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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Thursday 28 March 2013

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des débats
(Hansard)**

Jeudi 28 mars 2013

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 28 March 2013

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 28 mars 2013

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

AMBULANCE AMENDMENT ACT
(AIR AMBULANCES), 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LES AMBULANCES
(SERVICES D'AMBULANCE AÉRIENS)

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 26, 2013, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 11, An Act to amend the Ambulance Act with respect to air ambulance services / Projet de loi 11, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les ambulances en ce qui concerne les services d'ambulance aériens.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: As always, it's an honour to stand in this House and speak on behalf of the residents of Timiskaming–Cochrane, and most of the time I say it's also a pleasure. But on this bill, it's not a pleasure. It's a duty, because the air ambulance act is being portrayed as something that's going to fix the problems at Ornge. It's also a bellwether, if things are going to be fixed across not only the health care sector but across a lot of government agencies.

I'd like to really start this morning by saluting—thank-ing—the front-line workers at Ornge, the front-line workers across our whole health care spectrum, the people who actually save lives and the people who have to work in incredibly tough conditions and hard conditions. Some of those conditions were actually created by the people who ran systems like Ornge. The front-line workers are, in an odd sort of way, being side-swiped by the scandal that is Ornge.

I'd also like to spend a minute thanking, once again, the people who for years have actually been trying to wave the red flag about Ornge, the people who for years have been trying to blow the whistle; people like Trevor Kidd, whose family lives in my riding, who sat in this House in the members' gallery, who testified and who was widely praised for standing up and telling what he believed. But no one listened to Trevor Kidd for years.

If they had listened to people like Trevor, we could have stopped the waste of this money—or the govern-

ment could have stopped the waste of this money—years before and could have redirected that.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order, the member from Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I don't believe we have quorum in the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Can we check for quorum?

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Timiskaming–Cochrane.

Mr. John Vanthof: For someone like Trevor Kidd, who banged the warning bells years ago, and if people had listened, if the government side had listened, we could have saved—would have saved themselves a lot of hassle and scandal, too—millions of dollars, and redirected that to home care or saving more people's lives or making people's lives better.

The problem, unfortunately—and again, once again, I'm going to go back to my riding a little bit. Trevor Kidd blew the whistle, and Trevor Kidd was persecuted for it. That, unfortunately—despite the government's assertions with G11, the Ambulance Act—that's not changing because, in my riding, as we speak, there are members of the community in a town called Iroquois Falls who are once again blowing the whistle. They want to make the health care system better, and what's happening? These people are raising their arms and saying, "There's something going on. We'd like it looked at." What's happening is, these people are being sued by the hospital board, funded through the LHIN and controlled under the Ministry of Health.

Has anything changed in regard to whistle-blower protection really? Because if you're sitting back and you know—because there are, and there will always be, regardless of who was running the show—the government is a big organization. There will always be problems. You're always going to have to keep your finger on the pulse of how things are working.

If you know something is going wrong and you're seeing that other people, when they say, "Okay, wait. There's something wrong here," and they're getting sued by public funds, is that an incentive to come forward and say, "Well, I think there's something wrong"?

An even bigger problem with this bill is if someone takes it upon themselves and takes the risk of being sued with public funds, who do they go to, because with the air ambulance act, you go to a government inspector. Well, from northern Ontario, first you'd have to go on a major search to find what you would call a government inspector. They're not in the blue pages.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Or the yellow ones.

Mr. John Vanthof: Or the yellow ones. So first, you have to break the confidence barrier that, okay, you know what? You might get sued. If you go to the press, you might get sued by public funds. So that's not really an option. So then your next option is to find, Speaker, a government inspector, so I guess Internet search, for those of us who have high-speed Internet in northern Ontario.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Not in my riding.

Interjection: Mine too.

Mr. John Vanthof: You can make a joke about it, but it's serious stuff. There is one name and one number that everyone trusts and that everyone can find. The one title that people identify with fairness, with objectivity, with impartiality—there's one name, regardless of what party you're from, regardless of where you're from, regardless of what your faith is, what your race is, how old you are, Speaker, and that is the Office of the Ombudsman.

0910

How many times: "I don't know where to go. I'm going to call the Ombudsman, because you know what? It's his job to be fair, and it's his job to look into the issues." And you know what? He's not going to look into every issue, because not every issue is a scandal. Not everyone is happy with the system, and that's the way the world works. But you need to be able to call the Ombudsman.

What's so glaring in G11, the Ambulance Amendment Act, is that the government, for whatever reason, has decided not to have Ombudsman oversight. Some things just defy common sense. Why wouldn't you? It's the one office everybody identifies with, even in northern Ontario. When I go home to Iroquois Falls or to New Liskeard, Kirkland Lake, Cochrane, I can walk down the street—walk down Railway Street in Cochrane—and ask people how many government investigators they know, how many they can find. A few of them will mention the MNR, that used to be around—that used to be around.

M^{me} France Gélinas: They're going.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes—but no one else. But they will know—not everyone on Railway Street in Cochrane will know the Office of the Ombudsman, but a lot of them will. That's why it's such a travesty that, for whatever reason, the government didn't take a common-sense approach and say, "You know what? There have been bad things happen at Ornge. People were persecuted at Ornge for actually bringing their views forward. How can we actually learn from this?" You know what? In my personal business, the way I got better is that when I made a mistake, I thought, "Gee, how come that happened? We're going to try to make sure that doesn't hap-

pen again somewhere else." The best way to do that in this case—not the only way, but the simplest way from the client side, which is the people using the health care system—is the Ombudsman.

On the New Democratic side, we're going to push, when this bill goes to committee, that it actually does something and that they include the common-sense thing, the thing that is right for Ontarians: that they include going to the Ombudsman, not just G11 but throughout the health care system. Thank you, Speaker.

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

Ms. Helena Jaczek: It's a pleasure to rise in response to the comments from my colleague from Timiskaming—Cochrane.

I would like to remind the member that as soon as the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care heard about the issues at Ornge from the Auditor General, she immediately took action. She took strong action. She called in the Ontario Provincial Police; their investigation is continuing.

There has been acknowledgement on this side of the House of the problems at Ornge, but apart from the strong action that the minister took, of course, we first had Bill 50 and now Bill 11, which is before this House as we speak. Bill 11, as we heard yesterday at public accounts, does include many provisions that are extremely important and necessary to ensure that what happened at Ornge previously will never, ever happen again.

We have a very strong performance agreement. Pursuant to that performance agreement is the quality improvement plan. The new chief operating officer, Mr. Giguere, yesterday went through that quality improvement plan with us, setting out very clear targets for performance and his priorities of patient safety. He wants to see an effective system, with aircraft availability, paramedic availability at all times, at all bases, on call and available. He wants to see efficiency. He wants to see cost savings. He wants to see the Ontario taxpayer get maximum value for their investment in air ambulance.

Bill 11 contains many other important provisions, as we heard: the whistle-blower protection; the patient advocate. These are all important measures enshrined in this bill. I urge all members of this House to support it. Let us get it to committee to discuss it further.

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

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: As I recall, we were raising problems at Ornge for two years before the government did anything. The minister did not take direct action; she took no action whatsoever. This bill has some serious flaws. This is a bill that closes the barn door firmly after the horses have left. In fact, the horses left so long ago that they now have offspring. Those offspring are coming to the track this spring, and I don't think they're going to do very well because they weren't very well bred.

This bill has some very difficult clauses in it. One clause gives the government the ability to alter contracts—signed, negotiated contracts. The government can

alter those contracts, and that gives me great pause, whenever the government gives itself that kind of power. It gives itself the power to take over certain aspects, regardless of signed contracts. Sometimes a takeover is necessary. The conditions that that takes over will be outlined in regulation. Those regulations can be very, very strong or they can be very fair. I would encourage this government to be very fair when they're writing those regulations—fair to the people of Ontario; fair to the contracts that they signed. If you sign a contract that you don't know anything about and it's a wrong contract, shame on you; don't make that mistake.

The other problem is the protection that they give whistle-blowers. Again, some of that protection will be reflected in regulation. If there's not someone to report to—this bill doesn't specifically say who they can report to, other than an inspector appointed after the problem is created—then the whole bill is a sham.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I was really interested in what my colleague had to say. Basically, what happened at Ornge was 100% preventable. The ministry had had many whistle-blowers come to it and explain in great detail that the salaries they were paying themselves didn't make sense, that they had created a whole bunch of for-profits for the sole reason of shielding themselves from the ministry, that what was going on—there were kick-backs coming from deals that had been signed to buy new helicopters. Whistle-blowers told them that, years before it hit the front page of the Toronto Star. Step by step, whistle-blowers went to the ministry. But the ministry did not act.

Now they say, "We're going to give whistle-blowers protection." That is not worth the paper it's written on. Have no fear; Ornge has developed whistle-blower protection now, because they see the value. They saw what happened to their co-workers who are now out of a job because they blew the whistle on a real scandal, and what happened? Nothing happened at the level of the ministry, but those people paid the price. Those people lost their jobs, they lost their livelihood, and oftentimes their good names were thrown in the mud because they were telling the truth.

What we have in front of us, this bill, the whistle-blower protection that is in it, kind of makes sense in long-term care. It is part of the Long-Term Care Act. They copied it from the Long-Term Care Act and put it into the Ambulance Act, where it makes no sense whatsoever. I expect better than this from this government.

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

Hon. Jeff Leal: I think the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane provided some very valuable input this morning on Bill 11, the air ambulance act. I know he's always out consulting with his constituents, perhaps in the Tri-Town area of Cobalt, Haileybury and New Liskeard. I know he takes that opportunity frequently and

chats with them about what's going on in the riding and things down here.

I was just recently rereading Ted Sorensen's book about John Fitzgerald Kennedy. Edward R. Murrow, who was the great media leader in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s, provided President Kennedy with great advice after the Bay of Pigs fiasco in 1961 when he said, "An error does not become a mistake unless you don't correct it."

So Bill 11 is an opportunity to correct what we all recognize: some very serious deficiencies in the operation of Ornge. We'll have the opportunity, through the committee process—and that was highlighted to us, something that we were reminded of during the period of prorogation: that committees weren't operating. There's an opportunity now to get Bill 11 to committee, an opportunity for witnesses and presenters to come forward, to provide input where changes should be made, and amend the legislation before it ultimately comes back to the House.

There are, in this bill, some new provisions: the new performance agreement; the new policies and procedures on conflict of interest; whistle-blower protection. We do know that we now have a new chief executive officer and a new chair of the board.

But I think the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane made some great points today, and I'm sure he—an opportunity to present them, debate them, when this bill goes to committee.

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

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): My apologies.

The member for Timiskaming-Cochrane, you have two minutes to respond.

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to thank the members from Oak Ridges-Markham, from Halton, my colleague from Nickel Belt and the Minister of Rural Affairs for their comments.

The member from Oak Ridges-Markham: The question isn't that the government stepped in when the Auditor General said something; the problem is, they didn't step in years before, when people on the front lines were saying something. That's the problem.

That's also the whistle-blower problem. There's only so long that people can blow the whistle, at risk of their jobs, at risk of their reputation. In the case of what's happening in Iroquois Falls, these people are just community members who are being sued by the hospital board because they said, "Excuse me; I think something's wrong here." They're being sued by the hospital board with funds from the LHINs, controlled by the Ministry of Health. And we're sitting here talking about how we've improved whistle-blower protection? I'm sorry; I have a big problem with that.

Something else I have a big problem with: We've debated this whole thing before. And then the government was prorogued and it comes back, and all the things that we said should be put in that would make it better—

they're not in here. So when the government was prorogued, they maybe could have sat down and think, "You know, let's improve these things so when we come back, we might actually get them fixed." But again, they didn't take that opportunity.

So yes, we want this bill to go to committee and we want it fixed so people like my constituents in Iroquois Falls don't have to go to bed at night living in fear because they're being sued by the government because they are saying, "Excuse me; something here is going wrong."

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: The member from Timiskaming—Cochrane raises a very common theme which I'll continue in my 10 minutes. It's an honour to rise in behalf of the residents of Dufferin—Caledon to discuss the government bill before us this morning.

Today, we are here debating Bill 11, An Act to amend the Ambulance Act with respect to air ambulance service, also known by its short title as the Ambulance Amendment Act. Bill 11 is, of course, the Liberal government's response to the situation at Ontario's deeply troubled air ambulance service, Ornge. If enacted, the bill would amend current legislation and install new powers that the government claims will better equip the ministry to deal with situations like what occurred at Ornge. For example, Bill 11 would allow providers of air ambulance services to be designated as designated air ambulance service providers. Cabinet would then be given the power to appoint provincial representatives to sit on the boards of these newly designated air ambulance service providers—can you say "LHINs"? The bill also empowers the minister to issue directives to these designated air ambulance service providers.

Bill 11 creates other new positions and ministerial powers which I will touch on shortly. However, first I would like to point out something that I think is quite startling and disturbing. When I sat down to prepare my remarks for this morning's debate, at first I thought I was mistakenly picking up Bill 50 from the last legislative session. I'm not kidding, Speaker. I began reading it and thought, "I've got the wrong bill here. This is Bill 50." I mean, it is virtually the same bill. As a matter of fact, every single word in the explanatory note of Bill 50 and Bill 11 is identical—not a single change.

Now, to be honest, if you would have asked me in January if the Minister of Health would reintroduce a bill on this important topic almost a full year later with little or no changes in it, I would have told you it's highly unlikely. I would have said then, Speaker, that given everything we've heard in committee since Bill 50 was introduced, it only seems logical to alter the bill to reflect all that we have learned over the past year.

It's actually kind of shocking if you think about it. Bill 50 was introduced for first reading in the last session on March 12, 2012. The bill we're debating here today, Bill 11, was introduced for first reading on February 26, 2013. So here we are, almost a full year later, and, much to my astonishment—and I'm sure many of my col-

leagues would agree—the Minister of Health introduces legislation almost identical to that which was introduced back in March.

Speaker, I'm not making this up. Actually, I'm quite shocked by it. Frankly, I'm almost at a loss for words. To think that the public accounts committee has spent hundreds of hours questioning dozens and dozens of people over the last year—and continues to do so, I might add—and yet, after all that, all the meetings, all the questions, the thousands of documents submitted to committee, the minister introduces the same bill a year later? You know, for a party that spends so much time promoting respectful conversations and working together, they sure don't listen very well.

I'd say maybe the Minister of Health is blessed with the gift of impeccable foresight, but then again, the whole Ornge debacle took place under her watch, so I suppose I shouldn't.

But what is the impression we get? Mainly, it's that Bill 50 was so perfect, so well-written, so flawless that it doesn't matter what all the witnesses, all the members in this chamber and all the experts have said about Ornge in the past year. This bill should simply be reintroduced, just about word for word.

Speaker, the fact that the minister who presided over the Ornge fiasco would have the audacity to disregard everything the opposition has had to say and everything that was presented in committee, and instead stands in this House and presents nothing new on this bill, is shameful. But then again, I suppose, what does the minister have to worry about? Despite the terrible mismanagement and shameful waste of taxpayers' money that occurred under her watch, the new Premier saw fit to promote the minister to Deputy Premier.

So here we are, almost a year after Bill 50 was introduced, and we have a carbon copy, Bill 11, before us to debate—although now that I think about it, I suppose the minister was preoccupied during prorogation in her role as co-campaign chair for the Premier's Liberal leadership race, so maybe that's why we didn't see any changes to the bill. She wasn't really focused on her ministry responsibilities.

The real shame is that Bill 11 fails to take any substantive action to prevent the problems which plagued Ornge from happening again. One of the reasons I am glad I got the opportunity to speak on Bill 11 today is because I think Bill 11 serves as yet another example as to why we need a change of government here in Ontario. Actually, that being said, there's a lot about this whole Ornge file that demonstrates why we need a change of government here in Ontario.

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Let's consider the Liberal government's reaction to the problems at Ornge. True to Liberal form, their remedy is more bureaucracy, more convoluted lines of responsibility, and in the process we get less accountability. I say this because what we've opted to do with Bill 11 is allow cabinet to appoint new special investigators and give the minister the ability to appoint new

supervisors to oversee operations. In addition to these measures in Bill 11, there is currently a new patient advocate position at Ornge that the government claims will add oversight.

Speaker, we already have a special investigator to provide oversight. You might know him? His name is André Marin—you know, the Ombudsman of Ontario? And we already have a supervisor to oversee operations at the air ambulance service. They're known as the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Article 15 of the original Ornge performance agreement gave the minister powers of investigation. She never used them. The minister also had the power to intervene under the Independent Health Facilities Act. She never used it.

So you see my point: Rather than listen to the members in the PC caucus, rather than listen to the members in the third party, rather than listen to the Ombudsman himself when he wrote to the minister on this subject, this Liberal government was content to simply recycle this year-old eight-page bill that provides no real change and is really just positioning on the part of the Minister of Health. If the minister was serious about providing substantial, meaningful reforms, she would have added Ombudsman oversight to her bill before reintroducing it in this session.

The Ombudsman is an independent officer of the Legislature, and as such, reports only to this legislative chamber and the people's representatives who serve within it—not the Minister of Health; not the Premier; we as legislators. The minister, however, thinks oversight duties are better handled by individuals who would be employees of Ornge itself and would report to Ornge management. As the Ombudsman outlines in his letter to the minister, which my colleague read into the record a few weeks ago, the new patient advocate position reports to an Ornge vice-president. Really? That's your idea of independence? Was it not the total lack of government oversight that allowed things to get so bad at Ornge in the first place? Speaker, this is a totally dysfunctional model. It's so outrageous it would almost be humorous if this service wasn't in place to save people's lives.

Dozens of brave whistle-blowers have come forward with the shocking and depressing details of the abuse that took place at Ornge, and they often did it in secret for fear of retaliation against them. It is because of these whistle-blowers' bravery that people like my colleague from Newmarket–Aurora were able to pressure the Liberal government into finally confronting this terrible scandal. Yet the minister's idea of protecting whistle-blowers is make them take their concerns to an individual who reports to Ornge management. Speaker, with reforms like this it's no wonder Ornge was allowed to spiral out of control, because clearly the minister has absolutely no understanding of proper oversight mechanisms. Why else would the ministry expect people who have issues with the way an agency is being run to report their concerns to the very people who run the agency?

In the job description that was posted publicly, the responsibilities of the newly crafted office of the patient

advocate states that the position will “investigate, resolve, document and report organization-specific patient and visitor compliments” and complaints. It's a little late for that, Speaker. We need to have Ombudsman oversight included in this bill for it to have any teeth at all.

With that, I will await the comments of the opposition.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'm happy to comment on this bill, the ambulance bill, because I keep referring back to the Auditor General's report, where he quoted in February 2006 that the Ministry of Health committed to set standards to monitor performance. When you make a commitment, you don't abandon that commitment. She stated she is committed to standards and monitoring. This bill doesn't reflect that commitment that she made in 2006. So here we are, how many years later, and we are now in a problem that has been created by her non-committal of oversight to this ministry.

The member opposite who just spoke now—she's saying Ombudsman oversight is the way that the public will regain confidence and, in some small portion, some small way, will also reaffirm this minister's commitment to the public so that they can have the confidence in this service that we're supposed to be delivering as a government agency.

People shouldn't be questioning how a government agency operates so that they feel that perhaps that service isn't going to be delivered to them. All the fiascos, all the scandals that happened in management, were completely unacceptable and a disgrace to this ministry and a disgrace to me as a member here, having to discuss this bill and not having the minister listen to us expressing how important the Ombudsman is and how that's going to make things better for oversight.

When you make a mistake, as the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane says, you learn from those mistakes and you put in best practices so that those mistakes won't reoccur. When we're talking about life and death, Minister, it's crucial that those mistakes don't happen again.

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

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'm happy to speak again on this important piece of legislation. I've listened carefully to the comments from the opposition—both parties.

I just want to reiterate what I've talked about before, and why we have reintroduced this piece of legislation: It is to respond to the concerns that I'm hearing. It is to provide substantial oversight in government.

This legislation appoints special investigators or a supervisor when it's in the public interest to do so. It appoints members to Ornge's board of directors. It prescribes terms of the performance agreement between the government and Ornge in regulation. It provides whistle-blowing protection for staff who disclose information to an inspector, investigator, supervisor or the ministry. Ornge will be subject to retroactive freedom-of-informa-

tion requests, a change that we are undertaking through regulation.

I want to set the record straight, Speaker. The official opposition, the PC Party, voted against Bill 50. They voted against the kinds of things they're talking about today that are important: oversight, transparency, whistle-blower protection, improvements that will help pilots and paramedics. So I say to both opposition parties: Let's get this to committee, as the Minister of Rural Affairs said, work on changes and amendments, hear from witnesses and move it forward.

I think we're all really wanting the same kinds of things, and we're starting to debate this a bit ad nauseam, quite frankly. I think it's time to get this bill to committee, work on it and respond to the concerns that are being raised, and implement the very strong oversight and governance provisions that are articulated here in this bill. It's an important piece of legislation, so let's work together and move this forward to committee.

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to be able to join in the debate. I certainly found the remarks made by my colleague the member for Dufferin-Caledon to be ones that were clear in the process and clear in the condemnation of the government's lack of action.

When you think back to the early days when the brown envelopes started coming, when the phone calls and things that demonstrated the fact that there were some fundamental issues that were not being addressed by Ornge and by the government's response to those, when I think about aircraft that were ordered and provided that were too heavy, that didn't have the ability to fly as far as they should—they had interiors that prevented the appropriate response to patients. You don't get more fundamental than this.

It's shocking, not only that it was done, but the fact that there had been an air ambulance service in this province that worked behind the scenes to support people throughout the province and had been doing it for generations. All of a sudden, the government gives a virtual monopoly to a company that can't even figure out what the plane should look like. This is shocking in itself. But it's the treatment of those who came forward—further shocking and irresponsible on the part of the government.

0940

Finally, when you look at the piece of legislation that we're looking at today, what does it do? It creates more bureaucracy, more regulation. What that does is it demonstrates to me—and the references have been made to other examples and pieces of legislation where the same thing is the process—is the inability of this government to recognize that you cannot legislate either morality or good judgment.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: It's my pleasure to stand and actually add my comments to this debate. I really want to commend my colleague from Timiskaming-Cochrane.

He's really highlighting a very, very big part of the puzzle that is missing out of this, which is whistle-blower protection.

During my comments that I made last week, I tried to suggest one suggestion through my 20-minute comments that I was making, to really look at Ombudsman oversight and the importance of it.

But I want to touch on what my colleague had been talking about here this morning: whistle-blower protection. Him standing in this House and being so passionate about what's going on in his riding back home to his constituents and the failure of this government to listen to those views—and I heard from one of the members across the way that we want the same things. Well, if you want the same things, you have to be listening to the message in order to accomplish those. The message here is, we're missing substantial oversight out of this budget. We're missing Ombudsman oversight and we're missing transparency. Everything that you've created through this bill is exactly what we had been talking about and is not in this bill.

So I stand and I commend my colleague by highlighting the issues that he has challenged, because maybe, just maybe, if we talk about it long enough, you're going to actually recognize that this is missing out of this bill, and maybe someone from the other side of the House will actually say, "Hey, you're right. You have a point. We have not looked at this. Maybe we should be looking at Ombudsman oversight."

The bigger question for me sitting here is, why not? Why isn't the Ombudsman looking at this? He's our gold standard of all this, of what's going on. So why haven't we been doing this? That's what I'm concerned about, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Dufferin-Caledon, you have two minutes for a response.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Ultimately, there is nothing of substance that is going to change and improve what happened at Ornge to occur again.

What's that line from Albert Einstein? The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different outcome. You introduced Bill 50. You didn't listen to the changes that were being suggested. You've introduced Bill 11. It's identical. It is not going to improve the situation.

What we need is effective, responsible and independent oversight. We don't have it with this piece of legislation. You had an opportunity, actually, with the prorogation. You had almost a year to review the testimony within the committee. You had an opportunity in that year to review all of the comments that many of us already made on Bill 50, and you still ignored it. You still introduced the same old same old. This is another indication that there are no new ideas and there are no new changes happening on the other side of the House.

We need actual change. Bill 11 doesn't do it and the new front bench doesn't do it. I'm just really disappointed that we couldn't have offered something more sub-

stantive that would actually improve the lives of Ontario residents, the people in Dufferin–Caledon and ultimately, most importantly, the individuals who have to rely on that air ambulance service at their most important and critical time. Thank you, Speaker.

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

Mr. Ted Arnott: As I rise in the Legislature this morning to speak to Bill 11, An Act to amend the Ambulance Act with respect to air ambulance services, I am mindful of the concerns of my constituents in Wellington–Halton Hills first and foremost. I also consider Bill 11 in the context of the high personal regard that I have for the Minister of Health and Deputy Premier.

From speaking with two former Ministers of Health in the province of Ontario who are my friends, I know that being the Minister of Health is one of the most challenging jobs in government at any level. I believe it is more challenging even than being Premier. The complexity of the issues, the sheer volume of the work itself, and the need to ensure political accountability for the whole health care system are staggering. I do not envy the minister her responsibilities.

For my part, I'm glad to have what I consider to be an excellent working relationship with this Minister of Health. I appreciate the interest she has shown in Wellington–Halton Hills. She visited our riding just before the election, in August 2011, to announce up to \$2.6 million for the Georgetown Hospital's ambitious renovations, including an emergency room addition and a diagnostic image renovation project. Yes, we applauded the minister when she visited our riding to make that announcement. This project is now well under way. I drop by the hospital frequently to view its progress. I know that the hospital foundation is continuing to raise funds. I hope that the minister will be able to visit us again when the Georgetown Hospital celebrates the official opening of the new ER and CT scanner suite.

The minister was kind enough to visit Centre Wellington last December 6 to reaffirm the government's commitment to building a new Groves Memorial Community Hospital. We welcomed the minister and together unveiled a sign where the new hospital is planned to be built later on in this decade.

Mr. Speaker, I have always been willing to reach across the partisan divide in this House and work with members from other parties in the interests of my constituents. I've been here for 22 and a half years, and only eight of those years in government, so I guess my experience in many respects has been serving in opposition. You work with the government of the day to advance the issues that are of concern to your constituents. I believe that as members of provincial Parliament, we should demonstrate respect for each other and our mutual roles, as our constituents would expect.

Personal considerations aside, there are real political differences between our respective parties on many issues. In opposition, it is our responsibility to hold the government of the day to account, to point out the flaws

and drawbacks of its policies, to recommend constructive alternatives and to hold the government responsible for its actions. This we must do on Bill 11.

This government must believe in recycling; they have recycled themselves. Theoretically, there's a new provincial government, but the list of similarities between the McGuinty government and the Wynne government is long; the list of differences is hard to yet determine. In fact, the new Premier said that the reason she ran to be Premier was that she was so proud of the record of the McGuinty government. I was astonished to hear her make that statement on CBC Radio just after she was elected leader of the Liberal Party. Does she now regret making it? Perhaps, as she proceeds to attempt to turn the page and put her own stamp on the government's policy agenda.

I have said that the government appears to be in denial and oblivious to the significant economic challenges that the province faces today. Whether it's the jobs challenge—565,000 Ontarians are unemployed; the deficit challenge—the most recent estimate is \$11.9 billion; the rising provincial debt—\$258 billion; or the responsibility for cancelling the gas plants to save marginal Liberal seats that cost hundreds of millions of dollars, the provincial government carries on as if these problems don't even exist.

But they do believe in recycling, as I said earlier. In this House, they are recycling many of the government bills that were introduced last year by the McGuinty government but died on the order paper when the House was prorogued on October 15. Bill 11 is the recycled Bill 50. The government would have us believe that Bill 11 is the legislative solution to the Ornge air ambulance scandal. The minister wants us to believe that she has taken appropriate action to fix the problems in our air ambulance services.

We all know the sordid details. It is a shocking story of wasteful spending, lack of accountability, lack of transparency, and inadequate oversight. Every week, there seem to be more revelations coming out of the public accounts committee that command our attention and prolong the infamous saga. We also know that there is an ongoing police investigation. Bill 11, we're told by the government, is the solution. They say this even though the committee investigation continues and many questions remain unanswered.

Here are some of our caucus's main concerns. We say that there is little of substance in this legislation. This bill is simply a means of providing political cover for the government's failure to provide important leadership. Its biggest single weakness is that it perpetuates the existing structure of the air ambulance service rather than recognize that the structure is flawed and requires direct oversight by the Minister of Health. The bill plays lip service to whistle-blower protection but limits the scope of that protection. It fails to provide across-the-board protection for whistle-blowers. It imposes limits on which individuals are protected and who they can approach with that information.

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Instead, we say the legislation ought to provide for a formal process through the Ombudsman, which would ensure proper protection and follow-up. We say that the bill is an attempt to divert attention away from the fact that the minister has had the power to hold Ornge and its board accountable from the very beginning for the Ornge saga. The minister had the power to intervene at Ornge under article 15 of the original Ornge performance agreement, as well as the Independent Health Facilities Act. The government has never adequately refuted these facts, and these are some of the reasons we speak against Bill 11 in its present form.

My colleague the member for Newmarket–Aurora has been absolutely tenacious in holding the government to account for the problems at Ornge air ambulance. He deserves enormous credit for the work he has done to bring these issues to light.

Our Ontario PC health critic and deputy leader, the member for Whitby–Oshawa, is a respected voice in this House, and she has also offered a principled critique of the government's actions in this regard. On Monday of this week, she spoke at length to Bill 11 and in her remarks indicated that the Ornge air ambulance scandal has cost Ontario taxpayers at least \$300 million.

Health care spending scandals seem to be a specialty of this Liberal government. We are reminded of the eHealth debacle, where a billion dollars was spent with very little to show for it, as the Auditor General confirmed, other than Liberal-friendly consulting firms billing the government for questionable fees. Because of these repeated scandals and the stories that drag on and on, over and over again, I'm afraid to say that some have almost become inured to health spending scandals. We've become hardened; they don't faze us anymore, yet faze us they should. Every dollar wasted on eHealth or the Ornge air ambulance service is a dollar that should have and could have gone to front-line care for patients in Ontario.

Who in this House could not furnish, on short notice, a list of health care priorities that need funding in their ridings? I suspect that every single member could easily bring the Minister of Health a long list of funding priorities in their ridings which would present a noticeable improvement in health services for their constituents. We can all identify needed improvements in health care.

Let me tell you about one of those health issues which was recently brought to my attention. Madison Phipps is a 17-year-old girl from Georgetown. She has cystic fibrosis. Since she was born, she has spent more than 250 days in the hospital. Since becoming the MPP for Halton Hills in 2007, I have come to know Maddie's parents, Dr. Nigel Phipps and Shelley Phipps, through their community leadership and the numerous organizations which they support in Georgetown.

I won't go into the details of Maddie's treatment through the years, but suffice to say that she has courageously endured it all, and at the same time, she has maintained a sense of hope for the future. That hope has

not been misplaced. A new medication called Kalydeco has recently been approved by Health Canada. For some with cystic fibrosis, it promises to be almost a miracle cure. Cystic Fibrosis Canada says that Kalydeco is the first therapy that targets the underlying cause of CF. It helps to improve the function of the defective protein, leading to better lung function, weight gain and lower sweat chloride levels. For some CF patients, access to Kalydeco could lead to a longer, healthier life. Kalydeco shows the greatest promise for CF patients who have cystic fibrosis with something called the G551D mutation.

Kalydeco, at present, is prohibitively expensive. It is estimated that the drug would cost \$294,000 a year. No family could afford that, but isn't that why we have a public health care system? Just before Christmas, I emailed the minister's office to ask for her help on this. Her staff got back to me and informed me that the drug's manufacturer, Vertex Pharmaceuticals, had made a submission, which was before the Canadian Drug Expert Committee. This committee is responsible for making recommendations to provincial and territorial drug plans.

When the House resumed sitting on February 20, I spoke to the minister personally, informing her of this issue and asking for her help. I followed up again last week, on March 20, reminding her of Madison Phipps and the need to expedite consideration of funding for Kalydeco.

We learned just this week that the Canadian Drug Expert Committee has recommended Kalydeco to be listed on the formulary listing of publicly funded drug plans for the treatment of cystic fibrosis in patients age six and older who have the G551D mutation. Now it's up to the minister to act and make Kalydeco accessible to CF patients. I urge her to do so without delay so that patients like Maddie can have access to this life-saving drug.

Going forward, if the government gives greater attention to eliminating wasteful spending through better oversight and more effective accountability, then precious health dollars can go to life-saving patient care instead of being wasted on what the Ombudsman calls the "mal-administration horrors that have plagued Ornge."

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

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again, it's an honour to stand here and speak on behalf of the residents of Timiskaming–Cochrane and comment on the remarks of the member from Wellington–Halton Hills.

I listened carefully to his remarks, and he made some very good points about how the money that was wasted in the Ornge scandal and in others could have been put to much better use in the health care system. He commented on how each of us would have examples of how money could be spent in all of our ridings to make people's lives so much better.

I listened very intently as he remarked on a case. We all have cases in our ridings, but his in particular—how one person's life could be made so much better, and how

sometimes people's lives get caught up in bureaucracy and caught up—and we're here. We're here, in those cases, to try and be their voice, because we're most effective, all of us, the 107 of us, when we give people a voice who don't have a voice any other way.

I'd really like to commend the member from Wellington—Halton Hills for being the voice for that family, and I would like to add my voice, to hope the minister acts and helps that family, because he did his job and he is bringing that little girl's plight to the House today. Thank you.

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

Hon. Jeff Leal: I have great respect for the member from Wellington—Halton Hills. We had the opportunity the other day to get a picture with the Queen of the Furrow, from Wellington county. I know the member and the member from Perth—Wellington availed themselves of the opportunity to have a chance to chat with a fine young lady who will do very well.

We're all touched this morning. The member brought forward a particular case in his riding with a young lady. All of us on all sides of the House, of course, will do what we can, with the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. When there are new advances in medicine for citizens across the province of Ontario, it's a non-partisan issue. All of us want to make sure that people have that access.

He touched upon eHealth. I just want to share a story about eHealth and how progress is being made in eHealth. Just before Christmas, an individual in Lindsay, Ontario, had a stroke. The individual was transferred from Ross Memorial Hospital in Lindsay to the Peterborough regional health care centre because we have the regional stroke trauma centre. During that period of time, through eHealth, they were able to do a CAT scan in Peterborough, immediately send it to McMaster health centre in Hamilton, Ontario, where the neurologist, through eHealth, electronically was able to read the CAT scan of this individual and was able to prescribe a regimen of approaches to help this individual. Two days later, that individual was discharged from PRHC in Peterborough back to Lindsay, Ontario, and is on the road to recovery. That just indicates to me the advances that we're making in all areas of medicine in the province of Ontario, and all of us want to support that.

I say to the member from Wellington—Halton Hills, we wish his resident all the very best to get access to that drug to improve that individual's life—something that, on all sides, we want every day in this province.

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

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Perhaps the minister will speak to the Minister of Health and encourage her to support that request.

The member for Wellington—Halton Hills made very interesting comments. His speech was well laid out. First, he established his credibility and how he serves his constituents and how he works with the government. He

expressed his concerns about the direction that the government is taking on this particular bill. Then he brought into the debate the impact that this drug could have on his constituent.

I know this child; I know the family, I know the parents and I know the grandparents. They're good friends. This is something that they're very excited about. This could change this child's life.

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I would point out to this government that since they've been in government for the past nine and a half years, they have increased the debt of this province. This drug, costing \$294,000 per year, could be supplied if this government hadn't increased the debt. Just this government's debt—six hours of interest would pay for this drug for one year. That's what your debt, that's what your irresponsible spending in this province has created. It has created a situation where we look at \$300,000 a year, more or less, as to whether or not we can afford it; but it's only six hours of interest that this government has increased the debt of this province by. I say, shame on you.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I was listening to the member from Halton Hills and how concerned and passionate and compassionate, I should say, he is about this family's plight and this little girl's health issue. My heart goes out to the family. I hope that the Minister of Health will listen to the member from Halton Hills.

I know in all our ridings, there are those stories where people come to us and they're looking for help because there are things in the health care system that they can't access or there isn't access to. That's something that we need to look at and review, because when those things happen to a family it devastates all of us, and we feel helpless. We're here to try to make things better.

When we talk about Bill 11, and we talk about making things better, there is one thing that the government put in there, which was the freedom of information so people can get that information. That's one good thing that's in the bill, and it's a positive thing to see.

But we do talk about the Ombudsman, and today we talked about the importance of that oversight and how that's going to make a difference to people when they feel that there's unfairness or, perhaps, help they couldn't get. This is an outlet. An ombudsman is a way for people to have that serious concern heard, and perhaps the Ombudsman can investigate if there were issues around what happened to them with regard—we're talking about Ornge.

But I also want to take the time today to say thank you to those front-line workers who came forward from Ornge and made their voices heard—but, of course, the government didn't listen. Their work is appreciated. I know they work really hard. All the things that they do are to make sure that Ontarians do receive the best health service that they can deliver.

I just want to say that my thoughts are with the family from the member for Halton Hills' remarks, and I look

forward to this bill going to committee so that we can talk about how the Ombudsman is so important for oversight.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Wellington–Halton Hills, you have two minutes for a response.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I must say I really appreciate the responses of all of my colleagues to my remarks this morning. The member for Timiskaming–Cochrane, thank you very much. He is absolutely right, and I'm sure he has numerous examples in his own riding of constituents with health care needs. Obviously, he's absolutely correct, and that was the point of my speech: When we waste precious health care dollars, when we're not paying attention to proper oversight, when there seems to be little regard for waste and nobody seems to care, we're taking money away from front-line patients. We should care; we should care about that, and we need to make greater efforts in that respect.

I want to thank the Minister of Rural Affairs for his kind comments. Certainly we would appreciate his support within the cabinet on this issue. We very much appreciated having the opportunity to meet his relative, who is the Wellington county Queen of the Furrow, earlier this week. It was very kind of him to invite us to do that, and I thank him.

I especially want to thank my friend and colleague the member for Halton for his comments. Yes, he has been well acquainted with the Phipps family for many years. In fact, I spoke to him this morning and consulted with him in his office before, while I was working on my remarks, to seek his advice. Again, I appreciate very much his support, because on many of these issues, these are nonpartisan issues, and we should be willing to work together to ensure that they are resolved.

I also want to thank my friend the member for London–Fanshawe for her kind comments. Again, this shows, I think, an indication that this should be considered a non-partisan issue. It's unfortunate; sometimes we do need to bring the issues forward in the Legislature to draw public attention to them, to ensure that they're not shuffled by the wayside. I would again ask the Minister of Health to do whatever she can to expedite this process, to approve Kalydeco for the cystic fibrosis patients in Ontario who have this genetic defect that makes this drug work to be a miracle cure for those families.

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

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Today I will speak about Bill 11, An Act to amend the Ambulance Act with respect to air ambulances. Ontarians deserve an ambulance service that is second to none. It's a service that we rely on to provide safe and high-quality care. We certainly want to thank the service providers, pilots, paramedics and all front-line personnel for their dedicated service, but we also know why the Liberal government has introduced this bill.

Our health critic, Christine Elliott, made a good point in her response to the minister's statement on February

26: "This government cobbled together this piece of legislation in haste, in order to provide cover for the ministry's and minister's failure to do their job and to provide the appropriate oversight of the air ambulance service in Ontario." She continued, "What's even more troubling is, the legislation was put together before the public accounts committee heard from all of the relevant witnesses and before we understood what the conditions were that led to this air ambulance mess at Ornge in the first place. How can you possibly expect to develop a piece of legislation when you don't really even know what the problem is yet?"

But we do know one thing: There has been abuse of public money at Ornge. My colleague Lisa Thompson, the member from Huron–Bruce, had this to say: "Ontario taxpayers deserve so much better. When you hear that there's an executive spending literally double digits on a bottle of water, taking trips across the world on the taxpayers' back, it goes to show that this oversight—this ministry has been totally benign and turned a blind eye to the issues at hand." I agree with her. She is absolutely right. While waste and mismanagement and abuse of public money was taking place, the government didn't take notice. It didn't take action. Meanwhile, patients appeared to be—at the highest levels of Ornge and in the government—a secondary concern.

It's frightening, what we have heard about how the lives of patients were put at risk because of inadequate equipment or insufficient resources where it really counted. Ornge purchased helicopters that didn't even allow paramedics to adequately do their job; in some cases they couldn't even administer CPR.

John O'Toole, my colleague from Durham, raised several examples in a previous debate of abuse of public trust. He told the House about expensive, high-speed racing boats that once were docked in his riding. He spoke about the motorcycles, the fancy headquarters—and the list goes on. To anyone listening to these stories from our part of the province, they have to wonder, "How was this allowed to happen on the taxpayers' dime? Who allowed it to happen?"

Since the day these abuses at Ornge were uncovered, the government has done whatever it could to deflect the blame. Instead of taking responsibility, the government tried to do the opposite. The Minister of Health claims that she did not have the authority to exercise proper oversight at Ornge. She said the performance agreement was weak, and that it wasn't adequate. The Auditor General clearly disputes that. It was the minister's government that signed the performance agreement, so it's not very credible of them to turn around and say they didn't have the proper authority to act.

The government can't say it wasn't warned. My colleague our health critic said, "The ministry's failure to listen and take action following the good advice from the Auditor General in 2005 demonstrates that the ministry has failed to provide appropriate service to Ontarians for years. The warning signs were there, and this failure in oversight and management has only worsened in recent

years. In the Auditor General's 2012 special report on Ornge air ambulance, he admonishes the government for failing to meet its oversight commitment."

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It's too bad that a number of years ago the government didn't take seriously what was going on at Ornge. We brought this to the attention of the minister a couple of years ago, and it was not acknowledged.

I want to return to the service personnel, the people who do their jobs every day in a professional way, despite the leadership that has failed them and failed the people of the province.

I spoke to this House a couple of days ago about my granddaughter Danica getting a ride in an Ornge helicopter. She broke her arm near Lion's Head, where our cottage is, and it was serious enough that they had to take her from Owen Sound to London to get it set. It was quite an experience for her. They strapped her into the ambulance—the crew was just exceptional—then they strapped my wife into the ambulance and she went along with them. They both got a helicopter ride. By that time, my granddaughter wasn't in pain anymore, so she thought it was kind of neat looking at the lights as they flew down to London. She had a nice ride in the helicopter. It was the crew who made that experience so great for my wife and my granddaughter.

It's not those people that we speak about today. Those people just want to get on with their lives and get on with their jobs.

Fortunately, my granddaughter is doing very well. Her arm is fully repaired, and she has recovered well.

We also wrote a thank-you note to the crew and the hospital staff for their exceptional service in our time of need.

The government does a real disservice to those first responders when it comes forward with a bill that it hasn't even thought through—or maybe they actually have thought it through. That's what really concerns us.

Again, I want to return to what Christine Elliott said this week:

"Mr. Speaker, considering that the ministry failed to exercise its authority as problems plagued Ornge, I'm concerned about the possibility that the passing of Bill 11 will merely assist the government in covering up future scandals and mismanagement. Under Bill 11, cabinet can appoint special investigators to investigate a designated air ambulance service. The bill would also allow the minister to appoint a supervisor to oversee a designated service provider. What's more, these appointed investigators would report directly to the ministry, so instead of providing independent, transparent oversight of Ornge's operation, the government is now going to hand-pick a group of individuals to provide oversight and report directly to those who appointed them. It makes absolutely no sense. These new positions proposed under Bill 11 only facilitate the government's ability to cover up future scandals."

That is what is most concerning to us: that the legislation could only make it easier for the government

to cover up scandals, as it has tried to do so many times before on other issues.

And now the government tries to pretend as if it's really a new government. Ridiculously, that's what the government has been calling itself in press releases and in various ministries: "the new Ontario government."

I think my colleague Rob Milligan had it right when he spoke this week and said, "One of the things that I find disturbing is the simple fact that this government—it's the same government that was led under Mr. McGuinty, and now it's under the new Premier, supposedly bringing in changes and the whole new facade. But no matter how many coats of white paint you put on the old fence, the old fence is broken and the old fence needs to be replaced."

We agree, and we think the people of Ontario will agree, too, because they've seen waste and mismanagement; they've seen it repeated over and over. They've seen a government that hasn't learned its lesson. The money the government wastes on scandal after scandal, from Ornge to eHealth to the gas plants, not to mention the expensive energy experiments, is money the government could have invested in health care.

We know that rural health care—we know that more needs to be done to deliver quality services where they're needed. On a snowy day in February, our health critic came to Perth–Wellington to hear directly from my constituents, including hospital administrators, doctors, nurses and many other professionals from across the health care sector. We heard so many good ideas from the people who participated. The doctor shortage is a main concern for us in Perth–Wellington. Participants suggested encouraging or requiring new doctors to practise in underserved areas, making better use of technology to attract doctors, improving health care infrastructure and addressing work-life balance issues, amongst other things.

Wouldn't it be great, Mr. Speaker, if the money that has been wasted at eHealth, at Ornge and other scandals that this government—wouldn't it be great if we could get that money back and we could put it towards our doctor shortage in rural Ontario? We could put it towards new medicines that are coming out for very sick patients in this province. But that money is gone.

That's what has happened for the last 10 years with this government, Mr. Speaker. This bill does not speak to what we need to get done in this province.

Thank you very much, sir.

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 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Michael Harris: I'd like to welcome the family of Leah Dehn today, who is the legislative page from Baden in my riding of Kitchener–Conestoga. Visiting are

her parents, Gary and Olivia; her brother, Oliver; and her grandparents Arthur and Donna Dehn from Niagara Falls, who have all come to watch Leah as the page captain today.

I'd like to welcome you to Queen's Park, and I hope you enjoy your day.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'm absolutely delighted to introduce the family of page Nadim Iddon. That's Sadia Zaman, Neil Iddon and Samarah Iddon. They're all here in the members' gallery to witness proceedings, so we must be good.

Hon. Reza Moridi: It's a pleasure to welcome Lou and Vanda Lovisotto from Richmond Hill, sitting in the members' gallery.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm pleased to welcome today Val Millson and friend Shelly Van Aaken to the Queen's Park House today. Val is the mother of a wonderful page by the name of Ellen Jansen. She's done a great job.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: I'd like to acknowledge that today, I'm going to have the family of page Emily Kostiuk, specifically her mother, Julie Rosenberg. I know she's not here yet, but I welcome her, and she will be here soon.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I'm honoured to introduce a good friend of mine and one of my great staff members: John Fraser from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm very pleased, on behalf of the member from Windsor West, to introduce the parents of page Stone Haines. His father, Kelvin Haines, is here; and his mother, Mariam Roth. Welcome to you both.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I'd like to introduce my friend from North Bay, who had so much fun here yesterday he came back: Ishmael Van Der Rassel.

Mr. Phil McNeely: Sarah Zintel is a student in the Centennial College sports journalism post-graduate program. She will be interviewing me today on my impact in our riding, Ottawa-Orléans. Sarah has been involved in our community as Navan Fair ambassador.

Sarah, welcome to Queen's Park.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm happy and sad to say welcome and good-bye: La mère de Magalie Malette, une page qui est avec nous depuis deux semaines, a également été avec nous pendant deux semaines. C'est sa dernière journée. Bienvenue et au revoir.

I wanted to introduce Michael Hurley from the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions, who is here—not quite here, but on his way to support the family whose loved one was tragically killed in a long-term-care home two weeks ago.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is with regret that I announce to the House that this is the last day for our pages. I would offer us an opportunity to share our gratitude to them.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There is no truth to the rumour that the Minister of the Environment has asked for triple their pay. There is no truth to that.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Timmins-James Bay offers us some good advice: to ask them if they want to sit next week. Thank you very much.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On that regrettable note, it is now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question this morning is for the Premier. At the justice committee this morning, we heard testimony that was both incredible yet not credible at all.

Here's the history: TransCanada turns down an offer for \$712 million. David Livingston is brought in as the fixer. He's given no dollar ceiling—carte blanche. He has no energy expertise whatsoever, and yet he's the man who crafts five options to relocate our gas plants in Ontario.

Under oath, the OPA tells us the TransCanada deal was close to \$1 billion. He's the chief of staff to the Premier who announced the cost is \$40 million. I say to you, Premier: Who is telling the truth?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: To the government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Yet again, we had an individual who is now a private citizen, similar to what happened with Ms. Turnbull, who appeared in front of the committee earlier this week. They came forward and under oath answered questions to the best of their ability. I cannot help it if the opposition is calling witnesses who are not giving them the answers that they want.

Mr. Livingston provided an explanation. He answered questions at great length, and I understand that the committee has asked him to come back. So let's let the committee do its work and let's stop engaging in these types of drive-by smears of key individuals who are now in private life and have given of their time to come before the committee.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: David Livingston, the \$350,000-a-year civil servant, told us that he had a blank cheque when he was leading negotiations to settle with TransCanada on the Oakville power plant cancellation.

One document shows TransCanada received a \$712-million offer, yet Mr. Livingston, the chief negotiator, said he was unaware of that offer. Another shows that the province would "be pleased" if the total cost didn't exceed \$1.2 billion. This is absolutely unbelievable. A billion-dollar deal is done with absolutely no financial end in sight.

Premier, are you finally ready to admit the \$40-million figure you tried to pass off as the total cost is an absolute fabrication?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On the edge of the line. I'm going to ask the member to withdraw.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I withdraw, Speaker.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, again, I think we're starting to see that the opposition once again has only a passing acquaintance with some of the facts. Let's quote from what Mr. Livingston told the standing committee this morning about his expertise in this matter:

"Before I ran Infrastructure Ontario, I had a 30-year career in banking. Especially in my latter days in banking, I was mostly involved with the development of strategy and doing mergers and acquisitions work"—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. The member from Renfrew, come to order.

Hon. John Milloy:—"broad background in negotiating agreements between private sector companies. I think the way the government looked at that was that they had, in me and in people at Infrastructure Ontario, expertise in negotiating with the private sector that they felt was of use in trying to make sure that we get the best deal for the taxpayer."

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: We also heard and saw, in an August 2011 email titled "Confidential Advice to Cabinet," that Mr. Livingston offered up five proposals to satisfy TransCanada. He told us that he crafted—he crafted—these options with no idea of what they would cost or with no energy expertise at all.

Premier, according to sworn testimony, the Ontario Power Authority said this haphazard approach to planning the delivery of energy in Ontario will cost almost \$1 billion. Yet on September 25, Premier, you stood in this House and said the total cost was only \$40 million. Premier, who is telling the truth?

Hon. John Milloy: Again, the question of cost is something that's being looked at by the Auditor General, an officer of this Legislature. It's something that is being undertaken by the committee itself. I cannot help it—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Oxford, come to order.

Hon. John Milloy:—that the committee keeps—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Leeds–Grenville, come to order.

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Hon. John Milloy: I cannot help it, Mr. Speaker, that the committee keeps calling witnesses, and—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Oxford, second time.

Hon. John Milloy:—if they don't like their answers, they're blaming me.

Let me quote again—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Just to make sure you hear, because you kept talking while I was asking you to stop: The member from Oxford will come to order—second time.

Carry on.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, let me quote Mr. Livingston about the role of Infrastructure Ontario in these negotiations. He said, "Because I think most of the people that work there"—meaning Infrastructure Ontario—"were from the private sector. All the projects that we had done, everything that we were doing, were essentially in negotiation with the private sector, so we had expertise in doing this and how to do it. The government felt that if we came back with options or views, they were ones as being in the taxpayers' interests; they were views that they could trust."

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Rob Leone: My question is to the Premier. This whole ordeal started when we asked some simple questions in the estimates committee almost a year ago. We asked: How much does the cancellation of these two power plants cost? You gave no answer. We asked: Where in the government's estimates were these costs located? You gave no answer. We asked: Where in the budget were these costs located? Again, Mr. Speaker, they gave no answer.

Despite all the documents you've given us, we're only looking for two: How much did Oakville cost, and how much did the cancellation of Mississauga cost? Premier, will you provide these documents today, or will you continue to conceal the truth from the people of Ontario?

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

Mr. Rob Leone: I withdraw, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm happy to respond to the member opposite, and I'm happy to respond because I have done and we have done everything in our power to make sure that all the information is available, that all the questions that have been asked and continue to be asked are being answered.

We have asked the Auditor General to look into both of these situations. We've called for an expansion of the committee so that the committee could ask questions on the full range of issues, and I've agreed to appear at the committee.

Mr. Speaker, we have made it clear that we want the questions to be answered. I really would think that the member opposite, who was integrally involved in asking these questions initially, would see that there is an opportunity, and that opportunity is ongoing at the committee to get those questions answered.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rob Leone: Mr. Speaker, the opportunity to answer the questions I asked happened in May 2012 in the estimates committee, and we still don't have those answers.

Back to the Premier: David Livingston testified this morning that during his handling of the gas plant scandal at Infrastructure Ontario, there were many details of which he was not aware—important details. Mr. Livingston had no knowledge of the \$1.2-billion maximum settlement figure brought forth by that government. Mr. Livingston had no knowledge that an offer of \$712 million was made to TransCanada. Mr. Livingston also could not say for sure whether he took notes at meetings overseeing the cancellation of a billion-dollar power plant.

Mr. Speaker, this is a case of bureaucrats gone wild. I've never negotiated a billion-dollar power plant deal, but if I had, I probably would bring a legal pad and a few Bic pens.

Why was the man the people of Ontario trusted to oversee these political cancellations so unprepared for his responsibilities?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Again, Mr. Speaker, these drive-by smears are unacceptable. Mr. Livingston, Tiffany Turnbull—their witnesses. They called them before the committee, and under oath they answered questions to the best of their ability, and because they don't like the answers, they're taking it out on them. These people are deserving of our respect.

More importantly, I think it's time that we look again at the facts of the situation. We offered to provide them a government-wide deposit of documents on the gas plants, and they voted against it—a fact that was confirmed by the Chair this morning. We offered them a select committee on this matter, and instead they wanted to engage in a witch hunt on a former member of this Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, if there's transparency that's needed on this issue, it's from the Progressive Conservative Party.

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

Mr. Rob Leone: Mr. Speaker, the only reason why we have answers to any questions is because we continue to pursue these things in this House and in committee.

Fast forward to a year later: David Livingston, the chief of staff to Premier Dalton McGuinty, is now tasked with concealing the truth from Ontarians. He testified today that he was not shown the memorandum of understanding signed by that government. He said that the Premier's office was not shown the memorandum of understanding signed by that government. Are we to believe that the Premier of Ontario was not consulted on a \$800-million decision?

The current Premier stood in this House and said it only cost \$40 million. The former Premier told the Toronto Star that the total cost was \$40 million. Who allowed both Premiers to make mistakes, and why didn't anyone bother to pick up the memorandum of understanding, read it and tell them so?

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, we are talking about an individual, a fine public servant, who is now in the private sector, who appeared in committee this morning and answered questions under oath. I cannot help it that

their strategy is failing and that they are calling witness after witness after witness who does not support their position.

Again, let's review the facts. They opposed the gas plant. We came into power, we followed up with it, and they screamed bloody murder. We offered them a select committee, and instead they wanted a witch hunt against a private member. We offered to give them every document in government, and they voted against it.

Mr. Speaker, they have had more positions on the gas plant issue than the Kama Sutra over the past couple of months, and I think it's time that they came clear on their position in this matter.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. According to press reports, the Premier thinks it's time to talk about raising the \$100,000 income threshold for Ontario's so-called sunshine list of public sector workers.

The average Ontarian, earning around a third of that much, is interested in another conversation. They want the Premier to talk about the government's failure to cap CEO salaries. Is the Premier ready to talk about that?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I certainly have never said anything like what the leader of the opposition has noted. There are conversations about the nature of the sunshine list and the thresholds and so on. But what I have said is that people need to know what people are earning. They need to know the work that is being done for that money that is being earned.

I don't disagree that there does need to be a conversation about those upper limits and how we deal with those rates of pay, so I don't think anything that the leader of the opposition is saying is inconsistent—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: She's the leader of the third party.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Leader of the third party. Sorry; I apologize. The leader of the third party.

I don't think there's anything inconsistent about what she's saying with what I have said all along.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Last September, the former Minister of Finance said sky-high CEO compensation in the public sector was a problem and pledged "to bring ... overly generous compensation packages back to reality." That's a quote.

The government said they would cap CEO salaries at \$418,000 a year. Is the Premier going to take some action on this commitment, or is this just another conversation that leads us back to the same old status quo?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The leader of the third party is correct that we have identified this as an issue. It is still our policy that we do need to look at that, and we will take action. I think that it is a broader conversation about across-the-board CEO compensation, and I think that's what the leader of the third party is getting at.

We've been engaged in compensation restraint over the last couple of years, and we're seeing the results of

that. We're seeing that there are savings that have accrued to the government. That's how we've managed to reach our targets in terms of deficit reduction. It's a very important part of our fiscally responsible plan going forward.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The average single-parent family income in Ontario is \$38,000 a year. For them, \$100,000 is a lot of money, and \$500,000 is more than they'll earn in a decade. They're being told they have to wait for home care. They have to pay higher bills, they have to struggle just to find a job, and they see a Premier who seems to be completely out of touch.

When will this government get their priorities straight and keep their promise to put a cap on CEO salaries in the public sector?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I really believe that the leader of the third party is conflating a number of issues.

First of all, she's talking about the discrepancies in earning capacity of people in all sorts of endeavours. I am not going to disagree with her. I believe that there is extremely valuable work being done by people who are not being compensated well in the province. That is the reality. There are sectors where people are not compensated well, and the reality is that there are other sectors that, for whatever reason, society values in a different way, and they are being paid much higher salaries. That is a societal issue and I think it's something that all parties could talk about.

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But what we have done is we have made investments to improve the lot of people who are looking for home care, people who want their children to go to university and want it to be affordable—university and college. That's the work that we've been doing.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier. Yesterday, the government said that they support the goal of reducing auto insurance rates, but drivers are afraid that this is yet another example where we need a little more action and a little less conversation.

Is the government going to give this goal a mandate to reduce auto insurance rates by 15% in the coming year? That's my question.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I will just say what I have said before on this subject: This is an issue about which I've been concerned for a number of months—over a year. I had a round table in my own riding where we talked about high insurance premiums. I brought in the Insurance Bureau of Canada; I brought in the brokers' association. We had a very complete conversation about the issues.

During the leadership, I was one of the candidates who raised this issue early on. I had met with people in Mississauga, in Brampton, across the GTA, and I made it very clear that this was a priority.

Yesterday, we supported the opposition motion. We said that we were concerned about this issue and the principle underlying that motion: that premiums need to come down. We support that and we are going to take action.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, people are cynical about these promises because they've heard them over and over and over again. Two years ago, the government brought in reforms that put \$2 billion of savings into the bank accounts of the insurance industry, and rates in this province for drivers went up, not down. Now the government's saying that they want the rates to come down, but they won't tell us how they're going to get there.

Why should drivers believe anything the Premier is saying this time around?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Because we have demonstrated that we can bring auto insurance rates down. Starting in 2004, we took action; they went down 11%. And the member opposite is right: They have gone up again—which is why I agree with her that there's something that needs to be done.

We are going to take action. We believe that auto insurance rates should come down, which is why we supported the motion yesterday. We appreciate the principle underlying that motion; we're going to take action. I have said clearly in public and in our private meetings that I want to work with her on this one, and the Minister of Finance is exploring the options to get at the root causes so that we can see those premium rates go down.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: People in Ontario have to be insured. They must be insured if they're going to get behind the wheel. In fact, we require them to purchase this product. The government's job is to protect drivers and ensure that the prices are fair. Instead, Ontario drivers are paying the highest insurance rates in the entire country. They've made it clear to us and we've made it clear to the government: Enough conversation. It's time for lower rates in this province.

Is the government going to give FSCO a mandate to reduce rates by 15% in the coming year or is it not?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We're going to take action. We said we're going to take action.

I take the leader of the third party's point that there needs to be a relationship between the reductions in the industry and the premium reductions. That's exactly what the Minister of Finance is working on. We need to see those premium reductions, and we've done it before. We have made changes that brought reductions to premiums across the board in the province. We will do it again, and that's why we agree with the leader of the third party that action needs to be taken. We're going to do that.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Frank Klees: My question is to the Minister of Health. Yesterday, court documents were tabled in the

public accounts committee that show that the recently appointed chief operating officer of Ornge, Robert Giguere, evaded giving evidence in the bankruptcy proceedings of Skyservice Airlines. That was the airline where he was president from October 2007 until it collapsed under a pile of debt in March of 2010. The documents show that the legal firm representing the court-appointed receiver made numerous unsuccessful attempts to obtain evidence from Mr. Giguere. That evidence was related to money that was transferred from the general account of the company to another bank account prior to receivership.

Can the minister tell us: Was she aware of Mr. Giguere's involvement in these bankruptcy proceedings before he was hired, and of his disrespect for the process?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: It's disappointing to see that the member from Newmarket–Aurora continues to focus on discrediting hard-working people who are working to make Ornge even better. Ontario is well into a new chapter, and we're seeing the results that have come from the new leadership that is in place at Ornge. We have a new patient advocate. We have a conflict-of-interest protocol established. We have a new CEO. We have a new COO. We have a new board chair and we have an entirely new board member. We have a whistle-blower hotline that is now active. We've got salaries posted online. We have the new medical interiors. We've got the Thunder Bay improvement plan.

There is a lot of good news happening at Ornge, and I would think if anybody in this Legislature wanted to stand up and applaud the progress, it would be the member from Newmarket–Aurora.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: What is very disappointing about that response is that apparently one more time the minister has no idea what's going on or who her new COO is. The documents that were tabled at the public accounts committee include a notice of motion for substituted service. Why? Because her COO refused to give evidence and refused to appear when he was served. Counsel for the receiver made several unsuccessful attempts to contact Mr. Giguere, including email, telephone, letter and personal service of a summons, and he refused to even acknowledge. The other is a sworn affidavit in support of a motion that states that Mr. Giguere was warned that if he refuses to acknowledge he would be compelled to testify. The last witness who refused to testify and had to be compelled was Mr. Mazza.

Will the minister stand up and tell us whether she supports—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Minister of Health and Long-Term Care?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I think the people of Ontario might want to know who this Robert Giguere is, because he is an example of the kind of very high-calibre people who are coming to work at Ornge because they are committed to providing excellent care to people in their time of greatest need. Mr. Giguere is the former president and CEO of Skyservice Airlines. He previously served as the organization's COO and an account execu-

tive with Transport Canada. He held senior leadership positions at Air Canada, including executive vice-president of operations and senior vice-president of flight operations. He began his aviation career as a pilot with Air Canada in 1974. He currently holds both an airline transport pilot and flight engineer licence. His extensive aviation experience is well known. He is a highly regarded individual who should not be subject to this kind of smear.

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Premier. Today, the government's former lead negotiator on the Oakville gas plant and former chief of staff to the Premier of Ontario said that the treasury board would have reviewed the memorandum of understanding between TransCanada and the Ontario Power Authority, and the treasury board would have reported to the cabinet about that document that resolved that conflict.

How much did the treasury board tell the cabinet it would cost to settle the gas plant scandal?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: To the government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, the question of cost is something that's being looked at by the Auditor General, an officer of this Legislature. It's also something that's being looked at by the committee. Quite frankly, the committee's work would be a lot easier if they had voted for a government motion that was put forward—and confirmed today by the Chair that it was put forward and voted—on the fact that we were going to give a cross-government collection of documents to the committee that went far beyond anything that had ever been requested in the past, but to my shock—I think most members on this side of the House were left scratching their heads—that member and his colleagues put their hands up and voted against such a motion, which would have made the answer to many of the questions the committee is looking at much easier.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: That same lead negotiator and former chief of staff told the committee that he didn't know the history of the file when it was given to him, that he apparently didn't know the costs and wasn't briefed on them, and that he didn't cost the plans that he brought back. When he was chief of staff to the Premier, he never looked at the memorandum of understanding that settled the conflict with TransCanada Enterprises. So the lead negotiator and the Premier's chief of staff didn't know what was going on here. Who was in charge of protecting the public interest?

Hon. John Milloy: Again, let me quote from what Mr. Livingston told the standing committee on justice policy:

"Before I ran Infrastructure Ontario, I had a 30-year career in banking. Especially in my latter days in bank-

ing, I was mostly involved with the development of strategy and doing mergers and acquisitions work, so I had a fairly broad background in negotiating agreements between private sector companies. I think the way the government looked at that was that they had, in me and in people at Infrastructure Ontario, expertise in negotiating with the private sector that they felt was of use in trying to make sure that we get the best deal for the taxpayer.”

Mr. Livingston is now a private citizen. He came under oath and answered questions to the best of his ability. I understand the committee wants him back, and I think the sort of drive-by smears that we've been seeing here this morning are beneath the members of the opposition. Let's let the committee do its work.

TUITION

Mr. Grant Crack: My question is to the very thoughtful and considerate Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, students in my riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell know all about the importance of post-secondary education. As a result of Ontario's and our government's investment in education, we have one of the most highly skilled workforces in the country. Over a lifetime, those with college or university educations are much less likely to face unemployment and will earn hundreds of thousands of dollars more over the course of their careers. Post-secondary education is a path to participating in Ontario's job market. Tough financial times have affected everyone in this province, and many students have expressed their desire to continue with their education; however, many are concerned about the stability of the current tuition framework.

Speaker, through you, could the minister inform this House what the government is doing to help ensure that post-secondary education is affordable and accessible to—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I thank the long-winded member for the question.

Our government is absolutely committed to providing access to our world-class colleges and universities. That's why, earlier this morning, I was pleased to announce that our government introduced a new tuition framework. The new Ontario government is reducing increases to tuition for college and university students from 5% to 3%, which is an average of inflation plus 1%. That's a savings of about \$1,200 for your average undergraduate student over the course of the framework.

We'll be reforming the practice of deferral fees to make them fairer for students, and we'll be working with our post-secondary partners to address their concerns about flat fees. This new tuition policy strikes a balance: We're increasing fairness and affordability for students and their families while providing institutions with the long-term financial stability needed to provide the high-quality education that we're counting on them to provide

to our students. Our students will have access to high-quality education throughout this—

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

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you, Minister, for that comprehensive response. It's wonderful to hear that the new Ontario government is continuing to focus on providing better access to post-secondary education. I know that the students of my riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell will be pleased to hear about the new tuition framework.

Our post-secondary education system prepares students for the future. The Ontario economy rests on the shoulders of a strong, educated workforce, and I'm happy to see that this new tuition framework will help students keep our province moving forward. Providing the tools to achieve these goals is important with the students that I've spoken with.

What other ways is Ontario making post-secondary education more accessible to students, and can the minister please update this House on the financial assistance available to students in Ontario?

Hon. Brad Duguid: A very important supplementary. Ontario has one of the most robust student financial assistance programs in the entire country. We're ensuring that our students have access to higher education based on their ability to learn, not their ability to pay. Our government is continuing with its successful 30%-off tuition grant. This program is now benefiting over 230,000 low- and middle-income families across this province. For the 2013-14 year, that will translate, for students in university, to savings of \$1,730, and for students in college, savings of about \$790.

Mr. Speaker, more than 20 different provincial and federal grants, bursary and scholarship programs are available to Ontario post-secondary students. On top of all that financial assistance we provide our students, we continue to limit annual repayable debt to \$7,300.

I look forward to working with students and our post-secondary leaders as we work together to build a globally competitive post-secondary education—

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

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities as well. That's interesting: 5% to 3%, and yet you're hitting trades workers 676%. Very interesting. You've got to be proud of that one.

Minister, today in Ontario, we have a youth unemployment rate of 17%. Right here in the GTA, it is closer to 20%. That's 20% of youth between 16 and 24 who are unemployed. At the same time, we have a shortage of skilled workers in Canada that the federal government estimates at 260,000 people right today. Last year, the federal government filled this void by importing over 213,000 temporary workers.

Think, Minister. There's something wrong here. We are filling skilled jobs by importing workers while our youth hang out in the malls. We believe that training more apprentices by changing the ratios is key to creating more jobs in trades for the future. I know you are new and uneducated on this file—that's clear—and clearly care little—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you—time. The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Brad Duguid: That's okay, Mr. Speaker. I don't mind the insults. I'm happy to respond to the questions, because our priority on this side of the House is increasing apprenticeships across this province.

I actually want to commend the member for his interest in apprenticeships. I think his heart is in the right place. I think it's really important that we increase the number of opportunities for our young people to seek out apprenticeships, but let me tell you, there has been no greater champion of increasing the number of apprenticeships across this province than this government, so we welcome the member's support in our efforts to do that.

We have doubled the number of apprenticeships across the province from 60,000 to 120,000, and when it comes to ratios—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'll speak more to that in my supplementary.

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Your ignorance and denial on this file will not put our young people in Ontario into meaningful jobs. Instead, they will join the exodus of others to other provinces that are not catering to the demands of union business managers. Even your superhero Ron Johnson follows the predictions of the Conference Board of Canada and notes that Canada will be short some 360,000 skilled job workers within 12 years.

So my question to the minister is this: Minister, if you are so convinced that your archaic ratio system in Ontario is the best system, can you explain and tell us what is wrong with the Alberta, Saskatchewan and BC ratios, where our young people are going for training and jobs?

Hon. Brad Duguid: It's one thing to personally insult the members on the other side of the House, and it's one thing to personally insult one of his former colleagues in this Legislature, a PC member who is working very hard on behalf of the skilled trades across this province. That may be his approach; our approach is to work with people.

I've got to tell you, the member really ought to get his facts straight, because when it comes to reducing ratios, the College of Trades has already reduced ratios on six different occasions. Do you know how many times, when the PCs were in office, they reduced ratios? Zero, Mr. Speaker—zero. So the member ought to get a little bit of history on his own party, and maybe he should then start with apologizing for the actions of his own party.

We're very excited about the opportunities to grow the skilled trades. We're very excited about the opportunities

we're creating for apprentices across this province. We're going to work with the skilled trades—

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

New question.

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GAMING POLICY

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, Paul Godfrey said that the OLG plans to provide the government with a new municipal funding formula in April. So the government doesn't even have a real plan on casinos but yet is moving full steam ahead as if it did, while keeping Ontarians in the dark, pushing casinos on communities that don't want them, without giving Ontarians a chance to express their views.

Premier, during this afternoon's debate on my motion, will this government come clean with Ontarians and agree to allow communities to have a real say on whether they want casinos in their communities after they've been given the full picture?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, it's actually hard to know where to start with this question because we've been so clear that communities have the authority to determine whether they want to have a casino or not. We have said over and over again that neither the government nor the OLG is going to force a community to take a casino; that councils are going to decide. Councils are going to decide how they want to consult with their communities. They can have a referendum. They can do other kinds of consultations. They can—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That was quick. The Attorney General is not helping by talking while your Premier is answering, nor is the member from Leeds-Grenville, who is not sitting in his seat. Then I could tell him to stop again.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'll just end by saying that one of the reasons I am standing here today is because I believe in the local democratic process. I fought against the amalgamation of cities across the province, Mr. Speaker, and I believe that communities should have autonomy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: On one hand, this government claims that the Slots at Racetracks Program funds were being misused. On the other hand, the OLG is making contracts that are not open to public scrutiny at all.

Government forced the horse racing industry to take secret transitional funding deals, pending an impending deadline at the end of March. Further, the OLG has negotiated contracts to lease space for slot machines from racetracks, which—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean-Carleton will withdraw.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'll withdraw, but he's a hypocrite.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's not the process. The member will withdraw.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'll withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Please complete.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Further, the OLG has negotiated contracts to lease space for slot machines from racetracks, which are also not open for public review.

Will the Premier explain to Ontarians why the government is pushing secret deals on the horse racing industry, endangering thousands of rural jobs?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, we are working very hard to make sure that there's a sustainable horse racing industry in the province. That's the objective.

The panel that was put in place looked at the previous situation and said that the SARP program was unaccountable, that it was not transparent, that the industry was fractious, and that it had lost its focus on the customer. I'm sure that's not what the member is interested in supporting. I'm sure that he would rather see a sustainable industry. That's what we're working on.

The fact is that there are now nine racetracks that have a transitional agreement—nine out of 17. I think that is a very good number. That's more than half, Mr. Speaker. The negotiations go on, and, yes, they are confidential negotiations. By nature, by definition, the negotiations are confidential.

The horse racing industry will be sustainable. It will be smaller, but it will be sustainable.

GO TRANSIT

Ms. Dipika Damerla: My question is to the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation. Like many Mississaugans, I often take the GO train to come to work. I take the GO train because it's fast, it's convenient and it's green. I even get some work done. Sometimes I catch up with friends, including fellow MPPs. Not only is the GO train important to me personally, but it's important to all of the residents of Mississauga, when you consider the fact that what the GO train really does is it connects Ontario's third-largest city, Mississauga, to Ontario's largest city, Toronto. So it's no surprise that I follow this file very, very closely.

I recently noticed that Metrolinx is looking at buying some tracks from CN. Minister, could you tell us what this means for GO commuters across the GTA?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to thank the member from Mississauga East—Cooksville, because she's doing a great job on behalf of her constituents. I've got seven critics in the opposition—seven; I'm a make-work project for the opposition—and it takes my own member to ask me a transit question, because they won't.

We are actually investing in \$52.5 million worth of track, which is another 13.2 kilometres between Oakville and Burlington. One of the reasons we're doing that is because of members from Oakville and from Mississauga

who have really championed this. Owning this track for the next 100 years will improve travel time and help working families get to work and get home. We're now working towards two-way service.

This government is more committed to transit and transportation infrastructure than any other in about 50 years in this province, and we're pretty proud of that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Thank you for that update, Minister, and I look forward to the commute getting even smoother, now that we have more tracks. My understanding is that passengers are going to get priority over freight.

My other question, Minister, is this: Mississauga is one of the fastest-growing cities, and it's really growing along the Milton GO corridor, so I wanted to know what we are doing to introduce all-day, full-day GO service on the Milton line.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Anyone who rides GO service, whether they're going out to Kitchener-Waterloo or out to Aldershot, will see massive construction going on, on all of those lines. Why is that happening? Because we are building the capacity for greater express trains, for two-way service. We are now moving to two-way all-day service on all seven GO lines and also, obviously, on the Lakeshore service.

This costs money. We've already put over \$16.1 billion in public transit, including more than \$7.7 billion into GO.

There are members opposite who say that we can't have new revenue tools, that somehow we can't afford that. Some \$6 billion is coming out of our economy in the GTA—and that's coming out of working families' income. It is about young people who don't get jobs because of that \$6 billion, and it is lost investment.

There is nothing more expensive to the taxpayers of Ontario than inaction and a lack of investment. We stand for working families—

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

TAXATION

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is for the Premier. Premier, your predecessor, who graced us with his presence yesterday for the first time since prorogation, sliced and diced the Taxpayer Protection Act every time he felt like raising taxes or introducing a new tax, which he did often. But at least when the member for Ottawa South was Premier, he had gone to the electorate and was given a mandate, even though keeping his promises was not his strong suit.

Premier, the people of Ontario haven't given you a mandate. You've been selected, not elected. Will you show the voters of Ontario respect by supporting legislation to strengthen the Taxpayer Protection Act and realize that you need to have a conversation with the people of Ontario before you raise new taxes or find new revenue tools?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm going to dig down into that question and assume that the concern from the member is that we might actually commit to building transit in the province of Ontario over the next decade. I think that's actually what the member is getting at.

I had the privilege of serving as Minister of Transportation for a couple of years. It was very clear to me that the infrastructure deficit across this province is manifested in a couple of ways. One is that we have not had enough transit built in our urban centres across the province for at least 25 years. Secondly, the municipal infrastructure—our roads and our bridges across the province, of which there are 13,000—needs attention. We need to make sure that there is dedicated funding for that infrastructure in our urban centres and in our rural and small-town communities.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Back to the Premier: Premier, we learned long ago that you ought not to make assumptions. But, Premier, that's not a real conversation with me or the people of Ontario. It's not real democracy either. That's just lip service.

1120

I hear from constituents from my riding and from across the province that they can't afford another Liberal-NDP tax hike. I hear from my constituents who are moving west to escape the economic failure of your new government. A conversation is a two-way street. You've been doing a lot of talking; it's time to actually start listening.

Premier, I know champagne socialism is your drink of choice when you meet with your member from Hamilton Centre, but it's time for both of you to stand up, put down your mimosas and help protect hard-working people of this province from another tax grab and strengthen the Taxpayer Protection Act.

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, drawing on my capacity as a former teacher of English as a second language, I'm going to give an A to that question for creativity. Me with a mimosa? I don't know. I'm not so sure.

We are committed to bringing in a budget that acknowledges the needs of this province, that acknowledges that being fiscally responsible is absolutely essential if we are going to be able to continue to provide the services that people in this province need: education and health care, and investment in infrastructure, because I would say that infrastructure is one of the fundamental conditions for economic growth. I would expect that the member opposite, given the rural and vast riding that he represents, would actually be supportive of us making sure that infrastructure is in place for all of his constituents so that goods can move, so that they can get to work, so that their infrastructure is maintained—

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

TUITION

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. We know that Ontario students are paying the highest tuition fees in the country while receiving the least per-student investment from this government. Today, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities announced a new tuition framework that will once again see our colleges and university students watch their tuition fees increase by 3% to 5% every year for the next four years.

Can the minister explain how increasing fees will help the youth of this province afford the education they need?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I was very pleased this morning to be able to announce that, indeed, we'll be lowering the burden on students on future tuition increases from what would have been 5% under the current framework to 3% on average. Mr. Speaker, that will be a savings of about \$1,200 over the course of the framework to those very students.

I'll welcome the member's support as well for the 30%-off tuition grant, which benefits students right across this province—low- and middle-income students. We're now up to 240,000 students across Ontario that are benefiting from this grant.

Mr. Speaker, we've been listening very carefully to the concerns of students across this province, and we're responding very robustly to ensure that not only are we reducing the burden on students; we're also ensuring that we maintain the quality of our post-secondary-education system, which is just as important.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: The government continues to ignore the rising costs of tuition as a barrier to post-secondary education. Under their watch, the Liberals have allowed tuition fees to increase by more than 70% in Ontario.

According to the Bank of Montreal report in the Toronto Star, a child born in Canada today could pay more than \$140,000 for a four-year university degree. The people of London, who are facing a 9.2% unemployment rate, can ill afford those costs.

Can the minister explain why Ontario students and their families should continue to pay the highest tuition fees in the country and continue this cycle of debt?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'm pleased to talk about accessibility to our post-secondary-education system. We've increased the number of students in our post-secondary education system by 160,000 students since we've been in office. There's no country in the English-speaking world that has done a better job of increasing the participation rate in post-secondary education than we have.

Mr. Speaker, we're not satisfied with that. We think we can do even more. We're the best almost in the world when it comes to that. We think we can do even more. That's why we moved today to adjust our tuition framework, going forward, to provide up to \$1,200 in savings for your average undergraduate student over the course

of the next four years. That's why we remain committed to our 30%-off tuition grant.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to get this job done, working with our post-secondary partners to ensure we're providing the best-quality education at affordable costs.

IMMIGRANT SERVICES

Ms. Soo Wong: My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

My riding of Scarborough–Agincourt is the home of many new Ontarians. They make significant social, cultural and economic contributions to the community and to our province.

However, some of the newcomers are faced with the challenge of not speaking either English or French as their first language. I've seen firsthand the challenges of newcomers when they come to our province. In our society, the ability to speak, write, read and comprehend a language is critical for success. Newcomers know this better than anyone else, and it's these language skills that are the foundation for success in Ontario's communities, schools and workplaces.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration: What is the government doing to support newcomers in acquiring language skills?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'd like to thank the member from Scarborough–Agincourt for her question. From my work with her at the Toronto District School Board and here in the House, I know that she's a tireless advocate for newcomers in our community. Thank you so much.

When newcomers integrate successfully into our community, every person benefits. That's why this year we're investing close to \$67 million into tuition-free adult language programs. Our programs will help over 120,000 people here in this province learn English or French. It makes it easier for newcomers to learn the languages they need to be successful in their jobs.

Mr. Speaker, since 2003, this government has invested more than \$900 million into programs and services that help newcomers get the language program services that they need and to ensure that they're ready to work here in the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Soo Wong: Thank you to the minister for that overview of the ministry's work in terms of helping newcomers in their communities.

In my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt, we are fortunate to have several agencies that provide language training. They include the Centre for Information and Community Services, which provides over 20 language programs for newcomers, and a riding association called the Agincourt Community Services Association, which holds weekly conversational classes for newcomers. My constituents continue to tell me that language training programs are making a difference.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: What is the ministry doing to provide improved language training programs to a community like Scarborough–Agincourt?

Hon. Michael Coteau: The member is absolutely right. We are seeing great results from Ontario language training programs.

A number of changes to the adult language training programs are in progress to ensure that programs deliver the language training newcomers need. These changes will help ensure that programs are learner-focused and results-based. They will also improve the coordination between the federal and provincial government language training programs to address any gaps that may exist. For example, we expanded the eligibility of the programs to help more people get access to them, and we introduced instructor standards to ensure newcomers get quality instruction.

Our government remains committed to ensuring that programs continue to grow and evolve to meet the needs of Ontario's newcomers. Mr. Speaker, we know that when newcomers succeed, Ontario succeeds.

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Mr. Monte McNaughton: My question today is for the Premier. Premier, just over one year ago your government decided to wager 60,000 jobs when your party and the NDP joined forces to cancel the successful slots-at-racetracks partnership. We know that this wasn't entirely the Liberals' doing. It took the support and endorsement of the NDP caucus to allow your budget to pass and the death sentence to be imposed on families, horses and indeed the entire horse racing industry.

Premier, with no races currently scheduled for the upcoming season and eight tracks without a deal for 2013, do you have any sort of plan for the thousands and thousands of men and women who will now be unemployed as of Tuesday morning?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Actually, there is going to be a season. There are transition agreements with nine tracks. There will be racing at those tracks.

Mr. Speaker, my predecessor appointed a panel: John Snobelen, Elmer Buchanan, John Wilkinson. They looked at the situation. What they said was that the SARP program was unaccountable, was not transparent, and it had created a fractious industry and an industry that had lost focus on the customer. I don't believe that the member opposite thinks that that kind of industry and program should have been—

Interjections.

1130

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's enough. Stop the clock, please. Now, when I sit down—let it finish.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's—hold off. Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Based on the report that that group of people brought forward, we have a plan. The plan is working. Over half the racetracks in the province have got agreements for a transition—

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

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Back to the Premier: Premier, over one year ago, the Liberals, working together with the NDP, united to pass your budget, killing the slots-at-racetracks partnership and risking the livelihoods of 60,000 men and women. On the contrary, Tim Hudak and the Ontario PCs are the only party to have put forward a comprehensive plan to grow and develop Ontario's horse racing industry, including cancelling the OLG's plan to abandon racetrack slots and scrapping your plans to build 29 new casinos across the province of Ontario.

Premier, on Tuesday, thousands of Ontario workers will be out of a job courtesy of the Liberals and your NDP friends. Since your party and the NDP caused this problem, do you have a plan for these people? If so, let us know today.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It's very interesting; it was not our government that put an unaccountable, un-transparent, fractious program in place. It was the party opposite—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm not stopping the clock.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It was the party opposite, and what we did was, we pulled together a group of people—John Snobelen, John Wilkinson and Elmer Buchanan—and they've given us recommendations. We're going to move forward with those recommendations. Over half the tracks have got agreements, and on the issue of who we're willing to work with: We'd be happy to work with the party opposite. They didn't read the budget before they rejected it; they didn't read the throne speech before they rejected it. They haven't read our budget and they've already rejected it. It's pretty hard to work with people who don't want to work with you.

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the Premier. The federal government has stated its intention to repeal the law that regulates packaged food sizes sold in Canada, paving the way for foreign producers to take over the Canadian market, which will lead to Ontario jobs being lost; it's Conservatives cutting red tape. The Bonduelle plant in Tecumseh, the Heinz plant in Leamington and the Sun-Brite cannery in Kingsville are under threat of closure. What has the Premier and Minister of Agriculture done to stop the closure of food packaging plants and the loss of jobs in Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I appreciate the question from the member opposite, who is my critic. We had a chance to talk about this issue, and the issues that he has raised are exactly why, in my first conversation with federal Agriculture Minister Ritz, I raised this issue. I raised our concern about the changes—the packaging concerns—and I talked to him about the need for some mitigation and some planning around this, because it's very important to me that when we talk about agri-food and we talk about the \$34 billion that the agri-food

industry contributes to our GDP, that we're talking about processing as well.

Those container issues are very, very important to that industry, so I've raised it with the federal government. I will continue to make it a priority, and I hope that the federal government will work with us on it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. John Vanthof: My supplementary is, once again, to the Premier. If these plants are forced to close, not only will the processing jobs be lost, but the farmers who supply these plants with safe, healthy Ontario products will lose their market. Since introducing the Local Food Act, the Premier has spent a lot of time talking about increasing access to Ontario's produce. If the federal government goes ahead with its plan, what is the Ontario government going to do to protect the local food that we have access to now?

Premier, are you going to act to save our Heinz ketchup?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I said, these are changes that could be made at the federal level, which is why I raised it as a top priority with the federal minister. We're also working with the University of Windsor to develop a study of the comprehensive impact of these changes, because it's really important to us that we're able to articulate exactly what the changes would be.

But I have to reiterate: The federal government is going to need to work with us on us on this. That's why I raised it with Minister Ritz and I will continue to raise it with him: because I agree with the member opposite that the food processing industry is a very, very important part of the agri-food industry at large. And so we want to make sure that those industries can—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —that they can survive and they can grow. So I'll continue to raise it with the federal minister. and my hope is that we'll see some mitigation of the issue.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I just have one comment to make, and that is I would like to acknowledge that I did not have to offer any help to the member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek today. Thank you very much for that.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1136 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Robert Bailey: I take great pleasure this afternoon to introduce members in attendance today from the Quarter Racing Owners of Ontario, in the persons of Bob Broadstock, Rik Hudson, Kim Ito, Don Reid, Barb Graham, Belinda Taggart, Gayle Sommer, Carol McIntyre, Samantha Manuel, Gail Woodward, Betty Graham and Lisa Kalvoda. I'd ask the members to give them a warm welcome today.

Hon. Michael Coteau: It's my pleasure to welcome Bishop Christoforos to the Legislature today. He has been serving the community since 1999.

I'd also like to welcome the consul general here in Toronto for the Greek community on this special day, Greek Independence Day.

Mr. Randy Hillier: It's my pleasure to welcome and introduce a good friend and great roofer in Ontario: Gordon Sproule is joining us here in the House today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I need a quote. Further introduction of guests?

It's now time for statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

AUTISM

Mrs. Jane McKenna: Every April 2, the United Nations marks World Autism Awareness Day, a day to boost awareness around all those living with autism spectrum disorders.

Autism is a universe we are still exploring, and that universe is growing. Occurrence rates have grown almost 80% since this awareness day began six years ago. Autism currently affects roughly one in 90 children and is more common in boys, who are four times more likely than girls to have autism.

Caring intervention can make a huge difference, so I would like to salute the work of dedicated individuals like Marg Spoelstra at Autism Ontario and compassionate experts at agencies like Burlington's ROCK and Woodview. Their work changes lives.

I would also like to acknowledge the advocacy of constituents like Andrea Kovacs, the mother of an adult son living with autism.

Ignorance of autism spectrum disorders can be more limiting than the conditions themselves. This April 2 is the first time the federal government has officially recognized World Autism Awareness Day.

Autism Ontario is sending all of the provinces and municipalities the World Autism Awareness Day flag, to be raised to help raise awareness and encourage support. We all have a role to play.

SOLAR ENERGY

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I've met with a number of people in the solar energy sector this past month who've told me they're looking at job losses starting as soon as next week.

SolSmart, in my riding, employs 20 people, and they will have exhausted their microFIT allocation very shortly, as will have many others. They're looking at substantial job losses.

The Liberals promised jobs and business opportunities when they brought in the Green Energy Act. People invested money and time in the belief that Ontario was opening the doors to a 21st-century industry. Instead,

what many are now seeing are losses—job losses and business losses.

Solar Power Network, which has been developing solar installations with First Nations bands and municipalities, notes that the application for solar contracts is four times the contracts available. If the capacity limit is not raised, there will be severe damage to Ontario's small business owners and to manufacturing employers.

A failure to nurture and sustain our solar energy industry will damage many people and will damage Ontario's prospects for developing new industry. The Premier and the Minister of Energy must act.

PRIX CIVIQUES

M. Grant Crack: J'étais tellement fier d'assister samedi soir au Banquet de la francophonie de l'Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario—l'ACFO—de Prescott et Russell, à la présentation du Prix jeunesse Thomas-Godefroy, et l'Ordre de la francophonie de Prescott et Russell à six résidents de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

Mélanie Brulotte et Andréanne Marcotte se sont méritées le Prix jeunesse Thomas-Godefroy. Les vainqueurs du prix de l'Ordre de la francophonie de Prescott et Russell sont Louise Bédard, Gilles Blache et Daniel-Pierre Bourdeau, ainsi que le chef de police de Hawkesbury, Bryan MacKillop.

En 1999, l'ACFO créa l'Ordre de la francophonie de Prescott et Russell afin de reconnaître des individus émérites qui ont largement contribué à la promotion et à la défense de la langue française ici ou ailleurs. Cet honneur est venu combler un grand besoin dans la communauté puisque aucune reconnaissance de ce genre n'existait.

Chaque année, à l'automne, l'ACFO Prescott-Russell invite la population à soumettre à un comité de sélection indépendant des noms de personnes aptes à être considérées pour être admises à l'Ordre. Les lauréats sont admis à l'Ordre lors du Banquet de la francophonie de Prescott et Russell en mars.

Depuis 1999, 87 récipiendaires de notre région ont reçu cet honneur, et après le banquet de samedi dernier, le nombre s'élève maintenant à 91.

Félicitations à tous les honorés.

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: One year ago, the Liberal government abruptly cancelled the Slots at Racetracks Program. While the Liberals abandoned the horse racing industry, the Ontario PC caucus stood with them, working with them in holding the government to account.

The Liberals cancelled the program in their 2012 budget, but they needed help to pass that budget which so devastated the horse racing industry. Luckily for the Liberals, there was a white knight riding to the rescue. Actually, you might say it was a knight in shining orange armour, because when it really counted, the Liberals

could count on the NDP. But the horse racing industry wasn't so lucky. When they needed them most, the NDP sat on their hands.

Now, a year later, it appears that the NDP have realized the error of their ways. We are pleased to see that the member for Essex will come forward with a motion to address the crisis in horse racing. I intend to support that motion. But let's not kid ourselves: If that member and his party had voted against the 2012 Liberal budget, had they followed the lead of the Ontario PC caucus, there would be no need for a motion today. The horses are already out of the barn, as the saying goes, and that member is just now trying to close the gate.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Ms. Sarah Campbell: For decades, public libraries have been an important part of the lives of people in northwestern Ontario. Rather than being made obsolete by new technologies, the importance of these institutions has increased in recent years. Increasingly, libraries in the north are becoming the sole place where people can access Ontario government services, as ServiceOntario centres have experienced slashed hours in many communities and travel information centres have been closed.

Despite their important role, provincial funding for libraries has been frozen following significant cuts to the provincial grant system in 1997, and there has not been a funding formula that addressed the much higher cost of providing these services in the north. What's especially alarming is the fact that not every resident of Ontario has access to free public libraries, as residents of unorganized townships, located primarily in the north, have to purchase expensive subscriptions to have access to their nearest library.

But we can't fault the libraries, which rely on municipalities for almost all of their funding. With municipalities facing budget shortfalls of their own, many public libraries in the north are facing cuts, even potential closures, as a result of the province's failure to recognize their importance. That's why I'm calling on the government today to consult with librarians across the province and to develop a provincial strategy that will enable libraries to continue to thrive right across this province.

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Page Dasha Metropolitan-sky and I just had lunch today, and we're pretty proud because we're both from Oakville.

It's a pleasure to stand today and congratulate James Hinchcliffe from my riding of Oakville on his first career IndyCar Series victory this past weekend in St. Petersburg, Florida. Hinchcliffe, who was racing for Andretti Autosport, captured the checkered flag and became the first Canadian to win a race since Paul Tracy did in 2007.

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The self-proclaimed Mayor of Hinchtown is poised to become IndyCar's next star. He has improved from 12th

overall in his rookie season to eighth last year, while also being named IndyCar's most popular driver. Members will likely remember his face being plastered all over billboards all around Queen's Park last year.

Hinchcliffe is a graduate of Oakville Trafalgar High School. He's always proud to talk about his hometown and his country and displayed that pride Sunday when he waved the Canadian flag shortly after victory. He has often referred to the successful history of the racing tradition in Canada as an inspiration, and he recognized past Canadian winners like Tracy, Goodyear, Villeneuve, Carpentier and his sports idol growing up, Greg Moore, for their contribution to his success.

Hinchcliffe is now adding to that successful history on his way to becoming racing's next star, and I think he deserves the admiration of all of us at Queen's Park here today.

MENTAL HEALTH

Mr. Michael Harris: On behalf of the Ontario PC caucus, I would like to congratulate the students and staff at Wilfred Laurier University for their leadership and innovation in planning the campaign Love My Life: A Walk for Mental Health.

The event on Thursday, March 14, was designed to create a campus dialogue about mental health in Ontario, which raised funds for the Beautiful Minds program at the Grand River branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association. Students walked from noon to midnight, talking about their experiences with mental illness. The highlight of the event was the outdoor Zumba class, which got everybody up, moving and dancing together. This type of leadership to raise awareness about mental health is great to see in the student community.

In the PC white paper A Healthier Ontario, one of the paths recommends treating mental health equal to physical health, and that the myths surrounding it should be brought to light. Tracey Weiler, one of the participants, said, "[T]he group was energized and excited about their role in promoting conversations on mental health at the school." Tracey was pleased to accompany them, listen to their experiences and share her own story about having a child with mental health issues.

Again, I want to commend the students and staff at Laurier for encouraging an open dialogue about the illness that affects almost one in five young Canadians.

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Scarborough Southwest on a point of order.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I ask for unanimous consent to recognize the flag of the country of Greece on this day, being Greek Independence Day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member wants to hold a flag? It would be considered a prop, so he's looking for unanimous consent to hold a Greek flag to avoid it being classified a prop. All agreed? Agreed.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll just show it briefly: This is the flag of the country of Greece.

This year on March 25, Hellenes around the world celebrated the 192nd anniversary of the independence of Greece. March 25 is observed both as a national and religious day of celebration for Greeks. It is a national holiday commemorating Greece's war of independence from centuries of Ottoman rule, and it is also considered one of the holiest days for Greek Orthodox Christians celebrating the Annunciation of the Theotokos.

Greece's desire for self-determination was fuelled by Greeks who chose to follow in the tradition of self-government enshrined in ancient Greece, the world's first democracy. Thousands of years of culture and history have since embodied the modern state of Greece.

The Greek community here in Ontario has thrived for over 100 years, contributing immensely to the political, economic and social fabric of our province. Be it in business or in academia, Greeks have always played an important role in shaping our province's civic and cultural institutions.

Today at Queen's Park, I had the honour of participating in the Greek flag-raising ceremony. We celebrated Greece's rich history and modern statehood. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge several distinguished guests from the Greek community who are here with us this afternoon: Consul General of Greece Dimitris Azemopoulos; Andonis Artemakis, the president of the Greek Community of Toronto; Hermes Iordanous, vice-president of the Greek Community of Toronto; Bishop Christoforos of the Greek Orthodox Church; and visitors from Athens, Greece, who sang the Greek national anthem earlier at the flag-raising this afternoon: Dimitris Kokotas, Grigoris Bithikotsis, Haris Varthakouris and Stelios Dionysiou.

Mr. Speaker, using my best Greek possible, Zito É Ellas, Zito to Ontario and Zito O Kanadas.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I was a little patient with that because of the names.

The member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington.

CANADIAN CONSTITUTION

Mr. Randy Hillier: Tomorrow is an interesting and significant day in the constitutional history of Canada. By happenstance, both the British North America Act and the Canada Act received royal assent on March 29. This March 29 is the 146th anniversary of the royal assent of the BNA Act and the 31st anniversary of the Canada Act.

Unfortunately, many Canadians are not well-informed when it comes to our Constitution and our history. While our Constitution and our charter aren't perfect, they are the highest law in our land. They are the only laws that restrain government.

I recently came across an Ontario high school entry exam from 1925, which required grade 8 students to know the provisions of the BNA Act. It amazes me yet

disappoints me how little knowledge many have of these significant pieces of our country's history.

That's why today I'll be tabling a bill to commemorate and proclaim March 29 of each year as Constitution Day here in the province of Ontario and hopefully raise the knowledge of people to that of what we expected of grade 8 students in 1925.

VISITOR

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Point of order, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Yes, the member has a point of order from—

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Speaker, I'd like the opportunity to recognize somebody in the members' gallery. I didn't get a chance earlier, so with your permission, I'd like to do that. That would be Mr. Kostiuk. He's the father of page Emily Kostiuk. I especially want to recognize him because this is his second attempt at trying to come in and see his daughter at work. The first time it didn't quite work out because the session had adjourned.

Welcome here, Mr. Kostiuk.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We welcome all visitors.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

PUBLIC SECTOR CAPACITY TO PAY ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LA CAPACITÉ DE PAYER DU SECTEUR PUBLIC

Mr. Wilson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 44, An Act to deal with arbitration in the public sector / Projet de loi 44, Loi traitant de l'arbitrage dans le secteur public.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Jim Wilson: Since the bill is 67 pages long, and the explanatory note is two pages long, I hope you will give me some leeway in my explanation here.

The Public Sector Capacity to Pay Act, 2013, amends 11 other pieces of legislation that deal with interest arbitration in the public sector. The capacity to pay act, which is the short title of the bill, also creates several innovative elements that are based upon the recommendations of Don Drummond and his commission.

In the interest of brevity, I will summarize the core elements of the capacity to pay act, which introduces the following innovations:

- a roster of qualified, preapproved arbitrators and a fair, impartial process to appoint arbitrators to the roster;

- the elimination of boards of arbitration and moves to a single-arbitrator model;

—a new requirement for pre-arbitration hearings and full disclosure of all the issues.

The act also introduces new detailed and revised capacity-to-pay criteria for arbitrators to consider, which includes local economic indicators and arbitration deliberations based upon a no-tax-increase capacity-to-pay assumption.

The bill shortens timelines for decisions, capping arbitration decisions at nine months. The act also requires mandatory written reasons when arbitrators render a decision.

Finally, a new division is created at the Ministry of Finance, using existing resources, to monitor and report on arbitration decisions and the cost impacts to communities and the province of Ontario.

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I look forward to the debate on this bill.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Just a note: I thank the member for acknowledging two things, and I appreciate them. One is, you normally take the explanation as your short statement, which he has acknowledged. The second thing is, because it was long, he shortened it. I would use that as an example for all members. Thank you very much.

CONSTITUTION DAY ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LE JOUR DE LA CONSTITUTION

Mr. Hillier moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 45, An Act to proclaim Constitution Day / Projet de loi 45, Loi proclamant le Jour de la Constitution.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: Speaker, the Constitution of Canada is the supreme law of Canada and Ontario. The Constitution is an amalgamation of codified acts and uncodified traditions and conventions, which outlines Canada's system of government and protects the civil rights of Canadians.

The Canada Act, 1982, was Canada's final step in becoming an independent democratic country. The act repatriated Canada's Constitution, meaning that the British Parliament was no longer required to make amendments to the Constitution.

This bill proclaims March 29 in each year as Constitution Day.

SAFE ROUNDABOUTS ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ DES CARREFOURS GIRATOIRES

Mr. Harris moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 46, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to provide for rules for the use of roundabouts / Projet de loi

46, Loi modifiant le Code de la route pour prévoir des règles régissant l'utilisation des carrefours giratoires.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Michael Harris: Today I table the Safe Roundabouts Act, which would enable the Minister of Transportation to make regulations establishing province-wide rules for roundabouts. This bill seeks to establish consistent guidelines to ensure that drivers are able to apply the same rules of the road when manoeuvring through a roundabout, whether it's in Ottawa or the region of Waterloo.

Before making any regulations, however, the bill requires the minister to conduct a study about the safe use of roundabouts, as well as consult with members of the public.

Finally, the minister is required to table a progress report in the Legislative Assembly every year until a regulation is made.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon. John Milloy: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Milloy is seeking unanimous consent to put a motion without notice. Agreed? Agreed.

Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be authorized to meet on the afternoon of Wednesday, April 10, 2013, for the purpose of adjourning to the Ornge offices in Mississauga.

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

Motion agreed to.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. John Milloy: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put a motion before us. Agreed? Agreed.

Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot items 15 and 17 be waived.

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

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES DAY

Hon. David Zimmer: I rise in the Legislature today to acknowledge that the 31st of March is National Aboriginal Languages Day.

There are more than 60 aboriginal languages spoken across Canada. However, linguists consider only three—Cree, Ojibway and Inuktitut—to be safe from extinction.

National Aboriginal Languages Day was established by the Assembly of First Nations in 1989 to raise awareness about the languages of aboriginal peoples and to build support for their preservation.

Aboriginal languages are significant to our country's heritage. The name Canada comes from “kanata,” the Ojibway word for village. Ontario stems from a Huron word, Onatari:io, which means beautiful lake.

Languages carry with them the spirit, the history and philosophy of a people, and they transmit their culture to future generations. The revival and preservation of aboriginal languages is not only important for First Nations, Inuit and Métis, but for all the people of Ontario.

Allison Zakal, the coordinator of the Uqausivut Culture and Language Program at the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre, states, “Language really is the window into culture. When people understand a language, they can understand the culture.”

I'm inspired by the story of Charlotte Carleton, who has been taking Inuktitut classes at the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre since 2011. Ms. Carleton is an Inuk and has lived her entire life in Ottawa. Although she has been surrounded by Inuktitut speakers since she was a toddler, she was unable to speak the language herself. Learning to speak the language enabled Ms. Carleton to tell her grandmother, who did not speak English, that she loved her, just before her grandmother passed away.

As Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, it is exciting to know that there are opportunities across the province to learn aboriginal languages. For example, the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto offers Cree and Ojibway classes. In Brantford—your riding, Speaker—the Woodland Cultural Centre offers classes in Cayuga. In northern Ontario, the Kenora Métis Council is helping to preserve and revitalize Michif, the language of the Métis people.

The government of Ontario is supporting the preservation and revitalization of aboriginal languages in Ontario. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs has provided funding to support language conferences run by aboriginal organizations, and we have provided funding to the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre to support early language skills and to provide cultural literacy activities for youth.

The Ministry of Education also plays an important role here. It provides funding for language programs for aboriginal students, as well as the professional development

of aboriginal language teachers. In addition, Ontario's curriculum offers studies in seven First Nations languages: Cayuga, Cree, Delaware, Mohawk, Ojibway, Oji-Cree and Oneida, and it is available to all students who want to learn an aboriginal language.

Last year, nearly 6,000 elementary and secondary students were enrolled in aboriginal language programs and courses in our Ontario public schools. This includes students at the First Nations School of Toronto and the Bala Avenue Community School in the community of Weston who are taking Ojibway classes.

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Language plays an important role in the health, strength and vitality of aboriginal communities. On National Aboriginal Languages Day, our government joins with First Nations, Inuit and Métis in recognizing the efforts of individuals and organizations to revive and preserve aboriginal languages.

By supporting language preservation, we are assisting aboriginal peoples in strengthening cultures and traditions that are a part of the very foundation and future of Canada and Ontario. As Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, I encourage all people of Ontario to spend some time on National Aboriginal Languages Day to learn a few words of an aboriginal language.

Thank you. Meegwetch. Nia:wen. Marsé.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's now time for responses.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: As mentioned, March 31 is National Aboriginal Languages Day, which was established by the Assembly of First Nations in 1989 to create awareness across Canada of the languages of First Nations people and to build support for preservation of their communities.

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples stated that the revitalization of traditional language is a key component in the creation of healthy individuals and communities. Language is not only a means of communication but also connects people with their past and grounds their social, emotional and spiritual vitality.

Speaker, I just want to mention a great Canadian, an individual who was the chief of police in Thunder Bay—he was in policing for 33 years—and my father. Before being given the privilege and honour to be here in the Legislature, I was able to coordinate him as a camp outfitter. What I'm speaking about is something very specific for you, Speaker, and you will understand what I say.

While he was working as a camp outfitter in a lot of the territories, he learned that the youth were very shy individuals and they spoke without words. These are some of the cultural things we don't really know. The way these youth spoke was that when they said “yes,” they went like this: They raised their eyebrows. And when they said “no,” they wouldn't say the word “no.” They would squinch up. That meant no. Can you imagine a Legislature where individuals communicated in such a fashion, Speaker?

According to the 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey, two out of three First Nations people felt that keeping, learning or relearning their aboriginal language was very important or somewhat important. These languages are unique to First Nations communities and a vital aspect of their cultural traditions. We're blessed in Canada to have a diversity of aboriginal languages. Of the 60 documented individual languages, as mentioned, three are considered safe from extinction, which are Cree, Ojibway and, of course, that which is spoken by the Inuit.

Another aspect was that a lot of the individuals there communicated in so many other ways rather than just body language. My father expressed how individuals from one community to the next, which could be 50 miles away, just by the way they expressed the dialect you could tell which community they were from, which was a learning experience in itself.

I've been fortunate to have a few opportunities to experience the culture of the Cree nation in the far north of Ontario—a family lineage of Mohawk gives our family Métis status. I've been in Peawanuck, Fort Severn and Moose Factory, to mention but a few. But when I was in Fort Severn in the year 2000, Speaker, it was amazing to see—I'm trying to express a cultural difference here that people wouldn't understand. The cost of a bag of milk in the year 2000 was subsidized by \$10 a bag to get there. It cost \$19.50 a bag. I don't think the average individual, or we as legislators, would know that.

As legislators, most of us have not had the experience of the way of life of these people in our very own province. It's very hard to imagine how an entire year's supply would come in by ice roads in order to run the generators for a lot of these communities—they have about a month and a half to allow that to take place—or the fact that a youth would have difficulty trying to buy a pair of skates. Speaker, how do you get a pair of skates for somebody in a fly-in community? You don't send the kid out by themselves. You've got to fly in with an adult, and it's extremely expensive.

Suicide and self-injury were the leading causes of death for aboriginal youth in 2000, with suicide accounting for 22% of all deaths among aboriginal youth, and 16% of deaths among aboriginal people were between 22 to 44 years of age. The suicide rates of registered First Nation youth were eight times higher than the national average for females and five times higher for males. About every 10 days, a member of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, either in one of the region's many isolated communities or in the bigger northern Ontario towns where a lot of them go for school or find work, take their own lives. In 2005, there were 24 suicides in Nishnawbe Aski Nation territory, one of the highest rates in Canada. And there are many more attempts that aren't listed, in addition to the documented rates.

In that same year, I had the privilege and honour to meet with Grand Chief Stan Beardy on how we would aid these kids. Locally, we were able to come forward with a recreational equipment program where leagues,

businesses and individuals saw the need and came forward, and have been able to send over three transport truckloads of sporting goods to these individuals.

Last year, yourself, Speaker, reached out to send the toy drive that you have to First Nation communities, in conjunction with the RCMP aboriginal branch. We need to expand on these programs and focus on these youth to give them the opportunity to make differences in our community.

In closing, I'd just like to say that, while we talk about these things, it's a great start, but vision without action is merely a dream, or just talk. But vision with action can change a world. Let's start to take the time for the reality for these individuals to make a change in Ontario.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: It's an honour to stand up and speak on behalf of the New Democratic caucus to mark National Aboriginal Languages Day, which will occur on March 31.

This day was established in 1989 by the Assembly of First Nations to support aboriginal languages across our country. It is important not only because it preserves culture and helps strengthen one's identity, but because it helps to preserve the history of our nation's first peoples.

As you are aware, First Nations history has been passed down through the generations orally, and if we are to lose those languages, we would lose a vital link to the past, the lessons learned, and the wisdom that we have collected. All of us, regardless of ethnic background, can learn a great deal from the teachings of our First Nations. As my party's critic for aboriginal affairs, as well as an MPP who represents nearly 50 First Nation communities in my riding alone, I have been very fortunate to have been able to learn a great deal from those who've been generous enough to share their wisdom with me.

Much of the preservation of these languages relies on the supports we provide to preserve it, and I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge today the funding gap that exists between First Nations and non-First Nations education. I want to acknowledge the responsibility that we have here in this Legislature as provincial legislators to ensure that that gap is eliminated.

Rather than dwell on the negative, I would like to recognize some of the many organizations that are helping in this fight. We all appreciate and understand the role that the Assembly of First Nations, the Chiefs of Ontario, treaty organizations and our First Nations leadership play, but I would like to take a minute to thank the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, Aboriginal Voices magazine, Windspeaker, Tekawennake, Wawatay Communications, and others for the integral roles they play in preserving, teaching and sharing the languages.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Wawatay on the decision that they have made recently to reintroduce Seven magazine, which is a quarterly publication aimed at sharing and promoting First Nations culture among youth. After all, if we are to succeed in the goals of National Aboriginal Languages Day, it is the youth who will ensure the voices, history and the wisdom of our elders survives. Meegwetch.

PETITIONS

SPRINGWATER PROVINCIAL PARK

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is now time for petitions, and I think I'll do something brand new. I'll go to the member from Simcoe–Grey.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas we oppose” making the “Springwater Provincial Park in Springwater township,” a non-operational park as of “March 31, 2013;

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

“We ask that the park remain operating and facilities such as the animal sanctuary, cabins/shelters, playground equipment and ground maintenance remain open and operating.”

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

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I have about 300 signatures here that were sent to me from AdoptMe Canada, and it reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the process popularly known as ‘declawing’ is actually an amputation, that is the equivalent of cutting off a human’s fingers from the knuckle up;

“Whereas the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association considers ‘declawing’ to be an unnecessary cosmetic procedure;

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“Whereas research has shown that declawing a cat significantly reduces a cat’s quality of life and leads to behavioural and health problems;

“Whereas declawing eliminates a cat’s ability to defend itself when in danger; and

“Whereas the process is considered to be inhumane and is banned in more than 40 countries

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

“To ban the unnecessary and inhuman procedure known as declawing in the province of Ontario.”

I support this, will affix my signature and give it to Nadim to deliver to the table.

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Agincourt is historically recognized as north Scarborough’s oldest and most well-established community; and

“Whereas the residents of the community of Scarborough–Agincourt share unique interests; and

“Whereas historically Agincourt’s electoral voice has always been found in an electoral district north of Ontario Highway 401; and

“Whereas communities, such as Scarborough–Agincourt, with historical significance should be protected and not divided; and

“Whereas the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario has recently released proposals to redraw the federal riding map of Scarborough–Agincourt; and

“Whereas ‘community of interest’ is a mandated consideration of the federal Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act; and

“Whereas the original proposal from the commission included a unified Scarborough–Agincourt riding; and

“Whereas the commission’s report would inexplicably divide the Scarborough–Agincourt community; and

“Whereas the residents of Scarborough–Agincourt should not be divided and the electoral riding should remain, in its entirety;

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

“To call upon the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario to recognize the historical and demographic context of the Scarborough–Agincourt community and to preserve riding boundaries that include a protected Scarborough–Agincourt community north of Ontario Highway 401.”

I fully support the petition, Mr. Speaker, and I’ll ask Owen to bring it to the table.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: “Whereas in Ontario, abortion is a service covered by the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP), paying for more than 32,000 abortions at hospitals and private abortion facilities, at a cost to taxpayers of at least \$30 million per year; and

“Whereas pregnancy is not a disease, injury or illness; and abortion is not” medically necessary “and therefore should not be covered by” OHIP;

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

“To cease providing taxpayers’ dollars for the performance of abortions by passing legislation to remove abortion as a service covered by” OHIP.

I affix my signature.

CANCER TREATMENT

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Avastin is approved for use in the treatment of glioblastoma by Health Canada; and

“Whereas Avastin is currently covered for this treatment by the provincial governments of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia; and

“Whereas in a clinical study Mr. Kevin Graham had a positive response to this medication and his tumour stopped growing; and

“Whereas Mr. Graham and other glioblastoma patients have not had positive responses to other chemotherapy drugs currently covered by the government of Ontario;

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

“We respectfully request that Cancer Care Ontario be directed to reassess the importance of funding Avastin for brain cancer patients in Ontario to ensure equal access for Ontarians to the benefits of this treatment.”

I fully endorse this petition, Mr. Speaker, and I will sign it and give it to page Fae.

LAND USE PLANNING

Mr. Frank Klees: Speaker, I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

“Whereas the town of Newmarket official plan was developed through extensive community consultation and commits the town council to manage growth based on specific principles;

“Whereas Section 1.3.3 of the official plan states that growth should occur in a way that not only increases the quality of life for existing residents but also provides a functional environment for the future by protecting and enhancing existing natural features and systems;

“Whereas a key principle set out in section 2.1 of the official plan is a commitment to protect and strengthen existing neighbourhoods;

“Whereas section 3.2.1 states that the objective of the stable residential area policies of the official plan is to sustain and enhance the character and identity of existing residential communities;

“Whereas the town of Newmarket has received an application from Marianneville Developments Ltd. that, if approved, would impose an additional 730 housing units into the existing, long-established Glenway community;

“Whereas the Glenway community was not designed to accommodate the water, sewer, traffic and other infrastructure requirements of the proposed development application;

“Whereas the proposed development would not only change the character and identity of the Glenway community, it would have a negative impact on quality of life, would erode property values and would threaten the health and safety of its residents;

“Whereas the Places to Grow Act, 2005 and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006 provide for a significant portion of new growth to take place through intensification of built-up areas;

“We the undersigned petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass the Preserving Existing Communities Act, 2013 proposed by Newmarket–Aurora MPP Frank Klees, that amends the Places to Grow Act, 2005 to provide that a decision made by a municipal council is final and may not be appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board if the following conditions are satisfied:

“The decision is to refuse a request to amend the municipality’s official plan with respect to land that is designated for one or more of the following: stable residential area, and parks and open space.

“The municipal council has passed a resolution stating that the requested official plan amendment would not be in the best interests of the municipality.”

I affix my signature to this petition in support of my constituents, the residents of the Glenway community—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I was going to call it a filibuster, but I won’t; I’ll resist.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: If I read mine in English, then in French, it still won’t be as long as his.

“Whereas there are a growing number of reported cases of abuse, neglect and substandard care for our seniors in long-term-care homes; and

“Whereas people with complaints have limited options, and frequently don’t complain because they fear repercussions, which suggests too many seniors are being left in vulnerable situations without independent oversight; and

“Whereas Ontario is one of only two provinces in Canada where the Ombudsman does not have independent oversight of long-term-care homes. We need accountability, transparency and consistency in our long-term-care home system”;

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario “to expand the Ombudsman’s mandate to include Ontario’s long-term-care homes in order to protect our most vulnerable seniors.”

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

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Robert Bailey: The petition I have is from the people of Plympton-Wyoming in my riding.

“Whereas local citizens’ wishes regarding the development of wind turbines in their vicinity are not being properly consulted or informed;

“Whereas local government decision-making in regard to wind turbines has been rendered powerless;

“Whereas wind turbines have been divisive in other Ontario communities;

“Whereas electricity costs in Ontario have escalated since the introduction of the Green Energy Act;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand that no further development of industrial wind turbines take place until citizens are properly consulted and informed, and local government processes are respected.”

I agree with it, and I affix my signature.

PROVINCIAL PARKS

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I have a petition here with well over 300 signatures that are signed by the people of northwestern Ontario, including the districts of Kenora–Rainy River and Thunder Bay, which reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ministry of Natural Resources has announced the end of overnight camping in 10 provincial parks including nine in northern Ontario ... ; and

"Whereas this decision will result in job losses for northern Ontarians and negatively impact tourism and northern Ontario's way of life; and

"Whereas local stakeholders and municipalities have not been consulted on these closures and have been denied the opportunity to make these parks more sustainable;

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

"To immediately suspend plans to cancel overnight camping at the nine northern provincial parks named above; and

"To consult with local municipalities, stakeholders and regional economic development organizations regarding the long-term viability of preserving northern Ontario's provincial parks."

I support this. I will affix my signature and give it to Andrew to deliver to the table.

TIRE DISPOSAL

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

"Whereas the Ontario government has approved massive increases to Ontario Tire Stewardship's eco-fees for agricultural tires, increasing some fees from \$15.29 to \$352.80," some as high as \$546.84 or some even up to \$1,311.24;

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"Whereas Ontario imposes tire eco-fees that are dramatically higher than those in other provinces;

"Whereas other provincial governments either exempt agricultural tires from recycling programs or charge fees only up to \$75;

"Whereas these new fees will result in increased costs for our farmers and lost sales for our farm equipment dealerships;

"Whereas the PC caucus has proposed a new plan that holds manufacturers and importers of tires responsible for recycling, but gives them the freedom to work with other businesses to find the best way possible to carry out that responsibility;

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

"Please suspend the decision to significantly increase Ontario Tire Stewardship's fees on agricultural and off-the-road tires pending a thorough impact study and implementation of proposals to lower costs."

I affix my signature, as I agree with this petition.

REGULATION OF HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to present this petition.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas, as currently legislated by the Regulated Health Professionals Act, 1991, a dentist can be charged with sexual abuse for treating their spouse;

"Whereas the equation cannot be made between placing a filling, scaling a patient's teeth or reading a patient's X-rays and sexual abuse;

"Whereas dentists support zero tolerance as it relates to sexual abuse;

"Whereas, in rural and northern underserved areas of Ontario, dentists prevented from treating their spouses may create a barrier to access;

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

"That the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care immediately exempt dentists from the sexual abuse provisions under the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, to allow dentists to provide dental treatment to their spouses; and

"That the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return the authority to review and exercise discretion on a case-by-case basis any complaints involving spousal treatment to the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario."

I agree with this petition; I will sign it and give it to Eric.

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

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

"Whereas Ontario's tradespeople are subject to stifling regulation and are compelled to pay membership fees to the unaccountable College of Trades; and

"Whereas these fees are a tax grab that drives down the wages of skilled tradespeople; and

"Whereas Ontario desperately needs a plan to solve our critical shortage of skilled tradespeople by encouraging our youth to enter the trades and attracting new tradespeople; and

"Whereas the latest policies from the" McGuinty-Wynne "government only aggravate the looming skilled trades shortage in Ontario;

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

"To immediately disband the College of Trades, cease imposing needless membership fees and enact policies to attract young Ontarians into skilled trade careers."

TAXATION

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this really short petition from the people of my riding. It reads as follows:

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

"Be it resolved that Dalton McGuinty take the unfair HST off of hydro and home heating bills."

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature to it and ask page Stone to bring it to the Clerk.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: “Whereas the Ontario Health Insurance Program (OHIP) previously covered one Papanicolaou (Pap) test a year for women in the province of Ontario; and

“Whereas the Canadian Cancer Society estimated that 1,350 Canadian women were diagnosed with cervical cancer and 390 died from the disease in 2012, and that this valuable test is a simple screening procedure that can help prevent cancer of the cervix; and

“Whereas the province through OHIP now only covers the cost of a test once every three years under new rules that took effect January 1; and

“Whereas women who want an annual Pap test now have to pay for the screening themselves under the new rules;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately return the OHIP funding for annual Pap tests for women in order to help prevent cervix cancer and ensure women’s overall health and well-being.”

I affix my signature.

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I have another petition, which reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the province of Ontario is the only province in Canada that does not allow the provincial Ombudsman, who is an officer of the Legislature, to provide trusted, independent investigations of complaints against hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children’s aid societies, police, retirement homes and universities; and

“Whereas the people wronged by these institutions are left feeling helpless and most have nowhere else to turn for help to address their issues;

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

“To grant the Ombudsman of Ontario the power to investigate hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children’s aid societies, police, retirement homes and universities.”

I support this and will give this to John to deliver.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

TAXPAYER PROTECTION AMENDMENT ACT, 2013 LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION DES CONTRIBUABLES

Mr. Hillier moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 19, An Act to amend the Taxpayer Protection Act, 1999 / Projet de loi 19, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1999 sur la protection des contribuables.

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: Speaker, I introduce this bill to amend the Taxpayer Protection Act to bring it back to its original intent and purpose, which is that whenever the government moves to introduce a new tax or to raise taxes, the government must bring it before the taxpayers in either a general election or by way of a referendum.

Here’s why it’s so important: The concern I hear most from my constituents is the rising cost of living. People from all across the province have contacted me and, I’m sure, all members of this House to say that they are both concerned and frustrated that no matter what it is, from eggs to milk, from rent to hydro, the cost of living is going up.

We all know that the cost of living includes shelter, food and hydro, but the largest single part of a family’s budget is taxes. According to the Fraser Institute’s Charles Lammam, “Taxes from all levels of government make up the single largest expenditure facing Canadian families. In fact, the total tax bill has grown more rapidly than any other major item in a ... family’s annual budget” every year “since 1961.”

Everything from your income to your property to your savings to your child’s education is taxed. I know that the deputy premier has talked about this. I’m talking about the coalition member from Hamilton Centre, of course. Just yesterday the leader of the third party, in question period, said, “The average household budget in this province has taken ... hits in recent years. They are paying ... a new tax on gasoline, home heating and more, and now the Premier is indicating that she may be asking” people “to dig even deeper.”

Just the day before, she said that “everyday families in Ontario cannot actually afford more Liberal taxes that hurt their family budget.”

This is something I’ve heard in spades from people in my riding and from across the province.

Jane M. from Cloyne, who runs a small store, has told me that because of all the tax increases since the Liberals took over, and especially because of the HST, the retail sector in her community is facing an extreme decline.

Just yesterday, I heard from Royce C. from Burlington, who said that the tax on gasoline is hurting his ability to earn a living.

Bill F. from Kingston contacted me to tell me that he had to cut back on the work he does this winter because he couldn’t afford to heat his workshop.

I know these stories might seem far away and so very distant to some members of this House. But when I was an apprentice electrician, newly married and with young children, that’s what we had to do. We had to make hard choices to make ends meet. Everything from housing to hydro to affording Hamburger Helper had to fit in within our limited family budget. If we’d had extra taxes on

hydro back then, or the higher taxes on gas for my work truck, I'm not sure we could have made it. But I can say with certainty that this would have made life a heck of a lot more difficult on myself and my family.

It really puzzles me that both the NDP and the Liberals can say in one breath that they care for the disadvantaged and the little guy, but in the very next breath they'll show an utter lack of compassion and will raise taxes on that same little guy, creating even more financial disadvantages for the hard-working people of Ontario.

I'm sure the champagne socialists and the union bosses in the Liberals and the NDP have never had to make tough choices. They've never had to make life-threatening decisions because of new taxes. But, Speaker, a constituent of mine from Smiths Falls has. She needs a respirator and oxygen 24/7 to live. When the Liberals raised the cost of electricity with the Green Energy Act, she contacted my office and asked me whether the Liberals expected her "to turn off my respirator during peak hours and take my chances with my life." Then, after the Liberals introduced a new tax on hydro, she sent me the message: "I literally can't afford to live and breathe in Ontario." She of all people needed and should have had a say on the HST, because it was a tax on the air she breathes.

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Everyday people were the reason why the government introduced a Taxpayer Protection Act 14 years ago. It was a new law that finally gave taxpayers a voice and some control over the largest part of their family budget: taxes. The Taxpayer Protection Act required consent from the voters before taxes were raised or new taxes considered, either through an election or through a referendum.

Had the Liberal government respected this law, my constituent would have had a vote on the tax on her life. She would have been part of our democracy. Of course, we know what the Liberals did. They hacked and slashed it into effective abolition. In their very first budget, the Liberals raised taxes. They gutted the Taxpayer Protection Act and introduced the Ontario health premium. Then the member for Kingston and the Islands introduced the Respect for Municipalities Act in 2005, which allowed municipalities to only disrespect taxpayers with more tax increases.

Then they moved on the HST in 2009, tossing on more taxes on hydro, gas, foods, tires and a litany of other products and services, hurting our most vulnerable. Then they minced the act even more—the junior members of the coalition last year demanded it—that they raise taxes on our most productive workers. From top to bottom, the Liberal government has shown a flagrant disrespect not only for the principles of democracy enshrined in the Taxpayer Protection Act, but for all taxpayers.

But they were never forthright enough to be honest with taxpayers and repeal the act. No, they just quietly gutted it with exceptions and with legal wordplay. But I hope that the winds of change are blowing back towards

democracy and blowing with compassion for those who shoulder the burden of government, our taxpayers—the Janes, the Bills and the Royces of Ontario.

After the Liberals announced their plan to increase the number of casinos, my colleague from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex introduced his bill on casino developments. Almost immediately, the members of the third party jumped on the bandwagon for this proposal for a referendum on casinos. The third party seems to have a new-found love for democracy, at least when it comes to the issue of casinos. While they are loud about the money government makes at the gaming tables, they expect the hard-working people of Ontario to be silent about the money the government takes from their bank accounts, their paycheques and their hard work.

The member from Beaches–East York has asked no less than eight questions of the McGuinty–Wynne government over the last year on whether they would support referenda on casinos. On May 3 of last year, the member for Trinity–Spadina rose in the House and declared, "I believe that a referendum has to happen before a casino is adopted in any city," anywhere. Just three weeks ago, the member for Davenport rose in the House and said, with regard to a Toronto casino, that the "people in my community would really like a true consultation on that issue, and they can get that through a referendum...." In fact, the NDP member for Essex will even be using his ballot day later this afternoon to support democracy and "to allow municipalities wanting to be a host site for a casino to undertake a referendum...."

Even the government seems to be paying some attention, or at least paying lip service, to our lost democracy these days. On the Premier's website, she says that "increased municipal autonomy and local control on the siting of green energy infrastructure" is the way that we shall govern. She said that only communities that are "willing hosts" should have green energy projects. The government hasn't proposed a casino that would be right next door to every house in Ontario, but they have taxed every door and every family behind it. Nor have they proposed putting a wind turbine on everyone's house, but in the past 10 years, they have introduced countless new taxes, and the Minister of Finance hasn't ruled out further tax increases or, as the Premier told me this morning, new revenue tools.

The people in this province expect and demand that they will have a voice in their democracy, and that includes tax increases or new taxes. Taxes, unlike casinos and wind farms, affect each and every single person in this province.

They also expect politicians to stand up for democracy and stand on principles, especially on the things that affect people the most. That's taxes. They want their politicians to support referenda, not just on casinos—like the NDP only seem to care about—but on taxes as well. They will not tolerate the contradictions of a party whose labour critic uses his ballot day on casino referendums. But will he vote for a bill to do the same on taxes?

I don't know whether the members of the Liberal Party and the NDP know how taxes affect our constitu-

ents or whether they know how many hard choices they force Ontario workers to make because of their history of reckless tax grabs. But I do know that if members of the government and the third party actually care about the democratic principles they purport to uphold when it comes to casinos and wind farms, they will support this bill, Bill 19, to amend the Taxpayer Protection Act. Anything less is nothing short of hypocrisy of the highest order from the mimosa coalition.

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

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I am delighted to speak strongly against Bill 19, presented by the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Only on casinos.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, I disagree with everything you say, literally everything—except the little guy. It's a question of who actually defends the little guy. You guys surprise me a whole lot. You talk about the little guy all the time, and yet it is the policies of Conservative governments that affect the little guy the most. The very people who are affected don't realize that your policies and your laws you presented in the past and you will present in the future are the ones that are going to affect the little guy the most.

Remember, member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, it was your buddy Harris—I'm assuming he was your buddy—who, within an eight-and-a-half-year period, eliminated \$13 billion of money that we needed. Why and how? By cutting corporate taxes to the tune of \$13.5 billion. So the member from—

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You've got to give me a chance.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would ask the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington to come to order. The entire House provided you the opportunity to speak and it was totally quiet. And I will ask the member for Trinity–Spadina to speak through the Chair, not to the member from Lanark.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Of course, if my eye happens to go to the other side, it's not my fault.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I just give you one warning.

The member for Trinity–Spadina.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I do my best, Speaker, to look at you as much as I can, except the eyes do wander, as you might imagine. It's not easy to fix one's eyes on one object all the time. You understand that. So I say to the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, when you cut \$13 billion of corporate taxes, who do you think it's going to affect the most except the little guy that you're speaking about? Where and how does a government provide for a health care system that the little guy depends on if you keep giving our money away to the corporate sector each and every year? How do you do that? How do you defend yourself and defend the little guy in the same breath? How do you do it?

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“Oh,” says the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, “by cutting corporate taxes, the little guy is going to have jobs forever—well-paid jobs.” Yet the member states in his remarks that the little guy is earning less and less every year. So how does it work, member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington? How does it work? We're supposed to be getting more and more jobs as a result of giving away the taxpayer's money to the corporate sector, and yet the little guy is unemployed, is working part-time more than ever and can't make ends meet. Yet the member from Lanark believes that by taking from the little guy's pocket to give to the billionaires is okay by him and his party. How do you reason, how do you think about these things? And how is it that this member and all the other members think they're defending those little people. How? I just never quite understood it.

We forced the Liberals in the last budget to accept a surtax on those whose income is \$500,000 and up. We thought it was a reasonable thing to do. We believed the little guy supported us in that debate, in that motion that we proposed to the Liberals. And I believe the little guy is on my side and is opposed to the Tories who opposed that surtax on individuals who are making \$500,000 and up. In my mind, if you are a millionaire—if you're making over \$500,000, you're probably a millionaire in a couple of years—you could afford to pay a little more to help pay for a health care system that the little guy and the little person benefits from. And if you need a free education system, which isn't as free anymore at the elementary and secondary levels, we would want those who have a few more dollars to pay a little more.

You would think the little guys would support that, but not Tories. They said no to that initiative. They said no to the measures we brought in to amend the budget. They said no to everything, and they're saying no in this budget as well. All they can say these days is no to everything. God bless the Conservative Party. They've got nothing by way of any progressive initiatives except to say no to everything.

Oh, and by the way, if we cut more red tape, that should do it. That's another Tory—let me call them by the name most people understand—Conservative initiative. Mike Harris cut so much red tape there is none left. And yet the new Tories, young and old, still talk about there being so much more red tape that if they could just get their hands on those scissors, the budget problems would be gone.

God bless the Tories. They have no new ideas whatsoever. And just as a reminder, those fine Tories brought in the Taxpayer Protection Act. Their leader just after Harris left—he was the guy who changed the law that allowed mon ami Ernie Eves to raise tobacco taxes and delay the planned tax cuts in his first budget as Premier. I know you probably don't like him either. Is that correct?

Interjections.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: So I say to you, it's not going to work for you. This is an initiative that doesn't

make any sense. If you really want to protect the little guy, think about the little guy. The user fees you're passing on instead of corporate tax cuts—shifting that to user fees—doesn't help the little guy. You're hurting that little person, and I hope the people watching here and the people watching this program will understand that Tories are not for the little guy. They're for the big corporations and the millionaires.

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

Hon. David Zimmer: Speaker, I am very, very troubled by this piece of legislation, and let me give you a couple of reasons. They're sort of philosophical reasons why I think this legislation is just mischievous and wrong-headed; I have no idea what it's designed to do.

First of all, the legislation, the Taxpayer Protection Act, puts certain restrictions on the government's ability to increase taxes or change tax rates, all right? That in itself—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, you're warned.

Hon. David Zimmer: —is a responsible piece of legislation, because it focuses everybody's minds on thinking through very carefully if they're going to change a tax rate. But this legislation takes it a step further and says that under no circumstances can one ever amend the Taxpayer Protection Act. What he's asking the Legislature to do is pass a law saying that we can never amend the Taxpayer Protection Act, and then we're sort of locked into this deep-freeze forever and ever.

Why is it disingenuous? It's disingenuous because here is the member opposite who says he wants to engage in structuring the financial affairs of the province in a responsible way, and he says that this piece of legislation tying the hands of government in perpetuity, in effect, is a responsible way to go about it.

This member is a member of the same caucus that, when we formed a government five or six weeks ago and announced that we'd be having a budget soon, sometime later in the spring—his party was invited to “Give us your best ideas about what should go in the budget. Talk to us about your view of how the budget should be structured.” We've said that to both opposition parties. And what does the PC Party do—and is this a responsible reaction from a party that purports to be a loyal opposition and is conducting itself in the best interests of Ontarians? The day the government was sworn in, they announced that whenever the budget is introduced, and whatever is in the budget, they are going to vote against it. How can that be a responsible position for any party to take—to say to the governing party, “You've just formed a government. We're telling you right now, the day after you've formed it, that when you introduce your budget in five or six or seven weeks' time, that we're going to vote against it. We don't need to see it. We don't need to know what's in it. We don't even want to talk to you about it”? Is that a responsible opposition party?

Surely, the opposition party, if it has views of what should be in the budget that are opposite of the views that the governing party has—come and articulate a position and say, “We think this should be in the budget. We think that should not be in the budget. We think the budget should be structured thus and thus.” We can sit down, as the Premier has said, in a minority government, with the opposition parties and have a constructive and a substantive and a meaningful conversation about what the budget should look like. Give us your ideas.

How can you sit over there and say, from day one, when the government was sworn in, “When it comes time to introduce your budget, we don't want to see it because we know we're going to vote against it”? That is irresponsibility at its height.

I have many constituents in Willowdale, and I have many Conservative constituents in Willowdale who are just dumbstruck. They have been in to see me at my constituency office, and they've called me and said, “David, I'm a Conservative, but I like to think of myself as a responsible Conservative.” They sit down in my constituency office, and they have given me some ideas. They say, “Take this back to your caucus. I think the budget should look like this.” At least they're prepared to come into my constituency office and sit across the desk and talk to me and have a responsible conversation. I may not agree with what they have put on the table, they may not agree with what I've put on the table, but in the process of talking and in the process of trying to understand where they're coming from and where I'm coming from, it's amazing the common ground that we can find in my constituency office.

Our government makes no statement that we are the keepers of all of the knowledge and that the only party that knows anything about budgets is our party. Our Premier has reached out and said, “Come and sit down and talk to us.” The third party has engaged in that conversation, and we're having conversations and so on, but the opposition party—and I come back to this because it's strange behaviour. It's neurotic behaviour. It reminds me of when I was a little kid and my mother would make a new dish. Sometimes I would look at it and say, “I don't want to taste it. I don't want to eat it.” She'd say, “At least have a taste.” “No, I don't want to. I don't like it. I just don't want to talk about it.” She'd put a little pressure on me, and sometimes I'd take a taste of it and find out that I kind of liked it, and I was ready to engage.

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But this business of saying, “I don't want to see the budget, I don't want to talk about it, because I know”—three or four months before the budget is even introduced—“I'm going to vote against it.” That is irresponsibility. That's not the kind of party that should even seriously think about wanting to govern Ontario.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: I appreciate the opportunity from my colleague from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington for the chance to stand up for taxpayer protection. It's a concept that has been dragged through the

mud by this government bent on breaking the very Taxpayer Protection Act it signed to first get elected. As a result, taxpayers in Ontario have been forced to bear the burden of 10 years now of taxing and spending by a government that believed every problem they face could be fixed by more spending, more taxes, more bureaucracy, more programs—more Liberal fairy tales, essentially.

Speaker, Liberal fairy tales, instead of beginning with the phrase “Once upon a time,” begin with words like, “I, Dalton McGuinty, leader of the Liberal Party of Ontario, promise, if my party is elected as the next government, I will not raise taxes or implement any new taxes...” Further, Mr. McGuinty promised, “I will not raise taxes or implement any new taxes without the explicit consent of Ontario voters and not run deficits”—deficits is a whole other story, of course. Mr. McGuinty went on to pledge, “I promise to abide by the Taxpayer Protection and Balanced Budget Act.” That was a pledge McGuinty signed September 11, 2003—more Liberal fairy tale, Speaker.

The Taxpayer Protection Act was a very timely piece of legislation. It was introduced by Mike Harris, enshrining in law the importance of protecting taxpayers, whether they be municipal or provincial, from further spending and from net tax increases.

Taxpayers do need protection, Speaker. Between 1985 and 1994—that was under both Liberal and NDP reigns in Ontario—we saw 65 tax increases. Taxpayers had no say. For instance, in 1988 Liberals increased gas taxes 1 cent a litre. In 1989—again the Liberal regime—the gasoline tax went up another 2 cents a litre. A tire tax was imposed back then. A tire tax is imposed today. You pay up to \$1,600 tax on a tractor tire. In 1991—I’m now referring to the NDP government—they imposed the gasoline and diesel tax. That was an additional 3.4 cents a litre. In 1992 the NDP raised personal income taxes. In 1993 they raised income taxes again. What happened to taxpayer protection?

Then we had this pledge. What happened? We got a commitment from Mr. McGuinty. Obviously, it was an election strategy saying you’re doing anything to garner votes. We’ve seen that most recently with the gas plant cancellation. So it’s difficult to take. It’s difficult to watch this government as it ensures continued destruction of a promise to uphold the values of the Taxpayer Protection Act.

This government, as we now know, continues and will continue the McGuinty legacy. I predict continued tax increases in the coming budget—I’m not voting for this budget—and implementation of new taxes or running deficits.

Interjections.

Mr. Toby Barrett: We know you guys. We don’t trust you. You tax and spend; everybody knows that.

It’s time to restore those protections that we guaranteed in 1999. It’s time to beef up this legislation. It worked for a while, until we had a government that was lacking in ethics. For that reason, I’ll be supporting this legislation.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: This is like déjà vu all over again. We’ve got—

Interjection: Groundhog Day.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yes, it is Groundhog Day. The Tories have stuck their heads out and found out they broke their own law a couple of times.

It’s really interesting, and a little bit thick, coming from the Tories, trying to be seen as, oh, the big champions. They’re going to go out and they’re going to champion the people of Ontario to protect them from evil governments being able to ever raise taxes on them again.

I remember that mantra. You were here, Mr. Marchese. We were both in that election where Mike Harris came into this House, and he ran on the mantra—the same mantra that this member is putting forward today. Then, when he got to the Legislature, he actually passed the law and he put the law in place. And what did the government—

Mr. Toby Barrett: He did what he said he was going to do.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: He didn’t do what he said he was going to do. When they got a chance, and they were in a little bit of trouble fiscally, and they had to be able to deal with revenue, what did this government do—Mike Harris and Ernie Eves? They broke their own law. They stood in this House—I remember Tim Hudak. Tim Hudak was a member at the time; I think he was northern development minister. Jim Wilson was here, Ted Arnott was here, and a whole bunch of other members who were here at the time—they stood in this House and they voted against the very act that this member is putting forward. Why? Because the government was having fiscal problems, and they said, “We’ve got to raise taxes.”

Interjection: That was different.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I hear this member saying, “That was different.” How is it different to the people back home if it’s a Tory who raises the taxes, a New Democrat or a Liberal? Oh, Tories somehow or other are magical in being able to raise taxes and only they know when? What hypocrisy. This is more of the same.

These members over here tend to want to be seen as standing up for the little guy, but we all know what this is about. This is all about standing up for the people whom they represent as Conservatives. It’s not about the little guy.

Look at the white papers that this party has put forward. Tim Hudak—and they’re going to applaud the white paper. Stand up and applaud the white papers. Come on. Applaud, applaud.

Applause.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Applaud those white papers, and do it again. I’m going to run on those white papers, it’s so crazy. My God. They’re saying, “You know what? If you happen to have a defined pension plan in this province, that’s wrong, and we’ve got to take it away from you. All those people who have put 10% of their income

into their pension plan for the last 20 or 30 years: Take it away.”

They say, “Let’s get rid of unions. They’re just a pain in the bum. We don’t need unions. We don’t need people having collective bargaining. That’s a bad thing.”

Here’s the best one: They say, “If your son or daughter goes to college or university and they happen to not get a good mark, they won’t be able to borrow money, because Tim Hudak says that only those people who have good marks can borrow money for a student loan.” Have you ever heard such craziness?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Helping the little guy.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: These guys talk about helping the little guy? This is all about helping the elite and those in our society who need the least amount of protection. These guys are so far right wing, they make Mao Zedong look like a socialist, not a communist. My God. These guys are something else.

I look at this bill and I say: Do I believe for one second that if this bill were to pass under a Conservative government and if they were in trouble, they wouldn’t do what Ernie Eves did the last time? Not for a second. They’d be running to the House with the bill and saying, “We’re amending our own act, and we’re going to raise taxes,” as they did when they were in government. They overrode their own legislation, and they stood in this House proudly, saying, “We have to be able to do this”—Tim Hudak, and our friend Mr. Wilson, and our friend Mr. Arnott and a whole bunch of Conservative members over there. So, Mr. Speaker, how—

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Wow. I think we should be careful about the language you use in the Tory caucus. But I would just say: Our Conservative friends over here are really, really—I think we should create an award in this Legislature—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The No award.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: —the No award, for the party that pretends to stand up for people but always says no. The only thing these guys know how to do in this Legislature is to say no. If they had anything to do with trying to find a reasoned approach to anything, I think they’d run the other way.

So I just say to my friends: I’m not going to vote for this, for a couple of reasons.

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One is because in the end it’s not about raising—when we were in government for five years, we never raised taxes: not once.

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: That’s the record, absolutely: not once. What did the Conservatives do when they came to power? They raised taxes not once, not twice; they raised them more than two or three times. Who are these guys? I’m not going to raise this, because it is the hyperbole of what this is all about, and this is about the Tories trying to make points on what they say is a great, big issue to save taxpayers money when we know very well they’ll vote for taxes like they did under Ernie Eves because

they knew that’s what they had to do and they had no problem breaking their own law.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. Further debate? The minister responsible for seniors.

Hon. Mario Sergio: Thank you very much, Speaker. I’m going to join the debate. I only have a few minutes. However, I want to add a couple of points.

I can sympathize with the member from—the longest name here—Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington. He probably meant to introduce some reasonable bill in the House, but I think, by the heading of the bill itself, it tells us that really the bill does not belong in the House and doesn’t deserve any support.

We have been saying all along, the Premier has been saying all along, that two things are important. Very recently, we had the speech from the throne, which serves as a guide as to where the government wants to go. Sometime soon, sometime this year, we are going to have the so-called budget. Again, that will be a document worthy—the Premier, the government, will be expressing more in details, again, the direction of the government for the coming months and for the coming year.

It is unfortunate that we see the Conservative opposition already saying, “We haven’t seen the budget. We don’t care. We are not going to support it.” I think they should be paying attention to what the Premier has been saying all along. We have to create jobs. We have to make sure that the economy keeps on going. We have to increase, yes, jobs so we can increase revenues as well. We have to protect the public sector. We have to protect health care and the gains that we have made in education as well. Those are the issues that are front and centre, and we should continue on that.

At least the opposition should realize what is important for the people of Ontario. After all, once we oversee that, what is left? Cutting taxes? At whose expense? We all love to see taxes being cut, of course, but where are you going to get the money from? We’d like to know. We don’t want to fire doctors anymore. We don’t want to fire teachers. We don’t want to close hospitals. With all due respect, I think we have come a long way and we should not deviate from the direction that the Premier has taken so far. It is too important. It is too important at this very particular time, especially when we have done so much.

Speaker, they know; they all come from the rural area municipalities. They like to have a bit of flexibility. We can’t keep on saying to local municipalities, “You can,” or, “You cannot.” A few years ago we did amend the Municipal Act, giving municipalities more powers where they wanted it so they can decide in their own municipality what’s best for them, what to do and how to do it. I think we should continue on that particular mentality. We should not interfere, here in this House, when it comes to the well-being of our taxpayers. We have paid too much attention, Speaker, making sure that we provide good health care. Of course, here in the House, from the members, sometimes we get questions about home care, more home care and more assistance. We have come a

long way. We have been doing that, but there is more to be done. The question is, if we go that particular route, we will have to find the money and cut somewhere else. We don't want to cut services. We don't want to cut in health care or education. We want to maintain full-day kindergarten. We want to build more schools. We want to hire more teachers.

Where do we go when we say we cut taxes? Where do we go and get the money? I think it is something we should be considering before we introduce a motion that really goes counteractive to the best interests of the people of Ontario.

So I am grateful that the member has brought the motion. We have to be respectful that it is individual members' hour, private members' hour, private members' bills, and we would love to deal with motions and issues that we all could support, because if we can all support them, it means they are good and they would be good for the people of Ontario.

With all due respect, I have to say to the member that he's got a lot of work to do. I have no idea where this motion is going to go today, but for my part—I have no idea what the rest of the members are going to do—I can't support it, because I know for a fact, when I speak to my people, especially—I have a large component of seniors in my area—they say, “Well, we hear cutting. If you're going to cut, what are you going to cut?” The seniors are in my mind, seniors' benefits are in my mind, as are kids from kindergarten, as are teachers, as are doctors, as are nurses, as is the economy. We have to create jobs, and if we don't do that, we cannot proceed in improving our economy, especially in the schools—we are doing so well to make sure that we provide the best education to our young people, so when they come out of school, they can really face the pressure that we have externally.

I thank you for the time that you have allowed me, and my time is up.

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

Mr. Rod Jackson: It's an honour to stand here today and speak to the Taxpayer Protection Amendment Act, from my colleague from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington—that's a mouthful.

It's clear the Liberals have actually broken this act at least twice. It's also clear, sir, that this act needs to be strengthened. We've got to make sure it doesn't happen a third time. I read recently, when I was preparing for this debate, an interesting quote from Robert Heinlein: “There is no worse tyranny than to force a man to pay for what he does not want merely because you think it would be good for him.” I think that's very appropriate when we're talking about taxpayers. We need this protection. Raising taxes should be the last resort for a government to achieve money. It should be the last resort when a government needs more money. It should be the last resort when a government needs to pay for something. We have an obligation to the people of Ontario to look for money in other places. That means looking for

efficiencies. That means looking for maybe some cuts somewhere. It means looking to make sure that we're running the most efficient government we possibly can.

When we look at the endemic scandal of this government, let's not forget—the electorate sometimes has a short memory—about OLG, Ornge, gas plants and eHealth; the list goes on and on and on. When the member says, “Where are you going to find the money?”—if I start adding those up, I'm not into the tens of thousands of dollars, I'm not into the hundreds of thousands of dollars; I'm not even in the millions of dollars—I'm in the billions of dollars. People can't even relate to that number, it's so high. It's ridiculous.

When we have an act that tries to hold this government accountable to the people of Ontario for the tax money they spend, and they stand up in this House and tell us that they don't know that there's any other way to get money out of government so that they don't have to raise taxes and don't have to go back to the people to ask them to raise taxes—it's ludicrous.

Let's talk a little bit about the little guys. I look around me, and I see the member from Northumberland-Quinte West, who has a young family; he's a teacher. I look at the member from London-Middlesex, who's got a small family business, or the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, who's a nurse. When I look around me—what do you think we are? If I'm not a little guy, if all the people sitting around me aren't little guys, if all these people with young families to support don't represent people who don't want higher taxes and want their money spent properly, I don't know what little guys are. Don't talk to me about little guys, because I'm surrounded by them.

It's a little rich for the former minister in the Bob Rae government—the former parliamentary assistant in the Bob Rae government—to say that the Bob Rae government didn't raise taxes and the Mike Harris government did. I've got news for you: The Bob Rae government taxed and spent us into oblivion and put us into a disastrous mess. It took the courage of a PC government to actually say “no” sometimes.

Yes, “no” sometimes is the hardest word to use when you're in government. It's easy to say “yes,” folks. You do a good job at it, but the people are sick and tired of your actions, spending their money and getting nothing in return. They will not accept it. If you want a plan, we have it—and yes, it is the white papers. What's your plan, by the way? Haven't seen it; haven't heard about it. You sit on your hands every time you get a chance. You guys have fluffy bills that don't mean anything for anybody. We need action. People are sick and tired of not having any action from this government and having you guys sit on your hands and come to the party when it's convenient. We need action. We have action. This bill is action. This party is about action. You guys need to learn a lesson from us.

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

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I stand in my place today to speak in support of an important private member's bill presented by my colleague from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington. Bill 19, the Taxpayer Protection Amendment Act, is an act to amend the Taxpayer Protection Act, 1999.

This bill supports the concept of democracy. It is a call for democracy by the people. Respect for taxpayers is paramount, particularly now, when so many of my constituents are telling me they can't pay any more. The Taxpayer Protection Act was implemented by Premier Mike Harris to require that any provincial government that wants to raise taxes must first ask the people by holding a referendum. The intention of the original Taxpayer Protection Act was to make governments accountable to the people they govern.

In the last decade, this Liberal government has amended the Taxpayer Protection Act to allow for the biggest tax increases in Ontario's history without the consent of the people. It is clear that the Taxpayer Protection Act needs to be strengthened to respect its original intent. A referendum should be held if government wishes to impose a new tax or levy at the provincial or municipal level.

The current government is desperate for money. The debt and deficit are problems that will not go away and were created by this government. We are fearful that this government will hit the taxpayer again. Mr. Speaker, the taxpayer is tapped out. They cannot pay any more.

We have good reason to be suspicious of the actions of this government. In the last year, this Liberal government has cancelled the Slots at Racetracks partnership agreement that has benefited the horse racing industry and the government for the last 15 years. This government has also demanded money back from farmers who received it 10 years ago for mad cow disease losses. This government is now discussing going back 40 years to collect unpaid driver fines. There is nothing this government won't do to collect money.

But Mr. Speaker, here is a success story. This is democratic. The city of Toronto held a referendum in 1997 asking Torontonians if they wanted a casino. The people were over 70% opposed and no casino was built. Democracy worked. Government should give people the final say over a casino, a windmill or a tax in their community.

They should support this bill. There is no substitute for letting people decide on how their government impacts their lives, whether it's a casino, a windmill or a new tax. Democracy through a referendum is working right now in California and in European countries. It is not only important to ask people for their vote to elect their representative, but also for their vote on how the government proposes to tax them. Mr. Speaker, this is a good bill that has my support. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. The member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, you have two minutes for your response.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thank you, Speaker.

First off, I want to say to the member from Trinity–Spadina, who said that tax money is our money, I've got

news for him: It's not our money, it's the taxpayers' money, and we're elected to take care of it and provide value.

I also want to say to the member from Timmins–James Bay, you can correct the record but you can't revise history. For the member's edification, the NDP raised personal income taxes twice while he was here under the Rae government, and it also raised taxes twice on gasoline and diesel. So let's not try to buffalo the people of this province, Mr. Bisson. I have lots of good comments from the members from Carleton–Mississippi Mills, Barrie and Haldimand–Norfolk.

I do want to just clearly demonstrate something to the people of Ontario. Here we have the mimosa coalition, the NDP and the Liberals, who say that they have found this new regard for democracy and that they demand referendums on casinos and windmills. But when it comes to the people's money, when it comes to the largest single expense for every family in this province, what people go to work for every morning and come home late at night for—to earn money—when it comes to money, both these parties say, “To hell with you. We know what's best for you and we'll take as much of it as we want,” just as the member from Trinity–Spadina said, because he thinks it's our money, not yours. That's the sort of attitude—a rainy day—a fair-weather friend to democracy at the best of times with both the Liberals and the NDP.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. We'll vote on this item at the end of regular business.

Before I go to the next item, I'll just remind members, because several of you have done it today: We refer to members of the Legislature by their riding, not their name.

HELPING ONTARIANS ENTER THE SKILLED TRADES ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 VISANT À FACILITER L'ACCÈS AUX MÉTIERS SPÉCIALISÉS EN ONTARIO

Mr. Dunlop moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 22, An Act to amend the Trades Qualification and Apprenticeship Act / Projet de loi 22, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la qualification professionnelle et l'apprentissage des gens de métier.

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: It's a pleasure to introduce this bill today, Bill 22, Helping Ontarians Enter the Skilled Trades Act. This bill really is about changing the archaic ratio system that we have in the province of Ontario to a 1-to-1 ratio system. I wanted to point out some key points right off the bat. First of all, I think we're all aware that there has not been nearly enough attention paid to people

entering the skilled trades in this province. One of the key things we've seen with the ratios and with this nonsense around the College of Trades boondoggle—I think it's clear to say that it's brought a lot of attention. I'll get into that a lot more in a few minutes.

I want to start out by reading what the Ontario Chamber of Commerce says about 1-to-1 ratios. If I could take a couple of minutes, I'd like to say that.

“Why the Ratio Needs to Change”—by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce.

“Economic impact: Some argue employers want a 1-to-1 ratio to increase profitability. However pay for apprentices can be scaled to experience. A first-year apprentice will be paid less than a fifth-year apprentice who is able to complete the job faster and with less supervision. Profitability is driven by highly skilled workers that complete jobs quickly and the ability to hire, train, and retain these workers over the long term. Profitability is not necessarily driven by lower apprenticeship ratios.

“Rates of completion: The current 3-to-1 ratio prevents business from hiring apprentices thereby lowering the overall number of skilled apprentices in the labour market. The government's Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program further increases the gap between registered apprentices and completion because it bypasses the 3-to-1 ratio to introduce youth into the programs in high school, only to limit the availability of apprenticeships upon graduation.

“Jurisdictional comparison: Ontario (and PEI) have the highest apprenticeship ratios in Canada, with many ratios skyrocketing to 3-to-1 after the first apprentice is hired by a business. In every other province, the apprenticeship ratio stays closer to 1-to-1.” And of course, in many provinces now it's 1 to 2, so you can have one journeyman for two apprentices.

“Health and safety of workers: A 1-to-1 ratio between apprentice and journeyman provides direct training and supervision for the apprentice. There is little evidence to suggest that lowering the ratio decreases the safety conditions for apprentices on job sites or reduces employers' responsibilities for employee safety, which are dictated by the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

“Why Apprenticeships Work:

“Apprenticeships are an effective way to plug the growing skills gap in Ontario. Current estimates indicate a provincial shortage of nearly 560,000 skilled workers by 2030. The skills shortage is a significant barrier to attracting new investment in the province.”

That is from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. I thought I would start it out with that. I have many things to say; in fact, I probably don't have enough time to get to everything I want to say. But really and truly today, as a caucus that's very, very concerned about the fact that there are over 600,000 people out of work in the province of Ontario, I think we're really and truly concerned about the number of young people—in fact I mentioned today in a question to the minister that actually about 20% of the young people in the GTA between the ages of 16 and

24 don't have jobs, and the provincial average is about 17%. That alone should be the alarm bell for everyone.

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Now, the Conference Board of Canada—I'll get to the feds in just a second; I was very pleased with their budget last week. I thought it really got to the point, because it was zeroing in on where the jobs are. And if people want to actually take a partnership, if people want to hire more apprentices under the new federal program, they can. It's up to a maximum of \$15,000: \$5,000 from the province, \$5,000 from the federal government and of course \$5,000 from the employer. This seems to be an area where anybody who is complaining about not getting apprentices—in fact the employer can actually put his money into it, put his money where his mouth is and actually hire more.

The one thing I think we've really got to be concerned about is when we talk about a 1-to-1 ratio. This is not mandatory. This, of course, is at the discretion of the employer. No one has to go to 1 to 1. We just think it's a good, solid move. It goes back to 2008, when my colleague Laurie Scott put a resolution to the House, and of course it was turned down by the coalition at that time as well. The fact is they voted the 1-to-1 ratio down. That was very disappointing that day, because we continued to have problems.

One of the things that people seem to be ignorant of and are turning their backs on is this whole fact of the baby boomers, all the baby boomers that are in the trades. I hear it everywhere I go. The reality is that many of the baby boom generation are about to retire now and over the next decade, and that's going to create a huge number of problems and openings in the province. In fact, a recent comment made by the federal government is that we're graduating way too many BAs and not enough welders. We've got to get to that. We've got to change the stigma attached to that. So we're zeroing in on that as well.

I wanted to talk about the phasing in. Who would train the apprentices? Obviously, we have the community colleges, and people are saying, “Well, if you change to 1 to 1, you can't do it overnight.” I would agree with that. It's something that may have to be phased in over two, three, four or five years, and I agree with that. But you know what? The community colleges can do a great job of it.

I've actually talked to a number of the community colleges, and what they're saying to me is, “We may not have all the spaces, but we will do weekend courses and we will do night courses, if we have to, to train apprentices.” I'm not talking about the pre-apprenticeship programs; I'm talking about the actual steps, the basic, intermediate and advanced training of apprentices.

Then, of course, we have the union training centres. They're popular in different trades, and they've done a good job. They can be supported on that. And then we've got the Ontario career colleges. Like the Ontario pre-apprenticeship program, there's no reason they shouldn't be training apprentices at each different level, and there's a number of those organizations around. I think that our caucus supports the idea of having those people.

Last summer, I spent—well, basically it's gone on about a year now, maybe even more than a year, and what I really wanted to point out is that I've been at about 110 stops across the province—

Interjections.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: It's 110 stops, but it does cover the whole province. I'm not saying I spent all the time in Ottawa or all the time in Kitchener or something. You know, I've been to the western boundary of the province and Timmins and all those communities, and over and over again what I heard was the importance of changing the ratios. It didn't matter where it was, the people wanted to do it.

Now, I should point out one of the things I heard in northern Ontario, particularly in the growth areas, because they think they've got a lot of potential growth with the Ring of Fire and in the Thunder Bay area. When I talked about a 1-to-1 ratio, some of the people at the chamber of commerce up there said, "You're wrong. You can't go there. You've got to be like Alberta or Saskatchewan or BC. You've got to go to 1 to 2. You're not going far enough." I said, "Well, we're happy to go to 1 to 1 to get this thing moving."

But the reality is that many people think we should go to the Alberta model. And if you look at the Alberta model, of course, that's where all the people are making money and creating wealth, creating jobs. And you know what? They're not spending \$1.9 million more than they're taking in. They're actually making money in Alberta, and everyone there is working. So that works as well. That alone is something I really wanted to point out.

Then we get to this whole thing around the College of Trades, because now they're saying that they're going to be doing ratio reviews for all the trades. Good. I hope it works out well, because I can tell you that that we've already tried—as a lot of you know, I'm a plumber by trade; I'm a licensed plumber. I'm actually applying on April 12—I've actually put my name in as one of the people asking for a 1-to-1 ratio review with the plumbing trade. Probably there are not a lot of MPPs doing that this year.

I can tell you that this is what happened last week. This thing is so complex already, and it's so bureaucratic—would you believe, with only 15 people presenting on plumbing ratios, they had to have a special meeting and drag in the 15 recipients from all over the province—Ottawa, London—to have a meeting to discuss when they'd be on the agenda? That's the kind of nonsense we're already seeing with this nightmare.

I told you it was going to be a boondoggle. I predict that the College of Trades will be the next Ornge, without the oversight. It's going to be a tough sell.

They've got all this money that the community colleges don't have. That has all gone into the College of Trades so they can tell you how wonderful they're doing and they can have the big steak dinners and all the things that the Liberals are used to doing as well. That's what's it really all about: It's just more bureaucracy. It's another

barrier to growth in the province of Ontario, and we have to stop this nonsense.

On this side of the House, we believe in going back to Laurie Scott's resolution in 2008—we put it in our platform in 2011—about changing the ratios to 1 to 1, and we still feel very strongly about that today. That's why this bill is here.

You know what, Mr. Speaker? I don't expect the bill is going to pass today. I think the coalition will vote against it. We've seen it all week with votes. I think they will be very upset with us over these comments, but the reality is that we're here trying to create more jobs for young people in Ontario.

The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities—I'm not sure what he does in his spare time, but I can tell you right now that no one knows who the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities is. They didn't know the last guy, they didn't know the one before him, and they certainly don't know the new minister, because he's not out there being seen and listening to the public.

When I go into an event, I take in a little cardboard sign and my pen, and I speak. When the minister does an event, a communications company comes in and they set up a microphone. I tell them more than they get to know from that guy.

We're not spending any money; we're just getting out there and informing the public what a disaster the College of Trades is and why we have to go to a 1-to-1 ratio. We've heard it from all kinds of organizations. We've heard it from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and many, many organizations.

I do want to thank a number of the apprentices that have come from across the province. These are all men and women who are trying to get jobs in Ontario. And do you know what, Mr. Speaker? They don't want to go to Alberta and Saskatchewan for jobs. They want to work in their home province.

I ask you people to please support this bill. It makes common sense. It's going to eliminate what the College of Trades does. Let's get right to it immediately.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to contribute to today's debate on the issue of workers in this province and particularly the apprenticeship program and ratios.

As a—I don't like to say "a former tradesperson," because I could certainly pick up a hammer and get back to work today, but as a proud trade unionist, as a member of LIUNA Local 625, a labourer, I spent over a decade on heavy construction sites in southwestern Ontario, building bridges, sewers, culverts and everything else you could form and pour some cement into. So I have a little bit of knowledge of what it takes to slug it out on the ground.

Also, in my capacity as the training director of the LIUNA Local 625 apprenticeship program and pre-apprenticeship program, I understood and learned the dynamic nature of labour market demand in various regions.

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What I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, is that the proposal by the PCs today is a one-size-fits-all model. With our labour market demand in changing conditions and the dynamic nature of the variety of apprenticeship programs that are available in this province, it simply doesn't work. It's not feasible. In some instances, a 1-to-1 ratio absolutely works; there's no question about it. For smaller organizations who have smaller scopes of work and smaller employee groups, that works; there's a more condensed parameter on what the nature of that apprenticeship role is.

Let's remember that these workers—typically young workers, but you can enter an apprenticeship at any age, and I encourage anyone who's listening to do that—are learning. They are on the job. They're at school, essentially, fulfilling their hours towards their apprenticeship program. They need supervision, and hopefully the people that are on the job with them are not only providing them supervision and education, but you'd hope that they are also watching out for their health and safety. I can't tell you how many times, as a young labourer, I walked onto an unorganized job site—the nature of job sites in construction and the heavy sector is crazy; you're walking onto a muddy landscape that is changing all the time, that has challenges and safety concerns that are not known. They may have been known one day but not known the other day. You're relying on information at all times, not only by your colleagues but by as many people as are on the job site. The more people that a young worker is surrounded by—just logistically, in the same place—the safer and more knowledgeable that person will be.

I appreciate the position, I guess, or the efforts that the Progressive Conservative member is making in trying to highlight some of the issues in the apprenticeship program. I am, however, concerned that the motives around going to a blanket 1-to-1 ratio are simply gaining access to less expensive labour sources—which, ultimately, apprentices are. They're making less because they don't know as much, and what that does is it doesn't give them the full scope of their information. They are not going to be able to tag along with a group of all the veteran workers who are going to be able to expand their knowledge base unbelievably.

It also has the adverse effect in putting down or actually relegating those journeymen who have sometimes spent decades in the trade, who have earned their spot—it will keep them on a list so that they don't go out to work. They've got to compete against young workers. It's like going to school, getting halfway through your degree, and expecting to get out and practise law, or whatever profession, ultimately, your degree is trying to afford you. It doesn't work. It shouldn't work.

I think there has to be a better mechanism than simply arbitrary ministerial decree. That's why the LACs that determine ratios actually work: because it encompasses labour and management that come to an agreement. I can't tell you how many times we've had a call into the

local for labour and we've said, "Hey, we've got a couple of apprentices to give you," and they would say, "Listen, we're in time constraints. It's time-sensitive. This is a huge project. We want as many journeymen as possible, because we know we're going to get it done fast, we're going to get it done right and we're going to get it done safely." They are reluctant, on many occasions, to take on apprentices, but the discussion has to be had.

I just want to add one more point—

Interjection.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Okay. I'm being told I've got to share my time. It's a debate that I'm pleased and proud to have. It's one that I appreciate having on behalf of the young workers and journeymen and apprentices who are attempting to get into it, but one that I think is, at this point, wrong-headed.

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

Mr. Phil McNeely: I'm pleased to speak to An Act to amend the Trades Qualification and Apprenticeship Act.

Our government has been responsive to the concerns about the state of skilled trades in Ontario. Following recommendations from experts in the sector, our government took the bold move to establish the College of Trades, the first regulatory body of its kind in North America, to ensure a strong future for the trades, a sector that is a key part of the foundation of our economy. The College of Trades will help to ensure that when the people of Ontario need the services of tradespeople, they get the skilled, well-trained and accountable workers they expect and the quality of service they deserve.

Our government is committed to supporting a high-quality apprenticeship system that ensures public and workplace safety—areas that a member of the skilled trades who's now a MPP here spoke to just earlier—and ensures that the next generation of skilled workers is ready to meet future labour market demands. Ensuring public and workplace safety and ensuring that future labour market demands are met should only be as a result of industry-determined ratios based on their own requirements and trade expertise.

Why do Ontario's skilled tradespeople not deserve the same respect as other professions such as lawyers, teachers, accountants, doctors, nurses, foresters, real estate agents, social workers and architects, all of which have similar self-regulating bodies?

I received a certificate recently here in the Legislature for 50 years of paying my dues to my association, Professional Engineers Ontario. I'll tell you that this association has made sure that engineering in Ontario has had a high quality. We're known throughout the world for our engineering, and we really thank the association that we belong to. I think the fee is around \$240 a year now, which seems a lot. Even though I'm not a practising engineer, I continue to pay it because I believe in these associations.

Our government feels that these decisions must be made in a transparent, public and fair way. My constituents in Ottawa-Orléans, and indeed all Ontarians,

deserve nothing less than transparency and fairness. They deserve nothing less than to have the best possible value of the College of Trades available to them. This cannot happen if important decisions setting apprenticeship ratios are made behind closed doors, with no requirement for industry consultation. There's no labour market study that supports a claim that imposing a ratio of 1 to 1 on all trades would create 200,000 new jobs, which we've heard from the opposition. In fact, the chair of the College of Trades, former PC MPP Ron Johnson, has recognized that the PCs' blanket call to mandate 1-to-1 ratios is "absurd," adding that the Tory numbers of job creation under proposed a 1-to-1 ratio are "misleading," and that about 150,000 skilled jobs would be created over four years anyway, without changing a thing.

Mr. Speaker, our government has set the stage to continue expanding the apprenticeship system, just as it has been doing over the past nine years. In Ontario, there are more than 120,000 apprentices learning a trade today, which is 60,000 more than in 2002-03.

I can see that I am coming to the end of my time, and I thank you, Speaker, for this.

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

Mrs. Jane McKenna: Thank you, everybody, for being here today. And I'd like to say to our passionate member from Simcoe North that I'm pleased to rise to speak today to Bill 22, the Helping Ontarians Enter the Skilled Trades Act, brought forward by, again, our member from Simcoe North.

Bill 22 would modernize Ontario's apprenticeship system and create new apprentice jobs by balancing the ratio of journeyman to apprentice. The apprenticeship system often requires multiple journeymen to train a single apprentice. If passed, Bill 22 would make those ratios 1 to 1.

We're well into the seventh year that Ontario's unemployment rate has been soaring above the national average, and one shortcoming in the economy that is flagged repeatedly by analysts is a skilled trades shortage. The government's own Minister of Finance predicts that this province will face a skilled trades shortage of over one million vacancies by 2021. Ontario is producing 46% fewer tradespeople per capita than the rest of Canada.

The government's response to the skilled trades shortage has been to create a different kind of work: bureaucracy. This government rolled out legislation to form the Ontario College of Trades, a body tasked with modernizing the apprenticeship and trades system. Its mandatory membership fee will hit tradespeople with what is essentially an annual trades tax of \$60 to \$120. Thanks to the college, employers will also be subjected to an additional trades tax hit, starting in 2014. The college has become fixated on building walls and imposing measures that will ultimately result in fewer tradespeople and higher costs for consumers. Because everyone will have to be an accredited contractor, you can forget about multi-taskers. Instead, you'll be forced to choose between an army of contractors or black-market workers.

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A more serious side effect is that employers will have a harder time recruiting qualified workers. The *Globe and Mail* reported earlier this week that many employers are unable to find suitable skilled workers, even while roughly a quarter of recent grads are underemployed or unemployed.

We've also seen any number of industry players come out against the College of Trades. Almost 90% of tradespeople and employers have come out against the College of Trades.

We've also seen an impressive number of stakeholders come out in support of my colleague's private member's bill. Merit Ontario, the Ontario Home Builders' Association, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and the Ontario Chamber of Commerce are all in support of Bill 22.

This government can't find the willpower to make new jobs for young workers its top priority. Thankfully, we on the other side of this House are still bringing forward solutions. Thank you, Speaker.

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

Mr. Paul Miller: This is something close to my heart. I have three trades. I was an industrial mechanic/welder/fitter for over 30 years. I've had apprentices. What this isn't dealing with is the fact that you have first-, second- and third-year apprentices.

When I was a journeyman, if I had a first-year apprentice, I had to keep an eye on him a good part of the time so he was safe and didn't get injured on the job, as opposed to a third-year apprentice who had been around, had been on many job sites and had a lot more experience as a third-year apprentice. This person would be—I'd have to spend less time, because he would know what to do because he had already been with me or trained on those positions. That's a big difference, and that's not mentioned here.

They can talk about ratios, but you've got to talk about first-, second- and third-year apprentices—big difference. Because a third-year apprentice then becomes a journeyman a few months later, and he's on his own and he's got the same qualifications, or at least should have—not the experience that I have, but he certainly has the qualifications according to Ontario. So that's a big difference; that's not in there.

Let's talk about safety. Safety is very important on the job. If you increase the number of apprentices to 1 to 1, you put three journeymen on a job—it could be a fairly big job. You put three apprentices, who could be first-year apprentices—it might be second-year; it depends. Now those journeymen are going to spend a part of their time making sure the kid is all right. They're going to make sure he doesn't get in trouble, doesn't lose fingers, doesn't lose hands, especially when you're rigging. I mean, rigging—you're lifting 10,000-tonne items and machinery. I've seen apprentices lose fingers and arms over the 30 years I've been in because the journeyman may have sent him to do something on his own and

couldn't be over top of him at all times because the company was pushing. They wanted it done; they wanted it done fast. They wanted to save money. Whether anyone wants to admit it or not, this is about money, about getting cheaper labour, because they don't have to pay the apprentice as much as they pay their journeyman.

All the ratios are different in Ontario for different trades. Some might be 3 to 1, it might be 2 to 1, it might be 4 to 1, depending on the discipline. But when you get into some of the technical trades that require torches, using oxygen, acetylene, using high-rigging devices, come-alongs—all the things we use in the trades that require experience as well as the knowledge of how to at least start it. There's a lot of learning over a four-year apprenticeship.

I'm not sure that they've got it right yet. I certainly want to see a lot of young people working. I want to see more apprentices in the trades. I want to see them get to journeyman status so they can make good money, too. But while you're doing that, you've got to be safe.

This is a very simplistic answer, and I'm quite surprised if there are any tradesmen over there—and I think there are—who would be supporting this in its present form. We can make changes to put younger people back to work in apprenticeship programs, but we've got to do it right, Speaker, and this isn't the way to do it.

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

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to join the debate today.

If there's a good point to this bill—and I have to admit right from the start, there's not a lot of good about it. But if there is any good about it, it's that it started a discussion on skilled trades in the province of Ontario, which is something that I think we need to do much, much more of.

I'm a very strong supporter of the College of Trades. I'll tell you why. I'm not a tradesperson myself, but I was raised in a trades family. My father was a skilled tradesperson. He wasn't a plumber; he was a steamfitter. He worked with Local 46 in Toronto, and he worked on a lot of the nuclear plants—on Pickering and on Bruce. My dad was a man who believed in training, believed in safety, believed in self-determination and believed in dignity. I know my father would have loved the College of Trades, because it advanced what he considered to be an integral part of the post-secondary establishment in the province of Ontario: It advanced the skilled trades into that.

Too often, I think, we've looked at somebody going into the trades as a second choice, as somehow it wasn't good enough. You couldn't go to college or you couldn't go to university. Or you did go to college or you did go to university, and then somehow you happened to go into the trades. I don't think that's the right way to look at it, and certainly my father didn't.

But for some reason the criticism that's coming from the College of Trades, which allows the industry and the tradespeople themselves to make decisions that are im-

portant to their old profession—somehow the Conservatives seem to be saying that it's okay for teachers to have their own college, but it's not okay for electricians to have their own college. It's okay for a dental hygienist to have the dignity of their own college and their own profession, but it's not okay for a plumber. Somehow, the professions that have colleges today are smart enough to have colleges, and the tradespeople can't make those decisions; it's got to be made by government.

I don't buy that, Speaker. I think young people who are entering the trades are smart, intelligent people who are making a smart career choice. As they move through that career choice, as they move down that career path, I think they should be the ones who are making decisions about such things as ratios. Nobody knows more about this than the tradespeople themselves, the journeypersons and the people engaged in the industry.

I would say to the gentlemen who have joined us today in support of this bill to be careful. This could be a wolf in sheep's clothing. Believe me, the College of Trades is the way to go, in my opinion, to ensure we've got a strong supply of apprentices in the future. It's an integral part of a healthy economy.

The ratios, for example—that's not all the College of Trades will be doing, but that seems to be the focus of debate today—are all different for each one of the trades, and that's how it should be. The simplistic approach that's used in other provinces simply will not work, I believe, in a complex economy like Ontario's. I think we need to have the tradespeople themselves looking at it.

There are people in the nursing profession saying, "I have a college of nursing, but you can't have it because you're a tradesperson? What's wrong with you?" What's wrong with these tradespeople? Why can't they have a college? It seems to me that the proof is in the pudding. It's good enough for one but not good enough for the other?

I think the tradespeople I've talked to in the province of Ontario and those people who instruct our tradespeople in the community colleges are extremely supportive of this. They're supportive of the approach, and they buy into the argument that nobody knows more about the trades than the people involved in the trade itself.

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

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my pleasure to rise and speak to Bill 22, the Helping Ontarians Enter the Skilled Trades Act. First of all, I want to applaud the member from Simcoe North, the PC skilled trades and apprenticeship reform critic, for his tremendous work on this bill and the trade skills file as a whole.

At a time when Ontario is facing a jobs and debt crisis, I think we can all agree that a primary goal of government is to help create good jobs in the province. In Chatham-Kent-Essex, we've lost over 10,000 jobs since 2003. Coincidentally, that just happens to be the year the Liberals formed the government.

As our leader, Tim Hudak, pointed out yesterday, the unemployment rate amongst youth today is 16.2%. Our

government should be doing everything it can to make it easier for qualified young Ontarians to enter the skilled trades. This bill will modernize Ontario's antiquated apprenticeship system and create 200,000 new jobs by reducing the ratio of journeymen to apprentices to 1 to 1.

Recently, I chatted with a constituent of mine, Brian Wright. We spoke about this proposed change, and I asked him for his thoughts. Wright's Electric has been in Chatham for a good long time; 64 years, as a matter of fact. They employ 13 people at the moment. They know the community; they know the industry. When I asked him for his opinion on getting the apprenticeship ratios down to 1 to 1, he told me that he was very impressed. He said, "There are people who could get jobs if this was changed. And there are people who cannot get jobs if this remains the same. Ontario is way behind on this issue. I could never figure that one out; it just doesn't make any sense to me." Ontario, in fact, is well behind, with a majority of other provinces already having lower apprenticeship ratios.

1520

Brian also told me that the people in the industry want this. It's good for job creation, it's good for students and it is good for the public.

Speaker, there are many ways to create the right environment for businesses to grow. In this case, lowering the ratios to 1 to 1 will allow for smaller companies to create jobs by being able to bring in more apprentices. Government needs to get out of the way and stop telling businesses what they need to do. Instead, they should listen to what they've been asking for. Our young people need jobs, especially in the skilled trades field. Wake up, government, and let the small business owners, who drive the Ontario economy, do what they do best. So either get on the right track or get out of the way.

Thank you, Speaker.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: First, I want to brag a little bit. My daughter is an apprentice. She's going to be an electrician in about two weeks. She is just about to write her final exam and we're really proud of her. She comes from a long family—her dad, my husband, is an electrician, and so is her grandfather an electrician. We're really proud of her.

But the reason I'm standing up is that I know there will be lots of tradespeople listening, and lots of apprentices. I want you to go to mysudbury.ca. If you have an apprenticeship or a licence in anything—in bricklaying, in electrical, in building, in plumbing, welding, any trades at all—we need you in Sudbury. We have over 200 small businesses that support the mining industry. Sudbury is a great town to be in. If you are in a trade or thinking about a trade, please come: mysudbury.ca. We need you all. There is room for all the apprentices out there. Please come.

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

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'm delighted to take part in this debate and delighted to find out that the member from

Nickel Belt's daughter is looking to become an electrician—an apprentice, skilled trades—

M^{me} France Gélinas: In two weeks she's done.

Hon. Brad Duguid: In two weeks she's done. I think that's tremendous, and I think that speaks well of members who are actually putting their words into actions. When you think about it, we talk about telling others that we want to encourage our young people to go into the skilled trades, but is that what we're telling our own kids? I can tell you, I've got two young fellows, one that's in grade 11 and one that's in grade 12. I myself, too, am trying to get them to look at that option. I'm not going to tell them what to do. I couldn't tell them what to do. I never want to tell them what to do, because that's not going to work.

Interjection.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Well, one of them is a hockey player.

But the fact is that we want them to have options, we want them to look at every option, and we don't want them to look at the skilled trades as a backup option or not the first option. They are all very good opportunities for our young people, whether they take the college route, the university route, a combination thereof, or the skilled trades, which often involves a college education and sometimes even a university education. I think the choice needs to be left up to them, but we need to get rid of this stigma when it comes to the skilled trades.

One of the things when I was Minister of Labour—I know I'm off topic here a bit, but that makes me excited, because when I was Minister of Labour many years ago, one of the things that I really tried to become a champion of was encouraging women to get into the skilled trades. We have a pending skilled trades shortage in some of those areas. If we're only focusing on half the population to deal with that, I don't think that's a very effective or smart strategy. I just want to say to the member, congratulations to you and your daughter. I wish her all the best.

I say to the members in the House, I am pleased that we're talking about apprenticeships here. I think it's important that we do everything we can to promote apprenticeships.

As I said earlier in question period today, this government is really proud of the fact we've been a champion of expanding apprenticeships across the province, and we've done that very, very successfully. We've gone from 60,000 apprenticeships now to 120,000. Our record, frankly, is unrivaled when it comes to any government that's come before us, of all political stripes. It's something we're very, very proud of.

I would say to the members opposite that I appreciate the fact you've brought this forward. I think, though, that the plan that you're coming forward with is a simplistic plan to deal with a very complex problem. When I see politicians bring forward simplistic plans to deal with complex problems, I think we have to be very leery of that.

The other thing I would say is that we've gone past this. You're looking at making a decision in the old way,

where the politicians here at Queen's Park would make the decision based on whatever their priorities might be. Who knows what those priorities are? God forbid—but we're politicians; some of those priorities may be political. Some of those decisions may be made in the backrooms here at Queen's Park. I don't think that's the way to make those decisions.

I think things like apprenticeship ratios should be made by experts, those that know the skilled trades. They should be made by the people in the industry itself. I have confidence in their views. I have confidence in their intelligence. I have confidence in the fact that I think they can self-govern as well as any other profession in this province that gets that opportunity. That's why we agreed to create the College of Trades.

When it comes to apprenticeship ratios, the College of Trades has moved very quickly. Already they've reduced ratios in six different areas. When you compare it, as I said this morning, to the record of the party opposite—they've done six already in the eight years they've been in existence; in the eight years that that party was in office, they did zero.

I'm glad to see that they are supporting the apprenticeships. I hope they continue to do that. I commend the member on the work that he does to promote apprenticeships. I suggest that it would probably be more effective if he were to work with us on these issues, but I thank him for bringing this forward. We don't agree with the way he wants to go about doing this, though.

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

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'm pleased to rise and add my comments to Bill 22, An Act to amend the Trades Qualification and Apprenticeship Act.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Order. Stop the clock.

The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, it has been quiet all along, so I'd ask you to come to order. The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, I'd ask you to come to order.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Thank you, Speaker. I'll continue. Just wait till the horse racing debate; you haven't seen anything yet.

I've just got a few points to make before I let my colleague beside me speak. I just can't believe the arrogance coming from the government side and from the NDP, the fact that Alberta and Saskatchewan, who have a control on their spending, who have strong economies, are doing it right with apprenticeship ratios, but we can't do it here in Ontario. We have a deficit of \$13 billion; we've got \$200 billion in debt. Let's follow the other provinces. Let's get our apprenticeships to the right ratios. Let's create some jobs.

I find it funny, the coalition speaking together, and the left side of the coalition yelling out, "You can't do this. You've got to have a plan." You want to find jobs for the youth. What is the best way to find jobs for the youth but to make the apprenticeship ratios 1 to 1? They act like

spoiled children: "Gimme, gimme, gimme, but I'm not going to give you any plans." It's time to come out with your plan of action and get this economy back on track.

My brother is an electrician. He'd love to hire people, to train them, to improve the economy of Woodstock, the member from Oxford's area, but he can't, because he's a one-man show. He's got lots of work, and he'd like to bring it on. His own son had to leave this province to find work out west, and I find that disgusting. It's about time the government and the left side got together and supported us. Let's get these ratios 1 to 1 and get this economy back on track.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I would just say to the honourable member that if all they did was stop voting no on everything and actually tried to get a deal with the government, maybe then they could get some changes.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Chatham–Kent–Essex, come to order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: They can't stand in this House, vote no on everything, then propose something and not be prepared to work to try to make the change. That's the first point I would make.

The other thing I just want to say: I'm an electrician by trade—

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Stop the clock.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The opposition, you had your chance to speak; I would ask you to listen now.

The member for Timmins–James Bay.

1530

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I want to make two points. First of all, I'm an electrician by trade. I apprenticed in the mining sector, which has no ratios; there are zero ratios. You can have no journeymen and have all apprentices. That's the environment that I worked in, and I've got to tell you, it was not a very good one, because the department that I went into—I think there were 10 or 12 people who started as apprentices; there were only two or three of us who ever got our licence. Why? Most of the guys who went off to trade school were not able to pass at trade school because they did not have the type of mentoring they needed in the workplace.

The second part is, the employer would purposely push people out to bring in junior apprentices, in order to pay lesser wages.

So there's a real issue on this side. I think the Conservatives have to take a look at some of the realities.

The other thing I want to mention is an experience that I had with the super-trades. We're in the mining sector, and they had what they called super-trades, where an electrician could become a mechanic as well, or vice versa. They would put people in harm's way by not providing the training. A good friend of mine died as a result of electrocution. He was a mechanic who wanted to work

in a substation, who, quite frankly, wasn't trained to be able to do so. So there is a safety issue.

The last point I would make—there is a real issue here. What do we do in small-town, rural, northern Ontario, where there are small contractors who don't have the pool of labour to be able to attract journeymen? There are people like Lacroix Plumbing and others that I know who are trying to get people to come and work but they can't find the journeymen.

If we want to sit down and deal with this from the perspective of how to deal with safety adequately and how to resolve the issue of small-town, rural, northern Ontario, where there isn't the amount of people that you need as journeymen to be able to hire, then let's sit down and have that discussion and figure out how to find a practical solution to it.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to rise today in support of my colleague the member for Simcoe North and his bill, Bill 22, Helping Ontarians Enter the Skilled Trades Act, 2013.

This member has been the strongest advocate in the province, in our party, for the tradespeople. I thank them for coming here today. They've been here many times before: for the member for Simcoe North's bill; for my motions; to try to get the government to understand that you need to modernize the apprenticeship system in Ontario—it's archaic.

Reducing the required ratio of journeymen to apprenticeships from three or more to a 1-to-1 ratio will create thousands of new apprenticeship opportunities and employ our young people. The dichotomy between the two—the need for skilled labour and the high unemployment of youth—can help be matched by this. I don't know why the government and the third party do not see these opportunities. The young people of my riding want jobs. They can't get into apprenticeships at all, because the current system is out of date; it's a bottleneck. The ratio is going to help.

The member who just spoke, Mr. Bisson, said we can have a discussion—so we're having the discussion here today. He has been very passionate about this. But the reality is, thousands of our young people are entering the workforce and have left Ontario, as described by my colleague and seatmate. He gave a perfect example, a family example. That is what's happening. I don't understand why you're not understanding that.

Those skilled trades have been highly valued. We need to promote them more, as the member from Simcoe North has done. It is a great-paying job. Whenever I go into the high schools, into the career classes, young people want to know what to get into. I say, "You've got to look at skilled trades." Even the women in skilled trades—it's a great profession for women, and the member from Nickel Belt mentioned that. Promoting women in skilled trades—it's a good job. But under this government and their College of Trades, which has been men-

tioned here, the opportunities just aren't there for young people.

In rural ridings like mine, Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, we have a higher-than-average unemployment rate than the rest of the province. The province of Ontario has had the highest unemployment rate of all of Canada for six years running or more now. Is somebody not going to connect the dots over there, that we can provide opportunities for our young people in the trades? We're driving them out of the province. We're not creating those spaces for them.

I don't know if you read the Toronto Star—I'm sure all the members of the government have read the Toronto Star—but recently, "Jobs Mismatch a Ticking 'Time Bomb,'" "Skills Gap 'a Huge Issue'"—the story is in there about a major Ontario manufacturer that needed to hire 50 new skilled machinists and electricians and they couldn't find qualified workers in the ranks of the over 500,000 unemployed in the province. Instead, they had to go to the Philippines.

When I was up in northern Ontario this summer, they were saying, "Send us your young." They want to train young people. They need young people in the skilled trades. Mining companies were going as far away as Africa to get people to work in the mines.

Rick Miner has written many books. He estimates that by 2036, nearly two thirds of our population will be over 65 and under 15. In fact, within the next 10 years Ontario could be short over a million skilled workers. To borrow a phrase from Mr. Miner, "We're seeing a trend of people without jobs and jobs without people."

We have repeated this several times. We have brought private members' bills and motions to the floor of the Legislature. Would you please move on with changing our archaic apprenticeship system and help our young people find jobs. Get your head out of the sand. The province needs to change the apprenticeship ratio. Listen up and make that choice today and support the member from Simcoe North.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Simcoe North, you have two minutes for a response.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'd like to thank all 11 or 12 people who made comments today on this private member's bill and to address a couple of things.

First of all, I think I read the report earlier about the health and safety issues. That was a study done by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. They specifically said that there's no impact on the chamber of commerce.

Mr. Paul Miller: They're business. That's why. They're business.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Yes, and it's too bad. It's too bad we actually have businesses that want to make money and create jobs. Isn't it too bad? It's really bad. To the member from Hamilton East, isn't it too bad that we want to create jobs? Go away. You're disgusting.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Simcoe North, speak through the Chair.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: As far as the member from Oakville and the minister, they're more concerned about their College of Trades—Ronnie Johnson and Pat Dillon and the boys. That's what they are all worried about. But you'll get lots of chance on the opposition day motion on April 10 to discuss this as well, because we want to abolish it. It's a waste of time; it's a waste of taxpayers' dollars. You know that.

Look, the place is full of people here today. Many of them are people from the racing industry whom you've also put out of work, so they'll be able to go and take apprenticeships as well.

You can babble away all you want over there, but you know nothing about this file. I've told you that a dozen times. You know nothing about it. You know nothing about this file, Minister. Go and learn what's happening in Ontario. Find out from these people. Find out from the business people, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, all the people that actually create jobs and work in Ontario and make this economy run while you try dragging it down with crazy decisions like on the horse racing industry: the Slots at Racetracks Program. Just how pathetic are they over there?

What have we got here today? We've got the coalition agreeing with them. They're back to it. You can have Ornge and you can have all these cancelled gas plants, but you know what? They'll take it every time because they want to side with the coalition. It's all about the coalition now. They don't want an election and get rid of these cons over here. They want to support them all the way.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Order. The member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, this is your last warning.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Simcoe North.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I'm not going to start the next debate until we have quiet in the House.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, you're not helping.

I think I received a forewarning from many of you that this next debate will be very rowdy. Let me assure you that I will maintain discipline. So I'm giving you a forewarning right now.

GAMING POLICY

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the following principles should be immediately applied to the province's gaming policy:

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(1) implementation of the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp.'s transformation of gaming strategy be suspended

until after the 2014 municipal elections in order to allow municipalities wanting to be a host site for a casino to undertake a referendum on the issue on or before the 2014 ballot;

(2) a panel composed of representatives nominated by the three recognized parties be tasked with hearing from stakeholders and drafting fair spending limits for parties taking part in the referendum on casinos;

(3) changes to the Slots at Racetracks partnership be frozen in order to enable the horse racing industry to continue to operate while the government engages the industry in a robust consultation with the goal of ensuring its survival, stability and growth; and

(4) current funds from unclaimed purses due to race-track closures be made available to local or community racetracks.

I so move.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Natyshak has moved private members' notice of motion number 15. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Before I begin, from the outset, I have some people I'd like to acknowledge who have helped me along the way to learn more about this industry and to advocate on behalf of it. Number one, I'd like to thank our leader, Andrea Horwath, and my NDP caucus. They—

Interjections.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It's already starting. You know, Mr. Speaker, they will not only—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Stop the clock. The member for Lanark, you've been warned before. This is your second warning and the last one. I opened the debate by saying I expected this, and I expect to maintain order.

Mr. Natyshak.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Speaker, they can choose to not show me any respect, but what they are doing is not showing the people who came here today and took the time out of their days any respect. This is an opportunity for us to have this debate, so I hope they will oblige this House.

I'd like to thank our leader, Andrea Horwath, who actually—this bill piggybacks on what she introduced in October. Unfortunately, it was killed due to prorogation. I'd like to thank members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada: Christopher Wilson, Sharon DeSousa, Theo Lagakos.

Members of the Ontario Harness Horse Association: Jim Whelan, Brian Tropea, Christine Arlidge, Ken Hardy, Mark Horner, Paul Lindsey, who have met with me countless times and informed me. It's wonderful to have their support.

Members of the Ontario Horse Racing Industry Association: Sue Leslie, Anna Meyers, Glenn Sikura. Also individuals whom I've met in person, met with many times and also virtually over the Internet: Anita and Brad Fritz, thank you, guys; Bob McIntosh; Dr. John McKinley; Leo Thibideau; Dr. Mark Biederman; Bob

and Veronica Ladouceur; Mark Williams; Paul Branton; the mayor of Lakeshore, Tom Bain; Roy Steele; Jaime Higgs—who at this moment is awaiting the delivery of his first child; it's really a remarkable thing and we congratulate him—Brittany Kennedy; Marilyn Heald; Darin Kennedy; Ken Szijarto; Doris Middleton; Jason Mitchell; Ron Mitchell; Jane Mitchell; Ellie Mahew; Karen Duck, who is celebrating her birthday today—happy birthday, Karen; Ashley Keer; and Kurt Hick.

I want to thank those from the industry who have taken the time out of their lives to be here today in support of this motion. Your presence here today humbles me.

Those who have worked with me on this issue over the past year will know that I speak frankly, so expect that from me again today.

This is an important debate. It will allow us elected officials of this House to firmly express our position on not only the future of horse racing, but the future of gaming in this province.

You see, as we've tried to analyze the rationale behind the decision to end the SARP program, we can come to no logical conclusion. Why destroy a partnership that was successful in creating 30,000 full-time jobs? Why end a program that delivered over \$1 billion per year to government coffers? Why obliterate an agreement that was responsible for billions more in economic activity for rural Ontario? The old adage says, "When nothing else makes sense, follow the money." So where is the money?

Gaming is inherently a risky business. It is, in fact, the business of risk. Hedging your bets and stacking the decks always puts the odds in the house's favour. If the house always wins, and we, the people, are the house, then why sell the farm? That's where the lure of a quick payout and a sure bet has enticed the Liberal government to go all in on private casino expansion. This was and is and continues to be about big private casinos eliminating the competition and seizing that market share. This was a hostile takeover by the OLG, sanctioned by the Liberal government and orchestrated by privateers. The power and influence of the casino capitalists are palpable in our communities, and an army of high-paid lobbyists has descended on potential host communities with a singular focus: to get the deals done and to start raking in the profits.

That's why this motion calls on the government to establish a tri-partisan committee to set spending and intervenor status limits to ensure that a municipal referendum is conducted in a fair and transparent way.

It's private business. It's not their fault. Their motives are clear. It's the meaning of their existence. Do I think that private casinos could be more successful than publicly run casinos? Well, in fact, I do think that they would be extremely efficient at drawing in gamblers on the hopes of a big payout—only to fleece communities out of busloads of money to send to a vault somewhere in Las Vegas.

But is that where we want to go as a province? Is it good and responsible public policy? We in the NDP say

no. We say it is the responsibility of the government to weigh the risks and rewards of gaming expansion and to temper that desire for a quick payout with the knowledge that the socio-economic impacts of gambling often result in terrible effects that most often municipalities have to shoulder the financial burdens of dealing with. That's why this motion calls on the government to ensure that a municipal referendum takes place prior to any casino expansion to give the people a say as to whether they want a casino in their area or not—a right and a process that previously existed, but was eliminated by the Liberal government to further pave the way for privatization.

This motion today gives the other parties the clear opportunity to state their position on private casino expansion, and I hope they do, because the other two parties subscribe quite clearly to the doctrine of privatization.

I would like to know and I hope we all hear how—how—this secures the future of the horse racing industry in this province. You will probably not hear that plan fully articulated by the opposition parties during this debate. You will undoubtedly hear that this all could have been averted with an election. I would ask you to think about that. As difficult and emotional as this issue is, would a PC plan to privatize all gaming in the province of Ontario be any better than a Liberal plan to privatize all gaming in the province of Ontario? Because from where I sit, that is precisely the reason that horse racing is in the position that it is. They are one and the same.

You see, this was never about SARP. The call for transparency was a misdirection. The terms of SARP were always available for public scrutiny. Unlike the deals that are currently being negotiated under a cloak of secrecy, SARP was wholly transparent. Could it have been refined? Could it have been more tightly regulated? I think those in the industry would fully admit that we could have done more to refine it, to add some benchmarks on service delivery—absolutely. But as I've said many times before, the program did not have to be blown up to infuse those measures of transparency and measures of benchmarks into the program. But again, this was never about SARP. It's a clear example of how with enough money, power and influence, you can eliminate the competition.

So where are we? Since last year, the Premier has resigned, the finance minister has parachuted into a soft landing on Bay Street, and we still have no plan; we have maybes. "Maybe historic gaming machines will replace slots revenue. Maybe a sportsbook could enhance a product line. Maybe a V75 wager could be introduced."

1550

It's well known that the transition panel reported that the industry would not be able to survive without government intervention. It's ironic that SARP was never a subsidy, but was perpetuated as such by the minions. However, the new government will most definitely be required to inject hundreds of millions of dollars in short-term funding to achieve half the levels of activity once

found in the industry. That's why my motion calls on this government to suspend the cancellation of SARP until the industry can negotiate a reasonable transition product or series of products to make up for what was lost.

I haven't spoken about the breeding side, but undoubtedly what was once a world-class industry revered around the world for its quality of stock has been obliterated, frozen by this government's decision, arbitrarily and without consultation, to change the rules of the game. Yearling sales last year were reduced by nearly 50% year-over-year, and we can only expect that trend to continue.

This is why my motion requires the government to secure orphaned purse monies and direct them to community organizations such as the Lakeshore horse racing group, who are developing a plan to operate a community-based non-profit racetrack and schedule for the Leamington Raceway—and eventually a new track, if feasible. That money should go to the horsemen, who are committed to the preservation of the industry, and not back into OLG coffers.

Of course, the nature of this motion, if passed, indicates the will of the majority of the democratically elected members of this House. It will be up to the government to decide to abide by their will or to deny democracy and deny the democratic process of the people, the very fundamental pillar of our society. To ignore this directive would disenfranchise all Ontarians who put their faith in us.

The debate is no longer about blame. Those arguments have been made and have surely played out in the court of public opinion. What this motion does is allow the government to acknowledge that their actions have had deep consequences, and that those consequences have been devastating to a group of people who did nothing to deserve it. It allows us members to acknowledge this and to attempt to remedy this issue.

The original architects of this plan are no longer here to set policy. You have the opportunity—you, on the government side—to do the right thing, to save a wonderful industry. This motion gives you the space to do that, and I hope you will.

I urge you to do something historic. I urge you to do the right thing: Support this motion. The very fabric of rural Ontario relies on it.

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

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the member from Essex for putting forth his motion here today. At the outset, because there is a court case pending between Windsor Raceway and OLG, I can't comment on the court case, but I have offered my assistance to the member to work with him on his Leamington project, and that offer stands this afternoon.

I'm pleased to discuss the horse racing industry in Ontario and the work our government has been doing to ensure a sustainable, transparent and accountable industry. Our government is committed to supporting a sustainable racing industry that is fair to industry partners

and the people of this great province. That is why we convened three distinguished former Ontario cabinet ministers—Elmer Buchanan, John Snobelen and John Wilkinson—to prepare a report and determine—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I can't let you carry on; it'll just get out of hand. The member for Haliburton-Brock: You've been warned. The member for Lambton-Kent: You've been warned.

Hon. Jeff Leal: This panel, building on work that was done by the Sadinsky report—they did fantastic work consulting with the industry and providing findings that outlined a clear path forward.

Here are some of the findings from the panel. The panel found “that it would be a mistake to reinstate SARP.... The program has provided far more money than was needed to stabilize the industry—its original purpose—and has done so without compelling the industry to invest in a better consumer experience.... The panel concluded that a viable world-class industry requires public investment, though substantially less than the industry has received from SARP.”

In response to the report, our government is moving forward with these recommendations. We're guided by the panel's report on SARP, which calls for a program that was previously, as John Snobelen said, bad public policy, unaccountable, not transparent, creating a fractious industry that lost focus on its customers.

We put in place transition funding to help the industry find a way forward with a plan to ensure long-term sustainability for the industry. We've asked the horse racing transition panel and industry to work together so that there will be more than 800 days of racing this year, subject to approval of the Ontario Racing Commission.

We've had tremendous success. We've reached agreements with nine tracks in the province of Ontario: Woodbine, Mohawk, Western Fair, Grand River, Clinton, Hanover, Georgian Downs, Flamboro Downs and Fort Erie Race Track. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to announce that—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member from Leeds-Grenville, you're warned.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I'm pleased to announce that this afternoon at precisely 3:30 it was posted that racing dates have now been provided by the Ontario Racing Commission for the 2013 calendar.

Negotiations are ongoing. We're hoping to have more transition agreements in place to ensure that racing continues. We're willing to talk to any track that has a licence, a desire to continue racing and provides the required financial data to support this great industry.

Mr. Speaker, I want to have a couple of quotes from some people. I want to quote Dennis Mills, president and CEO of Racing Future Inc.: “After just a month in office, Premier Wynne is showing that she really understands both the horse racing industry and the gaming industry, and how the right interplay between the two can benefit

the public interest and” the great economy in the rural part of our province.

Mark Wales, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture: “The horse racing industry is vital to Ontario’s economy, representing 60,000 jobs throughout rural Ontario. The transition funding will provide much-needed stability for the industry while a long-term sustainable model is developed that ensures the future of the Ontario horse racing industry.”

Mr. Speaker, we listened to the people in the field. Premier Wynne announced just recently reintegrating horse racing to the Ontario Lottery Corp. Over the next little while, we’ll be looking at that portion of proceeds for OLG to make sure that there’s a section available to make sure that we keep this industry very sustainable in the province of Ontario.

We’re looking at ways—I just have a number of supportive quotes here from Sue Leslie and others. Certainly, today, we announced the transition program for Fort Erie, of course a track that was built in 1896; and Georgian Downs in Barrie, Ontario, which was formed originally by Earl Rowe, who was a very distinguished Lieutenant Governor in the province of Ontario and, in fact, was a federal member of Parliament for a period of time.

We’re working very closely with the panel. John Snobelen has done an outstanding job. He was at the cabinet table when the original Slots at Racetracks Program was brought in. He himself has said it was a program that was not transparent, was not accountable, and he certainly has provided great advice to the panel, along with Elmer Buchanan, a very distinguished former agriculture minister in the province of Ontario, and John Wilkinson, of course, who served so ably on this side of the House. These are hard-working individuals who are out in the field, who are getting the job done, who are putting transition agreements in place to make sure that we have a world-class horse racing industry in the province of Ontario. That is so important.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to correct the record. The announcement today was dealing with April dates only, so I think that’s very important. We’ll keep negotiating with the Ontario Racing Commission to get the rest of the dates in place.

I also want to make reference to a Toronto Star article, “Ontario Government Feeds Cash to Three Racetracks” to keep a sustainable industry going in the province of Ontario.

1600

Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude. We’re doing the right thing. We’re putting a plan in place. Horse racing will remain a very important part of the rural economy in this great province.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It is my pleasure to join the debate today on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus and to commit our support to this motion and our continued support to the Ontario horse racing industry.

I’m proud to be a member of a party that has stood up for this industry throughout the past year. Our critic, Monte McNaughton, put forward a ground-breaking piece of legislation, that died in prorogation, to make sure local communities would have more say. He supported me in my effort to have the Auditor General review the OLG’s decision. And it was our party’s white paper that reconfirmed its commitment to Ontario horse racing to make sure it remains a viable and important agricultural community.

Speaker, I know many of the people in this House understand that I’ve taken this decision by the Liberal-NDP government very personally. There are 1,000 jobs in my riding, in Nepean–Carleton, at the Rideau Carleton Raceway; many of those people are watching at home today. I want to continue to commit to fight on their behalf.

As I said, there are 1,000 people. I want to tell you four stories.

Rick Sullivan is a trainer and an owner of a practice facility who had just built a new barn for his racing facility with a \$100,000 inheritance before the cancellation. He’s now fighting liver cancer, and he’s afraid that he has got no other recourse if the Slots at Racetracks Program ends.

Gary McDonald is a friend of mine, a 55-year-old driver. He has done this his entire life. He used to have five employees; he now has three. He’s going to have to even let the rest of them go, including his own son. He’s afraid he’s going to lose his house.

Ted McDonald is another driver. He has no other trades experience. He tells me that he will either need to retrain or end up on Ontario Works. He had a stable which employed three people. Now they’re all going to lose their job.

Then there’s Jamie Copley. He’s a trainer and a young father who just built a house, and he’s afraid he is going to have to go to the United States to race in order to provide for his family. That is not just, that is not what we stand for in the Ontario PC Party, and these are real people who have been affected by the NDP-Liberal coalition.

The member from Essex needs to understand the consequences of his actions. By allowing the Liberal budget to pass last year, the budget that killed the SARP, he’s complicit in destroying the industry and the lives—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Stop the clock.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I can’t hear the debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Neither can I.

Member for Nepean–Carleton, continue.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you, Speaker. The member from Essex talks about respect until it’s other people’s turn to speak. He is absolutely complicit, and he should be aware that his actions have hurt the people I represent, like Rick, Gary, Ted and Jamie. The member is now trying to save face, to right his wrong, but it is too

little too late, and I find it, frankly, offensive that he would come here today and use these people and mislead them, because he is intentionally hurting the people I represent.

His actions on June 20, 2012, were shameful, when he allowed the budget to pass.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Stop the clock.

I would ask the member to withdraw.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Withdraw, Speaker.

Your actions today are giving false hope—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Just make it clear. I asked you to withdraw.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Withdrawn. Could we at least stop the clock?

The NDP could have offered a different course. They could have done a number of things. Last year, when Andrea Horwath was playing Let's Make a Deal with Dwight Duncan, she could have said, "Stop the cancellation of the SARP." She didn't. She has an opportunity right now to deal with the Liberals in this budget, but she didn't. And that member from Essex had an opportunity to vote against the budget last year and he didn't, Mr. Speaker. These members opposite are just as responsible for killing the SARP as that party opposite. Today, we are here because that Liberal-NDP coalition didn't give a second thought to the people I represent. The race days are over in some places across Ontario—just ask the people at Kawartha Downs.

The member for Essex, the NDP and the Liberals colluded together, Mr. Speaker, a year ago. They are responsible for what is happening in our communities, and I want to let them know that we will continue to stand up in the Ontario PC Party, and I'm proud to support Ontario horse racing.

Interjections.

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

Further debate? The leader of the third party.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's my pleasure to speak to the motion before us today, that was brought forward by the NDP MPP for the riding of Essex, Taras Natyshak, someone who has been diligent in his fight on behalf of the horse racing industry, as well as against the wrong-headed movements of the Liberal government in terms of their "modernization" of the gaming system in Ontario.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Huron-Bruce, you're warned.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm not here to huff and to puff, and I'm not here to have demonstrations of inappropriate proportions, considering that actions are more important than demonstrations. You can talk all you want, you can huff and puff all you want, you can scream and shout all you want, but our job here in Legislature is to try to actually get results for people, and New Democrats have worked very hard to do exactly that.

In fact, we have been working very closely with the horse racing industry. We have been working very

closely with people in rural communities and communities across the province that are being devastated by the callous behaviour of the Liberal government when they decided—without even a blink of the eye—in a stroke of the pen to simply deep-six an industry that not only was an economic driver in rural Ontario, but actually has been a way of life for a lot of people across Ontario, including myself.

As I've said before, I can remember when I went with my own family—my dad and my other family members—to Flamboro Downs to watch the trots, check out the harness racing and participate in what then was a family outing, frankly. It was something we all enjoyed, and it's always been a big part of our community in the Hamilton area.

But when it comes to the modernization plan, as the Liberals call it, it's not really that at all. What it is, is a plan to have the private casino interests in the world—in North America—swoop in and take over all the opportunity when it comes to casino gaming in Ontario. What we see as a result is that the people who get squeezed out in that process are the horse racing industry. That's what this is all about. It's all about shutting down the horse racing industry in favour of the private casino group, and we think that is absolutely the wrong thing to do. We think it's wrong-headed, and we think that private casinos, first and foremost, are not the right thing for Ontario in terms of a solution.

What people need to do is ask the Conservatives whether they think private casinos and the privatization of gaming in Ontario is the right thing to do. I think you would find out very clearly that both the Liberals and the Conservatives agree that privatization of gaming—making sure the Donald Trumps of the world and the big American casinos come in here and take over Ontario's gaming system is exactly what both those parties want to do.

New Democrats are quite different. We actually don't believe that's the answer for Ontario. But we do believe the answer is to make sure we have a strong and vibrant horse racing industry in this province, and that we freeze right now this wrong-headed direction the Liberals have us on so that we can make sure that industry is actually strong and vibrant going forward; not for me, Speaker, not for you, and maybe not for any individual who's sitting in the seats of this Legislature. But for individuals who are sitting in this gallery, yes. For communities, for people, for small businesses, for breeders, for people who have stables, for trainers, for people who provide feed, it's not just a quirky, cute little thing called horse racing, it is an entire industry of people who get their livelihoods from that industry. That this government was so callous in its disregard for those people is shameful and disgraceful.

What we are trying to do is pull that out of the fire, because that's where it ended up. It ended up in the fire because the government decided they were going to simply toss away that entire group of folks, including the animals, frankly. We now have people who are not sure

whether they should be paying their bills to feed their families or paying their bills to feed their animals. That's the kind of situation people have been in for a while now, and it's unacceptable.

1610

What New Democrats say is, let's try to right the wrong that the Liberals have put in place. Let's try to cut through the bluster and the horse manure that comes from the opposition and actually look at some real, practical solutions to the problem we're in. The only way that we can do that is by supporting this motion and making sure that we're taking the proper time not only to make that industry strong again with a real plan but to actually make sure that we have a system in Ontario that allows everyday people to have a say on whether or not they want a casino shoved down their throats.

Let's not forget, that's the other piece of this motion. The Liberal government wants to hide and wants to pretend that they don't have a stake in all of this, when we know very much that their plan is to shove private casinos down the throats of communities that don't want them.

What we're saying is, take a chill pill, let the people of Ontario decide whether or not they want a casino that's going to change the face of their community forever, and let's have the real conversation—there I go; I said that word. Let's have a real discussion and planning with the horse racing industry so that we can come out of the chaos that we're in right now to a place that makes sense and that is reasonable and is actually respectful of the horse racing industry and respectful of Ontarians in terms of their choice around casinos. That's what this motion is about, and I hope the Liberals and Conservatives support it.

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

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'm happy to rise and speak on this bill and join in the debate this afternoon. I want to talk about modernizing the OLG, and I will take exception to the leader of the third party about what that means from her perspective.

Let's not forget that OLG provides \$2 billion to schools and hospitals each and every year. OLG's return to the province is the largest single source of revenue after taxes, and if we want to fluff that off, I think we have to be awfully careful. When you look at that number, \$2 billion to schools and hospitals every year is very significant.

The current business plan for OLG is old, more than 20 years old. It is time to bring this multi-million-dollar company into the current century. I know that because my grandmother, who only died a couple of years ago, thought OLG was only about buying a Wintario ticket, and she had no idea what else was involved. But she certainly appreciated the investment in the schools and the hospitals each and every year. So I do take exception with the leader of the third party. It is important that we keep looking at OLG and modernizing it.

When we look at the benefits of OLG—increased revenues to the province by \$1.3 billion a year to help fund those vital public services I spoke of; \$3 billion in new private sector capital investment; 2,300 net new jobs in the industry; and nearly 4,000 additional jobs in hospitality and retail sectors.

The thing to remember—and I think it has been stated before—is that we won't impose any kind of facility on municipalities that don't want to support one. We respect duly elected, democratic municipalities, city councils and so on. That is not what the Liberal government is all about. Municipalities will consult publicly with their constituents and pass resolutions.

We're not in the position of trying to ask municipalities to be hosts when they don't want to be hosts. Part of my area where I live has said no. Another part of my municipality has said yes. It's a democratic process, and we respect that.

We will continue to invest \$50 million each year in the provincial problem gambling program, because we are a fair and responsible government. It's about balance. All existing responsible gambling features—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): There's a lot of chatter going on on the left side of the House. I'd ask you to keep it down.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Thank you, Speaker. It is hard to hear in the House.

All those responsible gambling features will be extended to new gaming sites and lottery offerings.

So what do our friends in the PC Party have to say? Hudak's plan to privatize the OLG is misguided, Speaker. A fire sale of the OLG will result in tax seepage and a drop in revenues that would affect the delivery of health care. Ontario has already suffered enough as a result of failed privatization schemes of the previous PC government. We, through the OLG, are seeking private sector agreements as they modernize Ontario in a careful and balanced manner—a careful and balanced manner. And instead of public consultation support, the PCs just want to take a heavy-handed approach.

As for the third party, there's not a lot to say other than we need to acknowledge in this healthy debate and discussion that it was the NDP government that started casino gambling, so to say they're not part of it isn't accurate. The NDP government opened the first casino in Ontario, in Windsor. So let's just acknowledge that we're all in this together. We are all in this together.

And if there's a party that doesn't want \$2 billion to schools and hospitals each year, I think we need to hear about that. It is the largest revenue source in Ontario.

We do need to modernize the OLG. It's time to do that; it hasn't been done in 20 years. We do need to engage people in this modernization process. We do need to strike the right balance, preserve our revenues and create a fair society for Ontarians. That's what we need to do—and keep those benefits coming from the OLG.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): There are a lot of members coming into the House because the vote will be held shortly. But I also ask you to keep quiet. Plus, several of you were already warned. So I hope you want to remain for the vote.

Further debate?

Mr. Robert Bailey: It's a pleasure to rise in the debate today and speak to this private member's bill. I want to say right off that at the end of the day, I intend to support this motion, mainly for the horsemen and the trainers and the horse industry in this province.

Interjection.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'm not voting for the coalition. I'm voting for the horsemen and the trainers and the industry.

In my community, there's Hiawatha Horse Park back in Sarnia, and Hiawatha has consistently been one of the best-run horse tracks in the province, generating over \$30 million in revenues in 2011. Obviously, there was a lot of shock back in my community a year ago March, when the Liberal government, with the support of the NDP, announced it would scrap that successful revenue-sharing agreement with the horse racing industry. In our community, this cost almost 300 jobs, between the OLG and the people who worked at Hiawatha.

Based on the signed contract with the city of Sarnia, the city of Sarnia received over \$24 million over the number of years that racing was in effect there, and they've still got a contract, hopefully, until 2015. This is a very important source of revenue for the city of Sarnia and, of course, those men and women who worked in the industry—the trainers, the breeders, and the people who ran small businesses in that community as well.

This sort of blatant disregard for the people of my community is common from the Liberal government of the last 10 years, but I was surprised when the NDP supported them in the loss of these jobs.

By dodging last year's budget vote, the NDP gave the green light to this Liberal government to gut the horse racing and breeding industry of this province.

The Minister of Rural Affairs brags that they're going to have 800 races in this province next year, but that's down from over 1,500 races in the previous year. Where are those horsemen going to race?

Mr. Speaker, I think my time is up, so I'm going to yield to my colleagues.

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

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I speak in support of the motion brought forth by the member from Essex. When he speaks about a referendum, it means that people want to be able to have a say on casinos. That's what they had when we talked about Niagara and Windsor; they had a say.

What we had about a year ago was the ability of communities to be able to have a say in a referendum, until the Liberals quietly said, "We'd better slip that out of public view, and then make sure that cities have the

power to do it so that we don't have to take any responsibility for that particular issue."

1620

People want to be able to have a say on casinos. Governments have lost \$700 million in the last 10 years on casinos; they are not a great economic strategy. They are losing money. That's why you're modernizing; that's why you brought in—God bless—Godfrey, who is the privatizer par excellence, and that's why you're bringing in light-Liberal privatization as opposed to Tory-in-a-hurry privatization.

Horse racing is getting a temporary reprieve; that's all they're getting. It's a one-year reprieve until the election, and after that, who knows? But who were the ones negotiating to try to save the—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I'd ask the speaker to speak through the Chair and not address the audience, because you've just incited the noise that's carrying on.

For a couple of members who are turning their backs at the Chair and figure they can shout: I recognize your voice.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: And while we were negotiating to save the racetracks, what were the Tories doing? They absolutely had nothing to say. In that budget debate, they had nothing to say. Saying no to the budget meant that it was a brilliant cover to say nothing and do absolutely nothing. That's what they're about.

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

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Speaker, as you know, over the past year I have travelled throughout the province of Ontario. I've been to nearly every track in this province and have met with thousands and thousands of men and women who are involved in Ontario's horse racing industry.

The Liberals' rushed decision to cancel the successful Slots at Racetracks partnership, which was allowed to proceed with the help of the New Democratic Party here in Ontario, has put at risk some 60,000 jobs across our province. We're talking about 800 to 1,000 jobs in Dresden in my riding; 1,000 jobs at the Rideau Carleton Raceway near Ottawa; 800 jobs at Kawartha Downs in Peterborough; 2,000 jobs in Fort Erie; 12,000 jobs—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek: This is your final warning. Just turning away and hiding does not make it that I don't recognize you.

The member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Speaker, 12,000 jobs are at risk in and around the city of London. These are real jobs and real people, but I'm proud to say that Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC Party have been standing up and fighting on behalf of the horse racing industry since the Liberals, with the help of the NDP, pulled the rug out from under them. We've been clear, we haven't wavered, and we have not sat on our hands.

On April 26, 2012—11 months ago—I recall introducing my first piece of private member's business: a bill to ensure that a local municipal referendum would be held prior to the development of any new casino. You see, Speaker, our party and our leader Tim Hudak were the only party to have put forward a comprehensive plan to grow and develop Ontario's horse racing industry. Here's what we're going to do: We're going to cancel OLG's plan to abandon racetrack slots and we're going to scrap the Liberal plan to build 29 new casinos across the province of Ontario.

Let me be clear: The Ontario PCs will build on a successful partnership with Ontario's horse racing industry. Unlike the McGuinty-Wynne-Horwath government, our party is looking ahead and laying out our plans and our ideas to ensure that horse racing is a key component in Ontario's gaming strategy.

Again, over a year ago, the Liberals, working with the third party, united to pass their negotiated budget, killing the Slots at Racetracks partnership and risking the livelihoods of 60,000 men and women. We opposed the decision then, we've been standing up for the horse racing industry all along, and we will continue to support and advocate for the families and the jobs involved in the Ontario horse racing industry.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I want to know what it is about the Liberal government that they hate northern Ontario so badly. Why is it that they have to stick it to us every time they can?

We've had horse racing in Nickel Belt for as long as I can remember. For decades we've had horse racing. Now they stand up and say, "Whoa, we have an agreement with nine tracks." That does not include a track in northern Ontario. When they talk about, "Oh, the industry will be smaller," what they really mean is: "The industry will be concentrated in southern Ontario, and to hell with you guys in northern Ontario."

I don't accept this. I have families that depend on this industry. I have 200 people in Nickel Belt who are out of a job—200 families with little kids—that are out of a job because of what they did. It doesn't have to be like that; it doesn't have to be like that.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to join in the debate. I want to welcome everyone here to our galleries today. Obviously, I'm going to be supporting the motion, as are my PC caucus colleagues.

Standing up for the horse racing industry is nothing new for our caucus, nothing new for me, certainly. I've been standing up for my constituents who are affected by this loss of the SARP program. I've also been standing up for the 400 jobs at the Thousand Islands casino and standing up against what this government is trying to do.

I want to remind you that it was this budget that made sure that the SARP cancellation continued. In a minority Parliament, it takes two to tango, so I want to make sure

we do acknowledge that the third party sat on their hands and were enablers in allowing this to happen.

I also want to tell the people who are in the crowd that at this 11th hour, we're going to stand up, we're going to support this motion and we're going to support you.

We've also tabled a motion at public accounts very similar to what Ms. MacLeod had tabled to send this whole cancellation of SARP, the bingo hall issue, the whole 29 new casinos to the Auditor General to have him investigate this. It will be debated on April 10, and I hope that the third party will support that motion at public accounts on April 10.

Just in closing, I want to remind members that the day I think was quite significant for the SARP program was June 20. Ladies and gentlemen, that's when 52 of you supported your budget, 35 of us stood against your budget and the third party sat on their hands.

You know what, Speaker? We've got maybe another NDP speaker. I know that the member for Essex has got two minutes to close. I think you owe it to the people in this crowd to apologize for sitting on your hands on June 20. That's what I think he should do.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: First of all, I want to commend my colleague from Essex for taking the lead on this issue. If anyone in this House has stood up for rural Ontario and the democratic rights of cities, it is this member.

In July 2010, the Liberal government set in motion this privatization machine, what the Globe and Mail has called one of the biggest privatizations in Ontario history. What do they want to do and what do the Tories want to do? They want to make sure that large, huge gambling corporations from Las Vegas come to Ontario, take the money out of this province and shut down the horse racing and the other businesses in this province. That's the outcome of the so-called OLG modernization.

1630

We're talking modernization. We're talking about sell-off. We're talking about transportation of tons of cash out of this province. OLG modernization is a reorientation of the whole gambling marketing to urban areas and young people. Read their document. Rural Ontario is ruled out; downtown Toronto is ruled in as the target market.

In this case, the Tories weren't as fast as the Liberals. The Liberals got in first on privatization. The Tories love the idea. They're following up as a strong, strong supporter on the idea of privatization. They may well vote for this today, but be well aware that it's that party that would sell off everything if they were in power.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: I just want to remind the people here that this Saturday, March 30, is the final race at Kawartha Downs in Fraserville in my area.

Interjection: Shame, shame.

Ms. Laurie Scott: It is shameful. They've been there for 40 years, so what they've built over the 40 years, this

Liberal government has taken one year to destroy—40 years of the horse racing industry—

Interjections.

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

The member for Essex, you have two minutes to reply.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I appreciate the submissions by all members in this House, because it finally gives us the opportunity to put everybody on the record. Unfortunately, as I expected, I didn't hear the PC plan for casino expansion during this debate. I know that it's a full-blown expansion on privatization. But they weren't going to talk about it.

As I've said, this debate is not about the SAR program. It's about privatization, it's about market share, it's about big business coming in and eating that market share. That's what it was about.

I'll tell you, I'm not going to apologize, but I will thank the leader of my party for standing up this House when your leader couldn't show his face to support the horse racing industry.

Mr. Speaker, what you're learning, what the people are learning—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Prince Edward—Hastings, come to order.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I'll keep standing until we have order.

The member for Essex.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Mr. Speaker, this is an emotional debate, and—

Mr. Tim Hudak: On a point of order: I just want to make the record clear that I am here in my seat supporting the horsemen. I just wish the member had done so in the budget last year when he sold out the horse racing industry—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Order. I just remind the leader that that's not a point of order.

The member for Essex.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: What I need people to understand, and I think what they've learned over this year, is that the politics that happen in this place matter, and the policies matter. The absolute initiatives that each party takes when it comes to all aspects of our government and all aspects of our province matter. They have a direct impact on people. And the privatization scheme that's currently going on under the OLG is the exact same plan that the opposition party would embark on, and if we don't support and we don't give them an opportunity to put that plan into place, that's another day that the horse racing industry gets to survive, and I'm proud of that.

Thank you very much for this debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

TAXPAYER PROTECTION
AMENDMENT ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION
DES CONTRIBUABLES

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will deal with the first ballot item, number 10, standing in the name of Mr. Hillier.

Mr. Hillier has moved second reading of Bill 19. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

We'll take the vote at the end of regular business.

HELPING ONTARIANS ENTER
THE SKILLED TRADES ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 VISANT
À FACILITER L'ACCÈS AUX MÉTIERS
SPÉCIALISÉS EN ONTARIO

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Dunlop has moved second reading of Bill 22. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

We'll vote on that item at the end of regular business.

GAMING POLICY

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Natyshak has moved private member's notice of motion number 15. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We'll take the vote. Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1637 to 1642.

TAXPAYER PROTECTION
AMENDMENT ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION
DES CONTRIBUABLES

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Would members please take their seats?

Mr. Hillier has moved second reading of Bill 19. All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Barrett, Toby

Jackson, Rod
Jones, Sylvia
Klees, Frank

Nicholls, Rick
Ouellette, Jerry J.
Pettapiece, Randy

Chudleigh, Ted
Clark, Steve
Dunlop, Garfield
Elliott, Christine
Fedeli, Victor
Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael
Hillier, Randy
Hudak, Tim

Leone, Rob
MacLaren, Jack
MacLeod, Lisa
McDonell, Jim
McKenna, Jane
McNaughton, Monte
Miller, Norm
Milligan, Rob E.
Munro, Julia

Scott, Laurie
Shurman, Peter
Smith, Todd
Thompson, Lisa M.
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Yakabuski, John
Yurek, Jeff

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

Nays

Albanese, Laura
Armstrong, Teresa J.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bisson, Gilles
Bradley, James J.
Campbell, Sarah
Cansfield, Donna H.
Chan, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
DiNovo, Cheri
Duguid, Brad

Fife, Catherine
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Forster, Cindy
Gerretsen, John
Gélinas, France
Horwath, Andrea
Hoskins, Eric
Jaczek, Helena
Jeffrey, Linda
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
Mangat, Amrit
Mantha, Michael
Marchese, Rosario
Matthews, Deborah
McMeekin, Ted
McNeely, Phil
Miller, Paul

Milloy, John
Moridi, Reza
Murray, Glen R.
Naqvi, Yasir
Natyshak, Taras
Prue, Michael
Qaadri, Shafiq
Sandals, Liz
Schein, Jonah
Sergio, Mario
Singh, Jagmeet
Sousa, Charles
Tabuns, Peter
Takhar, Harinder S.
Taylor, Monique
Vanthof, John
Wong, Soo
Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 35; the nays are 54.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negatived.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Open the doors for 10 seconds.

HELPING ONTARIANS ENTER THE SKILLED TRADES ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 VISANT À FACILITER L'ACCÈS AUX MÉTIERS SPÉCIALISÉS EN ONTARIO

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Dunlop has moved second reading of Bill 22. All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Barrett, Toby
Chudleigh, Ted
Clark, Steve
Dunlop, Garfield
Elliott, Christine
Fedeli, Victor
Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael
Hillier, Randy
Hudak, Tim

Jackson, Rod
Jones, Sylvia
Klees, Frank
Leone, Rob
MacLaren, Jack
MacLeod, Lisa
McDonell, Jim
McKenna, Jane
McNaughton, Monte
Miller, Norm
Milligan, Rob E.
Munro, Julia

Nicholls, Rick
Ouellette, Jerry J.
Pettapiece, Randy
Scott, Laurie
Shurman, Peter
Smith, Todd
Thompson, Lisa M.
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Yakabuski, John
Yurek, Jeff

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

Nays

Albanese, Laura
Armstrong, Teresa J.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bisson, Gilles
Bradley, James J.
Campbell, Sarah
Cansfield, Donna H.
Chan, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
DiNovo, Cheri
Duguid, Brad

Fife, Catherine
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Forster, Cindy
Gerretsen, John
Gélinas, France
Horwath, Andrea
Hoskins, Eric
Jaczek, Helena
Jeffrey, Linda
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
Mangat, Amrit
Mantha, Michael
Marchese, Rosario
Matthews, Deborah
McMeekin, Ted
McNeely, Phil
Miller, Paul

Milloy, John
Moridi, Reza
Murray, Glen R.
Naqvi, Yasir
Natyshak, Taras
Prue, Michael
Qaadri, Shafiq
Sandals, Liz
Schein, Jonah
Sergio, Mario
Singh, Jagmeet
Sousa, Charles
Tabuns, Peter
Takhar, Harinder S.
Taylor, Monique
Vanthof, John
Wong, Soo
Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 35; the nays are 54.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negatived.

GAMING POLICY

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Natyshak has moved private member's notice of motion number 15.

Let us open the doors for 30 seconds.

1650

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Order. Mr. Natyshak has moved private member's notice of motion number 15. All those in favour please rise and remain standing.

Ayes

Armstrong, Teresa J.
Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Barrett, Toby
Bisson, Gilles
Campbell, Sarah
Chudleigh, Ted
Clark, Steve
DiNovo, Cheri
Dunlop, Garfield
Elliott, Christine
Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine
Forster, Cindy
Gélinas, France
Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael
Hillier, Randy

Horwath, Andrea
Hudak, Tim
Jackson, Rod
Jones, Sylvia
Klees, Frank
Leone, Rob
MacLaren, Jack
MacLeod, Lisa
Mantha, Michael
Marchese, Rosario
McDonell, Jim
McKenna, Jane
McNaughton, Monte
Miller, Norm
Milligan, Rob E.
Munro, Julia
Natyshak, Taras

Nicholls, Rick
Ouellette, Jerry J.
Pettapiece, Randy
Prue, Michael
Schein, Jonah
Scott, Laurie
Shurman, Peter
Singh, Jagmeet
Smith, Todd
Tabuns, Peter
Taylor, Monique
Thompson, Lisa M.
Vanthof, John
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Yakabuski, John
Yurek, Jeff

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

Nays

Albanese, Laura
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bradley, James J.
Chan, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob

Duguid, Brad
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Gerretsen, John
Jaczek, Helena
Jeffrey, Linda

Milloy, John
Moridi, Reza
Murray, Glen R.
Naqvi, Yasir
Qaadri, Shafiq

Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic

Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
Mangat, Amrit
Matthews, Deborah
McMeekin, Ted
McNeely, Phil

Sandals, Liz
Sergio, Mario
Sousa, Charles
Takhar, Harinder S.
Wong, Soo
Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):
The ayes are 53; the nays are 33.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I
declare the motion carried.
Motion agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Orders
of the day?

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment
of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The
government House leader has moved adjournment of the
House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion
carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until April 8 at 10:30 a.m.
The House adjourned at 1655.

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, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough–Sud-Ouest	
Best, Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Del Duca, Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment / Ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et de l'Emploi
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre 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	
McGuinty, Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Millroy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Hon. / L'hon. Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement 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
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Agriculture and Food / Ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Vacant	London West / London-Ouest	
Vacant	Windsor–Tecumseh	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Michael Prue
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Grant Crack, Kim Craitor
Vic Dhillon, Michael Harris
Rob Leone, Bill Mauro
Taras Natyshak, Taras Natyshak
Rick Nicholls, Michael Prue
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Soo Wong
Dipika Damerla, Steven Del Duca
Victor Fedeli, Catherine Fife
Kevin Daniel Flynn, Monte McNaughton
Michael Prue, Peter Shurman
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Donna H. Cansfield
Bas Balkissoon, Rick Bartolucci
Sarah Campbell, Donna H. Cansfield
Mike Colle, Rosario Marchese
Laurie Scott, Todd Smith
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day (pro tem.)

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

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson
Laura Albanese, Lorenzo Berardinetti
Joe Dickson, Jim McDonell
Phil McNeely, Paul Miller
Randy Pettapiece, Monique Taylor
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

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

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laura Albanese
Laura Albanese, Teresa J. Armstrong
Steven Del Duca, Bob Delaney
Frank Klees, Jack MacLaren
Rob E. Milligan, Shafiq Qadri
Jonah Schein
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

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

Chair / Président: Garfield Dunlop
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Bas Balkissoon, Gilles Bisson
Steve Clark, Mike Colle
Garfield Dunlop, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Cindy Forster, Lisa MacLeod
Bill Mauro
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, Dipika Damerla
France Gélinas, Helena Jaczek
Phil McNeely, Norm Miller
Jerry J. Ouellette, Shafiq Qadri
Jagmeet Singh
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
Margaret R. Best, Vic Dhillon
Joe Dickson, Randy Hillier
Rod Jackson, Monte Kwinter
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
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Margaret R. Best
Ted Chudleigh, Cheri DiNovo
Ernie Hardeman, Helena Jaczek
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha
Jane McKenna
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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