



Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario

First Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament

Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario

Première session, 40<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Thursday 5 April 2012**

**Jeudi 5 avril 2012**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430  
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



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Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 5 April 2012

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 5 avril 2012

*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prayers.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES  
AMENDMENT ACT (RENT  
INCREASE GUIDELINE), 2012

LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT  
LA LOI SUR LA LOCATION  
À USAGE D'HABITATION  
(TAUX LÉGAL D'AUGMENTATION  
DES LOYERS)

Resuming the debate adjourned on April on April 2, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 19, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 in respect of the rent increase guideline / *Projet de loi 19, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation en ce qui concerne le taux légal d'augmentation des loyers.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** First off, I was pleased to see the Speaker enter the chamber this morning sans cane, and I trust that you're feeling better and are recovering and healing, so it's great to see that you're feeling great.

Speaker, I'm pleased to stand today on behalf of the New Democratic caucus to speak on Bill 19 to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, which the government claims the aim is to make rent more affordable and more predictable. The government proposes a rent increase cap for private landlords in the very profitable rental housing industry at 2.5%.

Speaker, I forgot to inform you that I will be splitting my time with the member for Kelowna—Kenora—Rainy River. Kelowna is a wonderful place as well, Mr. Speaker, it really is. But Kenora—Rainy River—they don't have a Rainy River in Kelowna.

The government proposes a rent increase cap for private landlords in the very profitable rental housing industry at 2.5%. When I say "very profitable," the private rental housing industry is one of the only industries that has consistently proven to make money due to rising property values.

Bill 19 will do almost nothing to address Ontario's crisis in affordable housing or provide for Ontario tenants' right to livable, well-repaired and safe units. Further, Bill 19 will not deal with the over 50,000 to 60,000 units that were exempted from rent control provisions. This failed experiment to exempt certain units from rent control was supposed to foster a climate to produce more affordable units, and that just never happened, Mr. Speaker. And Bill 19 is not retroactive. It does nothing to protect those tenants who have already undergone this year's rental increase in accordance with the guidelines.

Speaker, Ontario's most vulnerable are tenants, and in no particular order they are also seniors; they are children; they are single parents raising families; they are the working poor; they are those on social assistance, like Ontario Works; they are the disabled; they are immigrants, refugees and people of colour. I also wonder, Speaker, if the government has turned their mind to what affordable means to the most vulnerable.

Speaker, as I stand before you with the same concerns as my colleagues in the NDP, I truly believe that the government here has missed the mark on their efforts to make housing more affordable and more accessible. For instance, 1.3 million Ontarians pay more than 30% of their income on housing; 120,000 Ontario families live in overcrowded conditions; 80,000 Ontarians live in sub-standard or unsafe housing that requires major repair; and at that time, 142,000 were on the affordable housing wait-list, and that has grown to 152,000 households on the wait-list, and growing. On average, the wait is 10 years to get into affordable housing. People die waiting to get into these affordable housing units.

The insecurity today, compounding the lack of affordable housing, because of the risk utility costs, such as hydro and gas bills—energy costs will increase another 50%. One of the reasons I am so proud to stand on this side of the House, as the only party that has taken the effort from the outset of this Parliament to introduce a measure that would offer tenants and offer Ontarians a break, finally—that's something that we haven't heard, certainly for eight years, at this level—a break in their home heating costs, where we know those costs are ever-escalating and they add to the burden that is managing a household budget.

We also see on this side of the House that home heating, particularly in Canada, is something that we shouldn't necessarily allow corporations to gouge our residents on. It's something that is a necessity, certainly in the northern regions of our province, where folks heat

with oil, likewise in all the other regions of the province. In some areas, folks have to determine whether they pay for their heating or pay for food. That is a reality. It may sound clichéd, but it is a reality in today's economy where so many are out of work and so many struggle to just get by.

The income level of Ontarians is stagnating and declining. During the election campaign, the Liberals promised to keep the rent increase guidelines in line with what was happening in the real world for tenants. In the real world, tenants are losing their jobs, facing demands for wage freezes and rollbacks or living with a zero increase on social assistance. We know that has been the prescription by this government in terms of tackling the deficit. They tend to want to place that burden more and more on those who can afford it less and less. In the real world, the average rent is over \$1,100 for a two-bedroom apartment, and there is no limit on what a landlord can charge a new incoming tenant.

Even those who are well employed or seniors, who have to work hard all their lives, are feeling the pinch with the cost of living. The middle class is shrinking, of course. Half of all tenants spend more than 50% of their income on rent, and there are tenants who are making the choice between groceries, medication costs, sending their children on class trips or signing their children up for music or sporting activities rather than their rent.

Good housing is basic to individual and population health, as bad housing policy leads to a heavy burden of poor health, premature death and increased costs. Dr. Gary Bloch, a family physician and University of Toronto professor who founded Health Providers Against Poverty, said in a March 28 news article—he makes the link between poverty to the much-needed social supports for those on low income and the enormous damage to his patients' health. He is quoted as saying, "And I worry this will result in our society being less healthy, which should be the number one goal of the government." And shouldn't it be the number one goal of society, not only of governance, but our neighbours?

**0910**

Mr. Speaker, I've always approached my politics quite simply as wondering that—you know, I take into consideration my neighbours, my neighbours to the left of me, my neighbours to the right of me, not in the political sense but in the literal sense. I figure if the neighbour to the left of me is struggling, which they are, finding it hard to find a job or having to have three jobs, finding it hard to make ends meet, and the neighbour to the right of me is struggling as well, then what I figure is that I'm either taking too much or not giving enough.

Certainly, in light of the government's actions in the recent budget, we see that there is really no balance. They certainly are taking too much from those who can least afford it and definitely not giving enough to those who need it. That's why, once again, I am so proud to stand on this side to offer some real, constructive proposals to the government side, and I hear and I sense that there's a little bit of—they've had some auditory engagement here.

Their ears are a little bit more open than I think they ever have been. I see the member listening. He is listening intently, and I thank him for that, because not only are these provisions and proposals that I think will do them well as a government, bringing back some measure of respect—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** My mother always told me to listen.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** That is a good thing, and it's never too late to start, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that the member will start listening today, as we are on the verge of what could bring us into another election. But yet again, I think that the ideas, particularly around increasing the inventory of affordable housing in this province, an issue that's come before us at a time where it's critical, where our economy has really clobbered the most vulnerable in this province, those working poor or those who had lost their jobs after years of secure employment—we have to acknowledge that. It's an investment. It is a provision within this province that I think will trickle up.

There's something that you never really hear about: What about the trickle-up effect? What about when we take care of the poor? What about when we take care of those who need assistance, that it actually helps society get better on the way up? It's something that I think is never factored in in this House, that we can actually help those at the bottom, and by doing so, it helps everyone else. That's why I use the reference to my neighbours. I know that if I'm able to dedicate my life and my resources and ensure that my actions are contributing to some fairness in the society, my neighbour to the left of me and my neighbour to the right of me are going to be doing all right. It may sound altruistic but it's certainly something that I think we can use more of in this House.

Mr. Speaker, I've spoken just briefly on this bill. I will pass my time to the member from Kenora–Rainy River. I appreciate the time given to speak on the bill. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Kenora–Rainy River.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Thank you, Speaker.

I rise today to speak on Bill 19, an amendment to the Residential Tenancies Act, especially with regard to capping annual rent increases from 1% to 2.5%. In preparing for my discussion today, I spent a lot of time going over the remarks of my colleague the MPP for Welland on this subject. I believe she raised a number of important points about this bill and the affordable housing crisis that is facing our province. But rather than repeat the member for Welland's remarks, I will try to build on them and I'll try to bring a northern perspective to the table, because the challenges that we face in the north with regard to affordable housing are at times very similar but at other times very different than those being faced by members in southern Ontario. I dare say that, in my region, a rent increase cap might be a little less effective than proposing a cap on utility bill increases, which is something that I'll touch on a little later in my speech.

But before I go too far, I do want to draw a distinction, which I think that my party does quite eloquently,

between the rhetoric that's been used in this debate—so much of the rhetoric in this debate has been focusing on the term “landlord.” I want to be quite clear that there are some exceptionally good landlords out there. Generally, these landlords aren't looking to make a huge profit or living off of their properties, but instead are in situations where maybe their piece of property is more than one building, which is actually quite common in my region, or they've either moved out of town and they were unable to sell their property, or various other circumstances that have led them to focus more so on paying their expenses rather than profiting on the backs of others.

I do think that my party does a pretty good job of making this distinction in its proposal to require those who rent out six or more units to be a licensed landlord in the province. I think it draws a fairly clear distinction between those who may, for one reason or another, own a couple of properties and those who are actually in the business to make a profit.

I'd also like to say that there are many good landlords out there who do profit from their investments but do so in a way that's respectful of their tenants and their tenants' needs. In fact, there are many instances where landlords have had their property destroyed by bad tenants and have been forced to incur costs that are well above anything that they could ever possibly recover from the tenant to repair or replace the unit. So I just wanted to make that distinction.

There are good landlords and there are bad landlords, just as there are good tenants and bad tenants. Ideally, the Residential Tenancies Act would protect both sides in a fair and respectful manner. But with that in mind, I'd like to look at some of the concerns I have with this bill and the Residential Tenancies Act in general.

One of my greatest concerns is lack of consistency, both for tenants in general and those seeking affordable housing. When an individual is looking for a house or an apartment to rent, they have to look at two completely different models: those that are all-inclusive versus those where utilities and rent are actually separate.

I think it's fair to say for many people who may be starting out—and it may be true for all people—that determining this difference in value can be quite difficult. It's difficult, for those who are looking for a place to rent where utilities are not included, to really determine, based on the former tenant's bill, whether their costs will be in line with that or not. Some people look at the former tenant's bill and say, “Well, I'm frugal. I don't use this or that. I don't use a lot of electricity. I'm sure I can keep my costs down. I may be more accustomed to living in a cooler climate.” But then they can be hit with an exceptionally high bill shortly thereafter. The same could be said for landlords who rent their premises as an all-inclusive sort of deal.

I know of a situation, and actually it's a little comical. It was with my husband before we met. He was renting a unit. What happened was that one day his landlord approached him, and she was concerned about the high consumption of electricity that he was using in the apart-

ment. This was after she had already gone to Hydro One and asked what could possibly cause this spike of hydro. She was concerned that he had a grow op going on, because the spike had been so high.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Turns out it was a coffee maker. You would not think that a coffee maker would cause that kind of a spike, but my husband drinks a lot of coffee, so he had it plugged in most of the time. So what she ended up doing in that situation, to kind of minimize the costs that she was spending, was she bought a very expensive, energy-efficient coffee maker to bring those costs down. Of course, with the cost of hydro soaring so much in recent years, I'm sure more and more landlords are moving away from this all-inclusive model, because it simply poses too much risk and it's just too expensive. Especially where I live, it's very much the case.

In my region, I'm not so convinced that this proposed amendment is going to make that big a difference. With the downturn in the forest industry, many communities in my region have a substantial number of vacancies, and there are a number of opportunities for individuals to rent places for near cost, simply because the real estate market has tanked. There are many people who need to leave the community to find a job elsewhere, but they're unable to sell their house, so they're forced to rent it. It's very hard to sell a house, as I said, when the industry has taken a hit. People aren't buying houses, and we're seeing houses that go for over \$100,000, \$150,000, selling for as little as \$20,000 to \$25,000.

**0920**

So it's difficult for people who are renting multiple complexes or complexes with multiple units to make a profit and to sell those. This situation is really quite different from what's happening in Toronto right now, where you have very profitable hotels that are being shut down in order that condos can be built.

Utilities, on the other hand, are a real killer in our region. The price of electricity has gone through the roof, and so has the price of fuel, such as home heating oil and also electricity. That too is another thing that people don't necessarily think about when they are looking to rent a place. I know I have an experience where I rented a very small place in rural northwestern Ontario, outside of any kind of formal municipality. It was a small 800-square-foot place, and my monthly bills were in the range of \$500 to \$700 just to heat the building, and that was not including any electricity or anything like that.

I would like to touch a little bit on affordable housing, as my colleague from Welland very aptly and skilfully discussed the other day. The truth is that many of the affordable housing units that we have built in this province, at least where I live, were built 30 to 40 years ago. They were built quickly and they were built cheaply. So, in many cases, they're insulated poorly. They're poorly ventilated, and some of these units have the electricity and the heat included, others do not.

So here we have a situation—I know when I was a constituency assistant, before I ran in the Legislature, I

had a couple people from Red Lake call down, and they were very concerned, because they didn't have a lot of money. Their subsidized rent was about \$85 a month, but their hydro bills, when they came in, were in the neighbourhood of \$700 to \$800. How does that make sense? When I talked to the area district services board, who provide the subsidized housing units, they said that unfortunately they aren't able to provide it for everybody, and for those folks in those units that they do provide everything included, sometimes they're subsidizing in the neighbourhood of \$3,000 a month just for electricity.

The point that I'm trying to make is that this bill does go a ways towards capping some of the profits that landlords can make, but it does very little for those who can afford to rent the least, whose utilities are already spiralling out of control. I'd like to see this bill do more to address that.

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

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** It was interesting. I listened very, very intently to the member from Essex and to the member from Kenora–Rainy River. They made a significant contribution to the debate on Bill 19 this morning.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, if we roll back the clock to 1975, it was then that Stephen Lewis, who had become the Leader of the Opposition after the 1975 provincial election, pressed the Davis government to bring in rent controls in the province of Ontario. That was the product of co-operation in a minority government, the kind of co-operation that we're fostering each and every day that we're in this chamber.

But you know what's really important to the people who rent in the province of Ontario? Stats Canada released some information this morning that is terrific for Ontario. Ontario posted employment gains of 46,000, all full-time jobs, in March. It reduced the unemployment in the province of Ontario from 7.4% to 7.2%, the lowest in three years. Since March 2011, Ontario has increased employment by 1.3%—over 89,000 new jobs in the province of Ontario, Mr. Speaker. That is good news.

I certainly want to make sure that the members of the opposition—of course, they have some problems with Stats Canada. Their federal brother in Ottawa, when they were posting Stats Canada reports, threw that guy right under the bus because they didn't like the work that they were producing on a month-to-month basis.

It's really interesting. We bring in a budget the last week of March; 46,000 new jobs during the month of March. Mr. Speaker, we're providing the platform for growth in the province of Ontario, something that's so important for people who rent in the province of Ontario, because when the economy is solid, people are making new investments in rental housing across the province of Ontario, and certainly providing the opportunity for more people to rent as more people have jobs in this great province.

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

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It was like listening to stereo this morning, with the member from Essex and the member

from Kenora–Rainy River. To some extent, I admire and respect the fact that they stand here for “people of modest means,” as they describe it themselves. And I do think it's shameful that your husband keeps leaving the coffee maker on; I would say that. That's shameful. It's costing you a fortune.

First, I want to start by saying that this is very important: This is Easter weekend, and I wish everyone a happy Easter. I hope the bunny is good to them. But I'm not surprised that Dalton McGuinty is not good to us. In fact, this is what this bill is about. What it does—there's nothing in this bill. I don't know why we're spending this much time on it. All it actually does—I'm going to read it to you. There's one section; actually, it's half a page. You could download this bill and it would cost you two cents, and it doesn't do very much. Here's what it does. One clause, this is all it does; I'm going to read it to you: “The guideline for a calendar year” should not be less than 1% and not more than 2.5%. That's all it does. It's a rent guideline.

So we support it. I have no idea why we're spending this much time, when the economy of Ontario is going over the cliff. What's more important, the underlying cause here, as we approach Easter, is that there's 600,000 families that can't afford to live here any more, in Ontario.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities is an elitist; I get that. He's a Toronto-based condominium type person, and probably quite wealthy, and it's not affecting him. It's my constituents that I'm standing up for, who can no longer afford to pay the electricity bill in their apartment. This is the truth of what I speak to, and it's a shame that this morning we're wasting this much time on such trivia.

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

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** This morning I just wanted to introduce a particular seniors' group out of Elliot Lake who are very active in the community and speaking on behalf of seniors. They're called the Seniors' Action Group of Elliot Lake. They, along with many other seniors' groups in Algoma–Manitoulin, have really grave concerns when it comes to affordable rent, making the proper choices at the end of the month, looking at, “Am I paying my full prescription? Am I paying half my prescription? Am I going to be able to meet the rent at the end of the month? How much of an interaction am I going to have with my landlord?”

I just want to go back to the comment that my colleague from Kenora–Rainy River made in regard to the coffee machine. How many of you actually think that that coffee machine is on to heat the home? Well, I'll give you another perspective, which is actually a factual one. That coffee cup that they warm up every morning actually warms up their hands, because they're making the choice of closing their power or their hydro or their heating sources inside of their apartment, and this is them taking that opportunity to warm up their elderly hands. That's factual. That's happening right now.

So some of these changes, yes, they're light-hearted, but you know, in hindsight it actually is happening. So we need to make those changes. We need to make what is required in order to help a lot of our community members. I commend this group. They're referred to as SAGE; again, they're the Seniors' Action Group of Elliot Lake. They are a fantastic organization that are really big advocates for issues and concerns that are affecting not only seniors in Elliot Lake but the community of Elliot Lake. I take my hat off to them and I look forward to working with them and listening to a lot more of their input that they can provide to me so I can do my job effectively here.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Oak Ridges–Markham.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly a pleasure to rise just for a brief time in support of Bill 19 and to comment on the remarks made by the member for Essex and the member for Kenora–Rainy River. Why I'm so proud to be a member of this government is because I think this Bill 19 shows clearly that we have a very balanced and prudent approach to matters. What we're doing here is a matter of protection for both the tenant and the landlord. There are two parties obviously involved, and I just say to the member for Durham, who finds this bill trivial, I don't think that 29% of all households in Ontario which in fact are tenant households—that's well over a million households—would find this particular bill trivial.

**0930**

It's clearly something that is going to continue: our very responsible way of allowing affordable housing and stable housing for renters during these somewhat turbulent economic times. I think it shows that balanced approach that we've adopted over the last five years.

I think it's interesting to note that average rent increases over the last five years have only been 1.7%. Actually, since I have a number of figures here, I did do the average during the NDP time in government. The average rent increase between 1991 and 1995, I've calculated at some 4.5%. So, in a similar economic downturn, I think it's quite clear our government has in fact made rental housing even more affordable.

This rent guideline, capping rents at 2.5%, not falling below 1%, is a good balance for both the landlord and tenants. I urge all members to support this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Essex, you have two minutes to respond—the member for Kenora–Rainy River.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I'd like to address some of the comments that were made here. I would like to thank the members from Peterborough, Durham, Algoma–Manitoulin and Oak Ridges–Markham for their comments, and I'd just like to comment on a few of them.

I know the member from Peterborough talks about how we just—we're exploding with jobs in Ontario. I'm not sure where their Ontario ends, but I can tell you that it definitely doesn't include the northwest, because we are not rolling in jobs.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Or the southwest.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Or the southwest, right. Maybe just the GTA, maybe it doesn't go much beyond there.

With regard to the comment from the member from Durham, I think part of it is, when people think about their energy consumption, they think of things like, "Am I leaving the oven on a lot? Do I have the heat turned unnecessarily high?" They don't think about something like a coffee maker. I think most people are kind of blown away to realize how much electricity a coffee maker actually uses. But I can tell you, since that conversation with this landlord, he actually returned the coffee maker to her and he bought a carafe, which we use all the time, and he gets a lecture quite often about keeping the coffee maker on too much. But I do agree with the member from Durham when he talks about how this bill does very little. I mean, it caps increases, but it doesn't do much for the people who are already struggling to make ends meet. It doesn't mean a lot in the grand scheme of things.

I know that the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities didn't speak formally, but I heard his interjections that if we think that the economy is bad here, we should perhaps move to Michigan and see how bad things can really be. I'm just wondering, is that really the position of this government, that we should model our economy after what's happening in Michigan? Maybe we try to raise the bar a little bit more, and I respectfully suggest that maybe we raise that bar.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings to announce that there has been more than six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader indicates otherwise. Government House leader.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Mr. Speaker, we would like the debate to continue.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member from Mississauga East–Cooksville.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** Thank you, Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to speak. I'd like to thank everybody else who has spoken. Although, I'm a little baffled as to what coffee makers have to do with Bill 19, which is primarily about regulating the guidelines on how we set rent increases. Anyway, I guess I will just add that I would like to speak to the member after to find out why she's talking about coffee makers and not about this particular bill.

I'm delighted to speak to Bill 19, the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 2012. This is a bill that is very important to my riding of Mississauga East–Cooksville. Anyone who has recently visited Mississauga will know that it's no longer a sleepy suburb of Toronto. Instead, it's a very happening town, with its own downtown core full of high-rises, including the stunning Marilyn Monroe building, which has given Mississauga a very easy-to-identify skyline. I know that my fellow members from Mississauga—from Mississauga South and Mississauga—

Erindale—will agree that I think Mississauga today has a much more distinctive skyline than the city of Toronto.

**Interjection:** I agree with you completely.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** Thank you.

I'm delighted that all of this is in my riding. I'm indeed privileged to have the downtown core as part of my riding. That includes Square One—which, by the way, gets more visitors than even Niagara Falls per year. I'm very proud of that.

**Interjection:** Let's put a casino there.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** I'd be happy to host one—city hall, the Living Arts Centre, the Art Gallery of Mississauga, Hammerson Hall, and the list goes on.

All of this is to say that my riding has a large number of high-rises. It's an urban, downtown core with a lot of rental buildings. So anything to do with rent guidelines is of huge importance to me and the folks in my riding.

This proposed legislation is an excellent piece of legislation that balances the concerns of tenants with those of landlords, because this balance is key to any sustainable system that ensures that rents remain affordable.

Before I launch into the specifics of the bill, I would like to take a few minutes to paint an overall picture of rental housing in this province. I'll start off by saying that this issue is important to me and my riding, but I also know that there is probably no corner of Ontario that does not have renters. From the smallest towns and villages of Ontario to Toronto, there are renters everywhere. Young families saving up to buy their first home, new immigrants moving into their first home, students studying far away from home, young people on their first jobs, people struggling to make ends meet who cannot afford a place of their own, newly divorced or separated people struggling with their new circumstances: Renters come in all ages and all demographics.

I have myself been a renter, as a new immigrant and as a student. I still remember the excitement of being able to move out of my basement apartment in North York on Micmac Crescent to renting a brand new condo on McLevin Avenue in Scarborough. I still remember the excitement of feeling that I was moving up in life when I rented a small bachelor unit at Harbour Square overlooking the lake right here in downtown Toronto. I still remember the rent back then in 1996. It was \$900 a month, including a parking spot. A few months later, the excitement wore off as I realized that if I was ever going to be able to save enough money to buy my own place, I could not pay so much in rent, and so, quite reluctantly, I moved from the ritzy place downtown, right on the lake, to a place where the rent was lower but the view was no longer the lake.

So I know all about the opportunity cost of renting and how important it is to make sure that rents are affordable, whether it is for a new immigrant who is working two jobs to make ends meet, a young family saving to buy their own place, a single parent struggling to make do on one salary, a senior on a fixed income, or any Ontarian, for that matter, who is renting.

Just how many people rent in Ontario? Well, about 29% of all Ontario households rent. That means that

about a third of Ontario households or families live in rental units. This includes private rentals, social housing and transitional housing. To put a number on it, there would be about 1.3 million households that rent in Ontario. This bill that we are debating would cover about a million of these households. So, Speaker, this is a really important bill when you think about the fact that it's going to impact close to a million families in Ontario.

The goal of this bill is very, very simple. It provides stability to rents in Ontario. Under the current system, rents are indexed to inflation or, more accurately, the consumer price index. Put quite simply, annual rent increases move with the rate of inflation. This has worked quite well in the past, but recent fluctuations in Ontario's consumer price index have resulted in a 2012 guideline that does not reflect the economic circumstances of those who rent. These proposed amendments will change the rent increase guideline to provide more certainty, both to renters and landlords.

#### 0940

What exactly is the new guideline? I know we've talked about it a little bit in this chamber already, but I'd like to very quickly go over it. Essentially, the guideline remains the same, but what we are doing is, we are providing a floor and a ceiling to it. What this means is that in years when the inflation rate is such that the rental guideline increase under the current rules would be less than 1%, the rental increase floor would be 1%. What this does is it ensures that landlords get a reasonable rate of return on their investments. Conversely, should inflation be runaway so that the current formula results in rent increases greater than 2.5%, the increase will be limited to 2.5%. The proposed changes, if passed, would provide stability and affordability for renters during these uncertain economic times, and at the same time recognize that landlords require modest rent increases so that they have an incentive to maintain their rental properties.

The bill also has another provision. It would require that the annual rent increase guideline formula be reviewed every four years. I think this is a very, very important clause in here, to allow for a regular review as time, circumstances and the economy change. Maintaining the current guideline formula—just provide a floor and a ceiling—is what essentially this bill is about.

So why are we making these changes? These changes are important, given our current economic circumstances. I'm proud to say that under the Liberal government, on average, rent increases have been very modest of late, yet there have been some swings in the rent increases that make planning and budgeting difficult. Let me give you an example. In 2011, the rent increase was minimal. In fact, it's the lowest rent increase on record; it was 0.7%. But in 2012, under the current guidelines, it was 3.1%, so that's quite a bit of a swing. While the rent increases themselves may not be outrageous, it's the swing between 0.7% in 2011 and 3.1% in 2012 which makes it difficult for renters to budget their money.

When averaged out, the average rent increase over the past five years has been a reasonable 1.7%. Like I said,

it's the year-to-year swings that can be challenging for people, especially those who are on a fixed income or on very tight budgets. What this bill does is let a renter know that, at most, her rent will increase by between 1% and 2.5%. It lets the landlords know that at the very least they will get a 1% rent increase. It provides two things that everyone needs, especially people on tight budgets: stability and reasonability.

I said earlier that this bill is also fair to landlords, because not only does it allow a 1% floor; it also allows landlords to increase the rent by more than 2.5% by applying to the Landlord and Tenant Board for above-guideline rent increases in cases, for example, of extraordinary increases in municipal taxes and charges, in cases of capital expenses that are allowable, or increased costs related to security services.

This bill is just another positive step in the long list of things this Liberal government has done to help renters across Ontario. Our record speaks for itself. The Residential Tenancies Act in 2006 established strong rent regulations to keep rent affordable for tenants. We have afforded tenants across Ontario the lowest year-over-year increase of any government in recent memory, at an average of just 1.9%, and as I mentioned earlier, last year the rent increase was just 0.7%, the lowest on record in the history of Ontario.

As always, this bill is the result of broad consultation. We have heard from thousands of tenants, landlords and housing providers before coming up with these changes. Personally, I know that this is just the sort of thing that people in my riding need: affordable, predictable rent increases.

I wholeheartedly support this bill. It is about the lives of everyday Ontarians, making their lives just a little bit better. In an inherently uncertain world, what this bill tries to do is to inject a little bit of certainty—and I don't know how anybody can argue against this—certainty and reasonable rents for my friends and constituents who live on Paisley Boulevard; certainty and reasonable rents for my friends and constituents who live along Bloor Street just east of Dixie; certainty and reasonable rents for my constituents who live along Bloor Street just west of Dixie; certainty and reasonable rents for the many students and young professionals who rent in the downtown core in the new high-rises all around Square One.

As many of you know, my riding houses the wonderful Sheridan College, so we have a lot of young people now in Mississauga in the downtown core, living there, pursuing their college and university degrees for three, four years. They rent a lot of spaces in my riding, and it's really important that I be able to advocate on their behalf and ensure that their rents are affordable.

Certainty and reasonable rents for the folks who live along Hurontario in all those high-rises that dot that street in my riding from the 403 to the Queensway; certainty and reasonable rents for my friends who live in all those buildings along Confederation Parkway; certainty and reasonable rents for my friends who live in Park Tower; certainty and reasonable rents for my constituents who

live in all those Kaneff buildings in my riding; certainty and reasonable rents for all my folks who live in the iconic Absolute towers; certainty and reasonable rents for all my friends who live off Havenwood and those who live off Dundas; certainty and reasonable rents for all those people who live on Mississauga Valley Boulevard—Speaker, I could keep going on and on because there is no end to the number of rental buildings in my riding. There are so many rental and condo buildings in my riding, and certainty and reasonable rents for so many people cannot be anything but good, not just for people in my riding but for people all across Ontario.

The reason I know the names of every street in my riding is simple. It is because I have visited every building in my riding not once but multiple times. I have knocked on their doors and listened to their concerns, and I know that affordable rent is very, very important for every single constituent of mine.

It is so important for you folks back home that you can have some extra money left over for a piano class. That's what this bill is about. It's about ensuring that people on tight budgets can budget properly and have a little bit of money left over for those extra things that make life a little bit better: a little bit of extra money so your daughter can go to that math class; a little bit of extra money left so that when you finally make that trip home, you can buy gifts for the folks back home; a little bit of extra money to buy the pretty dress your daughter has been bugging you for; a little bit of extra money left over so that you can save some money for the down payment you need to buy that home you have always wanted.

Mr. Speaker, this is essentially what this bill is about. It's about allowing us a chance to chase our dreams, small and big, and turn that into a reality. That is what this bill at its very essence is about. It's a little disappointing when members on the opposite side try and turn this into an issue about heating or electricity. Those are all good issues, but I think this bill should be debated on its own merits, which is about providing certainty and reasonable rents for Ontarians—for every Ontarian across this province. It would be nice if the debate could be limited to the basic premise of this bill rather than talking about home heating or coffee makers or whatever else it is that my respected colleagues on the other side want to talk about.

This bill is very simple and I really hope that it will have the support of the entire House. I really cannot find anything wrong with it. All we are doing is ensuring that the rents are pegged to inflation, but we provide a floor and a ceiling and we make sure that it's fair to landlords as well, so that reasonable housing stock in Ontario for rental buildings continues to grow and everybody has a good, reasonable return when they are a landlord.

I know that many of us here are renters. Many of you rent here and I'm sure you would appreciate that your rents, wherever they are in downtown Toronto—I know many of you are from ridings across the province and you rent downtown here. I'm sure you would appreciate the certainty as well.

So let's just stick to the facts and let's not muddy the waters by discussing all sorts of irrelevant issues that have absolutely nothing to do with this bill.

I have been talking to renters in my riding about this bill. I have been telling them that this is a great bill but it's conditional: It can only pass the House if we get support from across the aisle. So they're counting on you folks to vote in support of this bill so that they can be assured that they will have affordable housing.

**0950**

In conclusion, Speaker, all I'm going to say one more time is that this bill is about allowing Ontarians a little bit of flexibility, letting them have a little bit of money left in their budget so that they can save for the future; so that they can provide an education for their children; so that they can buy that home they've always wanted; so that if they've immigrated, Canada does truly become the land of their dreams and they can own their own home. That is what this bill is about.

I'm really looking forward to all-party support. This is one of those good, motherhood bills. There's absolutely nothing wrong. It's fiscally prudent, and I look forward to support from everybody.

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

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** I'm pleased to rise to speak to Bill 19. Rental affordability is an important aspect of quality of life for Ontarians. It's understandable that we should be concerned with it and that we would work to ensure that rental rates stay reasonable.

Maybe it's a given that we are disappointed from time to time. I think this is a thin bill that is doubtful to change anything. It doesn't appear to address some of the pressing issues that are facing landlords and tenants across the province at the moment, and it seems like evidence of the growing disconnect between the government and the people of Ontario.

Bill 19 doesn't appear to contain measures that would do anything to create more affordable housing spaces or help municipalities cope with the mounting costs of operating their existing stock of affordable housing. It won't help open up new rental units or encourage landlords who are wrestling with the mounting burden of HST and skyrocketing hydro costs.

My predecessor, Joyce Savoline, who watched over this portfolio in her capacity as PC municipal affairs critic, cautioned the government time and time again that Ontario's rental housing stock was eroding as a side effect of the arrival of the HST. To that, I would add that the side effects of the government's extravagant green energy policy and its lavish feed-in tariff program have made matters worse.

Now the government is asking tenants to absorb the cost of the government's blue-sky energy policy. If this government wants to help tenants and landlords in Ontario, it can start by returning the attention of the House to Bill 4. That bill was approved by the majority of this House, and it deserves to be brought back here for third reading. I will not, however, be supporting Bill 19.

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

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'm pleased to stand to respond to the comments from my colleague from Mississauga East–Cooksville. She mentioned a couple of issues in regards to families having a little bit of extra money at the end of the day for that dress that my daughter has been bugging me for. How did you know my daughter's been bugging me for a dress? Except, we've got to add the HST on to that. What about those piano lessons that I'd love to put my son in? We have to add the HST on top of that. What about some of the soccer lessons and all the other incidentals that we'd love to provide for our families? Yet, on top of that, we have to add the HST on to everything—one of the measures that this government was in cahoots with their federal partners in enacting on the backs of the residents of this province.

The other thing she mentioned a couple of times was the certainty of reasonable rents—I think I'm quoting you well—certainty in reasonable rents. Of course, we would all love to have certainty in every measure of our lives. I'd certainly like to know how long I'm going to be on this earth for, and I certainly would like it to be for another 100 years, but that's not reasonable.

We do agree that there has to be some certainty, but there's some hypocrisy in that message. There's some hypocrisy in those talking points, because at the same time you're saying that you're going to provide certainty in rents, from 1% to 2.5%, you're saying that for all public sector workers, there is no certainty that their wages are going to be increased—no certainty whatsoever.

What you're saying in fact is, the only certainty is that you're not going to be able to afford the things you did the day before we enact this budget. That is really sending a signal that times are going to be tougher under this Liberal government, under the budget as it is proposed today. That's why we're pleased to bring in some other measures that maybe will give the certainty that people can live affordably and comfortably, with dignity and respect.

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

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I'm not sure what province some of the members opposite are living in.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, we just had 46,000 full-time jobs created this month in this province and over 3,000 part-time jobs. That's a record that neither party opposite—certainly, it takes many years for Manitoba to create that many jobs, and I know a little bit more about that than many members here.

We have arguably the biggest construction boom going on in the city. You cannot walk a block without seeing a half a dozen tower cranes. There is no city in North America or in the Western world right now that has the construction boom that this province has—dramatic growth rate.

You're right: It's because of this party. We're in favour of the HST, as is the party opposite's federal cousin. That reduced the friction of investment.

If these folks actually understood the economy, Mr. Speaker, they would have to do nothing more than walk three blocks, knock on one of the construction companies and ask the manager of the property—the member from Burlington should do this—about what the impact of the HST has been on reducing the cost of construction, which is then passed on to tenants in lower rent.

My mother, who is about to become one of Ontario's newest citizens, is out looking for apartments this week, and she finds it extraordinarily affordable, high quality, loves the city. I think she's more enthusiastic, Mr. Speaker, about this province than many of the members opposite. We sometimes in our generation take for granted the extraordinary economic boom and great times.

To my friend from Kenora–Rainy River, who made the comment about Michigan, go to Michigan where they have a 14% job recovery. Here we've created about 341,000 jobs and 121,000 net last year, over 46,000 this month alone. That's why we need to manage rent, because the demand for housing is unprecedented.

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

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The member from Mississauga East–Cooksville did a great job in speaking towards a bill that's actually two lines. The entire bill is two lines.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** He must have borrowed Vic's tie.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Well, Vic has a great collection of ties.

I commend her because she has been trying to speak on this bill for some time, and I commend her for that. But I think the member from Burlington made a very insightful remark on Bill 4. We passed a bill—the people listening this morning should know—the NDP had a bill, and we supported them in that bill, to take the HST off home heating. We actually believe in—do you know, that's going to affect the most vulnerable in our society. That would have given the normal person—right now, there's a bill in committee, Bill 30. Bill 30 is about healthy home renovation or something like that. You have to spend \$20,000, but to spend \$20,000, there's like \$1,500 worth of tax on that, and they give you a \$1,500 tax credit. This is a shell game. This thing here does nothing.

This bill should be passed now. They're in charge. All it does is control rent between a 1% increase as a minimum and 2.5%. This is a tragedy that we're spending this time, and the economy of Ontario is going towards the cliff, accelerating towards the cliff. There are 600,000 families that can't even afford to pay their rent and they're laughing about it. They're not paying attention to Ontario's future, and especially the pages here on their last day before Easter, their future is at risk. As I see it now, this bill does nothing—does nothing.

We're wasting all this time when we should be talking about some of the things the auditor said. The auditor has got it. He knows that we have a structural deficit in Ontario. The deficit is \$16 billion. The debt is soaring toward \$400 billion. And they're laughing about it. I can't believe it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Mississauga East–Cooksville, you have two minutes for a response.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** I just heard the member from Durham speak about the fact that there are a lot of families who cannot afford their rent, and I agree with him. But where we and you differ, sir, is that when you had the chance to govern this province, those 600,000 families that you talk about were cut off social assistance. That's not the Liberal way; that's the Conservative way. I'm sorry to say that, since you brought it up. I stand by this bill. It's a good bill.

I've heard some criticism about the HST again. Well, this bill has nothing to do with the HST. This bill has to do with providing affordable and certain rents to people across Ontario.

**1000**

I want to make one thing clear: This bill is only going to become more and more important in Ontario, because more and more people are choosing to rent, sometimes just because of their lifestyles, as well as the fact that our demographics are such that a lot more people are living in urban areas by themselves and they often prefer to rent. This bill is only going to become more important. You just have to look at the construction cranes across Ontario, which is a good thing for the economy, where a lot of rental buildings and condos are being built, and many of them will be for rent. There are going to be more and more people renting for certain portions of their lives. Eventually, I hope everybody has a shot at buying that dream home.

So this is a very important bill. We stand by it. It's a very simple concept: The rental increase is pegged to inflation, which is fair, but we are providing a floor and a ceiling. I'd appreciate if everybody stuck to the facts and just discussed the bill on its own merits rather than bringing in extraneous factors that have absolutely nothing to do with this bill. Thank you so much.

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

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** It's my pleasure to stand before my colleagues in the House today and speak to Bill 19, the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (Rent Increase Guideline), 2012, on behalf of the PC caucus today. The PC caucus cannot support this Bill 19, because we believe it's a piece of ineffectual and narrow legislation. The bill will not decrease costs for tenants or for landlords, it will not assist in opening up more rental units, and this piece of legislation is so narrow that it will not offer protection to those who are most vulnerable and need the protection the most. Bill 19 does nothing to improve anything for tenants or landlords.

According to the minister's own statistics, the average rent increase was 2.1% in the past 10 years and 1.7% in the last five years. These two figures fall within the arbitrary 1% and 2.5% range prescribed Bill 19. The bill will do absolutely nothing in terms of rent increases in Ontario. This is just another piece of window dressing we've become accustomed to from the other side of the House.

Under the current rent increase guideline, too many Ontarians, 1.31 million tenant households, are stretched to the limit trying to pay their household bills, including their rents. We know that some 20% of these households spend more than 50% of their income on rent. We have hundreds of thousands of people without work, while the HST and soaring hydro rates, along with increased fees, are eating away at what little disposable income Ontarians and people in Ontario have. Bill 19 will not change that reality, Mr. Speaker.

As for landlords, their operating expenses increase 6% each year. The government's ill-conceived energy and tax policies are driving landlords' costs through the roof. Under Dalton McGuinty, hydro rates have increased eight times since 2003, for a total of 84%—nothing to be proud of if you're talking about affordability for families—and if you're a family with a smart meter in your home, well, you've seen your bill go up a staggering 150%.

Also, the HST is driving up repair and maintenance costs for landlords. We must keep in mind that repair and maintenance costs are not subjected to any cap. The HST increased the cost of many services that landlords require; now subject to HST are snow removal, landscape costs, home improvement services. And the list goes on—it goes on and on and on.

Nickel-and-diming the people of Ontario to death is just not the way to do it. We need to get the job done. Landlords are losing money keeping their units available in the market. Landlords will either have to bear the costs themselves or pass the costs down to their tenants. Bill 19 will not change that reality either. The HST left some rental housing providers no choice but to use funds from their reserves. Reserve funds are meant for unexpected repairs and maintenance, and are a safety net to ensure the safety of their buildings, Speaker. When we do this, we're lowering the quality of the places where people are already living. If you've seen some of them, as I have while knocking on doors in Barrie, it's a disgrace, some of the conditions people have to live in.

Bill 19 fails to protect tenants. The rent increase guideline only applies to tenancies that have lasted longer than 12 months. In the real world, tenants move around. Landlords can increase their rents above the rent guidelines when their new tenants move in. The Residential Tenancies Act and Bill 19 are silent on these kinds of turnover rent increases. According to the CMHC, although the rent guideline for 2011 is 0.7%, apartment costs actually rose by 1.8%. This is a direct result of turnover rent increases, Speaker.

The former member from Burlington, Joyce Savoline, has repeatedly warned the government. She repeatedly warned the government that Ontario's rental housing stock was deteriorating as a result of the implementation of the HST.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Cam Jackson liked rent control.

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** You guys have got to get out of your time machine here.

According to the CMHC, the Ontario vacancy rate has decreased from 3.4% in the spring of 2010 to 2.2% in the

fall of 2011. The steady decrease in the vacancy rate in Ontario and the high cost of living as a result of this party's HST only exacerbated the problem with turnover rent increases. Average Ontario tenants are finding it increasingly more difficult to acquire affordable housing. Bill 19 could have offered more adequate protection to tenants, and sadly, Speaker, it's powerless in terms of protecting tenants against unaffordable turnover rent increases.

Affordable housing is an essential need, especially in Barrie, Speaker, where 5,000 families—not people, 5,000 families—are waiting for affordable housing.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would ask the members on the government side to come to order, please.

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** The Ontario Human Rights Commission declares, "The right to shelter, to have one's own bed to sleep in, a roof over one's head, a place where one's person and possessions are safe is a human right." Having a place to call home gives people the basis on which everything else in life begins. Without it there's no hope to maintain employment or get education and necessary training to break that cycle of poverty.

All tenants should be protected against unaffordable rent increases. However, 300,000 tenant households are living in accommodations that are not even covered by the Residential Tenancies Act. This is a long-standing flaw of the act, Speaker. When one of these 300,000 tenant households goes to the tenant advocacy agencies, they're being turned away because they are not covered under the law. Bill 19 was an excellent opportunity to extend protection to these families, yet the government chose to do nothing to help the 300,000 households and just apply their window dressing.

Bill 19 fails to address the real issue, Speaker. Bill 19 was introduced by the minister as her response to the one-year anomaly that we saw with rent increases going from 0.7% this year and the 3.1% increase we saw the following year. The root cause of these anomalies was not economic instabilities, as the minister calls it; the root cause is the government's inability to properly manage Ontario's economy, plain and simple. It is the government's decision to force the HST on Ontarians in their blind pursuit of costly energy experiments, with absolutely no regard to the impact on the hard-working families of Ontario and their hydro bills.

The guideline is based on the Ontario consumer price index, and we all know it's the minister's and the government's policies that caused the cost of living in Ontario to soar in the past several years. The rent increase guideline has just spiked up with it. If Bill 19 is going to do anything at all, it's going to limit landlords' and tenants' ability to adjust to new economic realities by arbitrarily limiting the range of rent increases to 1% to 2.5%.

Why won't the government focus their efforts on cleaning up their economic mess instead of proposing frivolous amendments? Bill 19 is just completely missing the mark. The tenants' groups know this legislation won't

really change a thing. It's an attempt by the government to really be seen as doing something at a time when I believe real, substantive change is necessary. It's quite ironic that this government has crafted a piece of legislation to narrowcast a message to such a select group of stakeholders, and even the group they're trying to appease has called it a failure.

Bill 19 presented a real opportunity to carry out more effective and beneficial reform of the rental housing system and cut red tape. For example, the government could have simplified the system and offered more help to landlords navigating through the bureaucratic system.

I'd like to quote from a small landlord from Brockville: "Not many have the time, the patience or the resources to litigate these matters. It is the opinion of a small landlord that the system, which has seen benefits over the years, has to be simplified, the process more friendly.... One has no idea until they experience this bureaucracy from a person with no idea of where to start, the frustration of where to turn or what to do now. To go to the tribunal to be turned away because of an incorrect process, incorrect form" being filled out, "to hear that the tenant has access to duty counsel, while the landlord has no support." That's a quote from a small landlord.

In conclusion, the PC caucus simply can't support Bill 19, Speaker. It's not in the best interests of Ontarians. It's window-dressing, a smokescreen at best. The minister should go back to the drawing board and do some substantive thinking and get a real bill that does real things to help the people and landlords of Ontario.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

*The House recessed from 1010 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I would like to welcome my parents and mentors to the Legislature today: Gary and Susan McNaughton, owners of McNaughton's in Newbury and from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** While we're on a roll, it gives me great pleasure to introduce my mother, Mary Murray, my best friend and soon to be one of Ontario's newest residents, who is in the members' gallery.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I'd like to welcome the family of page Emma Lang, with us today. They're here from Vermilion Bay: Her parents, Karl and Debbie, and her brother, former page Zach Lang. I'd like to welcome them.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I have the pleasure of welcoming an official delegation from Argentina, who are here to meet with our organizing committee about the successful bid and plans to host the 2015 Pan/Parapan American games. Please welcome María Celia Sánchez, Minister of Sports for the province of San Luis; Ivana Bianchi, National Congress representative of San Luis; Hernan

Cancio, San Luis program manager of sports events; Luciana Vajnenko, project manager for Gliocchi Marketing Agency; Ignacio Jakim, legal representative for Gliocchi Marketing Agency; and Aaron Glyn Williams, manager of partner relations at Toronto 2015. Bienvenido a Ontario.

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** I'd like to introduce a couple of guests from the University of Windsor here, some fine representatives from Windsor: Andre Capaldi and Caroline Jacobsen. Welcome.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** My question is to the Minister of Finance. Minister, you continue to insist that the Canadian charter will not allow you to implement a legislated public sector wage freeze, but two decisions have recently made it clear that a legislated wage freeze can be implemented in a situation where there are pressing fiscal circumstances.

There are 600,000 unemployed people in Ontario. Ontario's deficit is now three times larger than the other provincial deficits combined, and we spend \$10 billion annually on interest payments. If these are not pressing fiscal circumstances, I don't know what are. Minister, when are you going to stop putting Ontario's future at risk and legislate a public sector wage freeze?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, 46,000 more Ontarians had a job last month than did the month before. The economy is growing again. Our tax plan for jobs and growth is working. The budget plan for jobs we've laid out is the right plan. We do have to get back to balance by 2017-18, and we will. We will do it by working with our partners in the public and broader public sectors.

It was interesting: The federal government had a wage freeze, but when did they do it? They did it after consultation. They did it after bargaining. By the way, their wage freeze wasn't a freeze; it was 1.5% per year. So we don't need a lecture from them about how to do things.

What I can tell you is, our jobs plan is working. More Ontarians are working. Unemployment's lower than it has been in three years. The future is bright—

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

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** The reality is that we still have a net job loss since re-election. We still have almost 600,000 unemployed people in Ontario, and it's simply not acceptable.

The international credit rating agencies agree with us. On April 3, Moody's stated that "Canadian federal debt is low and the trend is favourable," but they continue to warn Ontario of a possible downgrade and question your ability to stick to your stated fiscal plan. Mr. Speaker, this is attributable to nothing else than eight years of outrageous Liberal spending.

Minister, every day that you waver on the question of a legislated wage freeze increases the chance of a further

downgrade in Ontario's credit rating. Why are you taking these chances with Ontario's future?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That member and her party and their federal cousins ought to stop running down Ontario. You are undermining our growth. You are undermining our future. You are going to cost jobs. Mr. Speaker, it's time they stand up for this province. It's time the Conservatives across the country—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Order. Order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I do know what is up, and it's the volume. Now, I have reminded members in the past that when I'm asking for quiet and we finally do settle down, it is not the time for the last interjections. It is the time in which I want quiet.

Final supplementary.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** There's only one party in this House that's running down Ontario, and that's this Liberal government, by refusing to take the necessary action to save our economy.

The reality is, your party is all over the map on this credit issue. On the one hand, you're saying the charter prevents you from taking action. On the other hand, you're saying you'll take action if you need to, somewhere down the road. You've already said, on Monday, that the budget has built in zero increases for public sector workers. So if you truly mean to hold it at zero, instead of just talking about it, the time for action is now. Stop the charade. Save the province \$2 billion and legislate a public sector wage freeze.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** This government, this party, will continue to stand up for Ontario. We will continue to create jobs. We will work our way back to balance, and we will do it by working together with all Ontarians.

It is time for that party—their idea of a jobs plan is to hire poll clerks and DROs and sign companies, to have an election. I think they're trying to undermine our credit rating by their comments and the comments of the federal government. I ask them, I urge them, to work with this government, work with all Ontarians: 46,000 net new—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I have been—actually, I've been a little bit patient on this little outburst, but I wish I had a magic bullet, and the magic bullet would be to have you hear yourselves.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I don't need that.

I'm trying to be sincere about how we are here, and I ask each of you, inside, to figure out how that is going to work.

New question.

1040

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Frank Klees:** My question is to the Premier. Speaker, the Minister of Health is now on record with a

menu of excuses for not stepping in to stop the waste of millions of dollars and the erosion of patient care at Ornge.

Yesterday, the former Minister of Health confirmed what we've been saying for months. In his sworn testimony before the public accounts committee, Mr. Smitherman confirmed that none of the excuses proffered by the minister are credible, that in fact the minister not only had authority but also had the responsibility.

In case, Speaker, you missed Mr. Smitherman's CTV clip last night, here's what he said: "If I was the minister, there's no way in hell that Chris Mazza makes \$1.4 million," said Mr. Smitherman.

Speaker, now that the minister has been indicted by both the Auditor General and the former Minister of Health, how much longer will she insist on holding on to her job?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The former minister and the current minister both have acknowledged the challenges with Ornge and both have acknowledged that the important steps we've taken to deal with the situation are very important. Let's just review them.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, the call for performance agreement being weak—you know, in the bill we have before the House, we've got a new performance agreement. We need to pass the bill, Mr. Speaker. The bill has stronger conflict-of-interest rules, increased audit, more detailed financial control—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Northumberland and the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and the Minister of the Environment will come to order.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health has acted in an appropriate fashion, in a timely fashion, as information became available. We stand behind her. We stand with her, as does her predecessor.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Interesting, but not surprising, that both the current and the former minister have bonded on this issue. Both have been subject to a scathing Auditor General's report. Both have been exposed for failing to exercise their oversight responsibilities and for protecting the public interest and for allowing the waste of millions of scarce health dollars. Neither accept responsibility for the scandal over which they preserved—Mr. Caplan took the fall for Mr. Smitherman. We'd like to know who the current minister is going to designate as her scapegoat.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, the new minister brought in a new performance agreement. She has put in place a new board of directors. She has put in place new senior executives. These are all the appropriate steps that needed to be taken. They were taken in a timely fashion. We've called in the police to look at criminal matters, Mr. Speaker. That's an appropriate thing to do, and we will continue to make the changes that are important to ensure that what happened doesn't happen again.

I'm proud of the role the minister has taken in this. She's done the appropriate thing in a timely fashion.

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

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Speaker, it's clear that the wagons are being circled. The member for Willowdale was dispatched yesterday to obstruct the hearings to protect the Premier. The government House leader is scripted with embarrassing speaking notes to protect the minister. The Premier refuses to answer questions. The minister refuses to accept responsibility. The government refuses to respect the express will of this Legislature to form a select committee. And now, shame on the government House leader for refusing an express motion of the public accounts committee to continue hearings next week.

I ask the Premier, just how long does he think and does this government think that they can hide the truth?

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

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Withdraw.

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

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I think it may be time to update the House. Yesterday, all I could hear at question period was that we were somehow trying to prevent testimony in front of the public accounts committee. Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform members: yesterday, 12:30 p.m., Wendy Tilford, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Innovation; 1 p.m., George Smitherman, former Minister of Health; 1:30 p.m., Jamison Steeve, principal secretary to the Premier; 2 p.m., Ian Delaney, board chair of Ornge; 2:30, Cathy Worden, chief of staff, Ministry of Economic Development and Innovation. And I'm pleased to inform the House that there is a robust list of witnesses who are currently being scheduled for the weeks ahead as the public accounts committee continues this very important investigation into the Ornge controversy, one which is, as appropriate, being guided by a counsel, despite the efforts of that member to have the counsel fired yesterday.

## HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Deputy Premier. Yesterday, the Premier indicated that he didn't want to comment on specific proposals around the budget, and I respect that. But can the Deputy Premier confirm today that protecting health care is, in fact, a priority of this government?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, we did that in the budget. We did that when we created family health teams. We did that when we hired 9,000 nurses. We did that when we increased medical school spaces by 23%. We did that by building 38 new hospitals in Ontario.

So, yes, Mr. Speaker, I can confirm unequivocally that this government is firmly committed to improving health care across Ontario. We've laid out a bold new plan for a better future, a more efficient future, and we welcome the

ideas that the leader of the third party has on all of these important issues.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** As the Deputy Premier knows, we've heard from thousands of everyday people across Ontario who want health care to be a priority, but they're worried. They're worried about a proposed budget that will leave them waiting longer for the care that they need. In communities across Ontario, we've actually seen emergency rooms closed and we've seen nurses laid off. And that's with higher funding than what's currently being proposed by this government's budget. People tell us they're concerned about the deficit, but they want front-line care to be the priority.

Will the Deputy Premier agree that the patients waiting in the emergency rooms, not the CEOs in the boardrooms, need to be our priority?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm proud of the fact that Ontario now has the shortest wait times in the country for many major surgical procedures. I'm proud of the fact that we have nurse-practitioner-led clinics. I'm proud of the fact that we're introducing birthing centres. I'm proud of the fact that we're increasing funding for home care by 4%.

So, yes, Mr. Speaker, we do put the priorities on front-line services. That's why we're keeping nurses in emergency rooms. That's why we're keeping teachers in classrooms. All the steps that the Minister of Health and this government have taken have improved care for all Ontarians. There's still more to do. I look forward to working with her and her colleagues as we continue to build the best health care system in the world.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** In the lead-up to the budget, the Minister of Finance promised to take a hard line against the growing public sector CEO salaries, but the budget revealed a lot more of the same solutions that have not been working. Families have been told before that CEO salaries were frozen, but this year's sunshine list came out, and we saw a slew of executives getting raises yet again. When a hospital CEO gets more in a raise than most families can earn all year as their salary, there's something definitely wrong.

Does the Deputy Premier think that the government's measures thus far to get CEO compensation under control are actually working?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** This government and this party are interested in more front-line nurses, and we've put them in place. We've expanded access to home care. We're building long-term-care beds. Mr. Speaker, we just brought forward legislation that creates the home retrofit credit, which will help seniors stay in their homes longer. This government and this party are all about the best possible health care; as the Minister of Health says, the right care in the right place at the right time. This budget builds on this government's record of building a better and stronger health care system for all Ontarians.

## EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also to the Deputy Premier. Ontarians are worried that this budget doesn't do enough to spread the burden. They need assurances that vital health care services are going to be protected.

**1050**

A lot of people in rural communities, Speaker, like Grimsby are justifiably upset that their promised new hospital has been put on hold by this budget. Patients are being made to feel the pain while hospital CEOs bask in the glow of the sunshine list.

Jane from Owen Sound says, "Hospital CEOs are making ludicrous amounts of yearly salaries but yet we still [get] cut[s] [in] hospital housekeeping services." Lisa from Gananoque writes, "I would like to see a commitment that front-line workers in [hospitals] will not be cut."

What does the Deputy Premier say to people like Jane and Lisa who see hospital CEOs' salaries climb while front-line jobs get cut?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Here's what Mark from the OHA says, Mr. Speaker: "The government has put forward and funded \$5 billion in capital projects for hospitals. That's a terrific amount of money that's gone, in my view, to places that really need it in investment."

We have made record investments in new hospitals and new health care facilities, and we're proud of that.

Yes, we've had to slow down because of the financial circumstances we find ourselves in, but as we continue to build a bigger, better and stronger economy, we'll have the revenues in the future to move on those projects. We're proud of what we've been able to do today. We will continue to build on that progress, Mr. Speaker, because Bob and Pete and Jill and Gail all across Ontario want us to do that, and that's why they support this government and this party—

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Ontarians simply demand that we make the best use of our resources, Speaker. That means putting dollars into front-line care, rather than into huge salaries and outrageous perks for the public sector executives.

Lily from Clinton writes, "Salary [and bonus] caps [for hospital CEOs] are a good idea." Will the Premier listen to concerned Ontarians like Lily?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of all the capital projects that are starting to come online over the next three years—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Essex, come to order.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** But if there's an election, Mr. Speaker, they all get put on hold, and that's what the risk is.

I say to the leader of the third party: We have to get back to balance by 2017-18. It's not good enough to put

out ideas, not cost them properly and, in fact, add to the deficit.

I look forward to hearing the rest of the ideas that the leader of the third party is going to bring forward. I look forward to working with her on getting these new hospital projects into the ground and under way. We will build more facilities, as well as improve home care. The right care in the right place at the right time: That's what this party and that's what this government are about.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, people in glass houses shouldn't be throwing stones. We've seen this finance minister's numbers bounce around from budget to economic statement to budget. It's quite funny.

People understand, very seriously, though, Speaker, that the province is facing tough challenges. New Democrats understand that as well. People are willing to do their part. But when they see hospital CEOs make off with huge salaries and outrageous perks, they don't feel like this government is looking after their best interests.

Linda from Sydenham writes, "I looked for a cap [on] hospital execs ... as well as elimination of bonuses.... Instead, this government is calling on the ordinary family to make sacrifices while the wealthy are not being forced to experience financial pain."

Will the Deputy Premier explain to Ontarians what this government is prepared to do to distribute precious health care dollars in a fairer way?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'll remind the leader of the third party what this government's commitment is. Since 2003, we now have the shortest surgical wait times in the country. There are 3,400 more doctors working in this province, and 2.1 million families have a family doctor that didn't have one before. There are 12,600 more nurses working in this province than there were in 2003.

Now the Minister of Health has introduced a bold new policy that will help us move forward in this century to provide the right care at the right time and in the right place. That's what this party is about. That's what we're going to debate. Those are the investments we've made and that's what the future's all about, Mr. Speaker. That's what all Ontarians care about.

## AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** My question is for the Deputy Premier.

Yesterday, when Mr. Smitherman was in front of the committee, he did acknowledge that the Minister of Health had the full authority to step in at Ornge and that the performance agreement allowed her to intervene. That's certainly contrary to what we've been hearing in here.

We also heard the Premier's right-hand man, Jamison Steeve, say, "We as a government could have, and should have, done a better job."

Instead of taking responsibility, it now appears that the government is shamefully scapegoating the defenceless

staff at the Ministry of Health. So I ask the Deputy Premier, do you endorse these tactics, and will you today affirm your belief in ministerial accountability?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** All of us on this side of the House are proud of the fact that we've brought in a new performance agreement, that the minister moved to replace the board, the senior executives.

We are going to support the legislation that is before this House that creates protections for everything from whistle-blowers through to better financial accountability. We have taken and the minister has taken the appropriate steps at the appropriate time, as information was available. We're happy to be in front of committee. Yesterday you alleged that we were blocking it. The House leader has indicated how many of our staff are prepared; the Premier has taken dozens of questions, and the Minister of Health.

We've taken all the appropriate steps in a timely fashion as information became available, and we're also looking at the police investigation that's going on. That will add another piece to this situation.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I say again to the Deputy Premier, you know, despite what you're saying, and your Premier and your minister have said, you have had all along the authority, as confirmed by Mr. Smitherman, to step in at Ornge, and you did not. The performance agreement allowed you to do it and you did not. You ignored the red flags. You didn't provide the oversight; we saw that in the report. And now you are engaging in a campaign of misinformation, stalling and—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member will withdraw.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I will do so, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** And now it appears that the ministry staff are being maligned and you're trying to deflect responsibility on them.

I ask you today, instead of putting this campaign to smear others into high gear, will you show some integrity and hold the appropriate person accountable—the Minister of Health—and ask for her resignation?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Deputy?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The Minister of Health took the appropriate steps at the appropriate time to deal with this circumstance and has answered questions on and on.

We have brought in a new performance agreement, a new board, new executives. We have legislation before this House that provides for stronger conflict-of-interest rules, increased audit, more detailed financial control, allows the minister to recover unspent funds, better public reporting, a new patient advocate, and links to pay-for-performance for executives.

All that's before this House in the form of legislation—all of that, Mr. Speaker. That builds on the Aud-

itor General's report, the minister's response, and the fact that the police are looking at this as well.

But instead of dealing with that legislation, that party wants an election. They want this legislation to die on the order paper instead of dealing with the real issues that are important to Ontarians. The Minister of Health has done all the appropriate things in a timely fashion as information became available. We stand behind her and the good work she's done—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. The member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** My question is to the Acting Premier. On Ornge, the current Minister of Health has blamed everything and everyone: a faulty accountability agreement, our federal tax status, opposition MPPs, and, of course, Mr. Smitherman.

Yesterday, the former Minister of Health said, "I just personally am not convinced, having again reviewed that agreement, knowing the ministry was the paymaster for the organization and with the powers of persuasion ... that there was not sufficient power to bring the organization to heel." Why doesn't the buck stop with the minister?

**1100**

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I again have to remind the member opposite that the minister has taken the appropriate steps in a timely fashion as information became available. We have said that. She sent in the Auditor General, who is an impartial source. He did a good piece of work on the challenges that came to be as a result of the original performance agreement. We're glad that he was there, and he acknowledged the important work the minister has done in dealing with a situation, frankly, that's unprecedented. We await the results of the OPP investigation as well. I'm confident that the minister has taken all of the appropriate steps in a timely fashion to address a situation that is unprecedented. We look forward to working on this more.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Mr. Speaker, again my question is to the Acting Premier. The problem is the blame game. This government's blame game is disgraceful. He had his faults, but under Mr. Smitherman's watch the salaries of Ornge executives were public. Here's another quote from Mr. Smitherman: "I cannot imagine a circumstance where I would have tolerated a situation where Dr. Mazza ended up making \$1.4 million and where the organization lost its focus." Apparently, secret sky-high salaries were something this minister was perfectly willing to tolerate. Why is this government letting the Minister of Health keep her job?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The Minister of Health took all the appropriate steps in a timely fashion as information became available. We have a new performance agreement and a new board. No issue has had greater scrutiny by this House or by the media than this, which is

appropriate under the circumstances. We have great confidence in the minister. We have great confidence in the new performance agreement. We're very supportive of the bill that's before this House. We're very supportive of the fact that she called in the Auditor General. We're very supportive of the fact that after the forensic audits were done we called in the police. The Minister of Health has acted honourably. She has acted quickly and appropriately as information became available in what, frankly, sir, is a very unprecedented set of circumstances. She's done a terrific job—

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

### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Speaker, my question today is to the Minister of Finance. Minister, yesterday the member from Thornhill spoke about the economy as if it was all doom and gloom. He believes, and the PC party believes, that our economy isn't on the right track. However our recently released budget has been well received by people of all political stripes right across this great province. I believe that our budget has struck the right balance. Will the Minister of Finance please tell us Ontario's 2012 budget is moving Ontario forward and creating jobs?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yesterday we were hectored that the Ontario economy is not working. In fact, we now know—44,000 new jobs last month alone. It builds on the 121,000 jobs that were created last year. Employment now is back to where it was before the greatest recession in this country's history since the downturn of the 1930s. Consumer spending is up. Business investment is at record levels. The economy is getting better. Jobs are coming back. This province is going to lead and continues to lead. We're proud of our record, we're proud of the budget and we'll speak more about this in terms of the jobs that are coming in the future. But to the member, 46,000 net new jobs the very day after this member said we were losing jobs—no credibility, no plan.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** The Minister of Finance provided us with a comprehensive and full answer. Ontario gained half of Canada's total. We added 46,000 jobs to our labour force. The number is eight times what the economists expected—the biggest single month result since last September.

Minister, the member from Thornhill said that our budget doesn't have a jobs plan and instead is heavy on rhetoric. He showed that he can count by listing off how many times he saw the words “consult,” “discuss” and “negotiate” in the budget. Well, I did some counting of my own: The word “jobs” appears in the budget 92 times. The word “economy” appears 88 times. In fact, all 69,354 words in the budget provided a strong plan for our economy and jobs.

Minister, can you discuss how Ontario is moving forward to a balanced budget while creating jobs and protecting health care and education?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The party opposite may think 46,000 jobs is a laughing matter. We're proud of that; we're proud of all Ontarians.

They have a jobs plan, too. They'll hire poll clerks and DROs. This will be a great boon for robocallers, Mr. Speaker, which their federal brethren have used so much.

Instead of an election, we ought to be focused on working together to build on the gains we've made in the last months. This economy is starting to take hold again. Vehicle sales are up. The economy is growing. Working together, we can keep building on this. We can create real jobs, high-paying jobs, more than the rest of the country last month—save and except they want to give poll clerks and DROs jobs, Mr. Speaker. Not us. We need a steady hand to keep this thing moving forward.

### COMMITTEE SITTINGS

**Mr. Frank Klees:** My question is to the House leader. Speaker, members will know that the member from Willowdale is favouring his left side. The reason for that is no doubt as a result of the jobs that he received yesterday from the member for Guelph, who was jabbing him in the ribs to get him to raise his hand to vote against sitting next week for the public accounts committee. Now, perhaps the member from Guelph wasn't aware that he had already made a public commitment that we sit next week as a public accounts committee. To the member's credit, he abstained from the vote.

I say to the House leader now, given the fact that even the member from Willowdale was willing to sit next week, will he gather up the courage and say no to the political operatives in the Premier's office and call that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Stop the clock, please. I'm going to permit the question, but I am going to remind everybody, on both sides, that this is the House business, and it's not common for us to talk about committee work. I would remind us to stay focused on the business of the House, but I will ask the House leader to respond.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I had a chance earlier to talk about the witnesses that appeared in front of the public accounts committee yesterday. The clerk has been working diligently to put together a robust list of witnesses for the next planned meeting of the public accounts committee.

The member talks about the fact that they want to meet next week, but what he hasn't told the House is that there are no witnesses to call next week, because debate and discussion went on, and in fact, there were no motions passed. So meeting next week, during constituency week, when many members of this House—I would suggest all members of this House have commitments back in their ridings, a chance to be in their constituency. Mr. Speaker, there is quite frankly no business for the committee to do.

We have plans to meet over the next Wednesday, the next following Wednesdays, when there's a very robust list of witnesses.

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

**Mr. Frank Klees:** At the risk of using unparliamentary language, I have to say that what the government House leader has just said is not true. We have a list of some 20 witnesses that we can call within 24 hours who would love to be here. Will the House leader admit that what he's doing is simply obstructing a direction of the public accounts committee that we sit this coming week? He is now thwarting the expressed will of this House on two occasions: one, the expressed will of this Legislature that we have a select committee and now, the express will of the public accounts committee on which his members have the majority.

Will he agree to call a meeting of the public accounts committee for this coming Wednesday? We will supply witnesses gladly.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

**Hon. John Milloy:** The will of this Legislature is set out in the standing orders in terms of the meetings that are held of the Legislature and constituency breaks in-between. During that constituency break—we've just had a budget—members of this Legislature have commitments, have meetings, have events planned in which they can go back and reconnect with their communities. That has been the tradition of this House.

1110

The honourable member talks about a motion that was sprung at the last minute during a session. From what I understand, due to his delaying tactics, they never got to vote on future witnesses coming forward.

The clerk of the committee has been tasked with putting together a robust series of witnesses who will be testifying at the public accounts committee over the regular meetings, which are scheduled for the following weeks.

We have co-operated with the opposition to bring these hearings to go, and we'll continue to co-operate with them.

#### EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** My question is to le vice-premier ministre.

Yesterday, the Canadian Institute for Health Information released data on hospital performance. It reveals that Ontario spent more on hospital administration than any other jurisdiction in Canada.

Is the government willing to stop this sad situation and put a hard cap on CEO salaries?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'd remind the member we have a lot more hospitals than the rest of the country, Mr. Speaker, so that kind of makes sense. I'd also remind her of what Mr. Drummond pointed out to us: that, in fact, Ontario's expenses are the lowest per capita in the country.

We welcome the findings of the Canadian institute of health. We thank them for their report. They're a leader in public accounting. We believe very strongly in keeping track and measuring. We're the first government to introduce those kinds of things. We will embrace this data as a tool to improve patient care.

Mr. Speaker, we welcome that report. The member opposite can take numbers any which way. As I understand it—I haven't had the opportunity to read the whole report myself—Ontario hospitals actually stand up very well to the rest of the country, in part as a result of the increasing investments we've made in health care since 2003.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Well, let me spell it out for the member. Ontario administrative costs, as a percentage of total costs, are the highest in Canada. Ontario spent more on hospital administrators than any other jurisdiction in Canada.

The province is moving ahead with pay-for-performance that gives CEOs huge bonuses. The pay-for-performance—let me quote what the Harvard School of Public Health says about pay-for-performance: It does not improve patient outcomes, but you keep moving on this way anyway.

The government is letting pay-for-performance balloon the bonuses of CEOs while taking away from patient care. Is the Deputy Premier willing to put a hard cap on CEO salaries to make sure that we come in line with the rest of Canada and that precious dollars go to health care?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Speaker, I would remind the member opposite that in 2003, we had the longest wait-lists in Canada. We started tracking that for the first time, keeping track of wait times for major surgical undertakings, and now we have the shortest in the country across a number of them.

Mr. Speaker, I remind the member opposite that we are moving to more home-based care, keeping seniors in their homes longer. That is the important part of the budget. That's the important part of what the Minister of Health has done in terms of the bold plan she has outlined to provide better care at the right time and in the right place.

We're going to continue to make those investments and focus on what's important to people: better care at the right time in the right place.

#### CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** My question today is for the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation. I've heard a lot about positive job creation in the Legislature of late: 170,000 jobs announced in the budget last week; 800 jobs created just last week through the province in the auto sector.

It's evident that Ontario is rebounding in our economy. Things are turning around. People are looking to invest, which is great for Ontario. One thing, however,

that has been missing is a discussion about the impact in the construction industry. I'm getting calls in my riding in Pickering–Scarborough East about this.

Can the minister please give an overview of the construction sector in Ontario and explain what benefits Ontarians will see in the growth of the economy?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Ontario's construction sector is indeed healthy, and it's growing. In fact, just look around the greater Toronto area today. You'll see more cranes than at any time in our history. Construction jobs are up 17% from 10 years ago. In 2011, employment in construction grew by 3.2%.

Opposition members have repeatedly scoffed at our efforts to create construction jobs. They refer to them, Mr. Speaker, as temporary, but the fact is, there are more than 480,000 Ontarians working in the construction sector today who strongly disagree. Unfortunately for those construction workers, the PCs would rather cause an election than support a budget that creates another 100,000 jobs, through our infrastructure investments in that budget.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Jobs are a very serious issue in my riding of Pickering–Scarborough East and all of Ontario. It's encouraging to hear how the government's plans continue to create jobs.

We've also heard a lot about the 2015 Pan Am/Parapan games in recent months. People in my riding of Pickering–Scarborough East are absolutely thrilled that the aquatic centre is coming to Pickering–Scarborough East—right in my riding—and will be the home of a state-of-the-art aquatic facility, a wonderful legacy facility. Ontarians are excited about hosting a major international sporting event because of the opportunity the games offer to create a lasting economic, social and athletic legacy for our province.

My question to the minister is, how are the preparations for the games contributing to our economy and how are they creating jobs?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** To the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and the minister responsible for the 2015 Pan Am Games.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Thank you to the member of Pickering–Scarborough East for her question and for her enthusiasm. I share that excitement, and I am pleased to tell the House that work is well under way to deliver an outstanding set of games. In fact, joining us in the gallery today are visitors from the government of Argentina, and they share our excitement, too, and have come to see how Ontario is preparing to host this great event.

The 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games will be one of the single largest economic drivers in the greater Golden Horseshoe region over the next three years. As you know, Mr. Speaker, construction has already begun on the Pan Am village in the West Don Lands. That project alone is 5,200 jobs. We're creating greater investment in new and existing sports and infrastructure. That, sir, will create 15,000 jobs in construction and game operations, on top of the 5,200 jobs at the athletes'

village. Mr. Speaker, we're excited and proud to host the games and to help deliver thousands of new jobs to Ontarians.

## ENERGY POLICIES

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** My question today is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, your government's failed energy strategy is drawing ire from thousands of families in Ontario. Now it seems that your failed policies are affecting developers. Minister, the proverbial blades are falling off here. Two lawsuits have been launched against your government and, just recently, this week, a \$1-billion lawsuit from an offshore wind developer.

Minister, last week, the first lawsuit was tagged at \$300 million. This week's lawsuit is \$1 billion. How much can we expect next week's lawsuit to be? Minister, can you tell us, the taxpayers of Ontario, how much this is going to cost and who's going to be footing the bill?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Just so I can get some clarification on where the party opposite is going, my recollection is that they supported the decision not to proceed with the power plant in Mississauga. I thought that was the case. I'm hoping that's still the case. My recollection was—and maybe things have changed, because you never know which way the wind blows—that they were supportive of the moratorium on offshore wind, and maybe that's not the case. It would be enormously helpful, Speaker, to have their advice on these important issues.

We have some things that we agree on. We agree on a moratorium—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I just spent 60 seconds listening to people heckle while the question was being put from your own side and the same happening when the people are answering. You're having two different conversations while people are asking the question and trying to answer.

1120

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** There are issues that we agree on: We agree on a moratorium on offshore wind and we agree that the power plant should not go on that site in Mississauga. We invite the party opposite to join us in working for the people of Ontario and not force an unnecessary election.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Minister, the National Post headline today was, "The Ontario green energy ship is taking on water..." Minister, you're the captain here. Why can't you admit that your energy experiments are failing? Your government has created this mess. If you can't handle this file, step aside, or be responsible and immediately cancel these unaffordable FIT contracts. Minister, when will you admit that your unaffordable energy nightmare has failed?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Last night I was at the AgriSolar board meeting in Chatham, meeting with hundreds of farmers, rural Ontario residents, who are

enthusiastic about green energy, who are participating in green energy and who gave the energy approach a standing ovation just last night.

Over the next two years, we're going to see more wind, solar and bio hooked up in Ontario than ever in our history. We're going to see more parts for that manufactured in Ontario than ever in our history. We're going to see more jobs created in Ontario than ever in our history. It's time that the party opposite focused on the real issues for Ontarians—jobs, which last month were up; prosperity for our communities, which last month has been up—instead of forcing an unnecessary election, costing us millions of dollars.

#### HAZARDOUS WASTE

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** This question is for the Minister of the Environment. Waste haulers in Ontario currently require a licence—it's called an environmental compliance approval—to transport and dispose of toxic waste. Even with licensing, the Auditor General has found discrepancies in the transport of hazardous waste in half of the cases. Given the risks to human health and the environment, why is this government reducing oversight of the transport of hazardous waste by removing the requirement for licences in most cases?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** The member would know, of course, that in fact it is not happening that there's a reduction in oversight. The oversight continues as assiduously as it has in the past.

The Ministry of the Environment has, on its front line, a number of people who are working on these issues. You should know that one of the challenges that we face is that many have not moved into the electronic age in that particular field, as I have. I recognize that, as they do, we will be able to do things even more expeditiously than we have in the past.

So I want to assure the member that we have addressed many of the concerns that the Provincial Auditor has brought to our attention. We in fact begin addressing those as soon as he brings them to our attention, even before the auditor's report happens to come out, whenever it does during a particular time during the year.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** Contrary to what the minister says, there are real concerns here. Ecojustice and the Canadian Environmental Law Association do have concerns about this.

Cost-cutting and deregulation now seem to be the priorities of the Ministry of the Environment, not protection of Ontario's air, water and land. In his recent annual report Ontario's Environmental Commissioner reported that the ministry budget has fallen by 45% since 1993 and that the ministry does lack the capacity to enforce environmental regulations.

Now the McGuinty government is moving ahead with yet another cut: a 9% cut in the budget to the ministry. Is the government removing the requirement for a permit to transport toxic waste because it no longer has the resources to pay staff to license these applications?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I want to assure the member that, unlike the mid-1990s, when the NDP government of the day was confronted with difficult circumstances, we are ensuring that all front-line services are being maintained within the Ministry of the Environment.

There are difficult decisions that do have to be made. I remember that the NDP government in Saskatchewan in the 1990s had to, they believed, close 52 rural hospitals in all of Saskatchewan. So everybody looks at all of these issues and tries to determine how to do things as efficiently as ever. We believe that, through moving into the electronic age in the Ministry of the Environment, we are going to be able to deal with these matters expeditiously and efficiently, as I know the people of Ontario want to ensure that we are going to do.

#### EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Our government understands that we need to continue to strengthen our economy and position our province to create and attract more jobs. This means we need to protect the services that Ontarians need most, including our support to help unemployed older workers get back on their feet. That's the only way we can continue on the positive trend that the employment numbers have shown this morning. Half of all jobs created in Canada were in Ontario. Our focus on job creation and employment is working.

The targeted initiative for older workers, or TOW, is an important program that helps my constituents upgrade their skills and work experience for unemployed workers ages 55 to 64. Is the minister still committed to supporting older workers through TOW?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I want to thank the member from Windsor West and also recognize the extraordinary leadership she has provided, not just as an MPP but in a lifetime of service as the executive director of employment and social services for the city of Windsor. We are very lucky to have such an informed voice in this House.

This is a challenging program, because it is a program for smaller communities and rural Ontario. The funding under this program, under agreement with the federal government, is restricted to communities of under 250,000. As has happened with so many other things, this program is being severely curtailed by the federal government, our principal funding partner. This will hit hard our smaller and rural communities who are struggling. They don't have some of the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Answer.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** —and the intensity of economic development that we have in some of our larger cities. So I'm hoping all members will take time to put some pressure on the federal government to come to the table on this agreement.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** The minister has mentioned that thousands of older workers continue to be ineligible for the TOW program because of its eligibility criteria. I

would like to join the minister in calling on the federal government to support hard-working Ontario families.

As the former director of employment and social services in Windsor, I certainly know the benefits of this program and all the retraining and supportive programming that we have available. We need the official opposition to co-operate with our government so that we don't trigger an unnecessary election that would further harm the economy and put our families at risk. We should be putting the interests of Ontarians ahead and work forward on our five-year plan to balance the budget.

What is the minister doing to ensure that all Ontarians have access to employment services?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** We are continuing with our commitment, which is over \$1 billion. This provides 170 service providers with 327 funded service delivery sites. So far in the last fiscal year, we have served over 610,000 Ontarians. In addition to that, our colleges and universities are driving about an 86% employment rate upon completion, and it was mentioned earlier that we have 46,000 new jobs this month alone. One could say that might be an aberration, except that since June 2009, we have had 345,000 jobs, over half of all the jobs created. That's a successful job strategy if I've ever heard of one.

#### PAN AM GAMES

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** My question is to the minister responsible for the Pan Am Games. Since he has yet to release an updated budget, I did a little research of my own. What I found is that the sunshine list could best be described as a supernova list when it comes to reading the explosive salaries of the TO2015 organizing committee. It starts with the CEO at over \$550,000 per year, and others coming in at just under \$300,000 per year. That's only 17 people costing Ontario families \$21.6 million by the time the games start.

When will the minister release the budget so we can confirm that we can afford these astronomical salaries and ensure Ontario tax dollars are not being wasted?

1130

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister responsible for the Pan Am Games.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. I appreciate that the member opposite is also concerned about the viability of these games because of how critical it is for all of us to have a successful games going forward. That is why we're providing the necessary oversight. That is why we are taking the necessary steps to ensure that every aspect of the game is concerned.

We now have the majority of the games signed. We have a little bit extra to go, but we will do everything necessary to ensure that it's done.

I'm very confident in the outstanding work that 2015 is doing to ensure that we have a relevant and very adequate set of games.

I, again, congratulate members from the other countries who are here witnessing the good work that we're

doing and complimenting the actions that this government has taken.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** I thank the minister for his generalities, but the thing is, Ontarians have the right to know how much the Pan Am Games are costing them and if they can afford it.

It isn't just those organizing committee salaries that are the issue. We don't know who's on the organizing committee. Only 11 people appear on the website that we're always referred to, yet 17 people were discovered on the sunshine list. Then there's also the board of directors, the management and the secretariat. Redundancy is waste. The only thing that is clear is that the minister's arm's-length governance over the games is costing us an arm and a leg.

Can the minister please let the hard-working people of Ontario know when we will see the budget? This is not your money, Minister. Tell the people of Ontario where the budget is.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I can assure the member opposite we have taken the necessary steps to ensure that salaries and whatnot are being taken care of. I, too, have shared those concerns with our management and with 2015.

But I also recognize that this is a very complex set of games that are being undertaken. In over 80 years, not once have—this is one of the largest. It's two and a half times the size of the Vancouver and Calgary games. We've got over 10,000 athletes and officials visiting. We've got a number of venues that are being prepared right across the Golden Horseshoe, and we make no apologies that we want the region to benefit from the investments that we're making around these games, creating 15,000 new jobs.

It's outstanding, the work that's being done. I congratulate all those who are participating. I welcome the opposition's input as well in terms of what we move, going forward. That's why I've welcomed him to my office on a number of occasions on this issue.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** My question is to the Acting Premier. Constituents in my riding are concerned about their local hospital services. Hospitals in my riding cannot plan for the coming year with only words of assurance. The fact is that this government has ignored the needs of smaller hospitals, and the frozen base budgets spelled out in the budget will equal deep service cuts.

This government's new funding scheme is silent on how many smaller hospitals in my riding, like Manitoulin Health Centre, Espanola general hospital, Lady Dunn Health Centre, will be able to keep providing the necessary services.

Instead of empty assurances, does the Acting Premier have a detailed and fully costed plan that he is willing to share with us today?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, it's called a budget, and it takes a number of important steps. The Minister of

Health has laid out an exciting and bold plan to improve health care in northern Ontario. It builds on our record of creating a northern medical school. It builds on our record of increasing health care facilities across northern Ontario. It builds on all of the important initiatives we have taken to shorten wait times for northerners. It builds on the assistance we've provided to northerners. When they need special treatment outside of the north, they have to come down here.

So this government's record of achievement in health care, particularly for the north, is unparalleled. We're proud of it, and we'll continue to build on that solid—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

#### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke on a point of order.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I beg your indulgence. I neglected to do this at the proper time, but I would like to introduce Darwin and Jennifer Groskleg, parents of page Abbigail, who is serving here on her last day.

Thanks for joining us today to the Grosklegs and thank you for Abbigail.

#### USE OF QUESTION PERIOD

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** On a point of order: I would ask the Speaker just for some clarification. The Speaker seemed to intimate today that discussion in the House on the business of committee was perhaps not appropriate or standard procedure. I would warrant that it is, particularly in this instance, being with the House leader. So I would ask for a ruling on that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** First, let me thank you. It is a point of order. Let me be clear. It is a long-standing practice of the House that matters before committees should be dealt with in the committee. I allowed the question because, in my mind, it had a connection to a matter that the House may be required to consider. If we come to page 506 of the O'Brien and Bosc House of Commons Procedure and Practice for the fuller discussion of this matter, it says in part, as I indicated to the member from Newmarket–Aurora, “When a question has been asked about a committee's proceedings, Speakers have encouraged members to rephrase their questions.” In this case, what I said was that the committee House leaders and the committee business is to be inside the committee.

#### VISITOR

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I'd ask the entire House to join me in welcoming my father, Dr. Jagtaran Dhaliwal, who has joined us in the members' gallery today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Simcoe–Grey.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Just on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is Holy Thursday. There are a number of us in the House that are of a Christian denomination—a very important holy day, and I would ask that this House not sit after private members' public business this afternoon.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is the member asking for unanimous consent?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Yes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Do we have unanimous consent on this point of order? I hear a no.

The member from Newmarket–Aurora.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Speaker, I would ask that the Deputy Premier might consider correcting his own record when he said that the Minister of Health called in the Auditor General. That is not a fact; the Auditor General was not called in—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. You know that's not a point of order. A member has to correct their own record.

#### LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Before we exit and we see too many people leave, I think it's a good practice that we bid farewell to our pages, as this is their last day.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I do believe I have another point of order. The member for Cambridge first.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would actually ask that we have some clarification on some of the rulings that you've made with respect to some of the language we've used. I know that in oral questions we've used the word “cover-up.” We've used the words “misleading the House.” I want to note, personally, that in the federal Parliament yesterday during proceedings in oral questions, those questions inserting the language “cover-up” and “misleading” were permitted by the Speaker in that House, Mr. Speaker.

It's part of the opposition's duty to hold the government to account. I believe that it would be in order for us to ask questions, trying to get to the bottom of some of the questions that we're seeing on that side of the House. At the federal Parliament yesterday, Mr. Speaker, they were talking about the F-35 fighter jet procurement program with respect to the Auditor General. I ask that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Not necessarily to interrupt the member, but I made out clearly what his point was, and the short answer to that is there is actually no list that exists. It is the will of the House and the Speaker in terms of interpreting the intent of the question or the comment being made. Quite frankly, it has been traditionally done by the Speaker to set the tone of the House.

I want to hear one more point of order, from the member from Timmins–James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Mr. Speaker, we're saying goodbye to the pages. I know they would love to be here an extra week, so I'd ask unanimous consent that we sit next week.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** As we continue to move down in my ruling of this particular point of order, my knee has given out twice so far; I just wanted to let you know that. We have had a request for unanimous consent to sit next week. Agreed? I heard a no.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** With respect, to go back to my original point of order, I recognize your response. However, in this particular case, the public accounts committee has directed a motion towards the House that sits with the House leaders—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I would let the member know that I've made a ruling on that point of order.

The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke on a point of order.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** If I could speak to the point of order raised by my colleague from Cambridge, I understand the convention in this House—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I've ruled on that already.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Excuse me, on both sides. I've already ruled on that request. Thank you very much.

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

*The House recessed from 1141 to 1300.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** The Liberal government has announced that they are having a fire sale of Ontario Northland. I believe that this is a blatant attempt to keep North Bay and Timmins out of the Ring of Fire. It is my job as MPP to do everything in my power to see that North Bay and the northeastern corridor, up through Timmins and beyond, join in the Ring of Fire, the biggest mining find in this century. The Ring of Fire is out there for grabs and we need to be focused on developing jobs and opportunities.

In addition, I have already submitted two order paper questions to the government asking how they plan to fund Ontario Northland pensioners without any further employee contributions or matching government contributions after the sell-off. I have discovered that any sale of Ontario Northland will cost the government \$150 million just for the unfunded liability in the Ontario Northland pension.

The Liberals show a saving of \$100 million in the budget, but nowhere does the budget show them paying out the \$150 million to protect the pensioners. So I say, the north's communities need answers. I think what the Liberal government has done to North Bay is awful. I think it was cowardly not to announce it in North Bay, and I think it was politically motivated.

## SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Miss Monique Taylor:** In January of this year it was reported that 59,000 children, women and men in Hamilton relied on the Ontario disability support program or Ontario Works. A single individual on Ontario Works receives \$599 a month. That doesn't even cover the most basic necessities for food and shelter. Some 18,432 Hamiltonians turn to a food bank each month; 8,526 of them are children under the age of 18.

I commend the people at Hamilton Food Share and the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction for their work to help Hamiltonians deal with the circumstances that they're facing under these startling statistics. I thank them for speaking out and bringing these figures to the attention of the broader public.

In a news release issued earlier this week, Joanne Santucci, the executive director of Hamilton Food Share, said, "Many emergency food programs across the city have been reporting a significant increase in need—particularly for infant baby formula."

Tom Cooper, director of the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, said, "The Ontario budget will deepen the crises facing many hungry children and adults in Hamilton."

We need a balanced approach to balancing the budget. If belts need to be tightened, let's understand that some are already at the last notch and can't go any tighter.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Over the last few years, the global recession and the needed focus of employment and economic growth have taken our focus off of a critical problem that will define the legacy that we leave for our children and grandchildren. That critical problem is climate change. The changes to our environment will pervade every aspect of our children's and grandchildren's lives and will spare no country, province, city or family.

Scientists are virtually unanimous in their belief that climate change is mainly man-made and is principally caused by the burning of fossil fuels. The IPCC calculates that in order to avoid a dangerous change to our environment as we know it, we need to reduce the concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere to 350 parts per million. CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere is now at 393 parts per million, and by the time we close all our coal-fired plants in 2014, the CO<sub>2</sub> concentration will be 400 parts per million. The increase each year accelerates.

Canada's record is one of the worst, and only action by the provinces, especially BC, Quebec, and Ontario, has helped to offset the Harper government's complete lack of action. Canada's greenhouse gas production continues to increase.

Mr. Speaker, we are approaching the point where changes will not be reversible and will be catastrophic. We owe it to our children and grandchildren to act. The stakes could not be higher and the need for urgent action could not be clearer. Ontarians have made great strides

by reducing the burning of coal and thereby reducing greenhouse gases by 26 million tonnes per year. In 2014, we will be the first government to stop using coal.

I urge all members to support green energy and conservation as we in Ontario lead by example.

#### MILTON QUARRY

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Milton quarry operated by Dufferin Aggregates, a division of Holcim. As the largest working aggregate quarry in Canada, Milton quarry has been an important part of the Halton community and economy since it began its operations in 1962.

As a leading supplier of aggregate for the construction industry in the greater Toronto area and other adjacent municipalities, Milton quarry has contributed to the success of some of the largest construction projects in Canadian history, including Highway 407 and Pearson International Airport.

Having had the opportunity to visit the site and learn about how it operated, I can attest to the quality of work undertaken by the quarry and its employees. Having planted trees at the site at the annual tree-planting events, I can also attest and tell you how proud I am of the company and their commitment to rehabilitating the site. They have been a leader in the industry for quarry rehabilitation and water management. Ongoing rehabilitation plans at Milton quarry will eventually see the site evolve into a community park and wildlife sanctuary for all residents to enjoy.

The Milton quarry has also supported the health care of local residents through contributions to the Milton hospital, which for years has been in need of expansion, and today the planning for that expansion is taking place. The Milton quarry has also been a supporter and partner of local community and environmental organizations, including the Bruce Trail and Scouts Canada.

In recognition of its environmental and community commitments, the Milton quarry has won over 50 industry and community awards for property enhancement, progressive rehabilitation and community relations.

Congratulations on their 50th anniversary.

#### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr. John Vanthof:** On Friday, March 23, another black Friday for the people of northeastern Ontario, the Liberal government announced the intended sale of the assets of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission and the death of the Northlander passenger train.

The government uses all the right words, big words like “divestiture,” and promises of an enhanced service, but northerners no longer believe the government’s line, since they also promised not to privatize the ONTC.

The official opposition predictably derides the government’s plan to kill the ONR. They spread the word that the answer to all the north’s problems is to elect them.

But they wanted to kill the ONTC in the first place. Has the leopard changed its spots? Well, on April 2, when asked if a Tory government would cancel the ONTC decision, the member from Nipissing said that the sale would be too far gone for the Tories to reverse it and it’s not a given that new owners will downsize operations.

Thousands of people have expressed their shock with this decision. How will seniors and others travel to medical appointments in Toronto without a passenger train—10 hours on the night bus? What about students? What happens when even bus service to small towns in the north is also cancelled? What about the 1,000 jobs? What about the pensions of the people who built Ontario’s development road?

Speaker, the people of the north extracted the natural resources that built this province, and we are doing so again. We have every right to demand equitable service and honest answers.

#### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** Like the rest of the world, Ontario has faced some challenges in recent years. We’ve overcome a sluggish US economy and uncertainty in Europe, and now we’re seeing some positive signs of economic growth in our province—we heard this morning about the wonderful job creation we’ve had.

Our government continues to make thoughtful choices to build on this kind of growth.

#### 1310

With Ontario’s economy gaining momentum, we are taking strong action with our plan to balance the budget by 2017-18.

I believe we’re making the right choices for Ontario families. Our plan will make sure all of Ontario’s students are able to reach their full potential. And we’re choosing to protect health care by asking seniors with the highest incomes to pay more for their prescription drug costs, so Ontario can invest in supports for all seniors.

I am proud of the choices we are making to create jobs and protect vital services, but I am disappointed that the Conservatives are playing politics instead of working with us to build a stronger economy. In fact, they vowed to vote against our budget without even taking the time to read it and without making the effort to strengthen it.

With Ontario on the path to recovery, the PCs would cut recklessly and take us off track. But our government has a plan to keep the economic recovery on track by taking strong action to balance the budget and create jobs for Ontario families.

#### HIGHWAY 7/8

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Many of my constituents have concerns about the government’s plans for Highway 7/8. It matters especially to those who live along the route between New Hamburg and Stratford. Here are just a few of the issues that matter to them: heritage preservation, safety considerations, the environment, regional

traffic flow, movement of agricultural equipment, the impact on residents and businesses in Shakespeare, and fair consideration of property values, among many more concerns. These issues matter to them, and they matter to me.

In December, I requested a comprehensive briefing by Ministry of Transportation officials on the plan for Highway 7/8. In January, a briefing took place. I expressed many of the views and concerns I've heard from my constituents.

In February, I met with ABC, the Agricultural Business Communities group. In March, I attended Perth county council's joint meeting with the councils of Perth East and Perth South. I listened as councillors spoke up with tough questions for ministry staff and AECOM staff.

Here's what I'm asking the Minister of Transportation: He needs to listen carefully to my constituents' views. The minister needs to do his homework. He needs to show he's listening, and he needs to show us that our concerns are being addressed.

#### QUEST FOR GOLD PROGRAM

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I want to thank and recognize several of my constituents who were awarded funding under the Quest for Gold Ontario assistance program. The 2012 Quest for Gold recipients from the riding of Scarborough Southwest were nine. One is present today. His name is Daniel Alvarenga, who is here with his cousin Luis and his mother. I want to thank them for coming here today.

I also want to mention the other recipients: Amy Armstrong, Abdi Dini, Crispin Duenas, Marlon Laidlaw-Allen, Leanna MacLean, Reed May, Kyle Smith and Justin B. Spencer.

These nine athletes were awarded over \$41,000 from the government of Ontario, because they have demonstrated at provincial, national and international sporting events that they're among the best athletes in Ontario.

The Quest for Gold program was established in January 2006 to provide financial support to athletes from Ontario so they can continue their pursuit of athletic excellence at the highest levels of national and international competition. Some specific objects of the Quest for Gold program are (1) to courage athletes to stay in Ontario to live and train; (2) to compensate athletes for earnings lost while training; (3) to increase access to high-performance coaching; and (4) to enable athletes to successfully pursue excellence in sport while fulfilling their educational goals.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating all these remarkable athletes as we continue to support them and all amateur athletes who inspire Ontarians to engage in physical activity and sport.

#### PRESCOTT AND DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AWARDS

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm proud to rise today to salute the people and businesses honoured last week at the annual

Prescott and District Chamber of Commerce awards banquet.

Among the honourees was the Spencerville and District Optimists, whose incredibly dedicated membership was recognized with the Rev. Gerry Ring Memorial Community Service Award for two decades of tireless work for youth. The award was accepted by club founder and former township of Edwardsburgh/Cardinal fire chief Jim Purcell. He's one of eight charter members who remain among the club's 27 members.

Generations of young people growing up in the Spencerville area owe some of their greatest memories to the countless events and activities either organized or supported by the Optimist Club.

Award winners that night included South Grenville District High School student Tamara Amell, who took home the prestigious Connie Dickey Memorial Youth Award. The Dragon Garden restaurant received the Mike Boyles Memorial Corporate Service Award, and Ian Farthing, the dynamic artistic director of the St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival, was named Community Artistic and Cultural Contribution Award winner—very fitting, given that this year marks the festival's 10th anniversary.

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the awards ceremony, but, reading from newspaper coverage, I was moved by how humbled and appreciative the winners were to be recognized for their efforts to make life a little better around them. It's important that we take a moment and thank them.

I want to commend the Prescott chamber and its executive, including president Dan Roddick, for another outstanding celebration of business excellence and community achievement.

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business, such that Mr. Fedeli assumes ballot item number 28 and Mr. Nicholls assumes ballot item number 51.

#### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

##### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AFFAIRES AUTOCHTONES

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I am very pleased to be able to rise today to tell the House and tell the people of Ontario that next week I will have the honour of welcoming to Ontario the members of the aboriginal affairs working group. This group includes Premiers and Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs from each of the provinces and territories. I just want to acknowledge that

it was our current Minister of Economic Development and Innovation who initiated the creation of this group, and this is the fourth year in which it will be meeting.

It also includes the participation and support of the leaders of the five national aboriginal organizations: the Assembly of First Nations, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the Métis National Council, the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, and the Native Women's Association of Canada.

L'Ontario présidera la semaine prochaine ce groupe pour la quatrième fois, la toute première fois pour moi. J'attends avec impatience le début des débats.

I'm very much looking forward to this meeting next week.

In the 2012 speech from the throne, our government committed to "continue to work hard to close the socio-economic gap between aboriginal people and non-aboriginal Ontarians." The work of the aboriginal affairs working group represents a concrete step toward closing this gap. For the past three years, the working group has provided national leadership as it works collaboratively on issues that are critical to improving conditions for First Nation, Inuit and Métis people.

The group's priorities include increasing graduation rates for aboriginal students, supporting economic development in aboriginal communities, and taking action to end violence against aboriginal women and girls. This is not something that we can accomplish by going off in separate directions across the country. Success requires all of us working together. La réussite exige que nous conjuguions nos efforts.

And we need a strong and committed federal partner. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to emphasize that. That's why I'm urging the federal government to join our working group and to contribute to these very important discussions.

Take, for example, one of the most troubling issues: the rate of violence against aboriginal women and girls. Across Canada, the rate of violence against aboriginal women is triple that of non-aboriginal women. Aboriginal women make up only 3% of the female population, and yet murdered aboriginal women represent 10% of female homicides in Canada.

Ici, en Ontario, notre gouvernement collabore avec les communautés autochtones sur plusieurs initiatives pour aider les victimes de la violence et pour prévenir toute forme de violence.

**1320**

We recognize that we need to work and look at the root causes that affect the safety and well-being of women and girls in the aboriginal community. That's why our government established the joint working group on violence against aboriginal women, which provides a forum for Ontario ministries and aboriginal partners to work together to effectively address violence against aboriginal women. We're teaching children and young men that violence is not acceptable, and we're providing justice and victim support services that help individuals and communities heal. But it's clear that we have to look

at this very serious issue holistically, together with the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, addressing the pressing issues faced by aboriginal people is an economic and a social imperative. Our well-being is interconnected. To build a stronger Ontario and stronger Canada, we must build stronger aboriginal communities, working with aboriginal communities.

Aboriginal communities represent the province's fastest-growing potential workforce. It's estimated that by 2036, a quarter of all workers in northern Ontario will be aboriginal. That's why we're working hard to increase the participation of First Nations and Métis communities in areas such as mining, forestry and green energy. Our government has created a number of initiatives to help aboriginal communities prosper and benefit from economic opportunities. The northern training partnership fund provides skills training to help aboriginal and non-aboriginal northern Ontarians participate in and benefit from emerging economic development opportunities like the Ring of Fire. Through the new relationship fund, we provide increased economic development and skills training opportunities to help aboriginal communities work and partner with business and government. And to support Métis economic development, we're providing up to \$30 million over 10 years through the Métis Voyageur development fund. These initiatives will provide First Nation and Métis communities with the support they need to benefit from Ontario's economic developments.

Monsieur le Président, les jeunes autochtones constituent le segment qui croît le plus rapidement dans notre pays et, par conséquent, représentent une partie importante de l'avenir de l'Ontario.

The aboriginal youth in this country and in this province represent one of the fastest-growing parts of the population, and so they are a key part to the future of the province. And yet, in Ontario, aboriginal people are three times less likely than non-aboriginal Ontarians to obtain a university degree. Across Canada, the high school dropout rate for aboriginal youth is 2.5 times the rate of non-aboriginal youth. And to me and to our government, and I think to everyone in this House, what's most troubling is that that gap is widening. We know how important an education is. Our government has made it a priority to ensure that all children in Ontario, including aboriginal children, have the best possible educational opportunities available to them. I will be the first to admit, as a former Minister of Education and now as the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, that that work is not done. We know that there is much that has to be done, and I want to reinforce our government's commitment to aboriginal students in our provincial education system.

J'aimerais réaffirmer l'engagement de notre gouvernement vis-à-vis des apprenants autochtones dans notre système provincial d'éducation.

Our aboriginal education strategy has been designed to help improve opportunities for off-reserve First Nation, Métis and Inuit students, whether they live in remote areas or urban areas. So, with the launch of that strategy,

the Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit education policy framework, we have made system-wide change to address the needs of aboriginal learners in the province, in our provincial schools, and we'll continue to work to increase all Ontario students' knowledge and awareness of First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures, history and perspectives. I think that is a frontier for us as government, to make sure that not just aboriginal students but all students have a better sense of the history of First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultures. I believe that the keys to the success of these initiatives lie in the development of good, collaborative relationships and mutually beneficial partnerships.

Nous devons collaborer plus étroitement, à savoir les gouvernements, les formateurs et les partenaires autochtones, pour améliorer le milieu éducatif.

We're very proud of the record that we have, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to education in Ontario, but the reality is that only the federal government can resolve the disparity in funding between education on First Nation reserves and education delivered in the rest of the province.

In the most recent speech from the throne, our government continued to call on the federal government to work with First Nations, other aboriginal partners and the province to improve education outcomes for aboriginal students. I just want to reinforce that we need that partnership. We're calling on the federal government to partner with us and First Nations people. Since 2009 and to this day, the working group has repeatedly called upon the Prime Minister to convene a First Ministers' meeting on aboriginal education with national aboriginal leaders.

Le gouvernement fédéral doit devenir un partenaire plus engagé avec les communautés autochtones en ce qui concerne l'éducation sur les réserves.

Without that federal partnership, it's very difficult for the country to move forward on this issue of education for aboriginal students. This includes providing adequate funding.

Although—and everyone in this House, I think, will know—the federal government did provide additional funds for First Nation education in their budget last week, this is merely a small first step in improving on-reserve education for aboriginal children across Ontario and Canada.

Let me just put it in context. The need for operating and capital dollars that was announced in their budget—by our estimates, in Ontario alone the need is in the order of \$200 million per year to close the on-reserve/off-reserve gap in funding. The federal budget announced only \$275 million over three years for the entire country. So the disparity there demonstrates that the funding gap still exists between aboriginal and non-aboriginal students. First Nation children will still receive thousands of dollars less per student each year from the federal government than the provinces provide to non-aboriginal students.

The cuts to the overall budget of the federal department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada make it a bit hard to believe that the federal

government is serious about improving the quality of life for aboriginal communities across the country.

To my mind, getting the funding for aboriginal students right, getting education right, will allow everything else to fall into place. It is a critical cornerstone. Ottawa must correct the funding imbalances so First Nations students receive the same funding as other children

Ottawa doit corriger les déséquilibres en matière de financement pour permettre aux élèves et étudiants des Premières Nations de recevoir le même financement.

It must also address the state of on-reserve school infrastructure in a systematic way. Next week, when working group members arrive in Toronto, it will be exactly five years to the day since the federal government promised the community of Pikangikum a permanent school. I'm going to use this community as an example because it's one that has been fairly high-profile.

I recently visited Pikangikum, Mr. Speaker, and I asked to visit their school. There is no permanent school. In fact, there's no school in sight. The community's small cluster of portables showcases the urgent need for Canada to take its on-reserve responsibilities more seriously.

Now we've learned that even with this makeshift school, which is more like a cluster of portables, the year for elementary students is in jeopardy. The state of the mould in the teacherages, which are the buildings that the teachers live in, has made it unsafe for many of the teachers to remain in the community. The federal government must take action to ensure that no First Nation children in Canada have to experience losing a school year as the children in Pikangikum may have to.

At the time when I was in Pikangikum, I spoke with the principal of the school. She noted that next year, even with the facility that they have, there's a whole class of junior kindergarten students that would not have a place in the school, that would not have an opportunity to come to the school just because of the physical inadequacy.

Mr. Speaker, like the students in Pikangikum First Nation, the aboriginal affairs working group is tired of waiting. It's time the federal government stepped up and eliminated the funding gap. Half-hearted attempts at addressing the education outcomes on First Nation reserves are not enough. We know the answer, and that answer is to address the disparity in funding for First Nation education.

L'Ontario et le groupe de travail sont prêts, disponibles et capables de travailler avec eux.

We are willing, we are waiting, we are there to be partners in working on this incredibly important issue. We know what needs to be done to improve education for First Nation students, and we need everyone at the table to make it happen.

I've been very clear that I understand full well that the provincial government, First Nations and the federal government all need to be at the table in order to bring the resources, the knowledge and the capacity that are necessary to resolve this issue.

**1330**

Again, I look forward to welcoming my counterparts from the provinces and territories and the leaders of the

five national aboriginal organizations. I look forward to a productive meeting next week, and I look forward to progress for a better future for aboriginal people and, therefore, for all Canadians.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Merci. Meegwetch.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Responses?

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** Mr. Speaker, I'm going to begin with a quote from Chief Dean Sayers: "Ontario continues to shoulder the responsibility to the federal government and this is simply unacceptable."

The aboriginal affairs working group is focused on delivering results in key areas, including education, economic development, and violence against aboriginal women and girls. The aboriginal affairs working group has adopted a collaborative approach to setting targets in (1) graduation rates for education; (2) closing the income gap between natives and non-natives in regard to economic development; and (3) ending violence against women and children.

The objective of the aboriginal affairs working group is to work effectively with the federal government to improve outcomes for aboriginal peoples.

Today's statement by the minister gives a warm and fuzzy feeling but fails to document measurable targets or benchmarks in any of the key areas. Where is the increase in graduation rates? How much has the income gap closed between natives and non-natives? Where are the statistics to show that violence against women and children is decreasing? Where is the provincial commitment to play its part in training and retraining teachers?

The federal government has the ability to move forward with the announcement regarding education buildings, but one of the commitments in the past was to have teachers, and retain teachers, from the aboriginal communities.

Why does the government continue to be reactive instead of proactive when it comes to economic development and social programs for First Nations? Why do they not work more closely and take into effect existing priorities or assets?

Where is the plan to combat drug abuse? In November 2009, Nishnawbe Aski Nation declared a prescription drug abuse state of emergency as a result of the epidemic in their communities. With the recent removal of OxyContin from the drug supply, this issue is set to escalate.

Mr. Speaker, I must go on about that. I'll explain this to the individuals here. OxyContin is a time-release pill. What takes place is, these individuals are looking for this high, so they crush the pill and consume it all at once, getting that rush all at once. Here's something, Minister, you're probably not aware of: The new replacement drug has now been broken down and can be used in the same fashion. Where is the plan for the government to combat prescription drug abuse?

The government claims to be taking a collaborative approach to dealing with First Nations. Here's a quote from Nishnawbe Aski Nation's website with respect to

Bill 191, the Far North Act: "The Far North Act is viewed by First Nations in NAN as an invalid law and a new form of colonialism."

Here's a quote from the Nishnawbe Aski Nation website with respect to the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act: "NAN has taken the opportunity to measure the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act against international human rights instruments and has found many human rights violations. The act was an opportunity for the province of Ontario to recognize First Nation forestry development rights and guarantee equitable sharing of the economic benefits. Instead, First Nations continue to be marginalized in the forestry sector, not only by private companies, but now also by" local forest management corporations "which will be controlled by the province of Ontario."

Does this sound like a collaborative approach to working with First Nations?

Are First Nations communities better off now than they were eight years ago? Indian and Northern Affairs Canada have developed a community well-being index to measure the quality of life in First Nation communities based on four indicators, including education, labour force, income and housing. The CWB scores and trends show, not surprisingly, that the quality of life in First Nation communities is not keeping pace and that there has been little or no progress.

Are First Nation housing conditions any better? I think not. Do First Nation communities have better drinking water infrastructure? Do First Nations communities have access to better education or health care? Most importantly, do First Nations kids have hope and opportunities for the future?

It's great to hear notions about collaboration and relationships, but let's see some results. The federal government promised new investments of \$100 million over three years to pay for literacy programs as well as other supports and services for aboriginal schools and students. In addition, Ottawa has promised \$175 million over three years to help build and renovate schools and reserves, as well as a federal government commitment for \$330.8 million for replacing and fixing water infrastructure on reserves.

I'll close as I started. Chief Dean Sayers commented: "Ontario continues to shoulder the responsibility to the federal government and this is simply unacceptable."

Never mind waiting, just do what's right. Meegwetch.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Kenora—Rainy River.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I would like to thank the minister for taking the time to keep this House up to date on the work being done by the aboriginal affairs working group.

Next week, as the minister pointed out, the group is meeting in Toronto, but I respectfully suggest that the minister talk to the committee and ask them—encourage them—to go up to Pikangikum, to meet there, because I truly believe that seeing is part of understanding. I know that the minister is very passionate about what's happening in Pikangikum.

The group has a mandate to help increase graduation rates among First Nations youth, supporting economic development in First Nations communities and ending the violence against aboriginal women and girls, as the minister pointed out.

Since being elected, I've had a number of opportunities to work with the minister and her staff and, again, I firmly believe that the minister is sincere in her desire to work with First Nations to improve their quality of life.

The minister spoke of the conditions in Pikangikum, but I wanted to point out that the conditions of the school there are not unique to Pikangikum. I'd like to take a moment, if I could, to read a letter from Mr. Ryan Boggs, who is a teacher from Fort Severn First Nation. Mr. Boggs writes, "The students in my current class have been going to school in portables for as long as they can remember. Their 'school' consists of cold buildings (it has gotten as low as minus 50), constant plumbing problems, no gym and few, if any, resources for their instruction."

He continues: "I do not find it surprising that many students barely complete grade school: hopelessness pervades. Hopelessness in a child is disastrous. These children deserve a new school, one that will encourage them to be excited about their education and their future. If they don't, I fear another generation will be lost to gangs and abuse."

I'd like to take this opportunity to give voice to that generation and share some of the comments from the students at that school in Fort Severn—the elementary school at Wasaho.

Tyler writes, "The kids sit around and eat junk food and watch TV or sit on the computer instead of exercising. This makes me alone and depressed."

Andrea writes, "We have no proper school and no gym. Our first school got shut down due to mould. I was only in grade 1 at the time." She's now in grade 8. She writes, "The students of Wasaho First Nation School had to get their education all over the town, such as at the youth centre, Niska Café and the E-Centre. Other families went out of the reserve to give their child a proper education."

Savannah writes, "In Fort Severn the kids here are almost always bored. We go to school in portables and we have no gym. Kids here sniff gas, glue, nail polish and hair spray instead of exercising. This makes me feel dead and alone."

**Interjection:** Terrible.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Sorry, I'm getting emotional. It's terrible.

These are some of the voices of the students at Wasaho school. I would ask a page to deliver these. It's really unfortunate that we have this in Ontario.

These students cannot wait for First Nations education to be funded equally. Even Don Drummond, the consultant charged with cutting the province's spending, stated very bluntly that the province needs to step up and provide funding for First Nations students if the federal government won't.

A few months ago, the national media was abuzz with talk of Attawapiskat's housing crisis. There are dozens of Attawapiskats across my riding and across Ontario. These communities are desperate, where the communities' infrastructure has been underfunded and left to rot by a federal government unwilling to step up and fulfil its duties and a provincial government that keeps telling us that this is a federal issue.

Minister, children are in desperation, and they don't care about federal or provincial jurisdictions. We have an obligation, not as politicians but as human beings, to step up and work together, to bring hope back to Fort Severn and communities all over Ontario.

**1340**

We have to step up and we have to do the right thing. We can't fight about who ends up footing the bill. We can fight about that later. We have an obligation to Andrea, Tyler, Morley, Rachel, Jade, Rebecca, Savannah, Matilda, Jay, River, Laurinda, Samantha and the countless thousands of students across this province.

We have an obligation to put partisanship and jurisdictional boundaries aside and provide them with a reason to get up in the morning and with a future. We have an obligation to Samuel, who puts it very simply and very eloquently: "We need your help to make a better life."

## PETITIONS

### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I was listening to the speech from the member from the NDP—very good.

My petition is from the riding of Durham, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas citizens are concerned that contaminants in materials used as fill for pits and quarries may endanger water quality and the natural environment of the greenbelt; and

"Whereas the Ministry of the Environment has a responsibility and a duty to protect the sensitive areas of the greenbelt and provincially sensitive wetlands; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has the lead responsibility to provide the tools to lower-tier governments to plan, protect and enforce clear, effective policies governing the application and permitting process for the placement of fill in abandoned pits and quarries; and

"Whereas this process requires clarification regarding rules respecting what materials may be used to rehabilitate or fill abandoned pits and quarries;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Minister of the Environment"—who's here today—"to initiate a moratorium on the clean fill application and permit process on the greenbelt until there are clear rules; and we further ask that the provincial government take all necessary actions to protect our water and prevent contamination of the greenbelt" and other sensitive areas in

the province of Ontario; more importantly, in my riding of Durham.

I'm pleased to sign and support it and present it to Nicholas on his last day here at Queen's Park—a sad day.

### SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** J'ai une pétition qui nous parvient d'un peu partout à travers l'Ontario :

« Attendu que la mission du commissaire aux services en français est de veiller à ce que la population reçoive en français des services de qualité du gouvernement de l'Ontario et de surveiller l'application de la Loi sur les services en français;

« Attendu que le commissaire a le mandat de mener des enquêtes indépendantes selon la Loi sur les services en français;

« Attendu que contrairement au vérificateur général, à l'ombudsman, au commissaire à l'environnement et au commissaire à l'intégrité qui, eux, relèvent de l'Assemblée législative, le commissaire aux services en français relève de la ministre déléguée aux services en français; »

Ils demandent « à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario de changer les pouvoirs du commissaire aux services en français afin qu'il relève directement de l'Assemblée législative. »

J'appuie cette pétition, monsieur le Président. Je vais la signer et demander au page Ammaar de l'amener au greffier.

### IMMIGRATION POLICY

#### POLITIQUES D'IMMIGRATION

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario entitled "Respect for Diverse Communities."

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

"Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a joint responsibility of the federal and provincial governments;

"Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a function of the departments of citizenship and immigration at both the federal and provincial levels;

"Whereas Ontario still remains the destination of choice for new Canadians in our federation;

"We, the undersigned, ask that the province contact its federal counterpart, including but not limited to the Honourable Jason Kenney and his department, and notify them:

"That the proposed reduction in the number of centres in the GTA authorized to perform immigration medical exams, the IMM 1017, is ill-advised;

"That the reduction in number of centres in the GTA where services are offered in French is ill-advised;

"Que la réduction du nombre de centres dans la région du grand Toronto où les services sont offerts en français est mal avisée;

"That the virtual elimination of centres where services are offered in the GTA in the languages of Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Farsi, Tamil and Arabic is ill-advised, and that it not only will inflict undue hardship on those cultural communities but is generally discordant with the Canadian values of openness, pluralism and diversity."

I certainly support this petition, will sign it and send it to you via page Julia.

### OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario signed by a great many people, not only from my riding but from across the province of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario Ombudsman, who is an officer of the Legislature, is not allowed to provide trusted, independent investigations of complaints in the areas of hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children's aid societies, police, retirement homes and universities; and

"Whereas Ontario is the only province in Canada not allowing their Ombudsman to investigate any of these areas; and

"Whereas people wronged by these institutions are left feeling helpless and most have nowhere else to turn for help to correct systemic issues;

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

"Grant the Ombudsman the power to investigate hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children's aid societies, police, retirement homes and universities."

I thank you very much for the opportunity to present this petition on their behalf.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. The member from Timiskaming—Cochrane.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Sorry, Paul. I stood up once before, before you got here.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I was up first, thank you, Mr. Qaadri.

### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr. John Vanthof:** This is on behalf of residents in northeastern Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission provides services which are vital to the north's economy; and

"Whereas it is a lifeline for the residents of northern communities who have no other source of public transportation; and

"Whereas the ONTC could be a vital link to the Ring of Fire;

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

“That the planned cancellation of the Northlander and the sale of the rest of the assets at Ontario Northland Transportation Commission be halted immediately.”

I wholeheartedly agree, affix my signature and give to it page Preston.

#### IMMIGRATION POLICY POLITIQUES D’IMMIGRATION

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Etobicoke–North.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Thank you, Speaker. I am willing to yield my spot to the member of Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. He does seem quite anxious. Am I able to do that, sir?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I’ve already recognized you. Proceed.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Thank you, sir. I will follow that.

Speaker, I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, which is entitled “Respect for Diverse Communities.”

“Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a joint responsibility of the federal and provincial governments;

“Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a function of the departments of citizenship and immigration at both the federal and provincial levels;

“Whereas Ontario still remains the destination of choice for new Canadians in our federation;

“We, the undersigned, ask that the province contact its federal counterpart, including but not limited to the Honourable Jason Kenney and his department, and notify them:

“That the proposed reduction in the number of centres in the GTA authorized to perform immigration medical exams, the IMM 1017, is ill-advised;

“That the reduction in number of centres in the GTA where services are offered in French is ill-advised;

“Que la réduction du nombre de centres dans la région du grand Toronto où les services sont offerts en français est mal avisée;

“That the virtual elimination of centres where services are offered in the GTA in the languages of Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Farsi, Tamil and Arabic is ill-advised, and that it not only will inflict undue hardship on those cultural communities but is generally discordant with the Canadian values of openness, pluralism and diversity.”

I certainly support this petition, Speaker, and send it to you via page Hassan.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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

“Whereas citizens are concerned that contaminants in materials used as fill for pits and quarries may endanger water quality and the natural environment of the greenbelt; and

“Whereas the Ministry of the Environment has a responsibility and a duty to protect the sensitive areas of the greenbelt and provincially sensitive wetlands; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario has the lead responsibility to provide the tools to lower-tier governments to plan, protect and enforce clear, effective policies governing the application and permitting process for the placement of fill in abandoned pits and quarries; and

“Whereas this process requires clarification regarding rules respecting what materials may be used to rehabilitate or fill abandoned pits and quarries;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Minister of the Environment to initiate a moratorium on the clean fill application and permit process on the greenbelt until there are clear rules; and we further ask that the provincial government take all necessary actions to protect our water and prevent contamination of the greenbelt.”

I’ve affixed my signature and give this to page Liam.

1350

#### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I would like to comment on the generosity of the member from Etobicoke North; I’m sure he had my well-being in his heart.

Speaker, this is day four in a row—I’m now having thousands a day—this is 3,776 more petitions signed.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario horse racing and breeding industry generates \$2 billion of economic activity, mostly in rural Ontario;

“Whereas more than 60,000 Ontarians are employed by Ontario’s horse racing and breeding industry;

“Whereas 20% of the funds generated by the OLG slots-at-racetracks program is reinvested in racetracks and the horse racing and breeding industry, while 75% is returned to the government of Ontario;

“Whereas the OLG slots-at-racetracks program generates \$1.1 billion a year for health care and other spending, making it the most profitable form of gaming in the province for OLG;

“Whereas the government has announced plans to cancel the slots-at-racetracks program, a decision that will cost the government \$1.1 billion per year and threatens more than 60,000 jobs;

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

“Call on the government of Ontario to protect the \$1.1 billion of revenue the government received annually because of the OLG slots-at-racetracks program; direct OLG to honour the contracts with racetracks and protect the horse racing and breeding industry by continuing the OLG slots-at-racetracks revenue-sharing program.”

I agree with this, Speaker, and will gladly sign my name to it.

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** “To the Legislature of Ontario:

“Whereas the current enrolment of Avalon Public School is 687 students;

“Whereas the student capacity of the school is 495 students, as determined by the Ministry of Education’s own occupancy formula;

“Whereas the issue of overcrowding and lack of space makes it impossible for Avalon Public School to offer full-day kindergarten until the overcrowding issue is addressed;

“Whereas Avalon Public School is located in a high-growth community;

“Whereas the enrolment at Avalon Public School is expected to continue rising at a rate of 10% to 15% a year for the foreseeable future;

“Whereas the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board has made building a new school in Avalon a top capital priority;

“We, the undersigned, call on the province of Ontario and Ministry of Education to provide the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board with the necessary funding to build an additional school in Avalon, to open no later than September 2014.”

I agree with this petition, and I send it forward with Abbigail. Thank you.

### GREENBELT

**Mr. John O’Toole:** I’m pleased to present another petition from my riding of Durham, which reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Greenbelt Act was passed by the Ontario Legislature in 2005, affecting property rights in Ontario; and

“Whereas the right to own, use, enjoy and the opportunity to earn a living from private property is the basis of freedom and democracy; and

“Whereas the greenbelt restricts property owners in the use, enjoyment and ability to earn a living from their private property; and

“Whereas property owners are not being compensated for any loss of these rights;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the greenbelt plan area”—and the Oak Ridges moraine act—“at the 10-year re-evaluation in 2015 to allow additional development when requested by the community and supported by the local municipality.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this and present it to Preston, one of the pages who is working his last afternoon here at Queen’s Park. Thank you, Preston.

### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** You will have heard this before; thousands and thousands have signed it.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario horse racing and breeding industry generates \$2 billion of economic activity, mostly in rural Ontario;

“Whereas more than 60,000 Ontarians are employed by Ontario’s horse racing and breeding industry;

“Whereas 20% of the funds generated by the OLG slots-at-racetracks program is reinvested in racetracks and the horse racing and breeding industry, while 75% is returned to the government of Ontario;

“Whereas the OLG slots-at-racetracks program generates \$1.1 billion a year for health care and other spending, making it the most profitable form of gaming in the province for OLG;

“Whereas the government has announced plans to cancel the slots-at-racetracks program, a decision that will cost the government \$1.1 billion per year and threatens more than 60,000 jobs;

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

“Call on the government of Ontario to protect the \$1.1 billion of revenue the government received annually because of the OLG slots-at-racetracks program; direct OLG to honour the contracts with racetracks and protect the horse racing and breeding industry by continuing the OLG slots-at-racetracks revenue-sharing program.”

I couldn’t agree more with this, Mr. Speaker. I’m going to sign it, and I’m going to give it to Hassan on his last day to be delivered.

### IMMIGRATION POLICY

#### POLITIQUES D’IMMIGRATION

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, entitled “Respect for Diverse Communities.”

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

“Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a joint responsibility of the federal and provincial governments;

“Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a function of the departments of citizenship and immigration at both the federal and provincial levels;

“Whereas Ontario still remains the destination of choice for new Canadians in our federation;

“We, the undersigned, ask that the province contact its federal counterpart, including but not limited to the Honourable Jason Kenney and his department, and notify them:

“That the proposed reduction in the number of centres in the GTA authorized to perform immigration medical exams, the IMM 1017, is ill-advised;

“That the reduction in number of centres in the GTA where services are offered in French is ill-advised;

“Que la réduction du nombre de centres dans la région du grand Toronto où les services sont offerts en français est mal avisée;

“That the virtual elimination of centres where services are offered in the GTA in the languages of Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Farsi, Tamil and Arabic is ill-advised, and that it not only will inflict undue hardship on those cultural communities but is generally discordant with the Canadian values of openness, pluralism and diversity.”

I certainly support this petition, Speaker, will sign it and send it to you via page Preston.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### CONDOMINIUM DISPUTE RESOLUTION

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Ontario Ministry of Consumer Services explore the possibility of alternative forms of dispute resolution in matters between condominium boards and owners.

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

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** I'm proud to rise today in the Legislature to present this motion before the House. This motion is one that reaches out to Ontarians across the entire province. Fourteen years ago, the Condominium Act was brought into power in the province, and it was an appropriate act for the time. It addressed many of the issues which surrounded owning a condo unit in Ontario.

However, times have changed. The number of condominiums in this province has increased dramatically in the intervening time. In 2012, Ontario has become a far more urbanized and more densely populated province. More and more of us are living in large urban centres, with space becoming a premium. The result has been a dramatic rise in the number of condominiums popping up around the province.

Mr. Speaker, I've met with representatives from the Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario, the Canadian Condominium Institute and, of course, condo boards and condo residents. They have enlightened me with some fascinating statistics. Over the last 25 years, condos have grown from a rarity to almost a commonplace in the province. In the last 25 years, condominiums have become almost 62% of all new home sales in the GTA.

Take my riding of Mississauga East–Cooksville, for instance: There are 23,000 condominium units and some 120 towers currently standing in my riding. This is just the beginning, because, according to the city of Mississauga, the downtown core of Mississauga today has a population of 30,000; by 2031, we expect that to double to 61,000—all of the growth coming from condominiums.

Across the province as a whole, there are more than 500,000 units with over 1.3 million Ontarians living in condos, with a further 34,000 under construction. In fact,

condominiums are so commonplace in this province, Mr. Speaker, that I was surprised to learn that 104 out of the 107 ridings have condominiums of some form or another. Once again, 104 out of the 107 ridings in Ontario have condominiums.

**1400**

I'm not here to recite statistics to the Legislature, but rather to reinforce to the members present the importance of this motion. With so many individuals and families living in condominiums, we must work to address a major issue which affects all of us. That issue is, of course, dispute resolution. Any Friday in my office, I can guarantee you there's at least one or two condominium owners coming to me because they have some problem or the other with their condo boards. I'm sure many of you have had the same experience. If you have, then you can understand that some condo owners and their boards do not always see eye to eye, and this is what my motion wishes to address.

The Condominium Act of 1998 has provisions in it for dispute resolution. Sections 132, 134 and 135 address this matter in so only it provides the parties involved the avenue of mediation to pursue. Furthermore, should a resolution not be found through mediation, then the matter is sent to arbitration.

This process as it was written is open to both condo owners as well as condo boards. Both sides have equal opportunities to bring forward disputes over declarations, the bylaws, or agreements made between owner and board. This portion of the act was welcomed as a solution to what was viewed as a vacuum at that time with regard to dispute resolution. While it's better than nothing, it does not keep up with today's world, and this is what my motion today seeks to address.

The problem with the current dispute resolution process today is quite simply that it is the only dispute resolution process between condo owners and boards. What may have been okay in 1998 is not in keeping with the realities of 2012.

Let me put this into perspective. Disputes can range from wanting to put a barbecue on one's balcony or a satellite dish on the side of your unit to a timely disclosure of a condo board's budget to allegations that perhaps the condo board did not go through a proper RFP process and awarded the window retrofitting to the brother-in-law of the president of the board. Disputes of all shapes and sizes, however, must proceed through the mediation and arbitration process. The end result is a time-consuming and costly process for all sides involved.

The current form of dispute resolution can involve months, even years, to come to a conclusion. This as well does not take into account the fiscal cost to both sides. To properly prepare yourself to enter into the mediation process, one has to obtain a lawyer's services, and as we all know, lawyers do not come cheap. Both parties' involvement results in spending upwards of \$10,000 on legal costs to properly present their arguments to the mediator. If that does not work, they will have to continue paying costly expenses at the arbitration process.

As I mentioned, the costs associated with the current resolution process can make for a very unfair and one-sided process. On the one side, you can have condo owners against their boards, and some boards literally have multi-million dollar budgets. Many Ontarians are unable to bring together the funds necessary to put together a cogent legal argument and therefore are unable to pursue the current resolution process. On the flip side, sometimes condo boards are required to spend unnecessary funds on legal costs to defend themselves against frivolous dispute claims brought on by overzealous condo owners. The result of the current dispute resolution process is really a one-size-fits-all policy which does not fit all needs of condo owners and boards.

This motion now speaks to the need to broaden the dispute resolution process of the Condominium Act. Do we really need a system where the process, whether you want to fight the board on where to put your satellite dish or there are accusations of irregularities in the way finances have been handled—we cannot have the same dispute resolution process for such widely differing issues. A better solution is needed, and that is what this motion seeks to do. It seeks to instruct the Ministry of Consumer Services to investigate alternative options to the current dispute resolution process.

I believe that this motion provides the ministry and the minister with the mandate to explore a variety of possibilities, especially to compare other jurisdictions to see what other provinces have done on this matter. Right here in Canada, for instance, Nova Scotia has now created a condominium dispute officer who is able to make decisions between parties on a very precise list of criteria. In British Columbia, they're looking to provide resources in education to parties prior to engaging them in the dispute resolution process so that they will know if they have a case prior to proceeding. We should examine these examples to see if there is a possible application here in Ontario.

After speaking with the Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario and the Canadian Condominium Institute, I have been informed that this is an issue that not only affects condominium owners and boards in Ontario, but it's an issue that is across the country, and we all need to work together to find a solution. The Condominium Act of 1998 provided a dispute resolution process which was right for the time and the place; however, 14 years later, times have changed. Our province is a very different place now. More and more Ontarians are living in condominiums.

My own riding of Mississauga East–Cooksville is an example of that. Driving through it, I'm often amazed at the level of condo development which is present in my riding. It seems that every other day a new tower appears in my riding, and I know that's the case in small towns and big towns across Ontario and, for that matter, across Canada.

In speaking with my constituents, I often hear their frustrations with trying to resolve basic issues with their condominiums, simple disputes which they're faced with

high costs and large time demands to see resolved. It really frustrates me as their MPP to see a condominium owner come with some dispute, at his wits' end, with nothing but a court solution in front of him. Typically, these people have 9-to-5 jobs. They do not have the ability to take on a board, particularly an entrenched board. We need a better system.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that in this House there are other members, including the member from Trinity–Spadina, working on the same issue. I look forward to working with all of you to come up with a solution that vexes so many people in Ontario to try to make Ontario a better place.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** That's Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to address motion number 15 from the honourable member from Mississauga East–Cooksville.

This week, I had the opportunity to meet with members of both the Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario and the Canadian Condominium Institute. These meetings help drive home just how complex the condominium industry is and how delicate the balance is that we need to strike in legislation regulating the condo phenomenon.

Property, its ownership and the right to enjoy it may not be written in any human rights code, but no one will deny the importance of ensuring that owners want to be true owners and not just tenants with a mortgage.

On the other side, unlike a house, when one buys a condo, one buys a community within a community and needs clear rules and tools to enforce it, and of course, compromise on issues that wouldn't arise in other types of properties.

I support the need to look at the dispute resolution mechanism, but I also want to highlight the need to reopen the entire bill and update it to reflect the explosion in condominium construction, where one in 10 Ontarians will soon be living in a condominium. Over the next few years, tens of thousands of new units will come on to the market, and we need to make sure the legislation evolves with them to ensure that the laws and regulations serve the best interests of Ontario. There is a need to review the act with the stakeholders to ensure that current issues facing the industry are addressed.

Mr. Speaker, the Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario and the Canadian Condominium Institute have done important work already that addresses the needs, and I urge the minister to use this report to bring the Condominium Act up to date. It identifies many issues that have developed as this form of housing has evolved into a major sector in the housing market. These recommendations will ensure that the market continues to grow and that the needs of the residents and the owners are looked after.

I look forward to working with the minister and her ministry to ensure that this important legislation is updated.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Trinity–Spadina.

1410

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I'm happy to hear that the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry wants to open up the act, because I think that's a good thing. I've been trying to do that for four years. There will be an opportunity, on May 10, to hear more of your comments on this.

I do support what the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville is doing. It is a small measure, but it recognizes that we have a problem in the condominium world, and it's a problem that obviously needs to be tackled. I don't think we need to tackle it in small, little pieces, but at least it's an effort that the member has made that moves us along that way, and that's why I will support it. I will speak to it briefly and give some history, as she did early on.

One of the main problems we have around this is that we have had six ministers in the last eight years. There is no good that can come out of that kind of constant changing of the guard. If you've got so many ministers coming and going, there probably will not be any minister who will be strong or brave enough to be able to say it's time to change the condo act. Because after 14 years of an incredible condominium boom, we have seen so many problems, and the time has come.

Every time you have a different minister, they have to come up to speed, and I understand that. They get very nervous in terms of initiating changes, because they're not quite certain of their own position or not quite certain whether they understand the issue very well. It takes time, and I appreciate that. But I want to highlight that as a serious problem: too many ministers over the last eight years, and as a result, nobody has been able to get a serious handle on this particular problem.

The member correctly says that since 1998, we have seen a tremendous boom in the condo world, and we—governments, MPPs—have not kept up to date in terms of the changes that are so drastically required. And it's time. I know that the ministry, with respect to my pushing them, did a little condo survey a year and a half ago and they're doing another one, and it's all good. I'm hoping that after the survey, the government will realize that we need big changes—not minor changes, but dramatic changes.

What the member highlights is a serious problem. But the problems don't exist between condo owners and condo boards alone. The problems go beyond that. The problems are between condo owners and developers and condo owners and property managers, and this motion doesn't touch on that. I understand that maybe there will be other bills that will touch on different aspects. I suspect that is the approach that some other Liberal may want to take on this—I don't know. But I appreciate the fact that the member understands that with a growing community living in condominiums—she has come to terms with the fact that this at least is a problem that has been identified in her riding, and that's a good start.

When a condo owner and a condo board have disputes, it can come to no good in terms of the friction that arises between them, and someone has to pay for those legal costs. If the board wins, the condo owner loses legally, and the cost can be very, very heavy. If the board loses, the condominium owner wins, but the costs are spread to everybody, so all condominium owners lose in that regard. We have to find a better way.

Now, the mediation and arbitration that already exists in the condo law, which most ministers who have spoken to my bill have said is adequate, is simply inadequate, as the member has stated. The problem with mediation and arbitration is that the majority of people don't even know it exists, and they go directly to the courts.

But if you go to arbitration, arbitration is very expensive. Nothing is settled in one hour—nothing. A condo lawyer will charge you at least \$500 just to sit down for that hour, and then you've got to sit down with the other party, it doesn't get solved in another hour either and you're already up to \$1,200 if it costs more than \$500. Understand: Disputes take time, and so they're very costly. Nobody goes to arbitration.

Some people take the mediation route, but I submit that most people simply don't have a clue, and they go directly to the court system.

Nobody goes to court except those few that have the money, and I know of some cases that I brought attention to in this Legislature where one guy is still at it years later and he has spent \$120,000 already defending himself. Another individual I mentioned in this Legislature last year said that he has spent \$40,000 defending himself and it's still not settled.

The problem is, it's very expensive to solve a problem that you have, and it shouldn't be that way. We need to have a process that's quick and cheap.

I remind people that renters can go to a tribunal. They pay a fee of 25 bucks, the landlord pays \$125 or \$150—mind you, they've got a little more pecunia; they can afford the \$150. But the poor individual at least can go and defend himself or herself for 25 bucks. It may be an unfair scenario of a landlord that brings a lawyer and a poor individual that goes there himself or herself, but at least they're able to go to a tribunal for 25 bucks and defend themselves. A condo owner has nowhere to go—they're on their own—unless you're wealthy.

But even wealthy people have realized—and one woman in particular that I've worked with has said to me, "Rosario, I've spent 20,000 bucks. I'm taking your advice and I am stopping here." What she discovered is that there's tremendous collusion, often, between a lawyer that defends the condo owner and the legal firm that defends the board. You understand the incredible potential conflict there is. It's a small crowd of lawyers here, so there's nowhere to run to. So this poor person has spent 20,000 bucks only to discover that the firm was representing the landlord. So you wonder, how independent could the lawyer be if the firm is supporting the other side?

It's a big problemo that we have, and that's why Marchese has proposed in the last three years that we

create a review board similar to a tribunal that exists for tenants. A review board would do the following: Where there is a dispute between a condo owner and a developer—and the disputes are legion—they would be able to go to a tribunal to defend themselves quickly and cheaply. That's what I've recommended in the last three years. I will do so again on May 10, when I bring my bill back again with some other amendments.

If you've got a problem, as a condo owner, with a property manager that may not be competent, what do you do? We have seen examples of tremendous fraud that has happened with a number of individuals that simply have not been too nice. They have been taken to court, and the fact of the matter is that when that happens, most of the condo owners lose.

What we need to do is license the property managers, something that the condo managers of Ontario support, and I will introduce that as an amendment in the bill that I will present on May 10, because we believe it's time that they be licensed. That's something that I believe has wide support from a lot of property managers.

Now, in that regard, I will be proposing that it's the government that has oversight and not some independent board where they oversee themselves. I don't support that. I say this on the record, and I've told this to the condo managers of Ontario, that I would prefer government oversight, not their own oversight. But it's still better than what we've got at the moment.

So you've got a review board that would allow people to defend themselves against terrible developers, because while we've got some good developers, there are some that are not so good.

Remember this: Condo developers have very expensive lawyers that write these declarations, which is the condo contract that you sign when you move in. Those contracts that are signed, those declarations, are deliberately confusing and deliberately complex, and they're done in such a way that the person who has the upper hand is the developer, not the condo owner. So we need to look at this, we need to deal with that, and it's something that I hope to be able to talk about on May 10. But that is another serious problem that we've got, and more and more, as we get more condominiums built, the declarations become more complex and more one-sided.

**1420**

Remember, the majority of people who buy condominiums are just ordinary people. There are some wealthy millionaires, but the majority are normal people. They do not read the declarations. Those who say "consumer beware, buyer beware" don't care about whether or not people are reading it, because they say it's your responsibility to read on your own or to hire a condo lawyer. It's too expensive; condo lawyers will cost at least \$3,500 to review your declaration. Very few people do it. Ordinary lawyers can't see the ins and outs of these problems, so most people don't even hire them, let alone a condo lawyer. Most people have no one except the real estate agent, and they don't know enough to be able to pick up the problems that are in those declarations.

There are many, many problems. I believe we need a comprehensive overhaul to protect condo owners. This is a small step in the right direction. That's why I support it. I don't want to attack it in any way, because I think it's a good thing. But it's simply not adequate vis-à-vis the many problems that you highlighted, that I agree with.

If we're going to do this, we need to open up the condo law altogether, and I am hoping that this new Minister of Consumer Services will finally do that. Small measures are simply not enough. We need to do a lot more than what we have seen in the last little while.

I congratulate the member for bringing this forward. It's a good beginning. I hope your minister will do much more, and I hope you and others will support my bill on May 10.

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

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** Actually, I am very pleased to stand and support my colleague from Mississauga East–Cooksville in motion number 25. She is actually a wonderful addition to our Peel caucus and our Liberal caucus, and this motion is well thought out.

I actually had the opportunity to be the Minister of Consumer Services for a short while, and I am actually aware of this situation. I am also very supportive of any measures or mechanisms that make the dispute resolution process simpler and timely for Ontarians.

We are building more condos in Ontario than Chicago and New York combined. If you look at that, then we need to look at what are some of the problems that condo owners are facing. If the current process is time-consuming, is costly, then we need to find a way to make it simpler.

I think the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville made about three points, in my view, in this motion. First, she is trying to make a case that the current process is very costly, because it's very time-consuming. The second point she is making is, when people are trying to make some small changes in their condos, and if the process is very costly and time-consuming, then people have to think twice and may not take the opportunity to go through the dispute resolution mechanism. The third point I think she also makes quite well is that if there is a process available out there which is much simpler, and we can learn from the other jurisdiction to see how they are dealing with this situation, then we should definitely be looking at those processes.

From my point of view, actually, I am supportive of all those things she is saying. We don't have a monopoly on knowledge. If there are processes that are available that are much simpler and actually work and make the life of the people simpler, then we should definitely look at those processes.

The member from Mississauga East–Cooksville also has given some examples of the jurisdictions that we can actually look to. I will actually encourage the ministry to look at those jurisdictions and see if those processes, in fact, work and if it can make life easier.

Mr. Speaker, let me just tell you a little bit. The Licence Appeal Tribunal comes under my responsibility

right now. Even in that, the LAT, we have looked at the processes to make it simpler, fairer and actually more accessible to the people. So, anything that we can do to make the life of the people easier, I think we need to do it. We owe it to the people of Ontario.

I really want to encourage my colleague from Mississauga East–Cooksville and congratulate her on bringing this motion forward, and I will wholeheartedly support this.

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

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** I am pleased to rise to speak to this motion 15. Someone once said that the secret to a happy life is learning to enjoy someone you don't approve of. Nowhere is that, indeed, more obvious than in our cities, which are full of exciting friction and vivid contrast. Understanding is critical to the whole urban ecosystem.

The same is true of high-density development, where give-and-take is essential. A condominium is a community of people with common interests and, in some cases, similar tastes. But that doesn't mean they are alike in every way. Neighbours in condos may be strangers to each other, but they're not strangers between one another. Noises, pets, property standards or something more serious—anything and everything can be fodder for disagreement and dispute, and things don't always follow the most obvious and neighbourly plan.

Alternate dispute resolutions experienced a shot in the arm about 11 years ago when mandatory mediation and arbitration of Ontario condominium disputes came into effect. Even so, we see time and time again that things escalate needlessly, bogging everyone down in political headaches and legal red tape.

There was a story in the *Globe and Mail* in late February about a couple who violated the no-pets policy of their condo and brought in a very vocal parrot. That decision took them through an 18-month legal process and the threat of having to pay \$41,000 to cover the condo corporation's costs. That's a whole lot of drama and emotional turbulence that you have to imagine could have been avoided.

Obviously this is also about protecting our investments, but I think sometimes we forget that we have tools available to us that don't involve the courts. Many condo corporations have provisions in their individual bylaws that insist that disputes between the condo board and condo owners or residents must go to an informal negotiation meeting as a first step before mediation or arbitration proceedings begin.

I think that this is the kind of temperament that this motion aims to achieve. Yes, we want to ensure that the right to own and enjoy a property in Ontario can be exercised without the concern of high costs of enforcement.

We must also acknowledge that every condo developer, manager and owner is unique, and that any attempts to paint all condo matters with a single brush isn't going to work. This bill could be made stronger, but ultimately we

do not need an additional layer of bureaucracy. We just need to make the Condominium Act work smarter.

I support the sensible measures laid out in this bill, and I hope that it will be approved, if and when it goes to committee.

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

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Let me first congratulate the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville for bringing forth this resolution, which aims to address a number of problems associated with condominiums, condominium owners and all the regulations that indeed regulate condominiums. It is since 1998 that the act has not been visited, and I think it is time that indeed we do revisit the act.

Given the content of the resolution, I wouldn't be surprised if the Minister of Consumer Services will pick this one up and, in due course, come up with proposed legislation that will deal indeed, in a very deep and acceptable and effective way, to come up with a solution to this particular problem.

I don't pretend that I have most of the condominiums in Metro, in Toronto, and when we deal with the legislation here, we do not specifically address it to our particular area or a particular city or location; it is for the entire province. But I know that this resolution comes at a very peculiar time, when we have seen in the last 10, 12 years, condominium buildings—the condominium industry has been burgeoning. I think we are the fastest-growing city in the world, if you will, in building condominiums.

**1430**

Associated with that, Speaker, you can see that we have first-time buyers; we have single people; we have empty-nesters buying condos. Some 62% of the homes sold in the Toronto and GTA area are condominiums. So I don't have to tell you, coming from a municipal background—and I have been a manager, as well, of condominiums—the problems associated with this particular time.

So I think we have to commend the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville for bringing this resolution. I hope that we can not only accept it and approve it in the House today, but I hope that the government will pick it up and indeed bring forth some changes to the legislation governing condominiums to address the many, many issues.

I have a large part of a condominium up in the Keele and Finch area. That's right in the heart of York University, next to the new subway station going to York at Keele and Finch. I can't tell you the problems associated between management, board and condominium owners. It is very difficult to accept some of the conditions and the inability for us not to be able to do anything to assist those people to assist themselves as well, because they don't have the means.

Often, I have to say that the management and board members are in cahoots, to the terrible detriment of the condominium owners, and they don't have recourse. They do not have recourse and they suffer.

So I hope, with the help of this resolution as a good beginning, thanks to the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville, that the government, through its ministries, can indeed look at the act, which, since 1998, has not been looked at, and bring forth some good, responsible, acceptable recommendations that will assist indeed the condominium owners. I thank you, Speaker, for your time.

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

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** The member for Cooksville–Mississauga East brings forward—in fact, Cooksville–Mississauga East: I was born in that riding, on Tomken Road, just below Bloor. There was a lovely apple orchard that used to be there. Some of the trees are still around the houses that were in that area.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** He took one of the trees and made Chudleigh's apple—

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** However, the member mentioned in her opening comments that this—

**Interjection:** Great apple pie.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Apple pie comments always are welcome. I hope we don't have a spring frost. The blossoms are coming out far too early, and a spring frost would wipe out a lot of apples in this province. I hope the government would have a program in place through their crop insurance to make sure that those apple farmers are protected.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I'd ask the member to stick to the debate.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Oh. We're not debating apple pie today? There's always room for apple pie, Speaker.

She mentioned in her opening remarks that the condominium issue is very new. Twenty-five years ago, it was a rare thing to have a condominium. Today, they outnumber—at least the new ones—apartment buildings. They're growing like crazy.

We all know how to buy a house. We've been buying houses for hundreds of years, as a society. We know what to do when we go and buy a house. We look at the foundation, the electrical, the plumbing; we look at the yard; we consider the schools in the area; we consider the transportation in the area. We know how to go about purchasing a home.

When it comes to condominiums, we look for many of the same things, but I think you also have to consider the condominium board. What is it going to be like to live in this facility with your neighbours? The community that you move into when you buy a house has neighbours, and you have to consider what those neighbours are like and whether or not you will fit into that community and whether you'll be happy in that community.

The same thing applies, and even perhaps more so, in a condominium. Is the condominium board one that likes to increase their fees, increase their services? Do they want to spend other people's money as opposed to their own? That's a consideration that you have to make when you move into a condominium. Those kinds of issues become part and parcel of the value of that property. If

you have a condominium board that administers the property in a very reasonable and prudent manner, it adds value to that property. If you have a condominium board that does not consider the needs or wishes of the owners of the condos, that becomes a detriment to the value of that property.

I think this whole condominium thing is an evolution. It's an evolution of how to buy condominiums, which we perhaps haven't had a lot of experience in. I know that condominium fees can vary tremendously. You can have condo fees that run in excess of \$30,000 a year; you can have condominium fees that are less than, perhaps, \$1,500 a year. All those funds, all those dollars, represent services. You may want those services in your condo building or you may not want those services. That becomes part and parcel of your purchasing decision as to how much service you want and how many fees you want to pay.

The difficulty, of course, comes—and I think that's what the members' motion is trying to address—when you buy into a condominium at a price point of fees that you expect to pay and then, over time, those fees drastically change because the condominium board may want more services than you're willing to pay for at that particular time. I think that is the crux of this bill.

Now, I'm not sure whether I support this motion or not; I'm still listening to the debate. But the thing I don't like about this motion is that we're asking other people to make decisions for us. I would be far more supportive if you came to this House with a proposal to say, "This is what we should be doing to solve this problem or to create the opportunity to solve this problem," as opposed to leaving it up to the civil service or to a third group. It's like the budget you just introduced, where you're going to have a committee look at the possibility of creating more jobs. I suspect the only jobs that can be created out of that committee are the people who are sitting on the committee. But having someone else make decisions for things that should be happening in this House, I think, is a problem. Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member from Willowdale.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Thank you, Speaker. It's my pleasure to speak in support of this motion. I commend the member for Mississauga East–Cooksville for bringing this forward.

The issue of disputes between condominium owners and managers, and then condominium owners amongst themselves—you know, two people on the same floor having a fight over how the hallway should be decorated and so on—has consumed an inordinate amount of my time in the constituency office in Willowdale.

Some people say Willowdale has the most condos in Toronto; some people say it's the second most. But there are a huge number of condominiums in Willowdale, and they are growing up mushrooms all along the Yonge Street corridor, where the two subway streets intersect.

Condo issues are of such importance in Willowdale that in the 2011 election, a group, the Condominium

Institute, the condominium owners and other people interested in condominium issues, sponsored an all-candidates meeting that was devoted solely to condominium issues. That was very well attended. All the political parties—the NDP attended, the Liberal Party attended, there was a Green Party attendee and a couple of other political parties attended. But do you know which party did not attend that all-candidates meeting dealing exclusively with condominium issues in Willowdale? The Tory candidate in the last election did not attend that meeting. I'm told that the Condominium Institute and the condominium owners association of the Yonge/Sheppard corridor in Willowdale pleaded with him. They pleaded with his campaign manager. They pleaded with his riding association. "Please participate in this all-candidates meeting because it's a huge issue in Willowdale." He would not attend. He would not participate in that debate. So of course, they did the usual thing: They set up a chair with his name on it—an empty chair. I just want to add that to the debate as an indication as to what the Tories think of this very, very important issue in Willowdale.

1440

When we got into the all-candidates debate, a lot of the issues revolved around—

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Durham, you have a right to ask a point of order, but I'll ask you to wait until I recognize you. Okay.

Would the member from Willowdale at least debate the issue that is in front of us?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I take the member opposite's point. I will speak to condominium issues today in this House in a way and in a manner that the Tory candidate did not last fall.

Now, on to the substance of it. One of the big issues that came up—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Willowdale, I will warn you for the last time. Please debate the motion that is in front of us.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** The resolution does address this important issue of how to deal with essentially the more minor disputes that occupy a tremendous amount of time in my constituency office and with the constituents.

In the old Condominium Act, the arbitration and mediation process was set up essentially with the idea to deal with big disputes involving board governance and the condominium agreements between the owners and the contractors. With so many condominium owners out there now, there is a whole new level of issues, and that is, issues between individual condominium owners.

I think the examples have been used: One owner wants to have a barbecue; the other one doesn't want to have a barbecue. One wants to have a green rug; one wants to have a blue rug. They get into these really difficult and personal and passionate arguments about these issues. And often, there's no way to resolve them short of that really expensive system. This puts in a much simpler

way to deal with these relatively minor disputes. It's needed legislation.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you very much. Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The member from Mississauga East–Cooksville—a reasonable motion to solve problems. I think that's something that's laudable.

By the way, the Condominium Act was actually created when we were in government. I was part of that government and led some of the consultations. The main consultant was actually Jim Flaherty, now the finance minister of Canada. So, we do have an interest in making arrangements for the contract provisions.

You have to look at a condo as a vertical subdivision. There's everything in there, under the kitchen sink. It's not for everyone.

I think the member from Halton made some very, very good points—outside the apple tree discussions. It was quite relevant to the discussion of how difficult it is. I think the member from Burlington as well made some very good remarks.

But it is really all about the relationship-building and solving problems. The most pressing thing, of course, is the reserve funds. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Mississauga East–Cooksville, you have two minutes for a reply.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to begin by thanking all of the members who spoke to this bill. Thank you so much. In particular, I was impressed by the passion with which the member from Trinity–Spadina spoke. Thank you so much; I really appreciate that. One thing that struck me was, he talked about quick and cheap, and that's exactly what I want: a quick and cheap solution, not just for the condo board and the condo owner, but also for government.

My idea today is not about creating more layers of bureaucracy necessarily to the point that I believe the member from Burlington made, but rather to simplify the process.

The member from Halton made a good point about the fact that "buyer beware." So if you are going to be buying a condo, perhaps you should read the condo act before you buy it or look at the board of directors. But the challenge is that the boards of directors change. When you buy the condo, it might be just fine and dandy, but three years later you have a rogue board in there, and then what do you do? So, it is that sort of thing that my motion, or my resolution, looks to solve.

Also, the member from Halton had some beef with the fact that my resolution is not prescriptive enough. There are two ways to look at it. Like the member from Mississauga–Erindale said, none of us have a monopoly on good ideas. The good news today, I think, is that we all agree that there is a problem. That's always a good place to start, that all of us agree there's a problem.

I'm open to suggestions. I'm open to working with all of you to find a reasonable solution that's quick and cheap, not just for the condo owner, not just for the

condo board, but for the Ontario taxpayer as well. Thank you so much.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. Orders of the day.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT  
ACT (BRAKE PAD STANDARDS), 2012

LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT  
LE CODE DE LA ROUTE  
(NORMES RELATIVES  
AUX PLAQUETTES DE FREIN)

Mrs. Sandals moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 51, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act with respect to brake pad standards and specifications / Projet de loi 51, Loi modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui a trait aux normes et aux caractéristiques relatives aux plaquettes de frein.

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

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to begin by introducing some folks who just arrived in the gallery to listen to the debate. From Guelph, some folks from ABS Friction, which is a brake pad manufacturer in my riding: Rick Jamieson, who's the CEO; John Burns, who is the president and COO; Jason Janssen; Scott McKay; and Robert Pitt.

Rick is actually—yes, you guys can stand up. Welcome.

*Applause.*

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Rick is the past chair of the Friction Material Standards Institute for North America, and he's actually a member of their standards negotiating committee with California and Washington, which I will explain later. I'd like to thank them for their assistance in drafting the bill.

Also present is Elizabeth Harvey, who's the provincial manager of government relations for the Ontario Lung Association. I'd like to thank the lung association for their support. Thank you, Elizabeth, for being here.

When I get into my car, I want to be sure that I've got good brakes and I can stop. I make certain assumptions that I'm sure are the same assumptions that most people do. Because it's really important that I be able to stop, and the government is in charge of important safety standards, I just presume that there are some safety standards for the brakes on my car.

That's only partly right. When you buy a new car, there are, in fact, North American safety standards for the original equipment. But eventually those brakes will wear out and you go to get them replaced, and in Canada, there is no standard for aftermarket brakes. It's buyers beware, and you really do need to beware because most of us don't actually realize that. Ontario brake manufacturers do, in fact, meet some voluntary standards and

their brakes are perfectly safe, but that can't be said of every brake on the market in Ontario.

The other assumption I would make is that Ontario, because of our health and safety legislation, no longer uses asbestos. Again, that's only sort of true. We don't use asbestos in the manufacturing process in Ontario, but there's actually no ban in Canada that says that you can't bring products which contain asbestos into the country. There lies the problem.

Bill 51 would actually address both of these issues. Firstly, it would permit Ontario to set standards for brakes, and secondly, and perhaps most importantly, it would make sure that the brakes we use in Ontario don't contain asbestos.

You might ask, what does asbestos have to do with brakes? As we know, asbestos is a strong, heat-resistant and cheap material. Because of that, it can be used and in fact used to be used in Ontario as a cheap, effective material in the manufacture of brake pads. But Ontario brake pad manufacturers don't use asbestos anymore. Why? Simply because asbestos causes cancer. A brake pad manufacturer in Ontario is not allowed to use an industrial process that involves mixing in little fibres, little bits of asbestos. Ontario workplace health and safety legislation does not permit it. So Ontario-manufactured brake pads, be they original equipment or aftermarket, do not contain asbestos. That much is clear. But brake pads manufactured outside North America can, and often do, contain asbestos. In fact, it might even be asbestos that's been mined in Quebec, shipped abroad and comes back in the brake pad. Those asbestos-containing brake pads can quite legally be imported into Canada. Statistics Canada reports that more than \$2.6 million worth of asbestos brake pads entered the country in 2011, and you might buy those brake pads.

**1450**

A few years ago, a Seattle newspaper went around and collected dust from garages that did brake repairs and sent this out to a lab to be analyzed. What they found from this analysis was that the dust collected from the garages that did brake repairs could have anywhere from 2% to 64% of asbestos content. Hugely variable, obviously—it would depend in what market the brake repair shop was working and what percentage they happened to have of foreign-manufactured brakes. Think what that means to the mechanic working in the garage. They're breathing asbestos in from the dust. As they open up the wheel and go to work on the brake pads, they get the dust. They may be breathing it in or they may get it on their hands, on their coffee cup, on their lunch, on their clothing and, one way or another, end up ingesting the asbestos dust.

According to recent studies, the incidence of lung cancer in automotive mechanics is significantly higher than in the general population. Mesothelioma is a rare cancer that affects those who have been exposed to asbestos. Naturally, a higher prevalence rates exists for mesothelioma and those who have worked regularly with asbestos.

The occupations with the greatest risk of exposure to asbestos include construction workers, workers in energy plants and oil fields, boiler workers, pipefitters, shipyard workers and sailors—places where we traditionally expect to find asbestos problems—and automotive brake repair workers.

So let's think about what happens when I bring my car into the shop to get the brakes repaired. How would the mechanic know if the brake pads, which have now deteriorated and got the dust all over them, contain asbestos? Well, if the brake pads were manufactured in North America, they might have what's called an edge code marking. AMECA, which stands for the Automotive Manufacturers Equipment Compliance Agency, has a ratings system and compliance program. They test the brake pads. They ensure they meet the performance standards and assign an edge code which goes on the metal housing, which identifies the manufacturer of the brake pad and the ratings standard which has been met. This provides traceability of the product for the garage.

On the other hand, if there is no edge code marking, the mechanic has no way of knowing who manufactured the brake pad, the country of origin or, most importantly, whether the brake pad contains asbestos and the wheel well is now full of life-threatening asbestos dust. The mechanic has no choice. We just expect the mechanic to go ahead and do the brake job.

Bill 51 includes a clause that would permit a regulation to be made to prescribe the use of edge code markings. This would provide the labelling and traceability which is currently lacking.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Timmins–James Bay on a point of order.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'm just trying to be helpful to my friend across the way, as she is dealing with a bit of a throat irritation.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Yes. I have what seems to be the caucus cold here. So thank you very much to the member from Timmins–James Bay.

When I introduced a similar bill back in 2009, it received the unanimous backing of this Legislature at second reading. At that time it was the first bill in North America to propose a ban on the use of asbestos in brake pads. Since then, two states—California and Washington—have actually passed legislation to control the materials used in the manufacture of brake friction materials. In both cases, in addition to controlling the use of asbestos, their legislation also set standards to limit the use of copper and other elements, such as chromium, lead and mercury.

Those states are concerned that copper dust—again, the same thing; the brake pad breaks down and you end up with dust, so if you have copper in the composition, you end up with copper dust. They're concerned that the copper dust is polluting their water and is toxic to aquatic life, including salmon. Bill 51 does not mention the copper pollution issue, but it does have the authority to prescribe standards that could be used to bring Ontario in

line with North American standards as they evolve in the future.

Back to the asbestos issue: The obvious question is, why not just ban the import of asbestos-containing brake pads? The unfortunate answer is that no federal government has been willing to deal with the asbestos issue. Health Canada's position is that the primary risks associated with asbestos in brake pads occur only during the manufacturing process, because science indicates that the problem with asbestos is when you breathe it in or ingest it. So their position is that if the asbestos fibres are, as they say, tightly bound in a product, there is no significant health risk, which means that if you work for Canada Customs, you're not going to get asbestos, because it comes in tightly bound. They're conveniently ignoring that by the time the brake pads are installed and the brake pads work the way they're supposed to, the brake pad breaks down, you end up with a wheel well full of asbestos particles, and the mechanic is being exposed to free asbestos fibres, and that's the problem that we have to solve.

For people who work in boiler rooms or in all the other places that I talked about, we've dealt with the problem. But we haven't dealt with the problem for mechanics, and the only way we can solve it for people who work with brake pads is to ban the use of asbestos in those brake pads, and Bill 51 will do just that. I ask for your support. Thank you very much.

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

*Applause.*

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I'm pleased to rise in support of this bill, and I'm glad that one of my caucus members applauded.

I'll say at the outset that I will certainly be supporting this bill. I know that this is a rare occasion when the member from Guelph and myself would agree on anything, but here we are, and it just shows you the miracle of this place.

I must say, when I first got the honourable member's letter saying that she was going to introduce a private member's bill that deals with brake pads, I must admit, I thought, "Is there nothing better that you can do with a private member's bill than put forward a bill that deals with brake pads?" But we looked into this, and I must say that it is a worthy use of our time, not only for the purpose of putting in place this legislation but also to raise awareness. You know, we in here certainly think, at least sometimes, that we're fairly well informed, but again, occasions like this just teach us how little we sometimes do know about important issues, especially when it comes to health and safety. The member has a bill here, I believe, that is worth supporting.

**1500**

I had a discussion with a constituent of mine, a gentleman by the name of Brian Roffey, who is involved in a family business called CM Brake Inc. There's quite a history to that company. It actually started back in 1978, went through some difficult times with the economy, and

is back in business. I asked him his view about this initiative. He, of course, was very supportive. They, as a business, imported product from China for a number of years. In fact, they had an operation in China as well. To be fair, he did say that the product that they manufactured in China did not contain asbestos, but admitted that many of those products do. Of course, no manufacturer in Ontario is using asbestos, but the issue here is, how can we control what comes in and what is sold at the end of the day?

In fact, it's interesting. For a few years before I was elected, Speaker, I drove a Corvette; that's something in the past now. But something about those brakes—I took the car in, and all of a sudden the brakes started to squeal every time I touched the brake. I thought, "I've just spent \$2,500," I think it was, "on a brake job here, and why are my brakes squealing?" Everybody looked at me when I came to a stop sign. It had nothing to do with me; it was my brakes.

So I went back to the mechanic and I said, "What's going on here?" He said, "Well, you know, there's been a change. We used to use brake pads that contained asbestos, and ever since we can no longer use those, we've got these things, and there's"—I'm not going into the technical explanation. I'll just say they squeaked. I was willing to have him put the asbestos back on, but he refused and said, "No, they're no longer available."

Here's my point. The point is that here in Ontario, I think we have obviously seen the wisdom of ensuring that our products are manufactured in accordance with health and safety standards. What the honourable member is doing is wanting to entrench this, to ensure that even products that are imported are restricted from use.

The question that I'm going to have for the member is: How will this be enforced? At the end of the day, every piece of legislation that comes forward with good intentions has to ask this question: How are we going to ensure at the end of the day that what is proclaimed here, in terms of intent, can actually be implemented so that it does benefit us in this province?

So I'll wind up my comments by simply saying I appreciate the legislation being put forward. I will certainly support it, and we would look forward to some of the details in terms of the actual enforcement. I understand the stamping and so on and so forth. With every legislation, with every law, with every regulation, there are always those who spend a great deal of time figuring out, "How can we avoid it, and how can we get around it?" So it depends on what we can do to ensure that it does get enforced.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Timmins—James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'm going to ask the House for a bit of indulgence, because I will be talking about asbestos and I will be talking about the member's bill, but from a very different context, and I would ask for your indulgence.

Back in the day, I guess 1974 or 1973, whatever it was, when I came out of the armed forces, I was looking

for work. Back in Timmins, mining is the game. So I went around thinking about it, talking to my friends. As I came into town—I believe I came in on a Monday or a Tuesday. I met with a couple of my buddies and I said, "So where's the work?" And they said, "Oh, you want a great job? Go to Johns-Manville, out at the Penhorwood mine by Foleyet. They're hiring and they pay more than anybody else." Little did I know that it was an asbestos mine.

So the next morning—it was January, if I remember correctly, or February—I hitchhiked out to Foleyet, which is about an hour and a half ride, hitchhiking, from Timmins, and I got dropped off at the highway. I always remember looking up this road that I had to walk to get to this mine. There was a huge pile of what we called tailings from the mill that you can still see today when you drive up there.

Anyway, so here I am. It's 40 below zero, short hair—well, I've got short hair again today, but back then we used to have lot longer hair. I go walking up this road, and I get to the mine and I have no idea. I don't know if it's a gold mine; I don't know if it's silver; I have no idea what it is. It's a job, right?

So I show up. I get there and I wait at the HR department and they say, "Hang on. The manager will call you and will see you in a minute." I thought, "That's rather interesting." About a half hour goes by. The manager comes by and he says, "Listen, sorry. We're not hiring." I said, "Hang on a second. I just walked up your bloody road. It took me two or three hours to get up here. I ain't leaving until you give me a job." So he says, "I like your spunk. I'll tell you what: Show up here tomorrow morning. Go buy some steel-toed boots and you've got a job."

I managed to get a ride back with somebody who was leaving the mine that I happened to know and drive back to Timmins. I'm all excited, being 19 years old at the time. I went out for a couple of beers, excited, celebrating with my buddies. I've got a good job; it pays good money. Next day I get to the mine, and I've got my steel-toed boots on and I've got my hard hat that they gave me—actually, we didn't have hard hats back then. Believe it or not, we didn't have hard hats. It was not mandatory. Actually, it was just the steel-toed boots.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** That explains it.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** It explained what happened to me along the way. But this is going to get funnier.

So I get to this place, and the story is that I'm supposed to be a sweeper. The sweeper was the person who went around in the mill, swept up the asbestos off the ground and collected it so that it just didn't sit around and puff up all over for people to breathe in. I got really lucky. I happened to be walking by the mechanics shop, and the guy who runs the mechanics shop was a guy who used to be a first aid instructor when I was in the air cadets, Carl Habla, who still lives in the city of Timmins today, and I'll give you the spelling later.

Anyway, so Carl says, "Hey, young soldier"—  
*Interjection.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** He's going to get the Hansard, for sure.

He says, "Hey, young soldier; nice to see you've done that. Stay with me. I'll give you a millwright's apprenticeship." So that was my first thing. I became a millwright, as I called it, because I wasn't a very good welder, I've got to tell you.

Anyway, so I get the job—and I'm getting to your bill. So I get this job, and what I start noticing as I work in this place is that people tend not to work there for a very long time because they get sick. When you're a young guy of 19, you don't think of these things. You say to yourself, "I'm here; it's a job. It's paying good."

God, I made so much money in that place in two months, I bought a car—cash. I always remember. It was \$4,200 to buy a Plymouth Grand Fury—black with a red top is what I bought. I paid in cash in about two, two-and-a-half months because the Steelworkers, who had the collective agreement, had a really good salary, but you got double time and a half after one shift, and they were always on double time and a half because they didn't have people. So I made a—a bunch of money. I was going to use mining talk there, but I can't use it in the Legislature.

**Interjection:** It's an expletive.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** It's an expletive. You can say that.

I was doing different jobs in the mine. I always remember that I'd go into what we call the fibreizers, which crush the rock and take the asbestos out. The guy I was working with—we were doing a job. There was so much dust, including asbestos, in the air, that you literally couldn't see the arc at the end of your welding rod in what we were doing, it was that dusty. Essentially, you'd put your helmet in front of you and you'd go "bzzz" and you'd just hope you hit the right thing and hope that you welded it. I've got to tell you, it was bad aim. I normally welded all the wrong things, but that's a whole other story.

But this guy was spitting blood.

**Interjection:** Terrible.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So I thought to myself, "Jeez, this is quite something." Then I noticed that a lot of people that had been working there for a while no longer worked there anymore because they were off on disability. Back then, you couldn't get workers' compensation; they'd go on pogeys, is where they would go. Eventually they would end up on welfare because there weren't really any benefits back then.

So here's the story: I go to work one day, and the manager calls everybody in the mine together. This is like 1975, I think. He says, "Everybody: The mine is closing down, and you're all to go home today. But we want to tell you that the mine is closing down because the NDP in the Legislature have introduced legislation and forced the Conservative government to clean up the act when it comes to the asbestos industry. We can't fix the mine to meet the new standards. We're closing down. Don't forget, next election, not to vote NDP, because they took your job away."

*Applause.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Hang on. My Conservative friend: "Yeah."

I am mad as a—mad as Jesus, as they say up there. I can't use bad words. I was as mad as the person down there.

**1510**

So I get to the Steelworker hall and I say to my friend Mike Farrell, who was the staff rep, blah blah blah, as you would as a young man who's lost your job. "What's going on?" He says, "Listen. Let me call Brother Stephen. We'll see if we can have Brother Stephen talk to you about what's going on"—because I was mad; I lost my job. The long and the short of the story is that he calls down to Stephen Lewis's office here at Queen's Park, and of course, "Stephen isn't here." They said, "He'll call you back." Yeah, give me a break. A politician's going to call me back? Give me a break—let alone the leader of the party.

I'm at home a couple of days later. The phone rings. Ring, ring, ring; it's Stephen Lewis. He says, "Hi. Is this Gilles Bisson?" I says, "Yeah, who's this?"

"Stephen Lewis."

"Stephen who?"

He tells me who he is.

I've only got five minutes—this is a much longer story, but it gets good.

I yell at him on the phone: "You took my job. You took my job. What are you doing?" He says, "I'll tell you. I understand your frustration, but this is an important health and safety issue.

"Do me a favour. Are there other people in Timmins who are mad because they've lost their job?"

I says, "Yeah, the whole mine."

He says, "I want all the members to come to a union meeting, which I will attend. I will coordinate my schedule with the staff rep from the Steelworkers in Timmins. I will answer all questions in regard to this decision we made in the Legislature," and I thought, "Right on. I'm going to organize that one. Woohoo!" I was an organizer even back then.

He said, "But make sure the girlfriends and wives are there," and I thought, "Whoa, cha-ching! Wow, I'm going to have them all swinging off the chandeliers. I'm going to be able to wax eloquently in front of everybody."

So we organized the meeting—four minutes; I've got to really shorten this down. We organized the meeting, at which point—true story—Brother Lenny Rice, who was president of the local, says, "Okay, Brothers and Sisters. Here goes. We have Brother Stephen Lewis here, and Brother Lewis wants to hear from people about how they feel about this decision to shut down the mine. All those in favour of Mr. Lewis please stand in this lineup, and all those opposed stand in that lineup." Of course, I ran to that lineup and I wanted to be the last speaker. There wasn't a soul at the "pro" mike; they were all at the "con" mike.

All these Steelworker friends of mine get up there and we wax eloquently and we yell at Stephen and we're mean and nasty and all of those things that you can be. It gets to my turn and I'm the meanest, I'm the nastiest, I'm the most over the top, the whole bit—at which point I'm the last speaker. Brother Lenny Rice stands up and says, "Brothers and Sisters, the leader has heard you and now it's his turn to respond."

If you've ever heard Stephen Lewis speak, he could make you melt in about five seconds. Stephen gets up and starts talking, in the way that Stephen does, about why the New Democrats did exactly what you're trying to do with your bill, because at the end of the day it was a health and safety issue. Is any job worth the death or disease of a person? Here we were, all these big burly Steelworker guys, going, "Oh, God, Brother Lewis, we are not worthy. We are workers. What do we know? Thank you for having saved our lives." Literally, it was one of those moments.

At the end of it, Brother Lenny Rice, the president of the local, gets up and says, "Brothers and Sisters, now that you've heard from the leader, I have here membership cards. Anybody who would like to sign up and be a member of the party, please line up." I became a New Democrat because Stephen Lewis made me lose my job, and that's why I'm here today. Wasn't that a great story?

*Applause.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I had the glory of telling Stephen that story some years ago. I'd forgotten about it completely, and we got into a conversation about asbestos. I say, "That reminds me," and he goes, "I remember. You were that obnoxious little guy in the back." He got that right—well, I'm the nice guy now. Now they call me Papa Bear.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Papa Bear—I can understand that.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Yeah, I'm Papa Bear.

Anyway, the member raises what I think is an important point—I just used that story as the example—that we do have a collective responsibility in this Legislature to try to figure out how we can make sure that workers and citizens in this province are safe. I think we need to take these opportunities seriously because, in the end, there are workers and other people who in fact get in contact with asbestos as a result of working with brake pads.

So I fully support the member's bill, and I just wanted to tell that story one day to put on the record for my good friend Stephen Lewis. Thank you.

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

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I'm certainly happy to stand in support of Bill 51, brought by our colleague from Guelph. I'm also absolutely delighted, as I'm sure we all are, to learn that we now have the member from Timmins–James Bay. Not only was his life saved by that particular event in his past, but of course he's a great addition to this chamber as well.

But while I'm happy to speak today, I'm also very disappointed because I spoke in June 2009, also in support

of the bill brought by our colleague. To me this is a very obvious gap in terms of health protection of workers. The epidemiological evidence is absolutely clear in terms of the health hazards related to asbestos exposure.

In fact, as I remember studying epidemiology, the Johns-Manville case, Asbestos Quebec—these were where the first studies were done. And the fact that we have this particular cancer, mesothelioma, that is a product of asbestos exposure—it's become literally a marker for contact with asbestos. We still have some 400 new cases of mesothelioma each year. Many other cancers and pleural diseases in fact are related to asbestos exposure, and have been demonstrated to be connected to asbestos exposure through very many studies.

Princess Margaret Hospital, at the moment, as you may have seen on The National, hosted by Peter Mansbridge recently, is conducting CT scans for early diagnosis of mesothelioma in those who may have been exposed to asbestos. I think it's somewhat shocking, when you look at the WSIB fact sheet here in Ontario. They talk very clearly about asbestos-related diseases. And right under the list of workers who get asbestos-related diseases are auto brake mechanics. There are some 4,300 workers in this particular industry in Canada. I find it really shocking that they continue to be exposed in aftermarket brake pad repair and replacement.

The member from Guelph has explained that asbestos fibres are microscopic particles and so they are in the dust in auto shops. They can enter the body either through inhalation or even through ingestion. They can remain on your clothes when you go home, and your family can be exposed to asbestos in that way as well.

In this WSIB Ontario fact sheet there's a little piece that says, "What can your employer do?" The advice is to keep the amount of asbestos dust low, and the employer is required to provide safety measures when a designated substance is used—asbestos is a designated substance. You should be protected to reduce contact with asbestos dust.

Now, I think most of us know that personal protective equipment can be very cumbersome. When you're dealing with microscopic particles, perhaps people are not as aware as they might be if they could literally see it the way they could in the mines. Using HEPA filters to vacuum the dust and so on is something that obviously should be done but is seldom done, as the member has alluded to.

There are also the home repair individuals, those who have the hobby of fixing up vehicles; they are also at risk with this type of product coming into our province and into this country. It seems perfectly obvious that the best solution is to ban the use. Europe has done this, and we should be prohibiting the import of these brake pads to Canada, not only for individual health; standards for road safety is another important issue, and of course tangible benefits to the environment.

So I would suggest that all members support this bill. I would also like to suggest to everyone watching that they may want to visit my Facebook page today to take part in

the signing of a petition to the federal government for a North American declaration to eliminate asbestos-related diseases, an effort that's been initiated by the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm very pleased to speak for a couple of minutes on Bill 51. I want to commend Ms. Sandals, the member from Guelph. She has done a great job. My first awareness of this was, of course, when she introduced it, but subsequently the issue on CBC Television, on the national news, was very, very well done. Whoever orchestrated that sort of attention: Congratulations.

1520

I think we all agree with the risk, as has been explained by the member from Oak Ridges–Markham. She of course was the medical officer of health for York region. That's why she knows all about disease and the proper terms.

I think you'll find unanimous agreement on the sentiment of putting safety first, and the health and safety of workers. I think this bill's time has come. As I said, it has been discussed. But the context of this: It's a private member's bill, and as such, whether or not it's ever called after today will be entirely in the hands of Dalton McGuinty. Our leader, Tim Hudak, would support this, I'm sure; our notes say that as well. But let's remember that if it does not become law, it's because Dalton McGuinty didn't call it. You need to know that when you leave today. It's important to put on the record.

I think our colleague Mr. Klees, who spoke, summed up some of the concerns. And the member from Timmins–James Bay gave a glowing example of his experience. Of course, when you look at some of the history of the discussion, the conversation was moved to blame the federal government, more or less, not dealing with the issue. It's a very treacherous issue federally. A couple of Prime Ministers of Canada came from Quebec. It's a huge issue in Quebec, and it was under a couple of them, Chrétien and Martin—I'm not trying to politicize it, but they should have been speaking about this years ago.

The evidence even from McGill University studies is very clear that there was some lack of consistency in the research that was being done at McGill. Recently, one of the professors, a head of research at McGill, was mentioned in some study that was done—this is a person with an Order of Canada—and the mine is still operating. So there's a lot to this.

Now your issue specifically, putting workers at risk: I support that 100%. They should not be exposed, and I think Mr. Klees raised the one thing. All the things we've said: The bill will likely pass—I'm quite confident of that—and may not ever be proclaimed. It will be up to your industry—and I'm glad you're here today—to really put pressure on the House leader as well as the Premier right after today. Start writing and get your workers to

have petitions. Make sure we're included in that. All MPPs should be included in that. That's what I think you have to do to move it along, because we believe it's the right thing to do.

It's actually a very small bill. It only changes one section, section 64 of the Highway Traffic Act. There's the bill right there. It's not a big deal, but it's very important. It's actually one line, really, and then there are some definition clauses.

So, good work on the bill. I suspect that if Ms. McKenna would like to speak in a few minutes, I'll give up the floor and let her finish her comments with respect to our support of this bill.

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

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'm pleased to rise. I've got a minute and 24 to speak on this bill.

I want to thank the member from Timmins–James Bay for his story. Of course, as a worker in the construction industry, I've had the unfortunate opportunity to work around asbestos. In fact, I was trained as a type 3 asbestos removal technician, so I'm probably one of the only ones in this House who is actually certified to remove type 3 asbestos from any facility, which is not necessarily the best job qualification for an MPP. I certainly believe that no one should need to work around this, and I think that's what the bill attempts to do: eliminate our exposure to asbestos completely in this province.

I'll have the Legislature know that at the federal level, our counterpart Pat Martin has been working tirelessly to expand our knowledge about asbestos and to remove it from export, because we are in fact exporting death to other countries when we export asbestos, and that's just simply a fact.

The member from Timmins–James Bay references the changes that were made under Stephen Lewis. Those changes were really, as we see them today, fundamental within our health and safety laws: the right to know, the right to participate and the right to refuse. Those are three things we can't imagine today that we wouldn't have had. But those were the fundamental building blocks of us knowing what we were exposed to at our workplace and ultimately knowing how to deal with it.

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

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I want to really commend the member from Guelph for bringing forward Bill 51. It's interesting that in my community of Peterborough, when I was growing up, Raybestos-Manhattan, which was the largest producer of asbestos brake pads, was manufacturing them in Peterborough. We still have many people today who suffer from asbestosis, and those who have ever known anyone who suffers from asbestosis know it's one of the most painful, agonizing ways of death. It's very slow. Of course, each and every day it reduces one's lung capacity until eventually an individual does smother. So, of course, Raybestos-Manhattan eventually ceased manufacturing asbestos brakes in my community as the indus-

try moved towards manufacturing brakes with ceramic materials that last longer and are much better, of course, for one's health and safety.

But we do know that there are countries that still manufacture those brake pads, Vietnam being one of them, that still export those materials to be used as aftermarket activities in garages and do-it-yourself-type operators who have that as a hobby, to repair cars.

We also do know that, of course, the real danger is the exposure to these asbestos fibres that float or indeed actually cling and stick to one's clothing and any other articles that might be in the immediate area. That has always been the great challenge and danger of asbestos, a material that has always been quite safe as long as it has been encapsulated but, once it starts to float freely, presents a huge danger to individuals. Of course, this has been clearly documented over many, many years from people who work in the field of occupational diseases.

So the member from Guelph presents a bill this afternoon, Bill 51. As I understand it, if this bill gets approval of this Legislature through to third reading and then on to royal assent, Ontario would become the first province in Canada to actually ban the import or sale of brake pads containing asbestos. Ontario has always been a leader in the past—it continues to be a leader today—and we need to move forward in this particular area.

It goes without saying, Mr. Speaker, that the mining of asbestos should have been banned in Canada years ago. It continues to be centred in the Thetford Mines area in the province of Quebec. But I hope, collectively, the government of Canada comes to its senses to ban the mining of this material.

When you look south of the border, the state of Washington, of course, has introduced the Better Brakes Law. On January 1, 2014, brakes in Washington will no longer contain asbestos, hexavalent chromium, mercury, cadmium, lead and many other materials. Auto shops and other distributors of brakes will be able to get rid of their inventory; they have a period of time to do that. But after January 1, 2014, they will no longer be able to sell brakes with asbestos in them.

Similarly, in the state of California, Bill 346 also has a provision, by 2014, to ban the use of asbestos. Oregon is moving in the same direction by introducing a bill in that Legislature, and New York state is also doing it.

So let Ontario be a leader again, and support Bill 51.

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

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 51, and I am thrilled just to hear the great story from the member from Timmins–James Bay. He's such a great storyteller, and it is thrilling to sit here and listen to that. I also echo everything everybody else has said here today.

The bill essentially amends section 64 of the Highway Traffic Act in two key ways. One is to prescribe standards and specification, for aftermarket brake pads sold in Ontario. This would include certain edge code markings for the identification of the product.

The second amendment is the stipulation that those brake pads shall not contain asbestos. The bill makes mandatory what is currently a voluntary industry standard. Although Ontario manufacturers did use asbestos in the making of brake pads in the past, they no longer do that. Neither will you find brake pads containing asbestos on new cars sold in Ontario. But brake pads do wear out, and so there is an opening for aftermarket brake pads of unknown composition. Those brake pads wear out, they turn to dust, and the dust collects.

**1530**

Now consider what happens to the mechanic who was working on that car, working on cars all day long. They're breathing it in, they may be ingesting it, and among other things, asbestos dust causes cancer. That's a health aspect.

Then there's road safety. As a result of enhanced safety measures, graduated licensing and improved driver training, Ontario has the safest roads in North America. Mercifully, we have seen traffic fatality rates in regular decline, but accidents and collisions still rack up staggering costs—human, social and economic costs; tens of billions of dollars annually—so any legislation that promises improvements in those areas should be looked at seriously.

I do have these questions, but I am in favour of this bill's prescribed amendment. I would suggest that it be referred to committee, where it can hopefully get the attention that it deserves and hopefully tuned up.

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

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** It's my privilege to rise today to speak in support of Bill 51. I, too, want to thank the member from Timmins–James Bay for his personal accounts from his mining days.

The changes outlined in this bill will require that cars are equipped with brake pads that meet specified safety standards, which will be outlined in regulation, as you know. The bill will require that brake pads not contain asbestos. Asbestos is toxic when fibres are present in the air that we breathe. The health risks of asbestos, as have been outlined, include asbestosis, or scarring of the lungs; mesothelioma, cancer of the lining of the chest or abdominal cavity; and lung cancer.

Asbestos is not used by Ontario manufacturers and is not required in brake pads. Asbestos is still used in other jurisdictions, and these brake pads find their way into Ontario. You can't tell if a brake pad contains asbestos just by looking at it. As asbestos in brake materials wears down through normal automobile use, asbestos-containing dust is released to the outside environment. The asbestos is then released when repair and replacement work is done. Mechanics who service brakes may risk heavy exposure to asbestos, but it's not only the mechanic that may be at risk; depending on the amount of particulate in the air, customers breathe it in as well. The mechanic may also carry asbestos home on work clothing, potentially endangering family members.

It's obvious that this bill not only speaks to the health and safety of mechanics but of others as well. Coming

from an automotive town, I certainly support any bill that improves health and safety.

According to the Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada, 58 auto mechanics died of asbestos-related diseases between 1996 and 2010. Speaker, we must act to protect as much as we can. The number of claims is expected to rise as, all too often, asbestos-related diseases do not appear until years after exposure. Experts have debated the usefulness of masks and gloves when it comes to preventing exposure to asbestos brake dust. Although respirators can prevent asbestos inhalation while working, the fibres can stick to clothing and equipment and be present long after the car has left the garage and work completed.

Both Canadian and American manufacturers have replaced materials in brake pads with safer alternatives. Asbestos-containing pads that come to Canada from overseas make up about 9% of the import value. Even at this level, the risk is too high to be ignored. Millions of dollars worth of asbestos pads continue to enter the country via imports. We really should be turning to the federal government and demanding a ban on these imports due to the known health risks, but for the time being we will do what we can to protect Ontarians.

Although various methods of reducing asbestos dust in garages and repair shops are available, whether or not they're used is another question. A high level of asbestos is often detected on floors, work areas and tool bins. Home auto mechanics who work with these brakes and clutches are also at risk.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Guelph, you have two minutes to reply.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'd like to thank the members for Newmarket–Aurora, Timmins–James Bay, Oak Ridges–Markham, Durham, Essex, Peterborough, Burlington and Windsor West for your remarks and your support, and particularly the member for Timmins–James Bay with his very vivid story about his experience in asbestos mining. I couldn't help but wonder, as you were speaking, how many of those people eventually succumbed to the lung and stomach cancers that they acquired on the job.

The member from Newmarket–Aurora actually raised an interesting issue, which is the enforcement issue. The technical answer is that there is regulatory authority within the bill, and that that's the place to sort out how you can do enforcement.

I think, however, the more practical answer is actually from Mr. Jamieson, who interestingly—because he was referenced in some of the media when we did this in 2009—received a phone call from a foreign embassy in one of the countries that does manufacture asbestos-containing brake pads. Basically, the message was that if Canada would set standards—or Ontario would set standards, which is what we have control over—they would follow them. That, in fact, absent us setting standards, they do what's cheap and effective. If we set the standards, they still want to be able to export to us because we're a big market. Set the standard; they'll follow standard. That's actually the practical answer to your concern.

In conclusion, there is absolutely no reason that we should continue to endanger workers knowingly when there's a really simple solution, which is, just say no. You cannot use brake pads in Ontario that contain asbestos.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** We'll vote on this item at the end of regular business.

## GASOLINE TAX FAIRNESS FOR ALL ACT, 2012

### LOI DE 2012 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ POUR TOUS À L'ÉGARD DE LA TAXE SUR L'ESSENCE

Mr. Yakabuski moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 27, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act with respect to matching rebates of gasoline tax that the Minister provides to municipalities / Projet de loi 27, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement des voies publiques et des transports en commun à l'égard des remboursements de la taxe sur l'essence similaires consentis aux municipalités par le ministre.

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

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It's my pleasure to bring this issue before the Legislature once again. I'm not even actually sure how many times I've brought it. It's a number since I was elected back in 2003. The reason I keep doing it is because I actually do expect a different result. It is a fundamental issue of fairness: fairness to rural residents of Ontario, and that I would hope that this government would finally recognize that they are important too.

You see, Mr. Speaker, one of the problems is—and it is the McGuinty government that instituted it—that when they brought in the measure that they would share two cents of the gas tax with municipalities in the province of Ontario, then they added this caveat and said, "But we will only share it with those municipalities that have a public transportation system," vis-à-vis a subway or a bus system or streetcars, above-ground rail—whatever—light rail.

The reality is that in rural communities, that's not possible. It's not feasible. In fact, there are only about 81 municipalities out of 440 or so in the province of Ontario that have a public transportation system. But everybody, every single person who puts a tank of gas into their car or their truck is going to pay the 14.7 cents per litre provincial excise tax on the gasoline, and now, of course, another McGuinty measure, the HST on top of that gasoline, which now will be—the GST was on it, but now the extra 8% of provincial tax on that gasoline, so 14.7 cents a litre, plus 8%.

**1540**

The reality is that anybody who lives in rural Ontario knows and understands—I've been here in an apartment

in the city of Toronto since I've been a member, and I stay here part of the time. I can get around the city of Toronto without my vehicle. I wouldn't have to own a vehicle to be here and working at Queen's Park. However, when I get home on weekends, in order to serve my constituents in a riding that is 12,000 square kilometres in size, I absolutely do need a vehicle, as does every one of my constituents if they want to get around.

Unless you live right in one of the downtown areas of one of the smaller urban centres within my riding, you need a vehicle. In fact, if you are a family with both spouses working, you're likely going to need two vehicles, because the likelihood of both of you working at the same place on the same shift is in fact remote.

What happens, Mr. Speaker, is that rural people pay a disproportionate share of the gas tax in this province. They pay far more, on a per capita basis, than anyone who lives in an urban area. I drive 90,000 kilometres a year. I doubt that anybody who lives in a city in Ontario drives 90,000 kilometres a year—it's highly unlikely. As I say, it's an issue of fundamental fairness to rural people.

The other fact of the matter is that the federal government does share its gas tax revenue with all municipalities. They're always harping on the federal government and always attacking Prime Minister Harper and his policies, but here's one where the federal government understands what fairness is, so that every municipality across this country gets a share of the federal gas tax.

But the province of Ontario has decided that they will penalize rural people. And it's even more important, now, that they look at this bill and change the way they view rural people. In the last budget, you'll see they came out with a new plan to increase the cost of a driver's licence. That affects everybody. Again, I could live in Toronto without a driver's licence, but I'll tell you, I can't live up in Barry's Bay without a driver's licence.

They're going to increase the cost of registering your vehicle. As I said, if you're a family where both spouses work, chances are you need two vehicles. The other side of the coin is, if you've got children and they've got to be ferried about to hockey or soccer or something else—school projects—the reality is, we just live in a big part of the world and the need to get around is essential. So we continue to pay this gas tax, but none of it comes back to our municipalities.

I want to thank all the municipalities—I may get to some of them—but particularly my own county of Renfrew and the municipalities within, and particularly Warden Bob Sweet, who has been an ardent supporter of this. In fact, it was the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus that originally brought up the issue of gas tax fairness, and I have worked with them very closely to try to make sharing that gas tax a reality in the province of Ontario. So I do want to thank Warden Sweet for his ongoing efforts to assist in this regard and his continuing support, and all those at county council in the county of Renfrew who have worked hard to support us on this bill. But it's

not just Renfrew county; it's all across the province that would be affected by the extension of this rebate to all municipalities.

I know I'm going to get some argument from the government side, because they're going to say, "Oh well, that money is needed for public transportation." Well, you know, roads and bridges in Renfrew county or Haliburton county or Lambton county or any other county in the province of Ontario are the public transportation of rural people. There is no option. You've got to get into a vehicle, Mr. Speaker, to go out and get a quart of milk if you happen to run out of milk and it's not grocery day, but you need milk—well, you're likely going to have to get into the vehicle to go and get that milk, because that's just the reality. Not very often is there going to be a store on the corner that sells milk in the middle of nowhere.

It just comes down to an issue of fairness. Why would a government take the money from everyone, as they do with the gas tax—everyone who buys gasoline pays the gas tax—and only give it to those who they want to give it to? Is this a politically motivated thing? You have to ask yourself that.

There's an urban-rural split in this province. Is it being driven by the agenda of this government? Maybe that's what they want. Maybe that's what they want. They want an urban-rural split because it seems every time they turn around, they bring in new legislation that's hard on rural people. It doesn't matter whether it's this gas tax bill or the Endangered Species Act, which has had a terribly detrimental effect on lumbering in my area. Every time you turn around, it seems that this government is doing something to impact negatively on the way of life in rural Ontario.

For example, Mr. Speaker, I don't think you see any wind turbines other than the fancy one down at the CNE. I don't think you see any wind farms in Metro Toronto or the GTA, but they keep building them across rural parts of Ontario, even though the people steadfastly oppose that kind of policy.

But I'm going to stick to the topic, thank you very much. So let's get back to the gas tax. In Renfrew county, there are 250 bridges. I see the former Minister of Transportation here, and she would know exactly how many bridges there are in Renfrew county, and she also knows the scope and the amount of rural roads we have, too. That is the public transportation network, and it is only fair that that be supported—and not a special program. All we're asking for, Mr. Speaker, is our fair share of the gas tax that we pay. On a proportional basis, there is no one in the world who is going to be able to argue that we don't pay a greater share. On a per capita or proportional basis, we pay more because we drive more because we have to drive more.

With the price of gas—and maybe we should be talking about the price of gas and asking what the McGuinty government is actually doing about the price of gasoline. Again, if gasoline is something that you need, that you have to use in rural Ontario, but to a much greater proportion than you use in urban Ontario, again,

is this another slight to rural Ontario that we get from this government because they don't seem to be too concerned about the price of gasoline that affects everyone but affects those that use it obviously more? And those that use more, it would affect to an even greater degree yet.

So every time, I think, I stand in this House, I've always stood to stand and fight for the people in rural Ontario, because that's who I represent. But what I'm asking today is that the people on the other side who would like to consider themselves fair-minded and believe that treating people equally is important—I would ask that they would finally get around to saying, "You know what? The federal government does it. They recognize that it is right."

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** That's right. It was the Liberal federal government that first brought it in under Paul Martin. I thank my colleague from Wellington-Halton Hills for putting that bug in my ear. Yes, it was a Liberal federal government that originally brought the gas tax in. The Harper Conservatives have enhanced it and made it permanent, and thank God for that, because now rural municipalities know they can plan.

How are rural municipalities supposed to plan even for infrastructure projects? Here's what they do in Ontario: They come cap in hand hoping that the minister might have some crumbs left on the table once he's given all the money to Toronto. There might be a few shillings left or shekels left for somebody in rural Ontario to do a project, but they have to come, hat in hand, begging. It is time to stand up for what is right, and all members of this Legislature should stand with me and agree that sharing the gas tax with all municipalities in the province of Ontario is the right thing to do.

1550

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Timmins-James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I want to, as the transportation critic, just be very clear in regard to what we're going to do with this bill. Does the member raise an important issue, and that is: Do rural municipalities and small municipalities who do not have transit get a fair shake when it comes to their transportation infrastructure? I think the answer is no. There needs to be more done to make sure that communities that don't have transit are able to fix their roads and fix their bridges, because that is their transportation infrastructure. That is their transit.

So, on that point, I really do agree with the member that something needs to be done. For that reason, I will support the bill and allow it to go to committee, but I want to put a caveat, and that is, as I read the bill that the member put forward, what he's suggesting at this point is that we actually take—what happens now is, two cents out of every litre sold goes into a central pot, and that pot is then divided up amongst municipalities like mine, the city of Timmins, that has a transit system. I think there are about 100-and-some-odd of those communities out there. What's the number again? I can't remember.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Eighty-one.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** About 81 transit systems in the province. If the intent of this bill is to make that pot smaller—whoa, I've got a real problem.

That being said, I think that there should be a debate in committee in regard to what happens with communities like Matheson, communities like Iroquois Falls, communities like Smooth Rock Falls, Hearst and others who don't have a transit system and have a real infrastructure need that they need to maintain.

I look at an example: In the town of Kapuskasing, Highway 11, which runs through that municipality, is the worst-kept piece of highway that I've seen on Highway 11. It is like washboard. You could actually take the asphalt off that road and it would probably be smoother. Why is it not being fixed? Not because the mayor and council don't want to fix it; because there's no money. When the province downloaded those highways on to municipalities—done by the Tories, by the way, Mr. Yakabuski—oh, excuse me, member for Renfrew-Nipissing whatever it is. I'm bad with ridings. I'm sorry. I don't mean that in a bad way. When the Conservatives downloaded those highways on to the municipality, like they did in Kapuskasing, municipalities were very ill-prepared to absorb the cost of maintaining the highways.

Here we are, some 12, 14 years later, after downloading that highway, and essentially what we've got is washboard through the town of Kapuskasing on the TransCanada Highway. So I think it speaks to the issue that the member is trying to raise, and that is, how do we find ways to adequately fund municipal roads and bridges as far as making sure that those major arteries and others are properly maintained?

What's happening in the town of Kapuskasing is that, quite frankly, it's a disgrace to this province. People drive through this country, they get to Kapuskasing, and the highway is so bad that literally you can take the asphalt off it to take the bumps out of it.

The member raises an important point; where we get the money to do that, I think is another debate. Should it be from the gas tax? That is an option. But is that an additional gas tax that you want to share with municipalities above the two cents per litre that municipalities now get for transit? It's very important that we don't touch the transit pot, because there's not enough of that to go around.

I don't know what the member wants, but I think that's why it needs to go to committee. Is he saying, "Let's take some of that money that we have now, in addition to the money that goes to transit, and add money to the municipalities in some kind of formula"? Is he saying that it's got to come out of general revenue?

We as New Democrats in the last election responded to that, because we said we would put in place—I think it was about \$70 million a year. I don't have my glasses, but I'm pretty sure.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Seventy million.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Yes, \$70 million a year to those municipalities to be able to fix Highway 11 going through Kapuskasing or whatever needs to be done. We

also proposed, as New Democrats through Andrea Horwath—and I thought this was a brilliant idea—that we take the politics out of infrastructure funding and we announce multi-year funding for those communities so that communities across this province know by a set formula that they're going to get so much money a year for capital infrastructure from the province, they can then budget accordingly to do what they've got to do, and they can engage in discussion with the federal government to make that happen. Multi-year funding is another option.

I say to the member—I'm going to be very clear: I will vote in favour of this bill, but if in any way you want to get your claws into the money that's going to the transit of these municipalities that now get it, we will not support this at third reading. We need an amendment that clearly says how we deal with the municipal infrastructure problem that's real in communities outside of those that are affected that are now getting the gas tax. If we can find a way to ensure that transit funding is made secure and we find a way to deal with how we fund municipalities for infrastructure who don't have transit, then I think we can go forward. But I tell you now: support at second reading just to have the discussion at committee. If you're going after the municipal transit funding, we will not support you at third reading.

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

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** My good friend from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke took a few minor liberties while he was presenting his bill. We listened very carefully here, very attentively, and I'm sure he will grant me equal latitude. Just to clarify for him, this is the seventh time that he's brought this bill forward since he's been elected—the seventh time.

The member referred to elected officials in his area, to use his own words, as going “hat-in-hand begging,” but the evidence speaks otherwise. Ontario's contribution to municipal roads and bridges since 2003 and not including gas tax for eastern Ontario—which does not include major metropolitan centres like Ottawa, Kingston and Peterborough, just areas like municipalities within the member's own home riding: a not-insignificant \$219.4 million. This is not cap-in-hand begging.

Not all municipalities have a municipal transit system, but Ontario has, through the years, and especially on the watch of our government, helped all municipalities to maintain their road and their bridge infrastructure. Municipalities that don't qualify, as the member accurately says, for the gas tax program are continuously eligible for many other funding programs, which the member conveniently omitted.

In 2011-12, the province will spend \$2.5 billion to design, repair and expand highways, roads and bridges all across Ontario, and this follows four consecutive years of record-setting investment. In southern highway construction, which includes the riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and many of the other municipalities similar to what the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke had described, this amount is \$1.36 billion, creating some 17,000 jobs.

Now, Speaker, he did venture a little bit into politics, so I'm sure he will grant me a little bit of leeway to do much the same. What is the difference between a Conservative and the rest of us? For the rest of us, sometimes we come up with an idea that doesn't work, needs refinement or can just plain simply be inappropriate for the purpose. For the rest of us, we look at the idea and we say, “Okay, we're either going to change it or we're going to dump it. That's the end of that.” But for this member and for a lot who think like him, they say, “Well, it didn't work. I guess it's because the ideology wasn't pure enough, so let's purify the ideology and try it again”—and in the case of this member, again and again and again and again and again and again and again. That's seven times. It is indeed seven times that he has tried an idea that is inappropriate, that doesn't work, that uses money designed to build transportation systems in large urban areas. And that's the whole point and purpose of it: to build transportation systems in large urban areas such as the member occupies when he comes to Queen's Park, when he can get on the TTC, when I can go home and get on the TTC, the GO train and MiWay, which used to be Mississauga Transit. This is one of the things that large urban areas have to have, and the gas tax for large urban areas is a sensible, equitable way of going about doing it.

Very clearly, the province of Ontario has never neglected—except when it was ruled by the Conservatives, but certainly under the term of our government, it has never neglected roads, bridges and other infrastructure in northern ridings and certainly in rural areas, and it is not now doing so.

For the member to push this, this would suggest to me that this might be an attempt to increase taxes. So I would say that I would be very, very sceptical. It would be the same party that supported using taxpayers' money to do something that city council in Toronto didn't want, which was to have a subway, which is the most expensive form of transit. Now they're suggesting taking the money that should be spent on urban transit that isn't a subway, such as they backed, and spending it in some other, amorphous way that doesn't really connect with mass transit in areas other than large urban areas.

**1600**

So let's go on a little bit. Whether this is an expression of antipathy toward residents of large urban areas, only the member can know, but I'd like to use the words of some of the people around him.

To quote from the Pembroke Observer, “Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke MPP John Yakabuski says he is pleased to see that several of the highway improvement projects that he has pressed the government on over the last four years have been approved, enhancing the quality of life for his constituents in Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.”

Let's see. I'm looking at the most recent roads and bridges fund. The city of Pembroke received \$258,826. The town of Petawawa—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Point of order.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Can we have the member from Mississauga speak to the bill, please?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member is speaking to the bill.

Go ahead.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Okay. Let's just continue, then. The town of Petawawa received \$414,097; the county of Renfrew, \$3,634,661; the town of Renfrew, \$148,484.

Speaker, let's just keep going. There's been more than \$2 million spent for the rehabilitation of the Madawaska River bridge on Highway 41—the member certainly drives over that; almost \$9 million for the rehabilitation of Highway 17 from Chalk River east; almost \$8 million for the rehabilitation of Barry's Bay to Arbor Vitae Road on Highway 60; and more than \$18 million for the rehabilitation of Highway 17 around Renfrew.

Speaker, I know one of my other colleagues wants to speak to this, but I just want to put this in perspective by saying that I can't support an initiative that proposes to take funds dedicated to large urban transit systems and misuse them for purposes they weren't intended for, when the money already flows to do exactly the programs that the member has requested.

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

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Anyone listening to the debate this afternoon who might wonder why the Liberal Party was shut out in rural Ontario six months ago in the provincial election campaign, having listened to the speech just given by the member for Mississauga–Streetsville, will now understand. His speech was essentially, I guess, a defence of the government's position on this issue through the last almost eight years now, since my colleague the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has been bringing this forward. His speech indicates that the government most likely is going to be voting against this bill yet again. It appears that the government members most likely will be whipped yet again, unfortunately, on a private member's bill, to vote down this bill.

But I want to commend the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. In fact, I've spoken on this issue in the Legislature—I've counted—six times in support of the principle that he's espousing today, which is that there should be a fair sharing of the gasoline tax. If the provincial government, indeed, is prepared to share two cents of the gasoline tax with municipalities, it should be prepared to share it with all municipalities, not just the ones that are in the cities—not just the cities, not just the ones that have transit systems. It's a matter of fairness, as the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke said, and he's absolutely right.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** It's an insult to rural Ontario.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** My colleague the member for Halton said that it's an insult to rural Ontario, and I would certainly draw that same conclusion.

Our rural municipalities have significant infrastructure needs. Now, the member for Mississauga–Streetsville

talked about the amount of money that has been expended through several joint infrastructure programs through the years, but at the present time, as far as I know, there is absolutely no provincial program to assist rural municipalities with their infrastructure needs. There needs to be one. There needs to be a program that allows for sustainable and predictable funding so that municipalities can plan. They all have the infrastructure needs of their communities listed.

Certainly, in my community, in the municipalities that I represent—in Centre Wellington, there's 100 bridges. Many of them are in a state of disrepair and need to be fixed. We have our list. We have our needs. Unfortunately, the government is unwilling to assist us in that respect to the extent that is needed.

In the municipality of the town of Erin, in the hamlet of Hillsburgh, there's a bridge that's been closed for some time called the Station Road bridge. I've been bringing that issue to the attention of Ministry of Natural Resources officials so that we can remove the provincial roadblocks and allow the municipality to move forward. Certainly, they would appreciate, and would in fact need, the support of the provincial government for that project and others. They need financial support.

Certainly, the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has a good idea. Again, I commend him and salute him for his persistence. When you have a good idea around here, as you know, Mr. Speaker, if you continue to advocate for it, continue to build support, that's often how things actually get done in the end. I would commend the member.

He pointed out that it was the federal Liberal government that initially allowed sharing of the federal gas tax, and from the very beginning, from the outset, the money was shared with municipalities large and small. The current federal government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Harper, has continued that policy, and again, I would commend that fact to the Liberal members to consider.

Present in the House we have a significant number of Liberal members, but unfortunately I don't see any who represent rural municipalities. Again, it would appear that the voice of rural Ontario, unfortunately, is not being heard in the government caucus. So we on this side of the House, representing our communities, will continue to advocate for rural Ontario. We will continue to urge the government to accept a policy of fairness in this respect. We call upon the government to support Bill 27 today, and I urge its passage at second reading.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Parkdale–High Park.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's a pleasure to rise and speak about transportation in a city—Toronto, my city—that has very little of it and not nearly enough. It's sad to listen to the wrangling between the two other parties, one that says there's enough money going to rural municipalities for roads, and the other that says more money should be taken away from transit in urban centres. The reality is that we need more money for rural roads and we need

more money for urban transportation. We need both, and we don't have enough for both. So we're fighting over these little crumbs with the gas tax.

Let me say, and let me say very clearly, where the New Democratic Party stands. Our stand, and we ran on this as part of our platform, is that 50% of the operating costs—just like they used to be, Mr. Speaker—should be paid for by the provincial government for transit systems. We also ran on this: \$17 million a year should go for roads and bridges, primarily in rural areas. So what do we need? We need both/and, not either/or, and not quibbling over a small amount of cash that's not nearly enough for either.

In Ontario, in transportation in urban centres, fares pay for 70% to 80% of transit costs. That's the highest in North America. In the United States, it's 50%. We're so far behind the curve. I took the TTC challenge in Toronto for a week. It was the hardest, longest week of my life, Mr. Speaker. If I did that every week in this job, it would add a day and a half to my work week. It never used to be like that. It didn't used to be like that. I grew up in a city that was the model for transit across North America, and now we're the model for dysfunctional transit across North America, in one generation. It's sad.

We need more money in transportation. We don't think that you take the money from this small pot and put it into roads. We don't have enough money as it is, but it's also not fair to the rural communities that we don't give them enough money to keep their roads in repair. This is the quandary of this bill; this is the problem. This is why, really, on third reading—you heard the member from Timmins–James Bay say it—there's no way we could support it in its current form.

On the other hand, we understand the need. We understand the problem. We understand why people start fighting over these little pots of money when there's not enough money to go around. So, as we in the New Democratic Party say so often, "A pox, my friends, on both your houses." You're wrong; they need money. You're wrong; we need money. Yes, we need money into roads and bridges; we need money into urban transportation. We don't have it in either category. So both—both—are failing. Under the current structure, both fail.

1610

So can we do better? We have done better. Could we do better? Absolutely. Adopt the NDP platform and, my goodness, we'd live, would we not—

**Interjection:** A little longer.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** —a little longer, closer to utopia.

**Interjection:** Close.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Closer to utopia.

I mean, it's a very practical suggestion, something that has been done before in the province: 50% of the operating costs—

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, come to order.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** You know it has been done before: 50% and \$70 million into roads and bridges. Oh, my goodness. How difficult is that? This is where we used to be.

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Minister.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** This is where we used to be. Back to the future, I say.

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Minister, you're being warned.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** At any rate, that's where we stand. It's pretty practical. It's pretty obvious that there's not enough money in both of these packages, and we don't think this is the way to get it into the transportation in the urban—also, we don't think they're right that there's enough money going to roads and bridges in rural communities. Of course there isn't.

I'm going to leave a couple of minutes for my friend from Essex to say his piece.

That's the voice of Toronto speaking, Mr. Speaker, and boy, do we need transportation in Toronto. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Oh my, Speaker, I don't know. Where do I start? I mean, there's just so much to share on all sides, but you know what? I'm just going to talk about one thing that's just not making sense to me. It didn't make sense to me last election when it was part of the Changebook—which wasn't changing much—that my friends were running on, the Conservatives. They want to take the gas tax money and they want to give that money to rural municipalities as well, but they also said, at the same time, that—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I'm hearing things from the background.

But they also said that somehow the urban municipalities are not going to lose any money. So urban municipalities are not going to lose any money, but the rural municipalities are going to get money from the gas tax. So is the gas tax going up? Is that what's happening here? Because the math does not add up.

There's always silence on the other part. I guess Conservatives really believe in raising gas taxes to make it even more expensive for people to drive. Perhaps that's what they want to do, and if so, I urge the member who sponsored this bill to say so, to say that they want to raise the gas tax in this instance. We don't want to do that, Speaker, but I guess the Conservative member from Renfrew–Nipissing wants to increase gas taxes so that urban municipalities like Ottawa and Toronto will continue to get the same kind of money and rural municipalities will get money as well.

But, Speaker, I think what's important is the kind of investment that our government has been making on an ongoing basis in rural infrastructure. For 2011-12 alone,

we are talking about spending \$2.5 billion to design, repair and expand highways, roads and bridges across Ontario, and this follows after years of investment that we've already made: \$1.36 billion in southern highway construction; \$618 million in northern highway construction. That has created about 17,000 jobs across the province.

I can go on and on about the amount of investments that we've been making in different communities: Durham region, \$35.7 million; eastern Ontario—that excludes Ottawa, Kingston and Peterborough—\$219.4 million in investment. This is not gas tax money; this is infrastructure money that is going into roads and bridges and rural infrastructure. In the Hamilton and Halton region, \$170 million; Kingston, \$7.2 million; London, \$20 million; Niagara region, \$34 million; northeastern Ontario, \$159 million; northwestern Ontario, \$37 million. And the list goes on and on. We have invested more in infrastructure, especially in rural Ontario, than any government. Since 2003, we have invested over \$70 billion in infrastructure—\$70 billion. That is unprecedented. That's almost \$10 billion a year.

Speaker, there is a very important reason that—we keep hearing stories from Quebec, for example, of concrete slabs falling off from highways. We don't hear such stories in Ontario. Have you noticed? There is a reason for it, because we have been investing in our infrastructure, and we will continue to do that. I think in this budget alone, which I hope the opposition parties will vote for, there is over \$30 billion over three years for infrastructure—\$30 billion. That's \$10 billion per year.

Now, what we're hearing from the opposition members is that they are going to nix that infrastructure investment, because they're going to vote against this budget and force an unnecessary and expensive election, which nobody wants. But most importantly, what I want to hear from the member who sponsored this bill is, is he planning to raise gas taxes? His math is not working in this instance, because he talks about giving money to rural municipalities but urban municipalities will get the same amount of money, and we haven't—

**Interjection:** He wants a carbon tax.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Or perhaps he wants a carbon tax. Maybe that's what he wants. We haven't heard that from him either as well. So he has got to come clean on whether he's planning to raise gas taxes in order to accommodate his scheme laid out in this Legislature. Otherwise he's not telling the full story to Ontarians.

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

**Mr. Bill Walker:** In Bruce county, we have 148 bridges, 650 kilometres of roads—just think about that for a minute, just to service that—and in Grey county, 189 bridges and culverts and 877 kilometres of roads.

Now, this is a very unfair bill, the way it currently is, because what if any of these bridges went down and we could not bring the aggregates to the city or the food, the beef and the milk that you need in the city to feed your

families? No worry about rapid transit; that's no transit. We need money to ensure that we're going to be able to courier those goods back and forth, to ensure that our economy can be sound, that jobs will be created and not lost, like they often are under your government.

In the little village that I grew up in, Hepworth, Ontario, Canada, five million cars a year go through that intersection, and that's a minimal estimate. While we thoroughly open the gate to say, "Come and visit our beautiful part of the world, our national parks, our underwater diving, our Wiarton Willie, our Sauble Beach. We need you to help pay for those roads and those bridges that you travel over"—50,000 people a weekend to Sauble Beach—"and we welcome you again, but we want you to pay."

I'm quite pleased—and in fact I'm hoping I'm going to get some of my money back when I ride the Scarborough subway. We'll get some of our money back that way. All we're asking is for you folks to pay a little bit back to rural Ontario, because without us, you would not have the food in your cities. You would not have the aggregates in your cities.

Speaker, again, it's just an unfair act. I believe my colleague from Wellington–Halton Hills said it's an affront to rural Ontario yet again. I find it interesting—Mr. Yakabuski from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

I only have one municipality in my whole riding that actually gets a piece of this tax. Our public transportation system is a road and a bridge, and a gravel road in many cases. I don't know that many of you have ever travelled in it. You should come up and try it some time; a great experience.

I truly believe that we have to change this, and we have to ensure that we're utilizing those dollars. If you hadn't wasted \$3 billion on the Mississauga gas plant, the Oakville gas plant and the eHealth boondoggle, we'd have tons of money to fix our bridges and our roads.

Speaker, it's a travesty. We need to do this; we need you. I'm hopeful, since you have a propensity to add to the OLG, that maybe Mr. Yakabuski's Lucky 7s will finally come up and he will get this bill through.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Essex.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm really pleased, as the critic for infrastructure, to rise today to speak to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke's bill. I think I may support it, simply on the premise that it is a Progressive Conservative tax-and-share-and-spend bill, which is essentially what it is. You're saying, "We want to tax, we want to share it and then we want to spend it." So I simply can't turn away this opportunity to support a Conservative tax-and-spend bill.

I do want to help address—I mean, they lay claim to being the rural champions. I come from a rural riding. I not only come from a rural riding, but spent 10 years in the construction industry building the culverts and bridges and sewers and tunnels and water mains they

speak of, and I understand how important it is to municipalities.

But the bill presupposes, and misses the mark, that rural ridings don't want public transit. I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, in my riding of Essex, where we're just outside of Windsor, residents in Kingsville, Amherstburg, LaSalle, Belle River, Lakeshore, Essex, Puce, Emeryville, Maidstone—they all want access to public transit. They need it: seniors, students, those who can't afford the price of gas with the added Conservative-Liberal HST on top of it. They can't afford it.

1620

So I would like to see, Mr. Speaker, a balance be struck in this House, that we certainly address the needs of rural infrastructure but also address the fact that rural residents, those that many of the members along this way represent, also need public transportation. And I would love to hear a clarion call come from that side that actually advocates on that behalf.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I'm pleased to support Bill 27, the Gasoline Tax Fairness for All Act. Basic fairness demands we support it. Everyone in Ontario who buys gas pays the provincial tax. Every driver pays it, from farmers to truck drivers to students to those of us who are fortunate enough to have a job and commute to work every day. We all pay gas tax. This province takes 14.7 cents out of every litre we buy. On a 50-litre fill-up, that's over \$7. To most of us, that \$7 really matters. With gas prices up around \$1.40 a litre, people are talking about the price of gas. We're told it's likely to stay high for some time, and it's likely to go even higher.

The McGuinty government already inflated the price of gas the day its HST came into effect, and the higher the price of gas, the more the McGuinty government collects in HST. And that's on top of the 14.7-cents-a-litre provincial gas tax.

The gas tax should benefit everyone, but it does not. Many municipalities are left out. In Perth-Wellington, the town of Minto is left out, the township of Mapleton is left out, and the township of Wellington North is left out. The township of Perth South is also left out. The government leaves them out because it says they don't have any mass transit systems. In fact, they do. Our mass transit systems are the roads and bridges we use every day. Many municipalities that aren't left out probably receive a lot less than they deserve according to their population and the gas tax that we pay.

It's interesting—all the statistics that come up across the floor—that we called the Minister of Finance for details on this and we were told to go to the Minister of Transportation, but they told us to go back to finance. So we went back to finance, but the minister's office still hasn't returned our calls.

**Interjection:** Imagine that.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Imagine that.

Maybe it's not surprising they don't want to share the facts, because the facts aren't on their side. Bill 27 would set things straight; it would set things right. It doesn't call for more spending. It only calls on the government to allocate gas tax revenue fairly, just as the federal government does.

If this bill is passed, no longer would our communities be penalized because they happen to be rural. Bill 27 would return to the people of Perth-Wellington the gas tax they already pay. It would stop sending it to Queen's Park, never to return.

If this government votes against Bill 27, it will once again be ignoring the people of rural and small-town Ontario. So I urge all members of all parties to do the right thing for all parts of Ontario. I urge them to support Bill 27, and I congratulate the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke for bringing it forward.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I am pleased today to rise in support of my colleague from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke's Bill 27, the Gasoline Tax Fairness for All Act. I too have spoken to this bill previously, and so I'm hoping that the Lucky 7s do strike right for him and we can get this passed.

You know, it is not fair to rural Ontario. The urban members may get sick of that, but how many times have you heard it explained today? I have Lindsay in my Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock riding that has public transit and gets some gas tax money, and that is it. So my other municipalities which have small populations but lots of roads and lots of bridges—Haliburton county, the rest of the city of Kawartha Lakes, the three sections of Peterborough county that I have, Brock township, which has a ton of tributaries going into Lake Simcoe, so you know how many bridges and roads that takes—they're in need of infrastructure repair. Rural Ontario, as spoken by my colleague, does deliver a ton of stuff to urban Ontario, so rural Ontario needs to have its fair share of gas tax money to support urban Ontario's needs. That's the way it is. A strong rural Ontario makes a strong urban Ontario.

So you get people frustrated certainly in rural Ontario because they see this unfair portion of the government's money going to them, and rightly so. If that is not reflected when the members—in the last election, yes, you heard that loud and clear: Rural Ontario's not being treated fairly, not only in their roads, but you're shoving wind turbines down their throats, and now you're taking the horse racing industry away from them and all those jobs.

So, yes, we are angry in rural Ontario. We want a fair portion. We contribute to this province. This government has refused to listen to the voices of rural Ontario, which, as I keep reminding them, they need to listen to, because we're important to the rest of the province. We make them stronger.

I appreciate the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke yet again bringing forward this bill, and I would hope that the present Liberal government would support it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, you have two minutes to reply.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I won't name the members, but thanks to all the members for responding to my bill.

I want to touch a little bit on the member for Parkdale–High Park, who talked about where the money's going to come from and how it's going to be divided. We're not calling for—we can't call for new spending in a bill, as the member for Ottawa Centre should know. We can't call for new taxes. But it is up to government to figure out how they're going to spend. They're spending \$126 billion in next year's budget. It's up to them to figure out how to spend the money. If they hadn't spent—how much of the \$750 million that they've given to Ornge has been wasted? What about the \$1 billion wasted down the drain at eHealth? How about the \$1-billion suit for windmills that's coming up? Or the \$300-million suit for the Mississauga power plant that most experts agree—

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Mr. Speaker, point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Point of order from the member for Agincourt.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Mr. Speaker, can we please remind the member that this is about the bill put forth—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, go ahead.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The \$1 billion that they're going to spend on the Mississauga gas plant for the cancellation—and how much are they going to spend on the Oakville gas plant? This is a government that is out of control—out of control—wasting billions of dollars every year.

But we're not going to stop. People in rural Ontario have made this an absolute priority. The Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus continues to say that this is one of their number one priorities, a fair share of gas tax revenue for rural communities. They scoff at it over on the Liberal side. They've been shut out of rural Ontario, and they will continue to be shut out of rural Ontario. But I thought that maybe in a minority Parliament, maybe they'd get the message that the people in rural Ontario have had enough. They're not going to take the fact that you dump on them all the time and do nothing to help them. It's time you treated them fairly.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Sit down, please.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order, please.

The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

## CONDOMINIUM DISPUTE RESOLUTION

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** We will deal first with ballot item number 25, standing in the name of Ms. Damerla.

Ms. Damerla has moved private member's notice of motion number 15. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

## HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (BRAKE PAD STANDARDS), 2012

### LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (NORMES RELATIVES AUX PLAQUETTES DE FREIN)

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mrs. Sandals has moved second reading of Bill 51. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is referred to the committee of—the member from Guelph.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I would like to have the bill referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member has requested that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy. Agreed? Agreed.

## GASOLINE TAX FAIRNESS FOR ALL ACT, 2012

### LOI DE 2012 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ POUR TOUS À L'ÉGARD DE LA TAXE SUR L'ESSENCE

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mr. Yakabuski has moved second reading of Bill 27. 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."

The ayes have it.

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

*The division bells rang from 1630 to 1635.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Would all members take their seats?

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing and be counted by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Leone, Rob	Scott, Laurie
Bailey, Robert	McDonell, Jim	Smith, Todd
Bisson, Gilles	McNaughton, Monte	Thompson, Lisa M.
Chudleigh, Ted	Natyshak, Taras	Walker, Bill
Fedeli, Victor	Nicholls, Rick	Wilson, Jim
Forster, Cindy	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Yakabuski, John
Klees, Frank	Pettapiece, Randy	

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

**Nays**

Albanese, Laura	Dickson, Joe	Murray, Glen R.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Duguid, Brad	Naqvi, Yasir
Bradley, James J.	Hoskins, Eric	Piruzza, Teresa
Broten, Laurel C.	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Cansfield, Donna H.	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Chiarelli, Bob	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Colle, Mike	MacCharles, Tracy	Sousa, Charles
Coteau, Michael	Mangat, Amrit	Takhar, Harinder S.
Crack, Grant	McNeely, Phil	Wong, Soo
Damerla, Dipika	Milloy, John	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Delaney, Bob	Moridi, Reza	Zimmer, David

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):**  
The ayes are 20; the nays are 33.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order, please. I declare the motion lost.

*Second reading negatived.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Orders of the day.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mr. Bradley has moved adjournment of the House. Agreed?

This House stands adjourned until April 16, 10:30 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1638.*

**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	
<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	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
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
<b>Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre de Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Innovation / Ministre du Développement économique et de l'Innovation
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	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
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	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

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
Milligan, Rob E. (PC) <b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	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) <b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	Richmond Hill York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	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	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak  
Grant Crack, Kim Craitor  
Vic Dhillon, Michael Harris  
Rob Leone, Taras Natyshak  
Rick Nicholls, Michael Prue  
Mario Sergio  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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

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Bob Delaney, Victor Fedeli  
Cindy Forster, Monte McNaughton  
Yasir Naqvi, Teresa Piruzza  
Michael Prue, Peter Shurman  
Soo Wong  
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**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: David Zimmer  
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Joe Dickson, Rosario Marchese  
David Oraziotti, Laurie Scott  
Todd Smith, Jeff Yurek  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Phil McNeely  
Donna H. Cansfield, Helena Jaczek  
Bill Mauro, Jim McDonell  
Phil McNeely, Randy Pettapiece  
Peter Tabuns, Monique Taylor  
Lisa M. Thompson  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Shafiq Qaadri  
Laura Albanese, Teresa J. Armstrong  
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Mike Colle  
Frank Klees, Jack MacLaren  
Paul Miller, Rob E. Milligan  
Shafiq Qaadri  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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

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Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon  
Gilles Bisson, Donna H. Cansfield  
Steve Clark, Garfield Dunlop  
Jeff Leal, Lisa MacLeod  
Jonah Schein  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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

Chair / Président: Norm Miller  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Toby Barrett  
Toby Barrett, France Gélinas  
Phil McNeely, Norm Miller  
Reza Moridi, Jerry J. Ouellette  
Liz Sandals, Jagmeet Singh  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Vanthof  
Michael Coteau, Grant Crack  
Vic Dhillon, Randy Hillier  
Rod Jackson, Mario Sergio  
Peter Tabuns, John Vanthof  
Bill Walker  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

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

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ted Chudleigh  
Ted Chudleigh, Dipika Damerla  
Cheri DiNovo, Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Ernie Hardeman, Tracy MacCharles  
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha  
Jane McKenna  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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