of bring it down—all of it. Thank you.

Member?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like the member to do her big-girl job as an MPP—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Someone has asked me to set the tone, and I've been trying to do that. I need some help from all of the members. This is not the time for us to exit the way we are. I was asked to bring decorum. It's not my responsibility; it's yours, and the shots back and forth are not helpful.

Member, you will withdraw.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I withdraw.

I would ask the member to speak to the managers and the people who are concerned with this issue at Joseph Brant hospital. They are extremely happy with the process. They have expressed that to this government, as most, if not every, single hospital CEO, manager, board of trustees and, most importantly, the public who are going to benefit from these hospitals. We are doing an exceptional job meeting the challenges of this province in

terms of hospital care, especially in ridings such as yours—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Jonah Schein: This question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. As the minister knows, she's responsible for working with municipalities to address our local challenges. As the minister also well knows, the province has a crucial responsibility in funding municipal transit. Can she tell us when she last met with the city of Toronto's Mayor Rob Ford to discuss ways to work together to avoid TTC fare hikes and service cuts?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I actually spent a fair bit of time working with Mayor Ford when I was Minister of Transportation. We had many conversations about the needs of the city. In fact, there's \$8.2 billion being invested by this government in building the Eglinton Crosstown line. We're completing the air-rail link from Pearson to Union Station and we are expanding the Spadina subway into York region. So we've made more investment in transit in the city of Toronto than any government for a generation.

The reality is that the city of Toronto is going through a budget process of its own making at the moment. The city of Toronto created the situation in which it finds itself, and the city of Toronto is going to have to talk among itself and figure out how it's going to resolve its issues.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jonah Schein: To the member opposite: As a Toronto resident, the minister must know that TTC buses and streetcars are already overcrowded. Waits are far too long and fares are too high.

The NDP has proposed a very simple solution: We'd like to reinstate the provincial funding of half the operating costs for transit in return for a fare freeze. The mayor, the TTC chair and city council have all called on the province to return to the 50-50 operating cost split. Why won't the minister adopt our solution or at least do something to prevent TTC hikes and service cuts?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: You know, we have worked with the city of Toronto, and I don't want to give the member opposite the notion that we're not going to continue to work with the city of Toronto; of course we are. We will continue to work with the city of Toronto on any range of issues. We're going to continue to upload social service costs, as we're doing for municipalities across the province. It's another \$500 million that is going to be uploaded to the provincial purse.

Since 2003, ongoing assistance to the city of Toronto has increased by 600%. We have made investment after investment in the city of Toronto. More than half of the money in terms of the gas tax goes to the city of Toronto for transit operating and capital. So we are more than interested in making sure that the city of Toronto is self-sufficient and able to provide services to its citizens. But

at the same time, Mr. Speaker, the city of Toronto has to look at the revenue and the expense side of its balance sheet and make its own decisions.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation. Last week, the minister introduced legislation that would make the eastern Ontario development fund permanent. The legislation would also create the southwestern Ontario development fund. There is a great deal of support in my community for this program and lots of optimism, knowing that the eastern Ontario development fund would be permanent.

Well, the opposition can't seem to figure out what side of the issue they're on. I'm concerned about comments made by opposition members who are claiming that the two regional funds will be combined into one fund instead of separate and distinct funds.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm that the eastern Ontario development fund and the southwestern development fund will remain separate from each other? Minister, eastern Ontario wants to know the straight facts.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Yes, eastern Ontario needs to know the straight facts, and that's exactly what we're going to give them today. The answer is yes; these funds will be two separate funds—of course they will be two separate funds—and they'll be addressing unique needs in both eastern Ontario and southwestern Ontario.

The eastern Ontario development fund has been hugely successful. It has created or retained over 11,700 jobs and leveraged almost \$485 million of investment.

The disunity and inconsistency of the opposition, Mr. Speaker, has been less than helpful. It's important that we all work together to put jobs ahead of politics. We're consulting with our partners in southwestern Ontario and we're consulting with the people of eastern Ontario to ensure that we put these funds together and create as many jobs as we can and have as big an impact as we can.

The fact, Mr. Speaker, is we live in a minority Parliament—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Hon. Brad Duguid: —and we need the members opposite to support—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would ask that all members make sure that when I either say "Thank you" or stand up, we let the next question happen.

Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Leal: Thank you, Minister. With that detailed response, I won't need a late show.

As I said, I think this is an important program, and I look forward to the discussions on how we can improve the eastern Ontario development fund. The minister touched upon this briefly, but I'd like him to elaborate further on whether the eastern Ontario development fund has met the objectives that it was intended to meet.

I'd also like clarification from him on when he expects to have the eastern Ontario development fund and the southwestern Ontario development fund up and running and helping to create jobs in these important regions. This is an important initiative, and people are eager to know when they can expect the programs to be up and running.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I know the member is very eager to see this program up and running, as is every member on this side of the House, and I suspect members on the other side of the House from southwestern Ontario and eastern Ontario are also very eager to see this program running. That's why I'm looking to them to show leadership, to fight for jobs within their caucus, to fight for jobs in this place, to ensure we move this legislation forward as quickly as possible so that we can get these jobs in place.

1120

Our goal, Mr. Speaker, is to have these programs up and running by the spring, but we're going to need the members from eastern Ontario on the opposite side of this House, we're going to need the members from southwestern Ontario to work with us, to put jobs ahead of politics. That's what we're doing on this side of the House. We need the members on the other side of the House to stand up for jobs in Ontario.

HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: My question is for the Minister of Transportation concerning the 407 extension. Minister, as you know, construction is in phase 1 of the Highway 407 extension from Brock Road in Pickering to only Harmony Road in Oshawa.

Work appears to be moving along, but a recent consultant's report now says that it will cost Oshawa \$31 million to make the necessary local road upgrades to accommodate the phase terminus at Harmony Road. This represents a substantial tax increase to the residents of Oshawa.

Minister, what will your government do to ensure that the costs of necessary improvements are not downloaded to the taxpayers of Oshawa?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to talk about the extension of the 407 east. This is an unbelievable project; it's the major transportation project that we have in the province at the present time. There was a tremendous amount of consultation that took place with all the elected officials at every level of government when this was moving forward.

Certainly, the issue that he is raising, I will look into. I'm not familiar with the report that he has indicated; I would have appreciated it had he provided a copy to me before he asked the question. But, in any case, the level of investment and the future economic development and job creation from the 407 east is just off the scale. I wish the member would stand up and appreciate that, and then ask his question.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: Minister, a quote from the report: “Based on engineering work to date, the city cannot afford to fund the road improvements required to address the 407 east extension impacts without significant hardship and the ‘cannibalizing’ of other ... city programs.”

The only project that your ministry has agreed to fund is a temporary traffic light at the intersection of Harmony and Columbus Roads, valued at \$150,000. This is far from sufficient enough improvements to ensure that the supporting roads are safe for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.

Minister, when will your government commit to review the report and sit down with the city and the region to commit to find a method to minimize the tax impact on the people of Oshawa?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I want to remind the member, once again, that the impact on that whole area from the 407 east is going to be job creation—hundreds and thousands of job creations while the construction is going on. It’s going to generate economic development in that area.

I want to repeat again: I wish the member would appreciate the level of investment—\$5 billion, plus or minus, depending on when the price comes in. That’s unbelievable; it’s off the scale. We’re proud of that project, and we’re not going to back down from any of that political, negative talk.

WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. The performance-based contracts that the Ministry of Transportation created are a major departure from the way that northern Ontario highways used to be maintained. The lowered standards are not only leading to closures but they’re putting motorists at risk. Why is this government compromising the safety of northerners by deliberately lowering the standards in its contracts?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, to the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Whoa, it’s Bob’s day.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, I have to say, in the last session as Minister of Infrastructure, I think I received two questions; this week, I think I’ve received 22 questions.

I appreciate the opportunity to answer. I also take the opportunity to say to the members here and anybody who’s listening to this that we have one of the best transportation departments in North America, in terms of safety, in terms of maintenance, and it’s improving week after week after week.

The investment is there, the commitment is there, and if you have any particular details you feel you want to share with me, then I’m happy to look at them, happy to meet with you, happy to arrange meetings with people in my department with you or with your critic, in order to move forward on this issue.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Minister, northerners are very, very dependent on their roads and highways for their

everyday lives, whether it’s taking their kids to school or taking their elderly parents to the hospital or to the doctor.

You know what? I’ll give him a specific, Speaker: just the other day, three accidents in a span of a couple of days just outside Wawa. In two of these accidents, the roads were so icy that the paramedics, fire crews and OPP had problems walking to assist the people in the accidents, because they were worried about injuring themselves on the roads that were in such horrible shape.

Now, I’m going to ask this question one more time: Will you scrap your performance-based system and ensure that northerners can safely travel the highways and roads that are so essential to their everyday lives?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I appreciate the leader of the third party’s interest in road safety and road maintenance. We certainly take it very, very seriously. That’s why our winter maintenance standards are among the highest in North America. The member knows that the decision to close a provincial highway is the responsibility of the OPP.

With respect to the member to your right, he raised issues of highway closings. That’s a decision of the OPP. The OPP work very, very closely with our officials. We’re a team, and we do everything possible to ensure the safety of our roads, particularly in the north, where it’s more severe than in the rest of the province. We will look into the issue that the member raises.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Mr. Grant Crack: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Speaker, wind and solar power are two very important parts of clean energy in Ontario. However, there is another form of clean, renewable energy that seldom gets attention in the province, and that’s biomass. This form of clean energy is part of the feed-in tariff program and is contributing to the province’s efforts to eliminate dirty, coal-fired generation. Biomass projects across the province are helping farmers participate in the clean energy economy and earn additional income.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the minister: Can you please give this House an update on biomass projects in the province?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I really appreciate the question on this issue from the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. Biomass is part of the feed-in tariff, so we encourage applications for this form of energy that’s really used a lot in Europe. We’re combining getting out of coal, which we want to do, with the use of biomass.

There’s this community in northwestern Ontario that the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan is very, very fond of talking about all the time, and we are actually in the process of converting the coal-fired station to a biomass-fired station. It will give us the opportunity to continue to generate energy, generate power for the strength of the economy of the northwest, and sustain and assist the forestry industry, because we can use the biomass in a very good and productive way. It’s an exciting project. Thanks for the question.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Grant Crack: I'm happy to hear that biomass is contributing to Ontario's energy economy, a clean energy economy that has been threatened by the opposition.

Speaker, that's why I was surprised and amused to read in the Daily Observer the other day that the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and the member from Prince Edward–Hastings are supporting the call from local forestry and logging companies to increase the amount of biomass in the province. I'm happy to see that they're now supporting our clean energy economy, despite their leader's constant calls to end it.

Mr. Speaker, would the minister tell this House what is being done to help forestry and logging companies participate in Ontario's clean energy economy?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: To the Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: The member is quite right: The opposition does not support clean energy projects, particularly their leader, which is why it's so encouraging that the members from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and Prince Edward–Hastings are joining their growing number of colleagues who are supporting green energy, like the member for Newmarket–Aurora, who, I think, was on the board of a company with FIT projects.

In terms of biomass in particular, Ontario has always practised sustainable forest management, and harvesting for heating, electricity generation or liquid biofuels is no exception at all.

This new sector will help revitalize the forestry sector, and it will create new, highly skilled jobs in the province. Let me assure you as well, Speaker, that the use of biofibre will not compromise Ontario's commitment to sustainable forest management.

This is an exciting development we saw with our wood supply competition—good news ahead; good jobs for everyone in the province of Ontario.

1130

GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is to the Premier. Premier, the Electrical Safety Authority, another of your unelected, unaccountable and faceless government agencies, has a new regulation that you must now have a master's licence to operate an electrical business.

Three electrical contractors in my hometown of Perth—Jim Murphy, Les Cross and Gary Munro—have over 100 years of combined experience in the trade. But come January 1, 2012, your government has told them that they must surrender their business licence or face a \$50,000 fine each, and up to a year in prison. The reality is that these new regulations are forcing many contractors throughout the province out of business, and laying off their employees as well.

Premier, why won't you do the right thing and grandfather these new regulations so that you don't put hard-working men like Jim, Les and Gary out of work?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Consumer Services.

Hon. Margaret R. Best: Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise the member opposite that the transition period for electrical contractors ends on December 31, 2011.

In 2006, a regulation to license electrical contractors and master electricians was brought into effect to enhance worker safety and to increase public protection while ensuring that electrical work follows the Ontario electrical safety code, to improve consumer protection and to make the industry equitable and safe by allowing only registered electrical contractors to perform electrical work. Electrical contractors who could not immediately meet the requirements were issued provisional licences. They had time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Premier, it's not just complying with the new regulations and getting their master's licence, because here's the irony: There's also Bill Fisher Electric. He has his master's licence and has a perfect safety record with the ESA. Years ago, when Bill finished his apprenticeship and went to Kingston to write his test, he was given the wrong licence by the ministry staff. He was given a 309C, which is a rare domestic licence, instead of the 309A for construction maintenance, which he apprenticed as. Despite the fact that he passed the test and has six licences, including his master's licence, now the MTCU is putting him out of work as well, unless he fixes that mistake.

Premier, you have created such a maze of unworkable regulations that your cabinet doesn't even know which way to turn. Why are you trying to put every electrical contractor out of business in this—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: I cannot speak to that specific case, but I certainly can undertake to speak with the member about that specific case. But I will continue with what I was saying prior.

They have had five years. This actually gave the electrical contractors the time for them to meet the new standards. This included having a staff person who holds a master electrical licence.

The Electrical Safety Authority is making the effort to assist each and every one of them with obtaining a master electrician licence before the deadline by maintaining regular contact with electrical contractors to clarify the process and also to increase accessibility to the pre-master electrician course by introducing an online course in June 2011, by continuing to provide an adequate number—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Ms. Sarah Campbell: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Ear Falls is a small northern community of 1,100 residents, almost all of whom are dependent on the town's only doctor, who will be leaving on December 31. If a new doctor is not in

place soon, residents will be forced to drive either 140 or 280 kilometres to access urgent and primary medical care.

Ear Falls is doing everything they can to find a doctor or secure a locum, and other doctors nearby are trying to help, but the ministry will not return the town's calls or emails.

Minister, what is this government doing to ensure that the people of Ear Falls don't lose their only doctor, and why will the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care not return the clinic's calls or emails?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I thank the member opposite for raising this issue. Speaker, this government has put a very high priority on increasing the number of doctors working in this province. In fact, by 2013, we will have doubled the number of new doctors entering practice each and every year.

In addition, we've made a very high priority of increasing physician coverage in the north. In fact, we established a whole new school of medicine in the north, the Northern Ontario School of Medicine. What we're finding, Speaker, is that what we had hoped would happen is happening: Doctors are coming to the school from the north and they are staying and practising in the north.

So we're working hard, Speaker. There are still communities where there is a physician shortage, and I will, in the supplementary, happily talk about the northern and rural recruitment and retention fund.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Mr. Speaker, I've only been in this Legislature for three weeks and this is the second time I've had to ask this government to ensure that my constituents have access to local medical care.

On Monday, I asked the minister about the Rainy River ER, which is on course to close in the new year because of the ever-present doctor shortage.

It's clear that residents of northern Ontario are not getting the help they need. It's clear that government policies are a barrier to medical care in northern Ontario and that this government is unwilling to work with the communities to find solutions.

When is this government going to get serious about the health care challenges facing northern Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I do want to say to the member opposite that I am more than happy to spend some time with her so that she understands that we can actually answer these questions informally between your office and mine, and we are more than happy to work with members on specific cases.

Speaker, on the issue in Rainy River that was raised earlier, I was very happy to tell the Legislature and update the member that we were able to find coverage through Christmas and are working on two more days in January that we still have not found coverage on, but we will work hard and continue to work hard.

Speaker, we have a very proud record in this House. Since we have been elected, we have never had an unplanned closure of an emergency department, in stark contrast to what was going on prior to our election.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): When I was in another field, in education, I used to ask my students and then my school, when I was a principal, what did you want? Do you want a number four, a number 10 or a number 15 when it comes to how high do you need me to get? What I've told them is, "You choose the number." Today, I gave you a number four. So if you want me to get even worse, I can.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): But I do want to end on a happier note, and that happier note is that I would hope that all of us would wish our pages happy journeys and merry Christmas. It is their last day.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I was also usually the first one to ask that they make them stay. I'm not going to do that because I think they have to go home for Christmas.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I also want to take a short moment to say to each and every one of you: Be safe, have a very merry Christmas, a happy holiday season, a prosperous new year. Take care of each other. I wish all of your families the best. I also want to say to the table and to all the staff here at Queen's Park, merry Christmas.

This House stands adjourned until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1139 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WESTPORT LIONS CLUB

ATHENS LIONS CLUB

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm proud to rise today to speak about two outstanding Lions clubs in my riding of Leeds-Grenville. It was my great honour recently to attend special celebrations for the 65th anniversary of the Westport Lions Club, and the following evening, the 50th anniversary of the Athens Lions Club. I have to say it was a privilege to be invited to take part in these events. It was a great opportunity to pay tribute to the current membership of these two outstanding organizations for carrying on the great tradition of supporting the community.

For the Lions in Westport, that service to the community began in the spring of 1946, and for the Athens club, their charter was issued in 1961. Both clubs were founded out of a desire by a small but dedicated group of citizens to work together on the common cause of making their communities a better place for everyone to live. Those charter members saw a need in their com-

munity, and with the attitude that's so much a characteristic of rural eastern Ontario, they stepped up and took on the challenge of doing something.

It's remarkable to see the hundreds of thousands of dollars raised for community projects and the lives changed and enriched by the work of the Westport and Athens Lions over a combined 115 years. Having spent some time with the current membership, I can tell you that the spirit that launched those clubs decades ago is alive and well today.

As the MPP for Leeds–Grenville, I congratulate the Athens and Westport Lions Clubs not only for your rich histories but for your very bright futures.

BELLEVUE HOUSE

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I rise today to commend the efforts and the successful initiatives of the dedicated members of the Amherstburg Heritage Committee.

The historic Bellevue House, which dates back to 1816, was named as one of this country's top 10 endangered places by the Heritage Canada Foundation. It remains so to this day; however, the Friends of Bellevue, a small but passionate group of local residents, are determined to help restore Bellevue House to its former glory.

On Thursday, December 1, a new plaque was installed by Parks Canada and the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada on the Bellevue property in Amherstburg. The plaque was a replacement for one stolen from the site over two years ago. Public access has been improved by placement of the new plaque in the public right-of-way in front of the property near a public bench, rather than at the previous site, at the top of the private driveway.

The plaque emphasizes the age of the building, the first significant estate built immediately following the war of 1812; its rare architectural features, unique to this region at the time of construction; and the fact that so many of those features have survived to our day.

With the bicentennial upon us, I urge the government to join with the Friends of Bellevue and work towards restoring this jewel in the crown of the province's historically significant buildings. It is a reminder of our debt to those who resettled here following that devastating war and our obligation to preserve and revive this outstanding property.

DAVE EVANS

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I am pleased to rise in the House today and speak about the very prestigious award one of my constituents has received for public service. On November 28, firefighter Dave Evans received the Ontario Medal for Firefighter Bravery. Mr. Evans received this medal for his selfless efforts on behalf of others.

On February 15, 2011, while off duty in a restaurant, he heard a fire alarm go off upstairs. Running to assist without protective gear or a breathing apparatus, he kicked down the door, overcame the intense heat and

thick black smoke and saved a 60-year-old woman trapped inside.

In the first moments of any crisis, many of us will reach out to emergency services. One of the many reasons that Ontario is such a great place to live is that we know that when we need this assistance, it will not only be there but it will be the best assistance we could hope for.

Mr. Evans is a tremendous example of this, and I am very proud to be able to say that he is one of my constituents in York South–Weston. On behalf of the province, I would like to personally thank him for the courage and bravery shown in the face of great danger. I know that all of those whose lives he has touched have benefited greatly from his heroic efforts.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Rob Leone: Today I rise in this House to bring to light a serious issue in my riding. Over 1,000 families living in the Waterloo region, many of whom have signed petitions that I have tabled and will continue to table in this House, are concerned about the status of child care in their neighbourhoods. Waterloo region school boards are currently the only school boards in the province defying the wishes of parents and the official recommendation of the government by failing to implement a hybrid child-care model. They are forcing monopolized, expensive school-board-operated child care on parents in the region, implementing the changes with little to no consultation.

Part of this government's full-day kindergarten plan has always been before- and after-school child care, the extended-day option. Indeed, the official government position has been to continue to allow local third party daycare operators to provide within the program. This government claims that they believe the partnership between those good-quality providers and the school board should continue to be nurtured, and expressed this belief explicitly in a letter to the chair of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board from the Premier and the other Ottawa-area Liberal MPPs.

I think the people in Waterloo region are wondering why there's such a discrepancy between the way the Premier is approaching this issue and the way the House leader spoke to the media.

Unfortunately, parents in my riding and the greater Waterloo region are gradually losing faith that the government will stand up to the school board and stand by their promises. I rise here today to draw attention to their concerns and hope that the Premier will stand up for families in Cambridge, North Dumfries and Waterloo region, as he did for families in his own riding.

ACCESS TO PUBLIC LANDS

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Northerners are becoming increasingly frustrated because the MNR has been restricting access to lakes that people have been travelling to for generations. Between 1996 and 2008, public access has

been lost to 11,746 kilometres of forest access roads due to abandonment or restrictions. Many signs which restrict access have sprung up across northern Ontario.

In the north, access to our lakes and undisturbed areas is a way of life, whether it's for fishing or snowmobiling or simply picking berries in summer. We no longer have access to particular parts of northern crown lands. These restrictions will also have an impact on businesses such as snowmobile equipment retailers or fuel retailers. But the bigger issue here is that these northerners are now being told by the MNR, "Don't enter here, because this is off-limits to you." We all know that other, more privileged tourists still maintain access to these lands that belong to all of us.

The Public Lands Act, section 3, outlines that 25% or more of crown land that borders a lake must be reserved for public use. We fully recognize that environmental protection is important, but the government is not making the case for itself by allowing access to some but not others. It's high time we ended this two-class system of public access to Ontario's crown lands and lakes.

AJAX STRIKERS

Mr. Joe Dickson: I rise in the House today to congratulate the Ajax FC Strikers, who are part of the Ajax Soccer Club, who won the U18 national championship in Fredericton, New Brunswick, over Thanksgiving weekend this past October. Their hard work and determination came through as they won 3-2 over St. Hubert, Quebec, in the final gold medal game.

Team members include—these will take a moment to pronounce, Mr. Speaker—Niko Giantsopoulos, Benjamin Cowman, Alex Lodu, Ryan Boylan, Nicholas Axhorn, Kyle Crichton, Shawn-Claud Lawson, Keishon Alcindor, LeShaun Young, Peter Boylan, Jordan Dover, Nicholas Palmer, Joseph Raccasalva, Mark Eydelman, Bruce Cullen and William Lay.

The coaching staff includes Dario Gasparotto, Michael Stanley and Dwight Crichton.

As someone who has sponsored over 20 youth, women's, men's and children's teams for over 40 years, I was honoured to be a guest of Ajax council on the evening of November 28 to bring provincial greetings and honours to each and every player and the coaching staff.

The Ontario Youth Soccer League organized yet another great tournament, and I commend the Ajax Football Club on their magnificent sportsmanship and victory.

1310

FIRST SPECIAL SERVICE FORCE

Mr. Norm Miller: Speaker, the people of our nation must never forget those who fought for our freedom and safety. One of those very special units was the First Special Service Force, which was comprised of an elite group of men from all across Canada and the United States who courageously fought with distinction in World War II.

In fact, five men from Huntsville, Ontario, were members of this exceptional service group, and today I would like to pay tribute to these men. Let us not forget Syd Boyd, Harry Wilks, Charlie Rowe, Myrle Woolman and S.A. Burbidge. Their names are proudly inscribed on a plaque located at the Huntsville Legion.

The First Special Service Force was comprised of 1,800 men, half Canadian and half American, who were specially trained in rugged, difficult conditions. In December 1943, the force was deployed to Italy. After several battles with the enemy, soldiers of the First Special Service Force were the first Allied troops to liberate Rome on June 4, 1944, and assist in the liberation of France. It was due to the heroic efforts of the First Special Service Force that the Franco-Italian border was secured. The FSSF experienced fierce combat for 251 days and had been reduced to fewer than 500 men.

I've become aware, Mr. Speaker, that the Congress of the United States is considering a bill to grant the Congressional Gold Medal collectively to the FSSF in recognition of its superior service during World War II. This award is considered the highest civilian award in the United States.

It is so important that we honour these men for their countless acts of valour. It is up to us to memorialize these brave men for all their extraordinary sacrifices in the service of their country.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr. David Zimmer: With the holiday season here, we want everyone to be safe in Ontario. Every day, Ontarians use our roads to take them safely where they need to go. I'm proud to say that our government has made road safety a priority, and today Ontario roads are among the safest in all of North America.

Here are just a few of the initiatives we've introduced with respect to safe driving. We've enacted tough penalties for drinking and driving, including prohibiting drivers under 21 from having any alcohol in their system while operating a vehicle.

As well, we've introduced a warning range of sanctions so that drivers with blood alcohol as low as 0.05 receive penalties, to further combat impaired driving.

We've also banned the use of hand-held electronic devices. Speed limiters have been made mandatory on most large trucks in Ontario.

These are some of the important steps we are taking to ensure that our roads are the safest in the country—the safest in the world. Safe driving is important, and today, Ontarians can use our roads and know they can get there safely.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season and particularly a safe driving season.

HIGHWAY BILLBOARDS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, with the recent completion of the four-lane Highway 11 bypass that sur-

rounds the villages of South River and Sundridge, the local businesses there have a requirement for highway billboards. The Ministry of Transportation's guidelines for signage along four-lane highways such as this one preclude any such billboards.

Now that traffic no longer moves directly through these communities, this billboard advertising is critical to local businesses, many of which are in the service sector and are reliant on visitor traffic and tourism dollars. They could benefit greatly from increased visibility and traffic from the new four-lane highway. In fact, for many, it could mean the difference between survival and closing the doors. Unfortunately, they cannot advertise.

I urge the Minister of Transportation to move swiftly to help these northern communities and businesses to capitalize on the advantages that beautiful four-lane highway can bring.

I also urge the minister to allow billboard signage along Highway 11 between North Bay and Huntsville, similar to the billboards currently existing on the four-lane highway between Toronto and London.

VISITORS

Mr. Michael Mantha: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: This morning I introduced a group of kids who were coming in from Espanola High School but who weren't here. They're here in the gallery with us right now, and they're from Algoma-Manitoulin.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank the member. It is actually not a point of order. We do welcome our visitors for being here—and we have the introductions set up so that we can avoid that in the future. But having said that, we're glad you're here. Thank you so much.

Mr. John Yakubuski: It's tough to get your attention without a point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is. It is very tough. Or sometimes it's easy.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

FAMILY CAREGIVER LEAVE ACT (EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS AMENDMENT), 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR LE CONGÉ FAMILIAL POUR LES AIDANTS NATURELS (MODIFICATION DES NORMES D'EMPLOI)

Mrs. Jeffrey moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 30, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in respect of family caregiver leave / Projet de loi 30, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi en ce qui concerne le congé familial pour les aidants naturels.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

Oh, I must have misheard. Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: In ministerial statements.

RED TAPE AND REGULATORY REVIEW ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR LA RÉVISION DES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES ET DES DISPOSITIONS RÉGLEMENTAIRES

Mr. Hillier moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 31, An Act to establish political oversight over legislation and regulations to reduce red tape and unjustified regulatory burdens / Projet de loi 31, Loi établissant un régime de surveillance politique des lois et règlements afin de réduire les formalités administratives et les fardeaux réglementaires injustifiés.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thank you, Speaker. From the explanatory note of the bill:

"This bill establishes a standing committee of the Legislative Assembly to be known as the Standing Committee on Red Tape and Regulatory Review.

"Every public bill must be referred to the committee for a review or include a provision stating that it applies despite the requirement for a review. The review deals with whether the bill imposes a regulatory burden on persons or bodies, other than the public sector, whether the bill infringes on the freedom of those persons or bodies to own and use property, whether the regulatory burden constitutes an unjustified burden and red tape, and whether the person or body that administers the bill is best suited to do so. The committee may amend a bill before reporting it back to the assembly.

"No person or body, including the Lieutenant Governor or in Council, is allowed to make a regulation under an act without giving the committee at least 60 days notice to review the regulation and to propose amendments to it, except if the person or body gives notice to the committee that the urgency of the situation requires the making of an emergency regulation. An emergency regulation can remain in force for no longer than 90 days.

"The committee can also review acts after they have been enacted and regulations after they have been made and make a report back to the assembly."

Thank you.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

FAMILY CAREGIVER LEAVE

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: It's a pleasure to rise for the introduction of the Family Caregiver Leave Act.

But first, I'd like to acknowledge some guests from the caregiver community who are with us today: Jacquie Micallef and Cammy Kong of the Alzheimer Society of Ontario; Florentina Stancu-Soare of the Canadian Cancer Society, Ontario division; and Mike Kronic of Bayshore Home Health. Welcome.

1320

Speaker, this proposed leave would amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000, and would fill a need, giving working Ontarians time to spend with family members who are seriously sick or injured. This legislation is simply about compassion and the need we all have as family members to care for our loved ones.

Our bill fulfills a commitment we made prior to the election to provide a new kind of leave for family caregivers. It would allow working Ontarians the one thing they need most when it comes to caring for a sick or injured family member: time—time to be with our loved ones at a time when they need it most.

Speaker, all Ontarians share a variety of personal connections. We're either a son or a daughter. Many of us are mothers and fathers, and we have husbands, wives, uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters. In short, we're part of a family. Unfortunately, families now and again encounter difficult times, like when a family member is seriously ill or injured. Maybe it's a child sent to hospital with a serious condition; perhaps a spouse who has been in a bad car accident; or an elderly parent has fallen and broken a hip. This bill would be for those family members at these critical times, family members who want and need us to be there to provide the care our loved ones require.

It's during these times of great duress that our focus is rightfully on our families. The last thing on our minds is the deadline that day, the email we've just received or the project at work. That's where this proposed bill would take some of the pressure off family members.

Those of you giving care don't need to worry that taking time off work will result in your losing your job. This bill will protect you as you support your loved ones. It says we care and it says we're going to help you to safeguard your means of making a living while you're caring for family members during tough times.

Our proposed legislation would provide up to eight weeks of unpaid job-protected leave to employees to care for seriously ill or injured family members. We will again ask our federal counterparts to take the steps necessary to extend employment insurance benefits to those taking family caregiver leave. This partnership with the federal government would capture the same spirit of compassion and commitment that exists now with our family medical leave.

The current family medical leave legislation provides job-protected leave for employees when a family member is facing a terminal illness. Today's proposed family caregiver leave is separate from the family medical leave. It applies to cases of illness or injury that are serious, but where there isn't imminent risk of death. However, if you're caring for a loved one under the family caregiver leave and their condition becomes terminal, you would also be entitled to the family medical leave.

Speaker, we know that Canada's population is aging and that more of our elderly parents and family members will be requiring care more than ever before. The family caregiver leave would alleviate pressures on Ontarians who act as caregivers for their aging parents and loved ones. It also means more people will have the option of being cared for at home, where they are most comfortable and where society's costs are lower.

Our proposed leave, Speaker, would be in the interests of all workplace parties. Employers and business owners have families of their own, and they understand how distressing and distracting it is when family members are ill or injured. Employers also know that a shared compassion during these difficult times is what builds employee loyalty and creates good relationships in the workplace.

This legislation is about families. It will help the new immigrant family and it will benefit single parents. It will certainly assist women who, as we all know, frequently take on a disproportionate share of the responsibility of caring for family members.

This legislation also says, quite simply, that we need to take care of our families, and family caregivers deserve to be cared for too. Thank you, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. The member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thank you, Speaker. First, I want to say to the minister, thanks for providing the briefings to myself and my staff earlier this week on this bill, and I do look forward to working with the minister on this bill.

However, during those technical briefings with the minister's staff I did have a number of concerns that were raised in those briefings.

The first of my concerns is just the very limited consultations that the ministry has done on this bill. The ministry has not consulted with any of the small or medium-sized business associations or groups—and even on the caregiver side, it appears, very limited consultation on that side as well—and we do know that this legislation may have a significant impact on small and medium-sized businesses who have to replace workers during that time of providing care.

In addition, we see that the ministry has not been able to provide any evidence or any documentation that the system isn't working as it is right today. There's no evidence that anybody has been dismissed or been deprived of unpaid leave. So I want to find out a little bit about where this need is being driven from, because the Ministry of Labour doesn't have any evidence to the effect.

Also, it is clearly the minister's intention that this bill would move from an unpaid leave into a paid leave by having Canada Employment Insurance pay for that unpaid leave. Once again, Speaker, right at the present time, the way the bill is drafted, it doesn't provide for much in the line of safeguards whatsoever, and those safeguards will become more important with time if, indeed, Employment Insurance is included in the bill.

I believe that there must be some legislated parameters to ensure that doctors are giving clear criteria on what constitutes a serious medical illness or injury and that we don't turn a system that is working to some degree into a system that becomes more dysfunctional and, without those proper safeguards in place, moving it into employment insurance.

Myself and the PC caucus look forward to working with the minister, discussing and debating this bill to make sure that there are not any unintended consequences that have not been addressed and that proper safeguards are indeed put in place.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Responses? The member from Essex.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to speak to the content of this bill, and I do thank the minister and her staff for briefing me yesterday on some of the aspects of it. I believe it is based on the spirit of compassion, in tandem with the leave given to those who are deathly ill and to family members who want to provide that support. In that respect, I think our party is certainly supportive of the thrust of the bill.

I'm sure that many in this House have had friends or family members who have been ill or injured. I, myself, in 2005 had my brother Eddie, who was injured in a mountain biking accident and became a quadriplegic—C-7, T-1. It was a catastrophic injury—

Interjections.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Why don't you listen? You might learn something here.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Yes. I'm giving some good information here.

It was a catastrophic injury, Mr. Speaker, and it required our family to make sacrifices. My parents, who had just newly been retired, immediately picked up and went to Vancouver, where my brother Eddie sought immediate treatment at Vancouver General Hospital and then subsequent rehabilitation at GF Strong, where they provided wonderful care. To this day, he's doing well; he's productive. He also receives an incredible amount of support from British Columbia health care services in the sense that they have a wonderful home care program and home support. Long-term care is also quite extensive there too as well. So I think those are components of this that maybe we're missing the mark on.

We need to have a place for people to go. That eight-week buffer certainly will allow family members to find a spot for our elderly residents, elderly family members or even any family members who become sick; to find an area for long-term treatment and long-term care. But

those spaces aren't available, unfortunately. So I would ask the government to put priority on those bigger-ticket issues, those big items that we know are increasingly a problem in this province.

1330

The bill also speaks, obviously, to the Employment Standards Act and the protection of family members who are seeking care under this provision. You have problems already with the Employment Standards Act in terms of the enforcement of it. Just this week, or past week, in Windsor, the Workers' Action Centre sounded the alarm on wage theft. In this province, employers are not paying their employees what they're due. They're not even paying them their appropriate wage, and are sometimes garnishing their wages without any reasoning. That's illegal. But yet we don't have the ability or capability or even the wherewithal in this province to enforce those. So I would caution the minister to add on those provisions to enable us to actually safeguard those workers who take this up, should it become a measure of law.

I'm also a little bit hesitant in the fact that it doesn't add any financial assistance to those looking for an eight-week leave, who may have to have that burden placed solely on them. And relying on our federal partners to come to the table—I wouldn't put too much weight on their assistance at this point. I don't believe they are as compassionate as some of us may be in this House.

But all said, I think the thrust is good, the intention, as well. I appreciate the compassion aspect of it. One of the other cautions: I would say that it is incumbent upon a physician to determine whether a family member can participate in this program. I would ask that that provision not be a financial burden to anyone who is seeking this. In a lot of cases, to get a note from a doctor typically will cost \$40 or \$50—who knows? That shouldn't cost anyone anything. We should ensure that no one feels any financial burden when they're looking to be with their family members who have been injured or who have recently fallen ill.

But all in all, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with the minister on this. I think it's a very small step but a progressive step, and I think it's something that can ultimately do some good.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their comments.

PETITIONS

SKILLED TRADES

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to present a petition on behalf of my constituent, Robert Eugene Jackson, who is an electrician who has a small business in Orono. He's been in business for 20 years and he's just been served with a notice that he hasn't got his master's licence. So I have this petition here, which reads as follows:

“Whereas a new policy from the Electrical Safety Authority that mandates that all electrical contractors must have at least one licensed master electrician on their staff for every business effective December 31, 2011, is forcing” small contracting businesses “in Ontario out of business;” this is very important and troubling.

“Whereas this ESA policy severely impacts small electrical contracting businesses in Ontario. George, in my riding”—and this is from Jim McDonell’s riding, Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry—“who has been in the electrical trade for the past 51 years and a small business owner for the past 36 years, who has good standing with the Electrical Safety Authority, Ontario Hydro and local utilities, who follows the same rules and regulations as the ESA,” follows the same electrical codes, “adheres to the same inspections and pays the same fees as large companies, will not be allowed to renew his electrical contractor licence. Effective December 31, 2011, George will no longer be licensed to practise in Ontario. George will be forced to close his small business,” along with others.

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Consumer Services to direct the Electrical Safety Authority of Ontario to modify the licensing requirements to allow small electrical contractors and self-employed electricians to work in the residential and rural market without the unnecessary burden of obtaining a master electrician licence or, at the very minimum, grandfather those who are currently qualified” and trained “and entitled to” do this “work in Ontario.”

I’m pleased to sign this on behalf of my constituents and the many small business operators in Ontario. This is a tragedy, at this time of year, shutting people out of work.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas 700 affordable TCHC homes are in danger of being sold off to the private sector;

“Whereas the sell-off will reduce the diversity of neighbourhoods and lead to an increasingly divided Toronto;

“Whereas the sell-off will further reduce the inadequate supply of affordable housing for the 80,000 households already waiting for affordable housing;

“Whereas the sell-off will require the displacement of thousands of men, women and children from their homes, schools and communities;

“Whereas there are a range of other options to deal with the repair shortfall that exists, including drawing on Infrastructure Ontario loan funds, seeking support from higher levels of government, investing in retrofits to reduce utility costs, and partnering with non-profit and co-op housing providers;

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

“We urge the Minister of Housing not to approve the sale of the TCHC units, but instead to work with the city of Toronto and TCHC to explore more just, sustainable and economically viable ways to address the repair backlog in TCHC’s scattered housing stock.”

I couldn’t agree more, and I’m going to give this to Mobarat to be delivered to the table. I’m signing it, of course.

EASTERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Phil McNeely: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the community of Orléans will be hit hard with the movement of 10,000” federal” jobs from downtown Ottawa to Kanata;

“Whereas the move of employment away from the east end will force many residents to move to the Kanata area and property values that have already fallen about 5% will fall further;

“Whereas the eastern Ontario development fund is designed to help businesses create new jobs and invest in new technologies, equipment and skills training;

“Whereas another goal of the eastern Ontario development fund is to support economic development projects that will attract or retain investment in Ontario-based industries and communities; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario has pledged to continue the EODF past its original four-year mandate;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request that the Legislature ensure that the eastern Ontario development fund extends to the geographic area including Orléans to assist job growth in the face of a federal decision to dramatically affect the sustainability of areas east of the downtown core of Ottawa, including Orléans.”

I agree with this petition and affix my signature, Mr. Speaker.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Jim Wilson: Mr. Speaker, a petition to restore medical laboratory services in Elmvale:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the consolidation of medical laboratories in rural areas is causing people to travel further and wait longer for services; and

“Whereas it is the responsibility of the Ontario government to ensure that Ontarians have equal access to all health care services; and

“Whereas rural Ontario continues to get shortchanged when it comes to health care: doctor shortages, smaller hospitals, less pharmaceutical services, lack of transportation and now medical laboratory services; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government continues to increase taxes to make up for misspent tax dollars, collecting \$15 billion over the last six years from the Liberal health tax, ultimately forcing Ontarians to pay more while receiving less;

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

"That the McGuinty government stop the erosion of public health care services and ensure equal access to medical laboratories for all Ontarians, including the people of Elmvale."

I agree with this petition.

DOG OWNERSHIP

Mrs. Julia Munro: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

"Whereas breed-specific legislation has been shown to be an expensive and ineffective approach to dog bite prevention; and

"Whereas 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 any related acts, and instead implement legislation that encourages responsible ownership of all dog breeds and types."

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

1340

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: Merci beaucoup, monsieur le Président. C'est bien apprécié.

I have this petition from the people of the northeast, actually; it's from all over northeastern Ontario. It reads as follows:

"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 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....";

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

I fully support this petition, Mr. Speaker, will affix my name to it and ask page Christian to bring it to the Clerk.

WIND TURBINES

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas residents of Port Elgin do not want the CAW to erect a turbine in their community; and

"Whereas the turbine will not adhere to the setback of 550 metres as determined in regulations through the Green Energy Act; and

"Whereas the community was misled that the turbine would be a generator of electricity for the Family Education Centre solely, not a profitable business enterprise; and

"Whereas there has been no third party health and environmental studies done on industrial wind turbines;

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

"That the Liberal government revoke the CAW's permit to construct this wind turbine."

I support this petition and I ask page Prakriti to deliver it to the Clerk's table for me.

TAXATION

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that comes from all over Ontario. It reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately exempt electricity from the harmonized sales tax."

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

SKILLED TRADES

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have this petition I'd like to read from the residents of my riding.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas a new policy from the Electrical Safety Authority that mandates that all electrical contractors must have at least one licensed ... electrician on staff for every business effective December 31, 2011, is forcing" electrical contractors and "small businesses in Ontario out of business;

"Whereas this ESA policy severely impacts small electrical contracting businesses in Ontario. George, in my riding of Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry, who has been in the electrical trade for the past 51 years and a small business owner for the past 36 years, who has good standing with the Electrical Safety Authority, Ontario Hydro and local utilities, who follows the same rules and regulations of the ESA," follows the electrical codes of Ontario, "adheres to the same inspections and pays the same fees as large companies, will not be allowed to renew his electrical contractor licence. Effective December 31, 2011, George will no longer be licensed to practise in Ontario. George will be forced to close his small business.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Consumer Services to direct the Electrical Safety Authority of Ontario to modify the licensing requirements to allow small electrical contractors and self-employed electricians to work in the residential and rural market without

the unnecessary burden of obtaining a master electrician licence or, at the very minimum, grandfather those who are currently qualified and entitled to work in Ontario.”

DOG OWNERSHIP

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

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

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

“Whereas 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 any related acts, and instead implement legislation that encourages responsible ownership of all dog breeds and types.”

As I am in favour of this, I have affixed my signature to give it to—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further petitions? The member for Simcoe–Grey.

PENSION PLANS

Mr. Jim Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A petition for Simcoe county paramedics:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas several paramedics in Simcoe county had their pensions affected when paramedic services were transferred to the county of Simcoe, as their pensions were not transferred with them from HOOPP,” the Hospitals of Ontario Pension Plan, “and OPTrust” pension plan “to OMERS,” the municipal pension plan, “meaning they will receive significantly reduced pensions because their transfer did not recognize their years of continuous service; and

“Whereas, when these paramedics started with their new employer, the county of Simcoe, their past pensionable years were not recognized because of existing pension legislation; and

“Whereas the government’s own Expert Commission on Pensions” in 2008 “recommended that government move swiftly to address this issue; and

“Whereas the government should recognize this issue as a technicality and not penalize hard-working paramedics;

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

“That the Minister of Finance support Simcoe–Grey MPP Jim Wilson’s resolution that calls upon the government to address this issue immediately, and ensure that any legislation or regulation allows paramedics in Simcoe county and across Ontario who were affected by the divestment of paramedic services in the 1990s and

beyond, to transfer their pensions to OMERS” from the Hospitals of Ontario Pension Plan—I think it’s now called the Healthcare of Ontario Pension Plan—and the OPSEU Trust pension plan.

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

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Ted Arnott: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

“Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have been bought out of their homes;

“Whereas Ontario’s Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

“Whereas 80 municipal councils, representing two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

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

“Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning.”

I support this petition and have affixed my signature to it, as well.

TUITION

Mr. Rob Leone: This petition is on behalf of college and university students across the province of Ontario.

“Whereas tuition fees in Ontario have increased by up to 59% since 2006, and students in Ontario pay the highest fees in Canada; and

“Whereas Ontario students owe \$37,000 on average after graduation and collectively owe more than \$7 billion to the federal government and more than \$2 billion to the Ontario government; and

“Whereas tuition fees are the most significant barrier that prevents students from obtaining a post-secondary credential and disproportionately hinders access for students who are low-income, racialized, francophone, aboriginal, queer, transgender or have a disability; and

“Whereas tuition fee increases have enabled successive Ontario governments to remove funding from the post-secondary education sector, leaving Ontario dead last in per-student funding, \$15,000 lower per student than Alberta; and

“Whereas during the 2011 Ontario election, the government was elected in part based on a promise to reduce tuition fees by 30%; and

“Whereas all political parties in Ontario have publicly acknowledged that college and university tuition fees are too high;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, support the Canadian Federation of Students—Ontario’s call to drop tuition fees and petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to apply the promised \$430 million in funding for grants to reduce tuition fees for all students and progressively reduce fees by 30% over four years, reduce the debt cap and introduce more student grants rather than loans for students, and increase per-student funding to the national average.”

Mr. Speaker, this is printed on nice Liberal red paper. There are about 10,000 signatures from students right across the province of Ontario, and I’m prepared to deliver it to page Tara to deliver to the table.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The time for petitions has now expired.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM SPENDING

Ms. Tracy MacCharles: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Ontario Ministry of Infrastructure should explore the feasibility of supporting the Frenchman’s Bay harbour entrance project in Pickering.

Filed on November 23, 2011.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

1350

Ms. Tracy MacCharles: I am pleased to bring forward today this motion that’s very important to me and to all the constituents in Pickering–Scarborough East.

Before getting started, I’d like to introduce and acknowledge some people who are visiting us today for this item. First, the deputy mayor of Pickering, Doug Dickerson; Pickering’s chief administrative officer, Tony Prevedel; Pickering City Councillor David Pickles; and Nancy Gaffney, from the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, are in the gallery. This project is a direct result of their hard work and commitment to Pickering’s waterfront development.

Frenchman’s Bay is located within the western sector of the region of Durham, on the north shore of Lake Ontario, in the city of Pickering. As one of the few naturally protected harbours along the Lake Ontario shoreline, the bay has provided commercial and recreational boaters a natural, calm water harbour for over a century and is currently home to a number of boating clubs and marinas.

On December 3, 2008, the city of Pickering, working in partnership with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, commenced the Frenchman’s Bay harbour entrance class environmental assessment. The environmental study report was completed in September 2009. The Ministry of the Environment approved the report on November 16, 2009.

Going back in time, in 1874—

Interjection: Way back.

Ms. Tracy MacCharles: —way back—the Pickering Harbour Co. built two breakwaters to protect the harbour entrance. Constructed of timber, the breakwaters have stone-filled cribs which are approximately 20 metres apart, with an average depth of 2.4 metres. Over time, the breakwaters have deteriorated, often overtopped when water levels rise above 74 metres. The channel width has narrowed from the original 25 metres as the crib walls continue to degenerate. The channel is dredged periodically to maintain a depth of 2.8 metres.

Currently—and this is of great concern—the Frenchman’s Bay harbour entrance is identified as an “extreme hazard” on navigation charts. This is something that needs to change.

The Frenchman’s Bay harbour entrance project will result in the creation of a safe harbour that supports the marine functions of the bay while preserving and enhancing the ecological conditions. The project will also provide opportunities to improve public use and recreation, environmental sustainability, enhanced tourism and commercial linkages.

Infrastructure investments are one of the keys to building a strong Canadian and provincial economy and improving our quality of life. Modern infrastructure supports commerce, creates jobs, attracts skilled workers and boosts a city’s growth and competitiveness. The project will contribute to the health, vibrancy and diversity of the community.

Recreational boating makes a significant contribution to our economy and is a source of considerable tourist revenue. A 2006 study found that boating contributes \$26.8 billion to the national economy; \$6 billion was tourism-related. That equals 10% of Canada’s total tourism dollars.

Frenchman’s Bay is an important part of Pickering’s heritage and adds significantly to the appeal of the community. The improvements associated with the harbour entrance project, as they relate to the expanded boating and tourism potential, will result in an improved economy for the city of Pickering. It’s important to note that without implementing the harbour entrance project, the future of boating at Frenchman’s Bay will indeed be uncertain.

Intensification of the city’s urban centre and new developments of the Seaton and Duffins Heights communities will see another 70,000 residents and 50,000 new jobs in the next 20 years. The project will improve the city’s waterfront assets and recreational opportunities, which influence residents to stay in Pickering and serve to attract new residents, particularly those with an interest in boating on Lake Ontario.

The harbour entrance project also respects the intent of the city of Pickering to create a focal point on the water for tourist activities at the foot of Liverpool Road with the proposed creation of a pier and associated public amenities. The harbour entrance project will result in an overall improvement to tourism operations.

Commercially, Frenchman's Bay harbour at the foot of Liverpool Road has undergone incredible revitalization. New restaurants, shops and walkways have been added, which have led to the development of a very vibrant, mixed-use public space.

Unfortunately, however, the businesses in close proximity to Frenchman's Bay are falling short of reaching their full potential to contribute to the local economy because of the state of the harbour entrance. Furthermore, the existing condition of the navigational channel has negatively impacted the ability of local marinas to fill boat slips. In the 1970s, the bay supported over 1,000 boats; today, there are only 300 boats using the bay for mooring. This shortfall equates to lost revenue for local marinas and, by extension, local business communities. Neighbouring harbours host up to 1,000 visiting boats per season, and the marina owners and operators estimate that 1,000 visiting boats can generate at least \$100,000 a season for local businesses.

The federal and provincial governments would provide community-building leadership and leverage the following investments by the public and private sectors:

- major investments in facility improvements, such as docks and land-based facilities, by marine operators and businesses;

- investment by the city of Pickering, the region of Durham and the TRCA in completion of waterfront parks and trails and aquatic and terrestrial habitats;

- expansion of the marine uses, which would generate an increased tax base for the city of Pickering, the region of Durham and the federal and provincial governments; and

- maintaining the benefits of current public-private investments to date in the revitalization initiatives of Frenchman's Bay; for example, the beautiful Millennium Square we have in Pickering and the new townhouse development associated with dockominiums—that's a new word for many of us; dockominiums instead of condominiums—from the Pickering Harbour Company.

Rouge Park's 10,000 acres will soon become Canada's first urban national park. With the Port Union Waterfront Park, funded by Waterfront Toronto, reaching Rouge Park by the fall of 2012, the waterfront trail will create a regional connection from the city of Toronto to Rouge National Park, to the city of Pickering and Frenchman's Bay, and across the Ajax waterfront to the town of Whitby border. That's a distance of nearly 18 kilometres.

This is about investing in sustainable communities, and the Frenchman's Bay harbour entrance project supports Pickering's official plan policy, which promotes boating, tourism and recreation within the Frenchman's Bay waterfront. The guiding vision for the entire waterfront node is that of a Great Lakes nautical village with a

mix of uses and an ambiance that is inviting. As Frenchman's Bay is considered a boating tourism area, the guidelines for the village are to create an interesting place to live, work and visit, recognizing the needs for seasonal marina facilities with opportunities for visiting boaters.

For project funding and implementation, the proposed funding partnerships of the project would involve the government of Canada, the province of Ontario and the city of Pickering. Based on the planning completed to date, including the preparation of detailed designs, the cost to construct a new harbour entrance is estimated at \$9 million in 2011 dollars. Once the total project funding of \$9 million is secured, the project implementation plan is expected to take 12 months.

This implementation schedule includes securing all necessary permits, tendering, and six to nine months of construction. The west breakwater would be constructed first, followed by the east breakwater. Should the funding for the project be phased over two years rather than one, the schedule could be revised to reflect a two-year construction plan. The construction of the west breakwater would be undertaken in the first year, with construction of the east breakwater in the second year. Based on the cost breakdown for completion of the harbour entrance project, the cost of a phased approach would be \$5 million in year one and \$4 million in year two.

I won't go into all of the details of what's involved with the project, but I'll just mention briefly—and this is quite technical, Speaker, if you'll bear with me—that the project proposes enclosing the existing east crib in a steel sheet pile, lined with sloped rip-rap and armour stone, to reduce wave reflection and wave overtopping. The western breakwater has an increased crest width to facilitate construction of a pile-supported concrete walkway. The natural stone breakwater ties into the passive waterfront recreation theme of Rotary Frenchman's Bay Park West and offers waterfront access for anglers, waterfront trail users and birdwatchers.

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Both the eastern and western breakwaters will have a series of access steps with ladders spaced approximately 60 metres apart along the length of the breakwaters to allow emergency egress from the harbour channel entrance.

The design of the eastern breakwater also includes railings. The design of the railing is based on conventional breakwater walkway designs meant to resist the higher wave and ice forces that will occur near the offshore end of the breakwater.

The ends of the breakwaters will have a capped steel pile rail. The rail will reduce to an elevation of 77 metres over two metres long. The remainder of the walkway will have only a 200-millimetre-high pipe curb intended to act as a barrier for only small-wheeled, non-vehicular traffic such as strollers or wheelchairs.

With that, Speaker, I'll conclude my comments and will be happy to provide some closing comments at the end of the debate. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. John O'Toole: Again, the opposition has reviewed this long-studied project. We have discussed it. Our critic, Frank Klees, normally would have been the point on this, but he has very graciously relinquished the time to Christine Elliott and myself because it is in Durham region and it is a destination that we understand and appreciate its asset value, both aesthetically and environmentally and, as part of it, the core of the important community of Pickering in the region of Durham.

In the very brief time we have, it's fair to say that this project is well studied—I think that's probably the best way to look at it—in terms of any research that I did on it. I want to start and sort of frame it in the context of a bit of history because when I was looking through the most recent study, which I think is a good place to start, it's important to recognize the contribution that has been made by the community, the region and other stakeholders.

Honestly, I'd have to start by saying that in 2007 the province of Ontario provided the city of Pickering with a grant of \$300,000 to complete an environmental assessment work plan and financing strategy to improve the harbour entrance. On May 20, 2008, the city of Pickering council authorized the TRCA to assume a leadership role in the partnership with the city of Pickering to undertake the work.

Wayne Arthurs, as the mayor of Pickering, a good member here, a friend of mine and certainly a friend and leader in the municipality and the region, worked very hard. I'm not trying to say that this was largesse or anything, but I'm sure he could demonstrate clearly the need for the investment at that time.

Tracy is the new member there. I commend you for being here and bringing this forward as your initiative as a private member. In that respect, these aren't political comments in any way. They're just a bit of framing the background here.

In fact, even more personally, the reason I'm kind of endeared to it is, I sailed on Lake Ontario for about 20 years. I had a Northern Quarter-Ton for a few years, which was really a fast boat, and then latterly I had a Viking 33, which was a very competitive boat, but they both drew about six feet. They would draw six feet, and that channel there: If it was rough water, buster, you're going further down to Oshawa or Newcastle or, if you're going the other way, to Toronto. These are decisions you have to make in a hurry, especially under sail, but more importantly, if you have a motor that fails in that channel, you're in trouble. But, once you got inside, it was a wonderful place to actually drop anchor or tie up and enjoy the time. So it is a destination on Lake Ontario, but this is a very treacherous harbour entrance. In fact, most of the navigation books that say things on it call it a high-risk harbour.

That's where I personally have stood. I think it should be completed. The work, the study, has all been done. In fact, if you look further back, that function is sort of man-

made. If I go back here—I saw something about it. It was about 1800—I'm just looking for it. Yes, it says, "Marine charts dating as far back as 1867 show an entrance to the bay in approximately the same location as the present one" today, "while a more detailed chart of 1913 depicts the entrance in its present location." There have been attempts over the years to provide some breakwaters for that entrance and exit, but again, in rough seas, you have to be—the boats drift, and there's so little clearance in terms of depth as well as width that it presents a challenge.

Now, when it gets down to it, this motion itself doesn't require or stipulate expenditure of money, although I know in the research that has been done that it's between \$7 million and \$8 million, as I understand it. Again, you're working with water, and the environmental conditions that are required are pretty stringent—as I said, \$300,000 to do the last report.

How often has this thing come up? Well, it has come up pretty well every year since about 1990—there has been a study of some kind, research done, the conservation authorities—and conditions aren't becoming easier any day now. I would suspect also that the member from Whitby–Oshawa, Christine Elliott, will add some content in a different frame. I put it in a personal reference. I think it's needed. I think it's a destination. The work has been done, the infrastructure, social and living conditions around the area—trails and things like that—are in place.

There is an investment here—the final investment, you would say. I guess this is where I wish some of the members, especially Tony and some of the others who are councillors—if Jim Bradley was here, for instance, he would say this is a "spend" question. Do you understand?

Everything we do in the province of Ontario is sharing the money with other destinations, and I say quite clearly that I believe Durham has been shortchanged. I'm not trying to politicize this at all. Forgive me for a moment for bringing some currency to the issue. We were promised—

Interjections.

Mr. John O'Toole: Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm being fair and reasonable here. We have been promised three key pieces to our infrastructure. One was the 407. It was promised in three elections, they still haven't done it and now they're going to dump the charges onto Oshawa, Durham and Clarington.

Mr. Mike Colle: You gave away the 407.

Mr. John O'Toole: That's fine. Look, I'm talking about broken promises.

The next one is the new-build nuclear plant as well as—

Interjections.

Mr. John O'Toole: Now listen up, please, respectfully—as well as the refurbishment. What has Premier McGuinty done with that? He has tossed it aside again, and the whole province of Ontario is depending on Durham to fire up this—

Interjections.

Mr. John O'Toole: Respectfully now. Respectfully, please. You don't like to hear the truth; I understand that. But I'm telling you the most recent information—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Order.

Mr. John O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, I met recently with Roger Anderson and all the mayors from Durham region. They listed some priorities, and it's our responsibility, including Ms. MacCharles, to bring this to the attention of the House.

The ghost train to Bowmanville: Get it done now. The 407: Get it done now. Get the nuclear done now. Quit cheating Durham region. I'm tired of it.

Interjections.

Mr. John O'Toole: Look, if Hazel McCallion was standing here, you'd be kissing her on the cheek or something because you'd do anything, but for us, we get nothing.

I have to share my time with Christine Elliott. They aren't listening.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Wow, Mr. Speaker. This has become livelier than I had anticipated. I appreciate the comments—

Mr. Jeff Leal: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd be remiss not to recognize that today is the birthday of Ted McMeekin, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I remind the member: That's not a point of order.

Mr. Michael Mantha: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Just because I didn't learn my lesson the first time, on the second half of my first point of order I'd like to introduce the kids from Espanola High School who are here with us today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I'll remind the member that it's not a point of order, but I'll allow it, since they've travelled this far to see the Legislature. Welcome.

Further debate?

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Mr. Taras Natyshak: I appreciate the ability to intervene into this session here. Thanks for the comments, to my colleague on the right, here—lively and, I think, poignant as well. In fact, we all have areas within our various ridings that need attention and need some infrastructure dollars flowing towards them. But thanks to the member from Pickering–Scarborough East for enlightening us as to the wonderful works that have been happening around in your area.

I took the liberty to Google search the bay, and it looks wonderful. It looks like a destination that I certainly would like to visit at some point, and I can see—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: If you can afford a boat.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Well, that's the whole thing. The member mentioned that he'll take his 33-foot speedboat there at some point in his life. I'm wondering

how he affords the gas for that, especially given the HST that's on that.

Also, what I'm wondering is—the province as a whole has a massive infrastructure deficit, regardless of whether it is within the boundaries of our Great Lakes. I know that there are areas in my riding; specifically, Lighthouse Cove has had a dredging issue for quite some time. I would again add some commentary to the members who are in the gallery: Let's build this project, but make provisions for continuation of dredging. Don't just let them build it and leave; make sure that they continue to support you in terms of an ongoing dredging process. That's something that the members of the Lighthouse Cove community would certainly like to see from this province, something that I certainly will be bringing to the attention of the ministry and the government.

Also, the member suggests that this is a good project as a whole because it is an infrastructure project, and that means good jobs and building tangible products here in this province. I love infrastructure. In fact, I was a construction worker. Each day that I was on the job was a day that I was able to provide for my family. I built bridges and roads and sewers and water mains, and I was proud of it. It was a job that kept me working. Do you know why? Because to this point, they still cannot build a bridge in China and transport it here. I know they're working on it. I know they'd like to do that, and I know it's probably within the framework of some trade agreements, but it's because we're spending good, tangible money here, and we know that the multiplier effect actually helps.

In that light, Mr. Speaker, I would say, let's reward those employers that are actually building things here. Let's reward employers that are employing Ontarians in this province and creating jobs. Let's give them the tax break. The other ones, let's let them pay their due—maybe those corporations that have outsourced and downsized, that haven't created a job in a long, long time, the ones that maybe can afford a 33-foot schooner or a 43-foot schooner. Let's make sure that they pay their fair share so that if they can float down Lake Ontario and enjoy the scenery and enjoy the infrastructure that we're going to build with public dollars, they've made their commitments to those projects in a tangible way.

I think that's the overlying message that we've brought about. It's time for us all to realize how much we can contribute and what projects are worthwhile. Again, I certainly appreciate the need. I think it will add value to that community. I also think that in terms of the scope, it should be an interesting engineering scope as well. Some of those technical terms, I did understand: the rip-rap and, actually, the inclusion of the trail so that you can have people come up in the bike, I think is what it's going to look like.

I would be supportive of the general nature of this type of a project because there are communities across the province that need it. But let's make sure that we have the money in the coffers.

It's out there. It's right there; it's waiting for us to go and ask. We haven't asked them for a long time. I'll tell

you one person who's finally stepping up to the plate, or who has been for a long time: my good friend Warren Buffet. The second-richest guy on the planet has said, "Please stop pandering to me and my rich buddies. Tax me more so that I can contribute to the country"—so that I can help you with your Frenchman's Bay.

It's a powerful message. It's something that the province and the government should heed, something that would make your lives a lot easier, because we know that these projects are not going to stop coming to the forefront. There will be more, and they are needed. They're worthwhile, but let's make sure that we do it in a prudent, practical way. It's not too much to ask. It is a contribution to a cohesive society and a civil society.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to add my commentary to this subject. I certainly look forward to seeing it to completion and then, at some point, visiting the member's wonderful riding. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Joe Dickson: It's a pleasure for me to rise today to speak to the resolution of MPP Tracy MacCharles, the member from Scarborough East-Pickering, and her motion in reference to the Frenchman's Bay Pickering harbour entrance. It's good to see some members of council here, along with TRCA, including the CEO, and good to see Councillor Pickles arrive. I can tell you that between Mayor Dave Ryan and Deputy Mayor Doug Dickerson and all members of council—I'd be remiss if I didn't mention them: Bill McLean, Peter Rodrigues, Kevin Ashe, Jennifer O'Connell—they have all supported this project for a long, long time.

The Ministry of Infrastructure should explore the feasibility of supporting this harbour immediately. I can tell you, my family goes back within five kilometres of that harbour to 1841, when they arrived from Tipperary, Ireland. I can tell you, it's something that has been an ongoing conversation for close to 150, 175 years. It's something that is long overdue. I know that back in the days when my aunt and uncle Nell and Ted Hogan resided on Wharf Avenue, which is right there; it was just a beautiful spot.

Of course, the harbour did have problems. Back in 1874, the Pickering Harbour Company actually built two breakwaters. The original construction is maintained on occasion, but over time they certainly can deteriorate. Where the width used to be 25 metres, of course, with deterioration it's now down to about 20 metres. In fact, the new plan would see it grow to about 60 metres.

This motion for supporting Frenchman's Bay harbour is something that is long overdue. MPP MacCharles has done a good job bringing it forward.

I should mention that there are other excellent harbours in the area. As I look across the floor, there's a beautiful harbour in Whitby, and as you go down the lake, another beautiful one in Cobourg. However, there is greater potential in the city of Pickering for an even larger harbour with proper development, and—

Mr. Mike Colle: What about Ajax harbour?

Mr. Joe Dickson: Ajax has not made a decision to go with a harbour. We feature trails on the waterfront, but thank you for asking, and it's absolutely the most beautiful waterfront you've ever seen, from Metro to Kingston.

I would tell you that this project of Seaton and Duffin Heights, which is estimated to add some 75,000 people in the next 15 to 20 years—15 years if we get expediting things properly—but it has actually been working and on the books for 40 years. So it's like everything else: It's overdue, it has to happen, and it's time to go forward. We could certainly use the jobs in that area. We could certainly use the growth in development and tourism. It's just a natural fit.

I can tell you that our government has supported numerous projects in Durham. I would be remiss, unlike my good friend and colleague from Durham—there are many positive things that have evolved over time. I'm just going to take a moment and perhaps mention a few of them—stray a little off topic. There has been more funding going to Durham College than has ever gone in history. They just turned the sod a week ago for phase 3, which will add 900 students in culinary and hospitality. Ten days ago at the university, UOIT, we opened a new energy systems and nuclear science research department—long overdue. It was a joint venture with the federal government and the Ontario government, and it has just been a great project. Minister Flaherty was there. We have opened in Ajax a \$20-million operations centre, of which the province paid 70%. We have opened a restructured village in Pickering; it's the old Pickering village, now part of the town of Ajax. There's just been groundbreaking on the new Ajax Sportsplex expansion, the St. Francis de Sales centre for the arts and, of course, the Ajax-Pickering hospital, which just completed a \$100-million expansion and the new MRI. It just goes on and on and on.

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This is Pickering's bicentennial year, and this is a major project that would be most appropriate to come forward this year. I know it's even something my mother talked about many, many years ago. When you look at the harbour entrance—as a kid, I can remember that, although it was supposed to be on a slight angle, it was on a deteriorating angle, so when the boat came in, they really had a difficult time in navigating. It's a century or a century and a half overdue.

As I get down in time, I'd just, again, like to thank my friend and colleague MPP Tracy MacCharles and the good people from Pickering and the TRCA who have come in today. I'm now going to sit down because we have a younger, more agile, more attractive, more intelligent speaker coming on this particular project, and I'd like to leave her as much time as possible.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I am very pleased to stand and speak in support of the resolution that's been brought forward by the member from Pickering-Scarborough East, which of course is that, in the opinion of this

House, the Ministry of Infrastructure should explore the feasibility of supporting the Frenchman's Bay harbour entrance project in Pickering.

I would like to say that as a fellow member from Durham region, one of the fastest-growing areas in Canada, there is no question that the Ministry of Infrastructure should support this proposal.

As the member from Whitby–Oshawa, which I have to say has one of the loveliest waterfronts in the eastern corridor, I firmly believe that developing these lands in the Whitby area, certainly, has improved the quality of life for those people who live, work and play in my riding.

The Whitby waterfront boasts a fully functional marina, yacht club, walking and biking trails, a conservation area and so much more. Extensive consultations have also recently been held with the public, with the residents of Whitby, concerning future development.

Another area that has a beautiful waterfront, Cobourg, which is also nearby, has been dubbed the gem of Lake Ontario because of its waterfront redevelopment and revitalization that goes back to the 1980s. Cobourg reports that not only is their waterfront a great hub for community events it has also contributed significantly to their economy. For example, Cobourg reported that; on Canada Day weekend in 2006, the economic impact on the town was approximately \$1.3 million.

This certainly isn't just about beautification. The Frenchman's Bay harbour entrance project has the potential to benefit the city of Pickering economically quite substantially as well, as the members from Pickering council and city are here today to attest.

The Frenchman's Bay harbour entrance report, which was jointly commissioned by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and the city of Pickering, makes some compelling arguments about why this project should be a priority. The project brief estimates the cost of the project to be \$9 million. The city of Pickering has already committed \$3 million towards the total project cost and is proposing that the federal and provincial governments make similar contributions.

I'd like to just spend a few minutes on the specifics of the project, and this has been noted by several of the other speakers. Speaking about the breakwaters at the harbour entrance, they were built back in 1874. As the member from Pickering–Scarborough East noted, since then, they've deteriorated to the point where Frenchman's Bay harbour entrance is currently listed as an extreme hazard on navigation charts.

The report also indicates that because of this, the use of the bay for mooring purposes has dropped from 1,000 in the 1970s to just 300 today. It was noted that marina operators and owners have estimated that 1,000 visiting boats would generate at least \$100,000 a season in local business. So we're talking about some significant economic possibilities for the city of Pickering should this project be moved forward. This will help local businesses surrounding Frenchman's Bay, should it be completed, as it anticipates that their business will pick up where sales have been lagging quite considerably in recent years.

Another noteworthy point to discuss here is the plan for a waterfront trail. As you may know, Rouge Park is slated to be named Canada's first urban national park—and I know, Mr. Speaker, you'd be quite familiar with that as well. With the completion of the trail in Pickering, the Port Union Waterfront Park, the Rouge Park and the Ajax waterfront eastward to the town of Whitby's border, in terms of trails, will create a regional connection spanning nearly 18 kilometres. So this project has the potential to benefit not just the residents of Pickering–Scarborough East but the lakeshore east corridor as a whole, both economically and environmentally.

For all of these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I support the resolution that has been brought forward by the member from Pickering–Scarborough East. And as a former sailor in the area for many years, having sailed a C&C 30 for many years along both the north and south shores of Lake Ontario, I think it's a very worthwhile project and I support it completely. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: First of all, I just want to congratulate my colleague our critic on infrastructure and labour for those particular comments. I thought those were quite apropos in the sense of support, generally, for the project itself—but the talk about the larger issue, which is a lack of funding for infrastructure across this province, because what we see is municipality after municipality with the same problem.

There is a real need within the community in order to fix something that is of value to that community, and sometimes there's not the place to go and actually apply to get the dollars to do it. So clearly, I think what we all know as members is that we need to find some way—and maybe this minority Parliament is a good opportunity to do this; that we're able to find a way of developing infrastructure programs that give the communities more flexibility than they currently have now.

The unfortunate reality is that the model of infrastructure programs that we have today is driven by either senior level of government, federal or provincial—normally the province—and we dictate exactly what that money is going to go to. So it has to be for a road, or it has to be for water, and those are all good and important things, but there are projects that fall outside of that, and how do you fund them? That's essentially what the issue here is. We can all tell stories, all 107 of us in this Legislature, of projects in our ridings that have that kind of challenge when it comes to it.

I think one of the things that maybe we should be looking at is: Is there a way of developing some sort of long-term infrastructure funding so communities know, "I'm going to get X amount of dollars every year, and I can plan this year, over five years, or 10 years, whatever it is, to be able to achieve those things that are important to our community"?

And who best to make that decision but the community themselves, because each community is different. They showcase something different when it comes to

tourism or when it comes to economic development or to social living within their own communities, and everybody has their own sort of shtick, as we might say. Who better to be able to decide that but the community?

I was having a little bit of fun, because I was listening to Mr. Colle—and I forget the riding, so I would say it.

Mr. Mike Colle: Eglinton—Lawrence.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Eglinton—Lawrence. I'm sorry. He was talking about how he wanted to join the maritime caucus. I just want to say that there would be very few of us in this province in a maritime caucus, because the only place with salt water is actually in my riding and Sarah Campbell's, because we have the Hudson and the James Bay. Now, that's not to say that Lake Ontario and Georgian Bay and Lake Huron and Lake Superior and Lake Erie are not large bodies of water and are not considered maritime, but I thought that was a little bit amusing because there are specific challenges when it comes to those communities; for example, to be able to dredge a harbour in Peawanuck, to be able to get supplies in so that they can do the construction necessary and not have the huge transportation costs that we have flying everything in, which has become a problem. They have no money to be able to do that. The harbour has been silted for some time, and there's a huge problem trying to bring barges up the river from the Hudson Bay to be able to off-load. So as a result of that, it's adding a cost to the community. So, again, it's a First Nations community. It's a bit of a different funding mechanism, but still, there are unique challenges for them.

I just want to generally add my comment. I just want to essentially give my support for what I think is a local initiative, but I just want to put the caveat that in the end, the government has to make the decision to fund. The motion can't force the government to do that, but recommends for this House to get the government to do that. So, I get it. Let's hope that the government actually does listen and say, "You know what? The will of this House"—if it turns out that way—"is positive that in fact the government does that."

Now, I would be remiss in not saying one last thing in the last minute and a half that I've got, because this being a motion, it wouldn't go to a committee. So I guess you're not terribly disappointed that we haven't struck the committees yet, because I'm sure that if it was a bill, you'd be chomping at the bit to say to your government House leader, "How come you haven't negotiated with the opposition a settlement toward striking the committees in this House?"

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I just say it in passing, and I say it a little bit offhand and with a bit of humour, that it's unfortunate, because the government has not been able to find a way forward to be able to strike committees. There was a bit of hope last week that there was movement on both sides, that we could have been able to do something.

But those committees, I believe, are important to the functioning of Parliament. Committees are where everything happens. We draft bills; we bring them into second

reading. There are interesting debates here, but committee is where people are able to come and give their opinions as to those bills, one way or another, and where members of this House can then sit and look at how you make this bill work better and how you change it by way of amendment.

So, unfortunately—

Mr. Mike Colle: But this is a resolution.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No, I know this is a resolution. What I'm saying is that it's unfortunate that we've not been able to strike it, because bills such as Mr. Mantha's HST bill—taking it off home heating—and the government's, if they wanted to finish the debate, on their home renovation tax credit would have been ideal bills to send to committee so that we could have actually done that work in the intersession, so that we could have passed those bills a lot quicker ahead.

I just wanted, for the record, to say that we New Democrats are looking forward to the striking of committees. We think there has been a lot of compromise on the side of the opposition. We're only now looking for the government to make that step as well, so that in the end we can do what's right for the people of Ontario who sent us here and can strike the committees so that, in fact, we can do the important work that needs to be done on behalf of all Ontarians.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: I'm pleased to rise in support of the resolution from the member from Pickering—Scarborough East.

You heard about the work that has been done in this area that goes back as far as 1874, but in fact, the history of this area actually begins in 1669. It's an extraordinary part of this province, and a place where there probably was safe harbour for maybe the odd pirate at one time or another.

I say welcome to the mayor, to the councillors and to the CAO. I want to say to them they've done an absolutely extraordinary job of identifying, through their five-year priority plan on Pickering's waterfront—and they went about it in exactly the way that you should go about it. In fact, what they did was, they identified the problems. You heard about the breakwater being deteriorated and that it needed replacement; that there was an issue of visibility during high-water levels; the channel is narrow, so it's not safe for navigation; there are sediment deposits which require ongoing maintenance dredging; changing currents; and of course, the waves, which create extraordinary hazardous conditions for the boaters; and there were the entrance issues that deter additional boaters from going in.

What they did was a very thorough analysis, and they actually looked at all of the options. They even looked at the option of doing absolutely nothing at all, but that wasn't an option that was going to be able to provide them with the necessities that they needed to be able to move forward under their priorities.

Their priorities were to develop a safe harbour entrance; to deal with the ecological conditions of French-

man's Bay; obviously, tourism and commercial linkages; public amenities; and the waterfront access trail. So, all of this combined. They looked at all of the options and they went out for public consultation. They in fact involved the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, and it's nice to know that all levels of government participated in funding that study, including the province of Ontario.

So, through that environmental study, they actually had results. The results supported a new marine function that preserves the ecological condition, that enhances trails and access to trails and the public use for recreation and, of course, environmental sustainability. These were the main issues that they looked at, and they came forward with a solid business plan of how to move forward.

I'd like to speak just for a moment about the natural environment, this in particular for an area that is very sensitive. Preserving and enhancing the ecological conditions is one of the foremost reasons for their environmental scan and also is a significant part of their business case.

Maintaining the biodiversity of this area and enhancing that biodiversity, not only for this generation but for future generations, was pivotal in their planning, so they had to ensure that there was no net loss of aquatic habitat. They needed to protect the very sensitive terrestrial habitat as well as species of interest, of which they have many. They maintain a warm-water fishery within Frenchman's Bay, and this is critical to the biological system within the Great Lakes ecosystem.

They also had to prevent or minimize negative water-quality impacts and to preserve the very unique habitats and land forms, for example, the wetlands, the beaches and the dunes, all of which are a significant part of the biodiversity of the region and also play a very significant role in terms of their impact on the biological diversity of this province.

So indeed, they are to be commended. This was well done, well researched; there is a good, solid business plan. We, in fact, did invest this money for a good reason, and now it's to move forward to the next steps. We've heard a variety of opportunities of how we can move forward in terms of infrastructure.

I think, in particular, what the town of Pickering has also done is look at this in a couple of phases so that it's incremental planning. That's sound planning; that way they can also monitor and assess. As they're doing and maintaining that planning, it also will produce the type of income that will support the town in the interim. That's a very significant part of a good business plan. You don't just go at it, if you like, full force, but you plan it in such a way, that as you move forward, it in fact generates the kind of income that you need to continue to move forward from the town's perspective.

So I believe what the member has put forward is a sound business case. It's sound ecologically for this very environmentally sensitive part of this province. It certainly is good for maintaining high water quality, which, as you know, is an essential and pivotal part of the

platform of this province. Water, as they say, is the next oil, and so maintaining the quality of that water is essential, and maintaining the habitat for all of those, including us, who use that water, is also essential.

I would like to commend the member for bringing this forward and to commend the city for the work that they have done and the region conservation authority of Toronto. Combined, what they've put in front of this House is something that we can move forward with from all perspectives in the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member from Pickering–Scarborough East, you have two minutes to reply.

Ms. Tracy MacCharles: In closing, I'd like to thank everyone who participated in the debate on this very important motion. First, the member from Ajax–Pickering, I'd also especially like to thank him for acknowledging that it is Pickering's bicentennial year, so what a great way to celebrate Pickering if this moves forward.

Also, I want to thank the member from Etobicoke Centre for her well-researched and thought out—

Interjection.

Ms. Tracy MacCharles: The member for Durham, the member from Whitby, the member from Essex and the member from Timmins–James Bay, thank you for the comments.

In closing, I want to congratulate the city of Pickering and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority on their excellent work to date. Well done.

If the required funding is secured from all three levels of government, there will be many direct and indirect benefits to the riding of Pickering–Scarborough East, Durham region and our province.

This is a unique and compelling shovel-ready project that will provide economic benefits, job creation, tourism and improved safety and environmental conditions. Frenchman's Bay is an important part of Pickering's heritage and adds significantly to the appeal of the community. The improvements associated with the harbour entrance will result in a strong economy and will contribute to Ontario's economic prosperity and the ability of residents and boaters, as we heard today, to continue to enjoy this beautiful harbour.

I look forward to supporting the next phase of this project and will be pleased to update the House as this project moves forward.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. The vote on this particular motion will take place later today.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The motion reads as follows:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should immediately move to implement:

(1) a moratorium on the current legislated corporate tax reductions so that the corporate tax rate reductions that are scheduled to take effect on July 1, 2012, and July 1, 2013, would not take place; and

(2) three separate, refundable corporate tax credits for: i. on-the-job training; ii. new hires; and iii. investment in plant and machinery.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Ms. Horwath has moved private member's notice of motion 4. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

1440

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's my pleasure to rise to begin to have a conversation in this chamber about the efficacy or the effect, the way that this government has dealt with corporate taxes. And I have to say that there's been quite a reversal of opinion from Mr. McGuinty—sorry, the Premier—and his team in terms of their view of the corporate tax rates in Ontario and how beneficial it is or is not to continue to reduce those taxes. In 2010's budget is when this change of heart took place. All of a sudden, in 2010, the Premier turned into a different person than he had been for so, so long.

I'm going to spend a little bit of time talking about why I have believed for quite some time, and why I continue to believe, that reductions in corporate taxes are not the right way for Ontario to go. But before I do that, I wanted to just kind of set the stage by saying that this new-found desire for more and more corporate tax cuts in Ontario is something that is quite the opposite of what the Premier used to espouse. In fact, he used to criticize the Conservatives, when they were in office, for corporate tax reductions.

It's quite interesting when you go back in the record and read some of the things that Mr. McGuinty has said in this chamber about corporate tax cuts. It's actually quite funny when you read it, because about 70 times over the last number of years—70 times—the Premier stood in his place with such indignation, railing at the Conservatives about their reckless corporate tax cuts and about how ineffective those corporate tax cuts were and how they were the wrong thing to do. You know, it is funny.

There's a quote here from 2008, which is really just two years, Speaker—just two years—before this corporate tax cut regime was undertaken by the Liberals. This is what Mr. McGuinty said on March 20, 2008, and I'm quoting from Hansard: “What the Conservatives are asking us to do is to cut corporate income taxes—those are taxes on profitable corporations—by \$2.3 billion.... That definitely means closing hospitals, firing nurses, cutting education. It means driving up tuition fees. It means cutting the Ministry of the Environment and the like, and it means running a deficit.”

Well, fast forward to today, Speaker, and what are the Liberals doing but every single one of those things? In fact, we are all waiting on the edge of our seats to see the kinds of things that Mr. Drummond is going to recommend that the Liberals cut, because we can't afford corporate tax cuts, and one of the things that they should cut is the corporate tax cuts. That's the thing that they should cut.

Why, Speaker, do New Democrats still believe that corporate tax cuts are the wrong direction for this province, particularly at this time? It's pretty simple. I mean, the big, big one is the fact that we're running a deficit, so the least time that we can afford a corporate tax cut is when the government is running a huge deficit.

So they're going to have the people of the province suffer from cuts, they're going to have the people of the province continue to suffer from the impacts of the HST in terms of their ability to make ends meet, but profitable corporations, the big dudes in Ontario, are the ones that are going to get a break. It makes no sense whatsoever, Speaker. So here we are going down the path of corporate tax cuts during a time of deficit, which is absolutely the wrong thing to do and absolutely unaffordable.

But that's not all. We have a situation in Ontario where our corporate taxes are already extremely competitive. I mean, it's not like our corporate tax rates are somehow out of whack with the rest of the world; quite the contrary. Our corporate tax rates are in fact very, very competitive. They're lower than 50 states in the United States; they're lower than all of the Great Lakes states that surround us and are direct competitors to us. They are lower than so many jurisdictions, Speaker, that there is no reason, no reason whatsoever, to continue to drive corporate taxes down in the province of Ontario.

In 2011, a PricewaterhouseCoopers study said that Canada's corporate income tax rates are well below those of the US, below those of Australia, Finland, France, Germany, India, Italy, Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, among others.

Now, we have seen a recent OECD study that ranks Canada's combined corporate income tax rates 10 points below the United States and Japan—10 points below the US and Japan.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: How low can you go?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: “How low can you go?” is exactly the question I ask. The member for Trinity-Spadina is asking the question, “How low can you go?” Apparently, for the Liberals, you weren't supposed to go low at all, and now they can't get low enough when it comes to corporate taxes.

The reality is that the more we drive down corporate taxes, we're not getting anything for it. And so the third issue why this is the wrong direction, Speaker, is because we get nothing for corporate tax cuts. We don't get jobs and we don't get investment. Ontario continues to lag behind in terms of investment. This is a fact. I'm not making it up; it's reality. So why do you keep doing the same thing over and over again if it's not effective?

Corporate tax cuts are not tied to anything. You cut the corporate tax rate, and the corporation can do anything with that money. They could create jobs, but they don't have to create jobs. They could invest, but they don't have to. And they're not. They're not creating jobs and they're not investing, and they haven't since this government has found this new vision of corporate tax cuts in Ontario.

So not only can we not afford it—not only do we already have very, very competitive tax rates—but they don't do anything for us. They are not producing investment, and they are not producing any kind of jobs whatsoever. So I can't understand why this is something that the Liberals suddenly think is the important thing to do.

We know that there is a Globe and Mail study—there have been a number of different studies—showing that investment isn't happening. Do you know what's happening to the money, the dollars that are going to corporations? The one thing that is increasing in Ontario is the cash reserves of corporations. They're taking that money and shovelling it away, but we're not benefiting at all. Our economy is not benefiting and workers are not benefiting. Families are not benefiting.

There's another way of creating jobs, Speaker, and that's the other half of our motion. That's what I want to talk about a little bit right now. You have choices when you decide how you want to try to do things that create jobs. We know that corporate tax cuts don't work, but we know there are other vehicles that do work, and we've seen them work in other jurisdictions. So we're suggesting, instead of these across-the-board cuts that don't do anything except cost the treasury, that they have a more targeted approach, that we actually reward the companies that are creating jobs with tax credits. That makes a lot of sense.

We reward the companies that are training their workers by providing tax credits. We reward the companies that are actually investing in plants and machinery with a tax credit. That is the more sensible thing to do, because we are getting something for the revenue we forgo in the tax credit model. We're actually gaining something of value. We're gaining investment in jobs, we're gaining investment in plant and machinery, and we're gaining investment in training of workers.

It's not like this is all some kind of—

Interjection.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Pardon me?

Interjection: Fantasy.

Ms. Andrea Horwath:—some kind of a fantasy. It's not like it's some kind of plan that we're making up on the back of an envelope. We have seen jurisdiction after jurisdiction in this country—jurisdictions, by the way, that are doing much, much better than Ontario, because let us not forget that Ontario has got the highest unemployment rate, the worst unemployment rate, a whole point higher than the rest of the country. So people are not getting jobs here. Other provinces are doing much better, Speaker. There are provinces which are doing much better that are actually implementing tax credit systems as opposed to across-the-board tax cuts. We think this is something that we should be doing here in Ontario, Speaker.

When you think about the billions of dollars this government is giving up in across-the-board tax cuts and realize that we're not getting anything for them, you have to try to figure out what the priorities of the Liberals are.

I mean, I cannot fathom why a government would come into power and make life worse for everyday families, day in and day out; take money out of families' pockets; really give up money that could be going to other endeavours of the government; tell families that government has to tighten its belt, and that's going to mean cuts to services; and tell families that, once again, they're the ones who are going to have to buck up and deal with the fact that life is getting tougher. Government is not prepared to do anything for them. In fact, instead of doing anything for them, they have to now shoulder the burden of the harmonized sales tax.

So the government itself, which has made life worse for families, is now telling families that they're going to have to get ready for the cuts that are coming down the pipe, and yet it refuses to even look at the corporate tax cuts as a way of softening the blow, as a way of acknowledging that—you know what?—for a change, families should be the ones getting a break. Instead, it's on the families' dime that the corporations are getting these across-the-board cuts.

1450

You know what, Speaker? We brought this issue up in question period last week. Do you know what the banks are making in profits these days, Speaker? I have it in my notes. I just have to find it. The biggest banks, the sector that is the recipient of Ontario's corporate tax cuts—

Interjections.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: They're getting all noisy across the way, Speaker. They don't want me to tell you the number, but I'm going to tell you the number.

The biggest banks, right? It's the biggest single sector that's a recipient of the Liberal largesse in terms of corporate tax cuts. They recently declared a quarterly profit—okay, quarterly profit, Speaker, so I'm only talking about three months—of over \$6 billion; \$6 billion.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: They need a tax cut.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Boy, do they need a tax cut.

Now, Speaker, that is a new record. That is a new record for the banks in Ontario; a new record of \$6 billion in profits in a single quarter. Now, far be it from me to be over the top on this, but I would suggest that those banks don't need further tax reductions. They don't need to be having their taxes reduced on their profits.

And so I would suggest that the government actually look seriously at setting a pause on those corporate tax cuts. There are two more tax cuts to be implemented. One is coming next year; one is coming the following year—half a per cent next year, a full per cent the year following that. That's another \$600 million into the pockets of banks and other profitable corporations. Put the money in the pockets of people for a change.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak on this motion, and I think pretty soon my position will be clear by the comments that I will make.

But the thing I want to preface my comments here today with is the context in which we're having this debate today, the context in which this motion is being discussed, and that is of a very fragile economy. I think that we cannot think of ourselves in some sort of isolation, to think that somehow Ontario is in a bubble, that somehow Ontario is immune to the pressures that are being faced around the globe, that somehow Ontario has some sort of a mechanism by which economic growth and job creation will just take place without any outlay to the world outside.

We have to realize that we live in a global context. Since the great recession of 2008 and 2009 and the toll that it took on our economy—not only on our economy, but the Canadian economy and then globally—those effects are not gone, Speaker. What we're seeing is that countries in Europe are still very much in a fragile situation and that has a significant impact.

So we have to ensure that the hard-working people whom this motion is perhaps intended towards have good-paying jobs available to them, that those hard-working people are able to find jobs that are meaningful, that match their skill sets so that they can contribute more to our growing economy. That is why having a competitive tax infrastructure and a competitive tax rate is essential: so that we can attract companies that will prosper in Ontario and create good jobs. I mean, it's not a very complicated argument to make. It's as simple as that.

It is very easy to attack banks, to pick on banks because somehow the conception is out there that they're not contributing anything to the economy. But the reality is that when we're talking about banks, we're talking about hundreds of thousands of jobs right here in Ontario. These are people who are gainfully employed in order to ensure that they're part of a growing economy, and ensuring that we increase our corporate taxes to make Ontario an uncompetitive jurisdiction is not going to help these companies to stay in Ontario and maintain those jobs.

Here's the other notion that we have to remember: Given that we live in a globally connected and competitive economy, it is very easy, it is extremely easy, for a business to move from one jurisdiction to the other. It's something that can literally happen overnight, and we have to be cognizant of that. If we want to keep Ontario as a place to come and do business, if we want to make sure that we say to people, "Look, we've got a good, healthy society," that we have one of the best health care systems, that we have one of the best human resources based on skills, that we have a good education system, we need to make sure that there is also, along with it, a competitive business environment, and a tax structure that will ensure that these jobs are being created for all Ontarians. So I think the context, Speaker, is extremely important in that regard.

We've seen the effect. We've seen that in Ontario we have created more jobs; we have been able to recover the number of jobs that were lost in the recession because we

have that competitive tax jurisdiction. In fact, most recently, the Financial Times of London came out with a study where they demonstrated that in North America, Ontario is the second most attractive jurisdiction after California, that we are attracting a significant amount of foreign investment in our province that is resulting in creating good jobs—and taking that away by way of this motion, as has been suggested, is not going to help.

Now, I know the NDP likes to talk about Manitoba, and somehow Manitoba is a flag-bearer in this circumstance, but remember, Speaker, Manitoba has been reducing their corporate taxes as well. They, in fact, have gone from about 16.5% and have reduced their corporate taxes about seven times since then. So, you know, you can't—

Interjections.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: You can't just pick and choose examples that don't compare well.

Now, the other point, I think, is that we have to focus on small businesses, because we realize that small businesses are very much part and parcel of our economy. We need to ensure that we're reducing the tax burden on them, and we have done so by reducing the corporate tax rate on small businesses by eliminating the capital tax, or surtax, on small businesses, and also by reducing corporate tax on the manufacturing and processing sector in Ontario, because it's a very important, vital part of our economy.

So, Speaker, in my humble opinion, the motion that is being presented by the NDP, I think, is going to harm Ontario's economy in these tough economic times. It is not going to help in terms of creation of new jobs. I really urge all members to vote against this motion, because what we need to do at this moment is to ensure that Ontario is a good place to do business so businesses can create those jobs and help good, hard-working Ontarians to have meaningful, gainful employment in their skill sets. Thank you very much, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Shurman: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the motion by the member for Hamilton Centre, the leader of the third party. It's an interesting motion, and I congratulate her for bringing it, because what it does is underline the principles of her party, the NDP. This is what she fought the election on, and I always admire somebody standing by their principles. Clearly, they are principles, however, that do highlight the differences between her party and mine. She wouldn't be expecting me to support this motion, and I will not disappoint her. But that's what happens when you have parties that stand by their principles, as we do in the PC caucus and as do you in the NDP caucus, as opposed to governing by wind chimes or focus groups, which other people do.

The NDP believes that by not allowing the continuous reduction of corporate taxes, there will be a surplus of money to reduce the deficit, fund more social programs, whatever it happens to be. The PC Party believes that the

word “company” and the word “profit” are both good words in the English language; they’re not dirty words. “Company” basically means a group of people, and the group of people who operate in a company are people who have either decided to work for that company and gain their employment that way, make their living that way, or the people who have invested in that company and want a reasonable return.

So you’ve got these two divergent opinions: We believe that the corporate tax rates in the province of Ontario at this point are, if anything, too high, and a barrier for the economy to recover in Ontario properly. And so business, to us, is a driver.

1500

People have called us at various times “the party of business.” We’re not the party of business; we’re the party of people, but we believe that people derive their incomes from good, healthy business in a good, healthy business climate, which the member from Ottawa Centre correctly identified as having been harmed by the state of the world economy, but which has been aggravated by the Liberal government of the province of Ontario. We have to address that, and we have to address that through an aggressive effort through our corporate citizens, and bringing taxes down is an essential part of that.

I want to draw attention to a couple of things. Ontario has one of the highest corporate tax rates in Canada: 4.5% at the lower rate—small business tax credit—and 12% at the higher rate. Only New Brunswick’s corporate tax rates are higher in the entire country of Canada. Prince Edward Island is at 1%; Newfoundland and Labrador at 4%; British Columbia at 2.5%; Northwest Territories at 4%. These are the rates that we have across Canada. Ontario is sitting at 4.5%.

Now, why do I single that out? Because there’s an NDP government in the province of Manitoba, Speaker—a successful NDP government, I might add—and it has a corporate tax rate of nil. It’s a zero corporate tax rate. So I have to ask the question: What is the difference between the NDP of Manitoba and the NDP of Ontario?

And Manitoba, at this point, is a very successful province. In the first quarter of this year, Manitoba had the lowest unemployment rate in the country for six straight months. We’ve had the highest unemployment rate in the country for five straight years. So there’s something amiss here if you take a look at NDP philosophy and the NDP approach to corporate taxes next door, to the west, and here, if we were to go ahead with the subject of the resolution by my friend from Hamilton Centre. Average unemployment rate in Manitoba for this year, 2011: 5.4%. The national average is 7.5%. And this is one of those months where we’ve notched down in Ontario: We’re at 7.9%. So this is the wrong time to be tinkering with corporate tax rates unless you’re talking about bringing them down.

So no—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Order.

Mr. Peter Shurman: I personally certainly can’t support the motion, but obviously I wish you well.

Thank you, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, I want to thank you for wishing us well and I love the wind chime comment. I thought that was a very good one.

I just want to say clearly, so that people understand what’s being proposed in this debate, that what we’re saying is that across-the-board tax cuts for the corporate sector don’t work. If you take a look at the experience of what happened in a lot of jurisdictions, such as the United States, if corporate tax cuts were such a winner, why the heck has that economy gone down the tubes? That is what George Bush did for the entire time of his presidency and it’s what the Tea Party Republicans continue to do in the Congress and the Senate of today. They’re continually trying to push down the corporate tax rates, and as a result of that, I would argue it has not been effective, because if you take a look at what’s happened to the American economy, it’s really gone bad.

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, this is where I’m getting my point, and I’m beginning to wonder, what do George Bush and Dalton McGuinty have in common? They like corporate tax cuts. So I just think it’s kind of weird where the Premier is getting his lead from.

What Andrea Horwath and New Democrats are trying to suggest here is a more responsible approach. We say to the corporate sector out there, we have the lowest tax rates now when it comes to corporate tax rates in the area. We are the lowest when it comes to all of the Great Lakes. We’re completely competitive when it comes to the rest of North America and most of the nations that were raised by my leader, Andrea Horwath.

It’s good to do business here for a number of other reasons, not just because of corporate tax cuts. But what we’re saying is, if you’re prepared to invest, you want to do training, you want to build up your plant, you want to make those investments that will actually create wealth in province of Ontario, we will provide you with a tax credit. We think that’s a much more responsible approach, to say to those who actually do something with the money and want to invest in this province in order to pump the economy and to get it going, we will help those. But we’re certainly not going to give the money to those who are basically making lots of money and are really not giving anything back.

One of the points that was made earlier is what’s happening with the big banks. Six billion dollars in three months and we’re going to give them more tax cuts? Come on. How do you square that off with the hospital worker who’s losing their job this month at the Timmins and District Hospital because the government is saying we don’t have enough money to pay for health care in the city of Timmins? How do you square that off against people in this province that are every day struggling in order to make ends meet and they can’t get a cut on their home heating bill through an initiative put forward by my colleague Mr. Mantha from Algoma–Manitoulin?

What we're saying is using the Ontario tax code as a way of assisting to attract investment is not a bad idea. We're saying, yes, that's fine. But you need to make sure that you target those investments in such a way that we get back a bang for our buck. So I think that's the thing that needs to be said.

To the point that was made earlier in regards to Manitoba, Manitoba took an approach that we kind of started in this election. That is, if you're going to help one sector of the economy, it's really the small business sector. The small business sector is being whacked. Yes, we stood up in the last election and we said, as a modest proposal—because there's not a lot of money in the pot—we would reduce small business tax by 1%—

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Half.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: —half a percent, I should say, down to 4%.

The Manitoba government, yes, has it down at zero, but New Democrats in Manitoba, as are New Democrats in Ontario, are saying it is important that we assist the small business sector because they're the ones that are creating most of the wealth. Those are the ones who invest in their communities; they're not taking their money and bringing it to the Cayman Islands. They spend it in Kapuskasing. They spend it in Nickel Belt. They spend it in downtown Toronto. And if we're going to help somebody, let's help the small business sector.

The problem with the corporate tax cuts: Who is it going to help? I look at my community. Xstrata, do you know where their head office is? It's nowhere in Ontario. It's nowhere in Canada. I look at Vale in Sudbury. Where's their head office? It's in Brazil. So we're assisting corporations who are taking the wealth out of this province and funnelling the profits offshore to no benefit to the people of Ontario.

So I stand proud with New Democrats and my leader, Andrea Horwath, in saying, yes, we need to have a vision that says you have to approach corporate tax cuts in a way that we get a bang back for our buck. We need to target that, and I think that is a very reasonable proposal.

If George Bush and Dalton McGuinty want to stay in the same bed, they're welcome to it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: It's my pleasure to be able to rise and have a discussion about this particular bill that's before us.

I'd like to start by suggesting that there is a difference in the philosophical perspectives of the different parties. We have determined that tax relief is part of our government's economic policy to stimulate the economy. Our priority is to create jobs and to grow that economy, and certainly we are about creating value, because without question, we're building our tax base.

As a good example of that, during the first 11 months of the year 2011, 45.8% of all new Canadian jobs were created in Ontario. And, yes, there is an unemployment issue. It's as high as—I've written it down—13.2% in Newfoundland and 11.1% in PEI. Certainly, we are at 7.9%. It goes down to 5% in Alberta. There's no question

that, right across this country, all of our provinces are dealing with issues that are a result of the recession of 2008.

So what is it, in fact, that we have done? What difference does our tax relief make? Let's just have a little chat about that. In order to stimulate the economy, we do have the tax relief. Our unemployment rate in 2009 was 9.4%. And you're right: It's now at 7.6%. There is more to be done—no question. But since May 2009, we have 283,400 new net jobs. We recovered all jobs lost in that recession, and overall, since 2003, we have 502,000 new net jobs. And so I think Canadian jobs that were created in Ontario are here, hopefully, to stay. But also, if they're not, our priority is still to continue to create those jobs through the type of tax relief that we have the opportunity to do.

We understand how difficult it is when one loses their job, and so we're going to do everything we possibly can to encourage the investment to create more.

Certainly, our auto sector is number one. We have a new assembly plant in Woodstock, and our machinery and equipment investments have grown by 6.2% in the second quarter.

If you actually look at what happened in Canada, our exports on machinery and industry are \$70 billion. That actually does not include the cost of weight, carriage and freightage. When it's imported and it comes in from the United States, it carries those numbers, so it's slightly higher, at \$90 billion, in terms of imports, but obviously we still have a very good, strong sector in Canada dealing with machinery.

So what possible difference does that make here? In fact, our machinery in manufacturing—89% will pay less in terms of tax; software publishers will pay 58% less in tax; restaurants will pay 67% less.

1510

I want to speak to you for a few minutes about this extraordinary small business. It's called Blue Mountain Plastics. That's the name of Ice River Springs' recycling facility. It's not 1,000 jobs; it's 35 jobs. It's a small business in Shelburne—absolutely phenomenal. They take those old bottles and they recycle them. They have recycled one trillion bottles into new bottles by taking just the number 1s. It's a subsidiary. It works here in Ontario. It manufactures here in Ontario, and it can actually take all of the recycling processes right through the Great Lakes and all of Ontario as well. They can handle 80% of the blue box material that's collected in Ontario annually.

The best part is, this is a really good business that started with a company called Amut from Italy. So it's a combined effort using Italian investment, United States investment and Canadian know-how by putting this together and putting something that now goes into President's Choice, into Walmart; it will go into Shoppers Drug Mart—a significant number of suppliers of bottled water.

All of us know that we've got to keep those things out of our landfills. The last thing we want to do is to burn them, because of the particulates they put into the air, or

maybe they can actually put them into cement. What we need to do is recycle.

This is a really good example of how a small business, because of the good tax incentives that are here in Ontario, came to set up that manufacturing company in Ontario. Yes, there are 35 jobs today. They're working 24/7, and they're looking at how they can expand. Their biggest challenge is, they need more and more of those bottles. The best part is, they reduced their energy footprint. It is the best story for energy recycling, because they deal within a range that certainly reduces their carbon imprint, bringing in that product for them to be able to—

Mr. Mike Colle: Where is that company?

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: That company is Blue Mountain, in Shelburne. As I said, it has converted over one trillion bottles.

So I think what we've been able to do is to share with you that, yes, tax relief does work and that we will continue to work with our large corporations, but the heart and soul of this province is in small and medium corporations. We've got to continue to find ways and means to create those jobs, to ensure that they continue to exist and to provide the kind of tax relief that allows them to continue to hire more people. That's really what this is all about.

I want to say something, though. I want to say thank you to the members of the third party for your support yesterday on the throne speech—I just want to say thank you. And then I'd like to take one last minute, because I may not get to speak again, and say Merry Christmas, everyone.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me this afternoon. I'm pleased to rise to speak on behalf of our PC caucus, the residents of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex and the many small and medium-sized businesses who would be impacted by this motion.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, I come from a small business background, a small family business in the village of Newbury in southwestern Ontario, and we proudly employ over 65 people in our Home Hardware Building Centre store, auto parts store and our Rogers store. So I'm speaking today on behalf of small and medium-sized businesses.

This motion will place a moratorium on the current legislated corporate tax reductions that are scheduled to take effect on July 1, 2012, and again on July 1, 2013, and that is something that I strongly oppose.

You see, Mr. Speaker, businesses across Ontario, small and medium-sized businesses, are counting on these tax reductions. They've already been passed into law, and responsible corporations are now planning and counting on these reductions to continue to get the Ontario economy back on its feet.

Ontario currently has some of the highest corporate tax rates, second only to the province of New Brunswick. That's right, Mr. Speaker: second-highest in all of Con-

ederation. Manitoba, as we've heard, under an NDP government, has supported their businesses and held their lower corporate tax rate at nil. PEI comes in at 1%, British Columbia at 2.5%, Alberta holds true at 3%, our friends out in Newfoundland and Labrador come in at 4%, and so do the territories, and, of course, Ontario, as I mentioned, is second worst at 4.5%.

This motion would have a drastic impact on our small and medium-sized businesses, the very heart of our economy. Indeed, over 90% of all new jobs come from small businesses, the very businesses who will benefit most from this fair, transparent and necessary reduction in corporate taxes. You see, Mr. Speaker, I believe in being fair, open and transparent—that's how I was raised, and that's how we do business—and these across-the-board, broad-based corporate tax cuts are much better than picking and choosing certain items and applying tax credits here and there.

The Ontario PC Party has always been committed to ensuring that businesses are able to compete and are able to help grow our economy. We need to create more jobs and create the conditions in which businesses in Ontario can thrive and prosper.

I will not be part of telling small independent and private businesses where they should invest to win the favour of our government. Instead, I will be standing up for our small and medium-sized businesses, standing up for broad-based corporate tax reductions and opposing this motion, and I encourage all of my colleagues to do the same. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Cindy Forster: I want to thank our leader, Andrea Horwath, for bringing forward this motion today, because despite low corporate tax rates and besides corporate tax cuts, those tax cuts have not helped Welland, they have not helped Hamilton, and they have not helped St. Catharines, and over the—well, just since 2008, we've lost thousands of jobs in my riding. The new jobs that have been created that we've been hearing about here today are not jobs that pay \$30 and \$35 an hour. They're not jobs that support families. They're not jobs that put kids through university.

The banks—we heard about the banks' \$6-billion profit. Banks are paying a buck an hour more than minimum wage to most of their front-line workers. Those are the kinds of jobs that the \$6 billion is supporting.

In my community, John Deere closed its doors after 100 years in 2010—800 factory jobs gone; 800 employees out of work; another 300 office workers in that factory. That business was in our community for 100 years. It made tons of profit. In addition to corporate tax breaks, it also got infrastructure investment to the tune of millions and millions of dollars, but it turned its back on our community, on our workers, and it took all those jobs to China, where it could make some more profit.

Henniges, which has been under the name of probably six different companies over the last 50 years, just closed its doors. I was at a barbecue in September, and I think that at the end of the day, there were 300 jobs lost, but at

its peak, not that long ago, maybe 2007 or 2008, it employed 1,500 workers in our community. Some husbands and wives both worked at that factory, and now both of them are out of work.

What I'm hearing in my community is, as these people run out of EI benefits, they're having to sell their houses, because there are no jobs—there are no jobs in the province of Ontario other than low-paid jobs—to support families in our community. So people in our community are either having to remortgage their homes or they're having to sell their homes so that they can actually live off of those while they wait for a job to come their way.

Bick's Pickles in Dunnville shut down; 300 jobs. CanGro in Exeter closed at the same time; 150 employees at CanGro near St. David's in Welland. We tried to save that factory, but we couldn't, so another 150 employees out of work.

So I think that this plan—

Interjection: Atlas Steel.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Atlas Steel, Slater Steel, another one—800 jobs.

Mr. Paul Miller: Hershey.

Ms. Cindy Forster: That's right.

We need to have these tax incentives so that we can encourage employers to create new jobs in our communities and to keep these jobs in our communities.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak to this.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Rob Leone: I wanted to speak to this motion today because I have a very brief comment to make. I think we have to have a tax policy, an economic policy, that will ensure that jobs are created. I agree with the member. I'm not sure that the solution proposed by the leader of the third party is going to do that.

That's the comment I wanted to make, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

1520

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'm eager to talk today in support of this motion that was presented by my leader, Andrea Horwath.

In London–Fanshawe and, I'm sure, as my colleague from Welland mentioned, many cities, people are struggling; people have lost their jobs. In my neighbourhood, where I live, I have seen homes foreclosed. That really disturbs me because, as I ran for this election, one of the big issues that people told me about is jobs and job security and job benefits.

What we're doing by presenting this corporate tax credit for businesses is allowing them to get the benefit of having lower taxes, but there are strings attached to show what they're going to do with that investment that we're making in their businesses.

What we want to propose with this motion is—we want to target job creators and have a job creation strategy that gives companies tax breaks only if they actually create the job, invest in machinery and equipment, or help employees upgrade their skills.

As you know, my riding has a 9.2% unemployment rate, which is one of the highest—much higher than what Ontario has now. We've lost a record number of manufacturing jobs, and the corporate tax giveaway that the government is proposing is not working.

Throwing money at the problem without the means of a measuring stick of how this money is going to create jobs doesn't make sense. The people of my riding need real leadership from this House, not a photo op from the Liberals. We need to have real jobs from these investments.

I can't stress enough how upset my constituents were that they couldn't find a permanent job with benefits. Working two and three jobs just to put their food on the table and to pay the HST on life's necessities—it's not fair. And then we're giving corporations tax giveaways without making them accountable for the money that they're going to be using from the taxpayers.

Speaker, I support corporate tax breaks for companies, but for the companies, again, that create new jobs, train workers and buy equipment to create a job for someone, not just giving away the money and watching it go out the door. Handing over the keys to the vault without requiring anything in return is an unacceptable way to address the real concerns that currently face jobless people in Ontario.

Lower rates haven't proven to boost productivity in our economy, so I don't understand why we think the solution is to continually lower corporate tax rates and not have them be accountable to create the job for the money that they're getting. As a mother, I wouldn't give my child dessert if they didn't eat all their food, so we have to use that same principle. You're going to use that money until it's all used up and you're creating a job, or you won't see a dollar of it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm very privileged to engage in this opportunity this afternoon.

Our member from Thornhill made it perfectly clear that our position is somewhat a juxtaposition of the position of the member from Hamilton.

I would say the leader of the NDP is actually standing on a principle that has been made, and I respect the fact that you do stand and speak with conviction and courage on what you stand for. What I'm really trying to say directly—but saying it indirectly, it's much more positive.

The government does not seem to have that sort of compass, that commitment, that conviction to be straightforward with the people of Ontario. In fact, I feel—

Interjection: And consistent.

Mr. John O'Toole: I feel consistently—this week and last week, we've heard from officers of the Legislature, independent experts in the environment. They've failed. They said they would have such reduction in energy use—we saw in the clippings this morning. They see reduction in improvements in recycling and waste diversion. They failed. In every single measurement—this is just one more word.

At least you're putting a stake in the ground. You think this could make a difference for people and families. Good for you.

But I haven't heard one thing—our leader, Tim Hudak, today said the same thing on both of his first lead questions: "What have you done?"

What have they done? It's really what the people of Ontario should be worried about. They're leaving—here it is—the 8th of December, and we're not going to be here until some time late February, if then. Prior to that, there are supposed to be hearings this winter. Normally the standing committees meet during the winter in pre-budget consultations. It's disappointing that those committees have not even been struck, so they won't be sitting, so the people of Ontario won't know what's going on because there really is no plan.

Now, this particular bill, I think, if you put a bit of referencing around it, is about jobs and the economy. Ultimately we all agree there are no jobs and no real job plan. We know the economy is on a negative slope.

Now, there are some relationships here which I need to put on the record. I think this is what I want to start now.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, order, please.

Mr. John O'Toole: Here are some of the risks in the economy right now: Ontario, as has been mentioned by other speakers, is a very high tax jurisdiction. By any measure—you look at almost every other province, including Manitoba, which is the best example, where it's an NDP government. They have zero tax. But here's the most important thing: Corporations do not pay the tax unless they make profit.

Now how are the companies doing? Look at the market—not just Research in Motion, which used to be \$85 or \$100 a share. It's now about \$15 a share. That's loss of equity, whether it's in pension funds or your own personal investments. So this idea here of reducing tax is not the only solution. It's, to me, I think, quite frankly—

Interjections.

Mr. John O'Toole: Well, you've got to look at, I think, the best example. They have a study going on with Don Drummond, a world expert and one of Canada's most respected economists. Here's what he's saying in Ontario: When talking about the deficit in 2009, Mr. Drummond said, "It's a lot higher than people are thinking, and it's a graphic illustration to me that there is a structural deficit."

Ontario has a spending problem. They really do. They have increased spending faster than the growth in the economy. As such, they've created a complete depression within the province of Ontario. We are shedding jobs, not gaining jobs. Every point in the GDP—this is very important—represents about \$700 million or \$800 million in revenue. Every point that goes down, you lose the \$700 million, and your costs go up; it's a billion dollars for every point. So if your economy is not growing, your revenue is shrinking. They don't seem to understand that.

The NDP at least have principles.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member from Hamilton Centre, you have two minutes to reply.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I want to thank all members who participated in the debate. There's a couple of things that were brought to the table that I really do think it's important to address.

First and foremost, I don't believe that the people of Ontario think that the banks are all that hard up. I think the people of Ontario think that the banks are doing quite well. They would rather see a break for themselves for a change instead of the big banks getting more and more of a break.

I think that it's important to acknowledge that Manitoba is doing great. They're a fantastic government; they've got their fourth mandate now. Their corporate tax rate, in fact, is 12%. Their small business rate is zero, but their corporate tax rate is 12% at this point because they actually stopped reducing their corporate taxes when the recession hit, and they switched to a targeted approach that targets tax credits for things like investment and job creation. So I too, like the Conservatives actually, would like to follow along with what Manitoba is doing because I think they have it right. When you don't have the money, you simply don't give it away.

I would disagree with the idea that this is only about a spending problem. I think it's obviously a revenue problem, and that's why we think it is so irresponsible for this government, at this point in time, to continue with the corporate tax reductions.

1530

You know what? During our campaign, we said, "Roll them back to 14%." But in the spirit of trying to find some compromise, trying to work together with the government, trying to bring some ideas forward that we thought they might be able to support, we went away from that 14% figure and said, "Okay, just stop right now. Just don't continue with the next 1.5% reduction."

What is so hard about that? Why is that so difficult, when we know that those tax cuts are not working? I'm going to reiterate for a final time: Jobs are not being created. In October, we lost 75,000 jobs in Ontario. We have no investment happening here. In lockstep, investment is going down at the same time as the tax rates, and we have not enough training. The minister should know that.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will have the vote on this later.

IMITATION FIREARMS REGULATION
AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LA RÉGLEMENTATION
DES FAUSSES ARMES À FEU

Mr. Dickson moved second reading of the following bill:
Bill 6, An Act to amend the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act, 2000 with respect to the sale of imitation

firearms / Projet de loi 6, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur la réglementation des fausses armes à feu relativement à la vente de fausses armes à feu.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to address a growing concern heard from our communities and our law enforcement partners across Ontario. I'm speaking of the ease of access to purchase replica and imitation firearms in our province. Replica firearms are literally identical to handguns.

Every few weeks or so, I read a news story about our public schools being disrupted and put into lockdown because a student or an at-risk youth brings a replica firearm to school. Innocent civilians are being intimidated and robbed because street-level criminals have easy access to replica firearms. Our law enforcement partners often mistake these genuine-looking replicas for actual guns, and several of these replicas can be converted into real guns quite easily. These are dangers that replica and imitation firearms pose.

We know that there are some laws in place that cover off replicas and, in some cases, completely prohibit their sale based on the make and model of the specific firearm. For example, we had a Zoraki model 925, which was available for sale at a shop in Oshawa up until this summer. The model 925, if you've seen it, looks like a type of automatic, Uzi-style pistol that you might have seen in the Al Pacino film *Scarface*.

You won't see too many track and field races being started with a starter pistol like that. Recognizing little, if any, legitimate use for the Zoraki 925, the RCMP rightfully deemed this model, along with the Zoraki 914, a prohibited firearm. The RCMP website also states that the Zoraki models are being sold as blank-firing pistols, but can also fire tear gas and flares with a muzzle adapter.

Since prohibiting these two firearms in late June this year, our Durham Police investigators have confirmed that these two Zoraki models are no longer on sale in Durham region. So, bit by bit, there's some good news. And more good news: Some municipalities have taken the initiative to follow through with an outright banning of replica handguns in their jurisdictions. One of those municipalities is the township of Scugog, in Durham region, which banned the sale of replica guns in its jurisdiction about six years ago.

Moving forward with more stringent controls on these replicas, we could look at imposing province-wide or even Canada-wide bans, and I would entertain some kind of all-party initiative on that front with your approval.

The legal age to purchase a replica firearm is 18 years, but often these guns get into the hands of youth. Youth are not to blame in all cases of replica gun incidents. However, I feel that our youth need some more support, and that includes keeping replica firearms out of their hands and the hands of their peers.

There are still many real-looking replica firearms legally for sale in Ontario. They are federally permitted for sale in Ontario and across the country. If the RCMP cannot ban each and every one of them outright, then we need stronger regulations in the meantime.

That's where my private member's bill comes in. My bill proposes amendments to the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act, 2000, put in place by the previous government. To this date, the IFRA, the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act, has not yet been amended.

My proposed amendments to the bill are as follows: The purchaser should provide, upon purchase, a written statement that describes his or her intentions regarding the use of the imitation firearm and include a declaration that he or she will not use the imitation firearm for an unlawful purpose.

The second one is a requirement that the prospective buyer provide the seller with a criminal reference check, proving that the individual has not been convicted of any criminal offence for which a pardon has not yet been granted.

The third and final recommendation proposes increased fines for those who contravene the above proposed amendments. The fines for sellers contravening this act would go up to \$25,000 for a first offence and \$50,000 for a second offence, a significant increase over the current \$15,000 fine.

Just a few short months before the previous Conservative government passed this legislation, our former member and past Attorney General Michael Bryant came forward with a private member's bill with the same goal: to regulate the sale of imitation firearms in the province of Ontario. It was called the Replica Firearms Regulation and Protection Act, 2000. That bill put forward by Mr. Bryant was stronger and it more closely regulated the sale of imitation firearms than existing law that we have on the books. I have taken the important parts of his bill and new information and am proposing to fit them into the existing legislation from the previous government.

Since I brought this debate to the Legislature back in June of this year, I continued to work with the Chief of Durham Regional Police Service, Mike Ewles, who supports the proposed amendments to this legislation. Durham police have confirmed even more seizures of replica firearms. They continue to take the time of our police officers and investigators and they continue to serve as tools of intimidation towards innocent civilians and between criminals themselves.

During an investigation of an Oshawa resident this October past, just a month ago, our Durham Regional Police officers seized a 9-millimetre replica handgun, over 490 grams of hashish and 4.8 grams of heroin with a combined street value of over \$12,000. The replica gun was used by these criminals as an intimidation device in the same manner as a handgun. Because it is not recognized as a real gun, its possession carries fewer legal consequences than those of a real gun. I just wanted to use this particular story as an example where genuine criminals are making use of replica firearms.

There were two more cases in Durham region this November, just a couple of weeks ago. Durham police received a tip that an 18-year-old kid was carrying a handgun near a local Pickering high school on November 3. Officers attended the area and spoke with the witnesses, who offered a description of the fleeing suspect. Officers canvassed the area and located the lone male suspect at a local shopping mall. The male was taken into custody at gunpoint and found to be in possession of a loaded replica handgun.

Although Durham region has been lucky enough not to lose a life due to an incident mistaking a replica for a genuine handgun, because the danger is real, it would be a tragedy for an 18-year-old to have lost his or her life just for playing around with fake guns in public. None of us ever want to lose the life of a child because he or she got the bright idea to brandish a replica gun in a view that could be seen by a police officer and was shot. I would never want to lose a police officer when the officer made a judgment call that it was a replica gun, only to have it be a real gun, and the officer was shot and perhaps killed.

On the night of November 14, 2011, just a few weeks ago, Durham officers located a stolen vehicle in the vicinity of Falby Court in Ajax. As the officers approached the stolen vehicle occupied with several male suspects, five youth fled on foot. A replica handgun was found and the three youth, all Toronto residents under the age of 18, were arrested. This is an example of another dangerous situation that could easily have ended in tragedy. There are several stories like this.

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As an example, a young man was charged around Weston and Finch in Toronto on November 27, a couple of days ago. He brought a replica handgun to a party Saturday night, early Sunday morning. Police were called to investigate a dispute at this party and the young man brandished what looked like a semi-automatic. Of course, with this information the officers would go in prepared to use lethal force if necessary.

Perhaps the most disturbing news came just a few days ago, when I picked up my local Ajax and Pickering News Advertiser of December 1 to learn that an 81-year-old Pickering senior was carjacked at gunpoint in Durham. The male senior was forced to surrender his vehicle to a young man and woman, but they kept him hostage at gunpoint. The couple drove the man to a bank and took his money. They drove him to a shopping mall and forced him to buy two BlackBerry phones. When police finally caught up with the suspects a week later, they executed a search warrant, recovering the senior's stolen car and the replica handgun used to intimidate him. And the stories go on. I could read more and more of these stories, but police bulletins from other ridings are bringing these more to the forefront as well.

Moving forward, I want to quickly address another unique danger that these replicas pose to the public and to criminals who use them for illegal purposes. Police say that converting replica guns and starter pistols into real weapons could become a major problem in this country.

Broadly speaking, firearms are much more controlled in Canada than they are south of the border. So, naturally, enterprising criminals and anyone else who wants a real gun will find creative ways to go about their illegal activities.

I want to speak about a case from British Columbia. According to CTV news, a 67-year-old man was arrested in May on charges linked to a case of gun conversion. The RCMP said that conversion is so easy that even a layperson can do it.

Back to Durham region and here locally in Ontario, where earlier this year Durham police seized a replica that was converted to a firearm by drilling out the barrel—a simple, simple procedure. At the time of my last debate, we were still waiting for the test results from this firearm from the feds. It was sent to the RCMP for test firing and the gun blew up in the process. This is a weapon that could have done a great deal of harm to the shooter, the intended target and a number of innocent bystanders.

Our police officers across Ontario do a great job. Arrests are being made and prohibited replica guns are being kept out of hunting and sporting shops as of right now.

I am going to speed it up a touch, Mr Speaker, because I know time is of the essence.

I just want to tell you that this is a simple bill with a simple purpose, and that's to reduce the amount of replica firearms in circulation and to hold sellers and purchasers more accountable. None of us ever want to lose the life of a child or an officer of the law due to an avoidable tragedy. Please support Bill 6 today. We will work with you. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. John O'Toole: I want to commend the member from Ajax-Pickering. I know in his community he's highly respected. The intent here is very genuine and, in that respect, is generally a good thing—I use the word “generally” quite generally.

What I'm actually trying to say here is that I have a bit of an attraction to this issue. I'm going to read, mostly to stay on topic here in the limited time I have.

First, it's important to put some reference around this thing. I looked into the Royal Canadian Mounted Police website and looked up replica firearms. It's quite a good article—a fact sheet. Here's some information:

“Replica firearms are prohibited

“To be prohibited as a replica firearm, a device must closely resemble an existing make and model of firearm. If it looks like an antique firearm, as defined by the Criminal Code and Criminal Code regulations, it is not prohibited.

“The Canadian Firearms Program receives many enquiries from people wondering whether an imitation firearm would be considered a replica if it resembles a real firearm in many ways, but it is made of clear or brightly coloured plastic, or is much smaller in size.

“Many of these devices need to be assessed case by case. As a general rule, however, those made out of clear

plastic and those that are a lot smaller than the real firearm are not prohibited replicas. Those that are brightly coloured might be prohibited, depending on other features.”

This is quite important:

“As an individual, you may keep any replicas that you owned on December 1, 1998. You do not need a licence to possess a replica firearm and it does not have to be registered.” That’s 1998. It’s sort of grandfathering all the old ones that are very valuable today. “However, you cannot acquire, make or import a replica firearm. If you take a replica firearm out of Canada, you cannot bring it back in.

“If you are a business, you may possess, acquire or import replica firearms only if you have a valid firearms business licence” that allows you to possess these prohibited devices.

It goes on. It’s quite well structured about who can get them and what you can do with them, and it’s very well structured in law today. That’s how it exists.

The background of this is much like the member from Ajax–Pickering said. They are used, if they are—it’s like trying to regulate criminals. Generally, they’re in jail or they’re breaking the law somehow when they are out. They don’t follow the rules like we do. That’s why the registry in Ottawa is so controversial. I won’t get into that part of it, but this sounds a bit like it.

But these replicas don’t have serial numbers or other identifying devices, and it really requires people to keep records. So if you’ve got this little corner store thing with the permit and the licence to sell them, they’re going to have these little pieces of paper hanging around with some stuff on it like, “John bought this thing that looks like a .22,” but there’s no serial number. It’s a good intention and it just doesn’t—we haven’t got the framework right here.

However, I want to give credit to Durham Regional Police Constable Todd Petzold, who brought this to my attention in 2006. I called a meeting at that time with the deputy chief of police and two or three mayors, and we had some pretty interesting discussions, and I want to give them credit.

In 2006, regional council endorsed a resolution brought forward by Mayor Marilyn Pearce, which came basically as a result of that meeting—a great former mayor—and a resolution was adopted to pass a bylaw to regulate the sale and possession of replica firearms in 2006. A copy of the minutes from the regional council meeting is attached—and if anybody wants to, you can see it. There’s an existing municipal bylaw.

This is a quote from Marilyn Pearce, the mayor at the time: “I am hoping all of the municipalities in the GTA will come on board on this initiative to get toy guns off the streets. It is really about protecting children and I don’t know how anyone can have an issue with that”: Marilyn Pearce, 2006.

Currently, there’s township bylaw 02-06. In the municipality of Clarington, there’s a bylaw there; the township of Uxbridge.

Again, the people you’re talking to here are basically criminals. They break the law; they don’t follow the law. And you’re really making it—a lot of paperwork here, as far as I see it.

It’s the right thing to do, Joe. I’d like to support it, but we need to do some work on it. I thank you very much for bringing it up, though. I think that’s important. I don’t approve of them. I have met with people. How do you regulate it, though? Do you understand? It’s a black device that looks like something, and “I was bought by so-and-so from”—it sounds a little informal for me, but I appreciate the effort you’ve put into it. I’m waiting for my colleague Ms. Elliott, who is a practising lawyer, and I believe that she has more to say, more accurately than I could ever say it. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: It gives me great pleasure to rise on this issue and to share my thoughts. I also would like to commend the member from Ajax–Pickering for his concern and his work on the laudable goal of protecting our community. I think I share with the member opposite in complimenting you, sir, through the Speaker, on your efforts to make Ontario a better place.

1550

I think it’s important to stress that no one would ever disagree with the idea of making Ontario more safe and providing the tools to assist in making Ontario a safer place. I think no one would disagree with that. That’s why the spirit of what the member from Ajax–Pickering would like to do is exactly that. The spirit of his intention is to make Ontario better, to provide some tools.

However, it’s the job of myself as a critic to highlight the efficiency and effectiveness of a bill proposed. This is not to say that I question the spirit of the bill proposed, but whether or not it’s an efficient or effective way to address the concern.

If I can frame the concern this way, essentially the member opposite provided some very serious stories about concerns in the community, examples where imitation firearms were used. It’s important that we look at these stories, these narratives. They provide a context of why the bill is proposed, but we should not be moved by the emotions evoked. It should be a rational and critical approach when we look at a bill, not an emotional reaction to some tragic stories. When we assess the effectiveness or the usefulness of a bill, it should be done with logic, clear thought and rational thinking.

The purpose of this bill, if I understand my friend correctly, is essentially to limit replica firearms in the public, to limit their sale. Does this bill achieve that? Well, let’s break it down.

The first point is, there are two new requirements added. The first requirement is that if someone is to purchase a replica firearm, they have to provide a statement indicating their intention. Now, anyone purchasing a firearm, when asked, “What is your intention?” will not say, “My intention is to commit a crime.” Obviously we can approach that with the logical inference that someone

wouldn't at that point say, "I'm purchasing this firearm so I can hold up a convenience store." They wouldn't say that.

The written statement portion—while the intention, again, I support—is well thought in terms of intention, but in a practical sense no one would admit to committing a criminal offence or an improper use at that point. If it's a starter pistol, he or she would indicate, "I'm purchasing this imitation firearm, this starter pistol for the purposes of recreational sports, competitions." If it's another type of replica firearm—for recreational uses or for collector purposes.

The second issue is providing a criminal record check. The issues that are engaged at that point are twofold. One is, we're providing store owners, people who are selling firearms, with a privacy interest. They are now able to access a piece of private information from a consumer at a level where there is not any evidence of any crime yet committed, and it concerns me with respect to the liberties of an individual and their privacy interests.

Furthermore, if there is an individual who has a criminal record—for example, for drinking and driving or impaired operation of a motor vehicle—but is a coach of an athletic team, are we precluding coaches who have an unrelated criminal record from purchasing a starter pistol? This is again speaking to the effectiveness or the practical nature of the bill.

Again, the bill proposed is directly targeting those who are selling replica firearms. It's a bill that is not Criminal Code. As my colleague indicated, from the party opposite, there are Criminal Code stipulations, there are Criminal Code sanctions on the possession of prohibited firearms. Criminal Code sanctions are by far more powerful, more persuasive, a better means of limiting or discouraging activity which is criminal. So in that respect, there are firearms that are prohibited under the Criminal Code, and there are replica firearms which fall under that category. I would respectfully submit that that is by far a more powerful means of sanctioning or discouraging criminal activity.

Then we're left with two additional concerns. When we look at the record-keeping component and the sanctions on the business owner, if a business owner improperly sells an imitation firearm, it makes sense that they should face a sanction. Increasing that sanction is arguably—there is some rationale, some logic to that.

However, the record-keeping portion—some of the concerns were highlighted by my colleague from the party opposite. How can we connect the record-keeping to the reduction of firearms in the public? How do we make that connection? If there is a statement that's kept by the store owner, and if there is a criminal record check that's kept by the store owner, they're presumably going to keep it in a file. The replica firearm is purchased by that person and is used at some point down the road. Without any specific type of identification on that firearm, it's very difficult to connect that firearm to the person who purchased it, to the location where it was purchased, to the store it was purchased in. There isn't a

causal link between them. If a firearm is used in a crime, how is that then to be connected to the store where it was purchased? How is it then to be connected to the person who purchased it? There isn't an identifying feature.

That component of record-keeping, while well-intentioned, doesn't have a causal link, and it doesn't have a connection to the effectiveness. How can we assess whether that would be effective in deterring people from selling or possessing imitation firearms? In summary, the concern is not addressed by the bill.

Again, I'd like to stress that I don't have any disparaging comments toward the member or his intentions. I'm simply criticizing or evaluating the effectiveness of the bill. If the purpose of the bill is to reduce imitation firearms in the public or in the hands of youth, then this bill does not address that, in the way it's presented. It provides an inefficient framework that's—

Mr. Mike Colle: Are you for it or against it?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: It's inefficient, so I'm against it.

It's inefficient. The framework of it doesn't address the real concerns, which I am completely behind and I support. We certainly need to make Ontario safer. We certainly need to help our youth and prevent these types of crimes, but this bill will not achieve that. There is not the logical connection. There isn't the rational connection between the purpose and the logistics of the record-keeping and the requirements of providing a written statement and a criminal check. If we balance privacy interests and effectiveness, I would respectfully say that the balance does not weigh in favour of the bill.

It's essentially a bill that requires deterrence by red tape, providing more red tape in the hope of discouraging the replication of firearms. But if it doesn't do that—if it doesn't accomplish that goal—what's the point?

When we look at bills that are presented, we have an obligation to make sure the bills that are presented have a clear purpose and a clear effect. Otherwise, we will clutter our legal system; we will clutter the bills that exist.

Interjection.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: The legal system already has enough hurdles and obstacles as it is.

Mr. Mike Colle: Lawyers clutter the legal system.

Interjection: Only the bad ones.

Interjections.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Raise your hand if you're a lawyer in the room.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Order.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: The final component is the requirement that store owners keep their records for five years. We're placing a lot of onus on store owners to keep these records. What are they going to do with the records, and what's the purpose of this?

If we combine all these factors, I respectfully submit that it's just not an effective bill to address the concern. For that reason, I think we need to rework it, retool it, to make it a more effective tool that our law enforcement agencies, our different administrators, can use to address their real concerns.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: It certainly gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise in support of Bill 6, introduced by my colleague and seatmate, the member from Ajax–Pickering.

1600

I think we have at least heard from the other two parties in this House that they do recognize that this is an issue of concern across the province. There certainly is the potential for loss of life, either on the part of a person in possession of an imitation firearm or possibly one of our law enforcement officers. I think my colleague has very clearly demonstrated that we have a serious problem.

Now, it's interesting, certainly, to hear from the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton that, while he recognizes the problem, he has certain issues with it. I would simply say to him, this is why it's so imperative for us to form the standing committees of this Legislature in a very timely fashion so that we can take this type of bill that addresses an important issue for further discussion. So I would urge the other two parties to consider that requirement that we form our standing committees very, very soon.

Now, looking at the provisions of the bill, I would say that the requirement that a criminal reference check be provided is an extremely important provision. The member for Durham has alluded to criminals using these replicas. So clearly he sees a potential that we might catch a few of these criminals through a criminal reference check. This is not an onerous requirement. It is very often required of coaches now, those who are involved with our youth, and it's a very simple provision, and I think an excellent one.

This legislation is important because it seeks to prevent harm to the community, and I think this is where someone like my colleague the member for Ajax–Pickering has such extensive experience—

Mr. Mario Sergio: Good member, good member.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Excellent member.

We have heard some very interesting inaugural speeches where we've heard the background of many of our new members in this place, and I think I would like to just bring to everyone's attention that this particular member was first elected to public office some 40 years ago. He has served as a school trustee, a regional councillor, a councillor and now clearly represents the people of Ajax–Pickering so well with his deep roots into the community.

I did want to touch on the issue of the RCMP, who have maintained that certain starter pistols and replicas can be converted into makeshift ammunition-discharging firearms. I think this is especially important. The member has alluded to the fact that this can be done quite simply, and I certainly found that reference through the RCMP's comments on the matter.

I found it particularly alarming—there was a recent article in the *Ottawa Citizen*, actually, just on December

2 of this year, and they have described another replica called “the outlaw.” This is a replica of a sawed-off shotgun which can slide into a backpack. The real version is a prohibited weapon, but this replica, of course, can be obtained and, as the RCMP has said, could be converted to an ammunition-discharging device.

The member has alluded to the interests of the Durham Regional Police. I know that in York region, our deputy police chief has also made the suggestion that starter pistols and other replica handguns aren't needed at all.

We've had a couple of incidents in York region. In February of this year, a Vaughan man was charged with possession of a weapon for a dangerous purpose after police were called to Richmond Hill. Even more recently, just this summer, there was an occurrence at the Tim Hortons in Newmarket; officers seized two replica handguns, a box cutter knife, two plastic badges and a police notebook and pens similar to what are used by police officers in York region. So this man was apprehended before any serious harm was done, something that certainly—I think the provisions of this bill could have prevented having that incident occur.

Now, the federal government does seem to consider the issue of replica firearms to be of some importance. I think the member from Durham also found this reference: that you cannot take a replica firearm out of Canada, you cannot bring it back in—if you do take it outside, you cannot bring it back in—and if you're a business, you may possess, acquire or import replica firearms only if you have a valid firearms business licence that allows you to possess prohibited devices for an approved purpose.

The Criminal Code also does ensure that there's a mandatory minimum penalty of one year in prison if an imitation firearm is used to commit, to attempt to commit, or during the flight after committing a serious criminal offence. So clearly, the federal government, even while they are dismantling the gun registry, does seem to acknowledge that there is some potential harm from the use of imitation firearms. I think the point that my colleague wants to make is that we should try and prevent these circumstances in the first place.

Now, there was a reference to the use of bylaws, and certainly some municipalities have passed bylaws to restrict the sale of these particular imitation firearms. I know the town of Aurora looked at this in York region, but in fact they decided not to proceed. Clearly, when you have a situation with bylaws, you're going to have a patchwork of regulations. This makes it very confusing for the average person. I think this is why a provincial solution to this issue is so important, and I would urge all members to support this bill here at second reading so that we can discuss it further in committee. Thank you so much.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Ted Arnott: I want to commend the member for Ajax–Pickering for bringing this bill forward this

afternoon. I think it's a worthwhile discussion, and I know it's a bill that he has demonstrated interest in in the past, in terms of a previous Parliament. I think that we, as legislators, though, have a responsibility to ask a number of questions with respect to the bill, and I hope that he will address some of these issues when he responds.

For my part, I think we have to ask what exactly is the nature and scope of the problem. I believe he has outlined an answer to that question in the course of his initial presentation, but I think we should look at that again. We have to question whether or not this bill will be effective—certainly there are some expressions of concern from this side of the House in that regard; we need to know what is the cost to Ontarians, whether it's directly to the taxpayers or to the individuals who will be affected; and whether or not this bill can be enforced.

I look forward to hearing more about this issue as the debate unfolds, and I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Mike Colle: I was just shocked by the NDP comments on this bill, talking about controlling replica guns is going to create red tape for the seller of the gun, that it's going to be a burden on the legal system. This is what the Tories were saying about attempts to get rid of gun control or gun registries. I'm shocked at the NDP. Maybe the new breed of NDP here is much different than the old breed I used to know. At least the Tories are consistent about this.

I just want to say that I commend the member for bringing this forward, because what it basically is—I think it's a concern that we all have. If you ask your local police forces, there are incidents of this happening in all of our ridings, where there are these replica weapons. And the thing that caught my attention was the easy conversion of these things that are being smuggled in from China. They're smuggling in AK-47s that are BB guns. Can you imagine that? And with the removal of a couple of interchangeable parts, they can make the AK-47s into lethal weapons. These are smuggled in from China.

So we're not talking about your toy guns; we're talking about a business here in smuggling, basically, in the criminal underworld, that is being supplied by this lack of oversight. The thing about it—

Interjections.

Mr. Mike Colle: I hear the NDP talking about, "Well, there's Criminal Code sanctions. Let the Criminal Code take over for this." The Criminal Code, as you know, has such a high threshold—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Stand with the people. Stand with the people on Dufferin Street.

Mr. Mike Colle: The member from James Bay doesn't care about the people on Dufferin Street who are being held up at gunpoint and that people are being shot at by these guns.

Interjection: He cares.

Mr. Mike Colle: He doesn't care. Because there are threats to people's safety in all of our cities, and in this

case here—you know, for instance, there's a Criminal Code sanction against carrying illegal weapons, handguns, in your cars. Well, these illegal weapons in your cars are carried all over the city, and there's never been a conviction—a rare day in May when a criminal is convicted for carrying weapons in his or her car. The Criminal Code never convicts anybody because all the Bay Street lawyers go to defend the criminals who are riding around our streets with illegal handguns underneath the seats. So if we leave it up to the Criminal Code, it'll be a rare day in June when they're convicted of carrying a real gun in their car, never mind these replica guns that can be used to threaten police officers.

1610

I don't know if many of you ever go on night patrol with your local police officers. I know the good men and women in 13 Division. I go out at night and I get a sense of what's going on. I go with the men and women of 32 Division and we see what's going on. And I'll tell you, they approach people constantly. They go to a car, they go to people standing around and they say, "Hi, how are you doing?" Well, you can imagine, in some cases, if one of these police officers is approached by someone else with one of these replica guns. How does the police officer know whether it's the real thing or not? The police officer, God forbid, has to respond. This is a threat that exists with these innocuous—things that some people call innocuous; they're not innocuous. They're a real danger to the police officers.

Also, young people say, "Well, I can go around with these replica weapons because if I get caught, nothing will happen to me." But they can go—and as we've seen, I know in Toronto there have been a number of them where people have been mugged. They've been held up by replica semi-automatic pistols, because they think, "Well, there's no consequence because the Criminal Code doesn't take this seriously." So if you wait for the Criminal Code to do something about these things, it's a rare day in June when they take this seriously.

So we need to look at it provincially to see if we can strengthen an already existing act. In their wisdom, the Conservative government of 2000 brought in this legislation. It wasn't a Liberal act; it wasn't an NDP act; it was a Conservative government that said, "You need legislation provincially to make sure that this type of illegal replica gun industry doesn't promulgate all over the province."

So the member from Ajax is saying, "Let's look at this and see if we can strengthen legislation that already exists there to make sure that our police officers aren't threatened; to make sure that the children in our streets are not threatened by these weapons, which can be extremely, extremely dangerous, because they are used like weapons." So let's give it a chance. Look it over.

No private member's bill is ever perfect. I know the member from Timmins—James Bay thinks they're all perfect when they come here. Well, they're not. They've got to go to committee, but he's stopping the committees

from being formed. Shame on the member from Timmins–James Bay.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Thank you for giving me the opportunity to make a few comments with respect to Bill 6, which the member from Ajax–Pickering has reintroduced this session: An Act to amend the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act. And I would like to start by commending the member for the intent behind the bill, which, simply stated, is to keep our communities safe. I know that he's a very dedicated member and keeps his ear to the ground in our communities and knows that many people in our communities are misusing these imitation firearms, either by using them in their original state in the commission of crimes or by modifying them to allow them to become actual working firearms.

This is something that our chief of police in Durham region, Chief Mike Ewles, has been very concerned about, and I would just like to read from a news article from March of this year, where he stated: “To someone staring down the barrel of a gun, you'd never assume it was anything other than a real firearm,” said Durham police chief Mike Ewles. ‘For all intents and purposes, an officer on the site would have no idea these weren't real.’”

So it is a problem, there's no question, and I do commend the member for bringing it up. But there are problems with this bill, and I would refer to a position paper on replica firearms that was prepared by the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police youth committee, which clearly indicated that amending provincial legislation is not the desired route to be taken. The paper clearly states that “the improper use of imitation firearms in connection with other criminal offences is currently addressed within the Criminal Code,” and indicates that any such improvements that could be made to legislation pertaining to imitation firearms should be addressed through the existing federal legislation. So we start with that.

Next, I'd just like to take a moment, because I know that my colleague the member from Barrie also has some comments that he wants to make, but there are some problems with some of the specifics of this bill, some of which were outlined by the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, who did a very good job, I think, of outlining the concerns which we share with respect to this. First of all, what this bill requires is that if you go to a vendor indicating that you want to buy one of these imitation firearms, you have to sign a declaration indicating the purpose for which you intend to use it. Well, clearly, Mr. Speaker, if you're planning to use it to rob the local convenience store, you're not going to indicate that on a declaration. So you wonder whether it's worth anything to have that declaration filed.

Secondly, we're taking a look at asking the vendors to hold onto the records for a period of five years, to do a criminal background record check. Okay, that's all fine. The problem is with respect to the firearms themselves.

There are no serial numbers on them, so there's no way of tracing where a firearm might have been used in the commission of a crime to a particular vendor. So what's it all for? That's what we have a concern about. We want to make sure that any changes that are going to be made are going to be effective, are going to be used to connect with the firearm that's being used in the commission of a crime, and that's what I think we really need to focus on.

At the end of the day, I have to say that I think it's a bill that is worthy of discussion. It is raising an important issue that we do need to deal with. I'm just concerned that the measures contained in the bill aren't going to be the effective ones to actually deal with it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Rod Jackson: Let me first state that I highly appreciate the member from Ajax–Pickering's intent to make our province safer for our families. I certainly share these goals, and they're a priority for me as well. Thus, it's important that the proposed amendment will actually achieve these goals. I'll discuss a couple of issues that should be considered when we vote on this bill, I believe.

The bill was proposed last May, and at that time it became apparent that there was a need to consult with more policing stakeholders to ensure this amendment would actually, in reality, have its intended effect on community safety. Even the sole policing stakeholder who was consulted, the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, said that it was inappropriate for serious incidents with imitation guns to be addressed by anything other than the Criminal Code of Canada.

Also, the proposed amendment will essentially create an imitation gun registry. I certainly hope that, at the very least, we can learn lessons gleaned from the multi-billion-dollar federal real gun registry boondoggle. The success of the imitation gun registry would further be strained because the pretend guns don't have real serial numbers. It's also going to create bureaucracy around our businesses, create red tape that's going to be impossible to track. It's not real.

We've seen that not enough policing stakeholders were consulted to adequately inform this bill, and those who were questioned its efficacy at really achieving safer communities. For hard-working families and businesses, the potential cost of this amendment plus the added layers of red tape for a group already bombarded with bureaucracy would be an irresponsible designation of resources.

We don't need more government in business and we don't need more government telling some businesses what to do. We need to be able to address the roots of the problem, not the symptoms. That's all this bill does: Create more red tape around an issue that really needs a serious look and a real consultation with all the real stakeholders who have a real stake in the safety in our communities.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

The member for Ajax–Pickering, you have two minutes to reply.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Thank you to the members from Oak Ridges–Markham, Eglinton–Lawrence, Durham, Bramalea–Gore–Malton, Wellington–Halton Hills and, of course, Whitby–Oshawa. I sincerely appreciate your information, and I did indicate quite clearly that I am looking to pursue that further, jointly with members of all parties.

I must tell you that this is not a plastic water gun; this is an identical handgun. The costs are borne on the bearer of the replica handgun, who has to take a declaration when he acquires the handgun, and that cost is not borne by the taxpayer.

When the chief of police says to me, “I’m petrified,” I get petrified. Police know that it’s a serious problem; it’s a growing problem. As I indicated—and I don’t want to be emotional about this but I want to think of a young person and I want to think of a police officer. None of us ever want to lose the life of a youth because he or she brandished a replica gun that happened to be viewed by a police officer and was consequently shot. I would never want to lose a police officer when the officer made a judgment call—and this is a concern expressed to me from police—that it was a replica gun only to have a real gun and the officer was shot and perhaps killed.

1620

I’m willing to work with everyone on this. I would like very much for this to go forward to committee where I can discuss it further with all members of the House today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The time provided for private members public business has expired.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM SPENDING

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will deal first with ballot item number 7, standing in the name of Ms. MacCharles.

Ms. MacCharles has moved private members’ notice of motion number 3. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

TAXATION

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Ms. Horwath has moved private members’ notice of motion number 4. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion, please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion, please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

We will deal with this vote after we finish other business.

IMITATION FIREARMS REGULATION AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA RÉGLEMENTATION DES FAUSSES ARMES À FEU

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Dickson has moved second reading of Bill 6, An Act to amend the Imitation Firearms Regulations Act, 2000 with respect to the sale of imitation firearms.

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

I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion, please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion, please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Bill 6 is referred to committee of the whole.

The member for Ajax–Pickering.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Justice policy, please, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The bill has been referred to the justice committee. Is the majority in favour? Okay. The bill is referred to the justice committee.

TAXATION

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Call the members into the House. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1624 to 1629.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Please take your seats.

Ms. Horwath has moved private members’ notice of motion number 4. All in favour, please rise and remain standing until recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Horwath, Andrea	Schein, Jonah
Bisson, Gilles	Mantha, Michael	Singh, Jagmeet
Campbell, Sarah	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
DiNovo, Cheri	Miller, Paul	Taylor, Monique
Forster, Cindy	Natyshak, Taras	Vanhof, John
Gélinas, France	Prue, Michael	

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): All opposed, please rise and remain standing until recorded by the Clerk.

Nays

Albanese, Laura	Dickson, Joe	Moridi, Reza
Arnott, Ted	Duguid, Brad	Munro, Julia
Bailey, Robert	Duncan, Dwight	Murray, Glen R.
Bartolucci, Rick	Elliott, Christine	Naqvi, Yasir
Bentley, Christopher	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	O’Toole, John
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gravelle, Michael	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bradley, James J.	Hoskins, Eric	Piruzza, Teresa
Broten, Laurel C.	Jackson, Rod	Qaadri, Shafiq
Cansfield, Donna H.	Jaczek, Helena	Sandals, Liz
Chan, Michael	Jeffrey, Linda	Sergio, Mario
Chudleigh, Ted	Leal, Jeff	Sousa, Charles
Colle, Mike	Leone, Rob	Takhar, Harinder S.
Coteau, Michael	MacCharles, Tracy	Walker, Bill
Crack, Grant	Mangat, Amrit	Wilson, Jim
Damerla, Dipika	McMeekin, Ted	Wong, Soo
Delaney, Bob	McNeely, Phil	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dhillon, Vic	Milloy, John	Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):
The ayes are 17; the nays are 51.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Orders of the day.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The government House leader has moved adjournment of the House. Agreed? Agreed.

Just before we adjourn, I just want to wish all of you a happy holiday season. We'll see you back in the new year.

This House stands adjourned until February 21, 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1632.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

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
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
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 Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Innovation / Ministre du Développement économique et de l'Innovation
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
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 Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonnell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Milligan, Rob E. (PC) Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Reza (LIB) Munro, Julia (PC)	Richmond Hill York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

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