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Tuesday 5 November 2013

Mardi 5 novembre 2013

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

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The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WASTE REDUCTION ACT, 2013
LOI DE 2013 SUR LA RÉDUCTION
DES DÉCHETS

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 4, 2013, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 91, An Act to establish a new regime for the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste and to repeal the Waste Diversion Act, 2002 / Projet de loi 91, Loi créant un nouveau cadre pour la réduction, la réutilisation et le recyclage des déchets et abrogeant la Loi de 2002 sur le réacheminement des déchets.

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

Mr. Robert Bailey: It's a pleasure to rise today in response to Bill 91, the Waste Reduction Act. It's a pleasure to be here so early in the morning, and all the members here with us as well—a great morning.

To speak about the bill right off the get-go, the Waste Reduction Act, a number of wags have referred to it as a Liberal shell game that shifts eco taxes from consumer receipts to price tags on the store shelves. This bill not only fails to meet the Ontario PC's demand to scrap eco taxes; it also fails to eliminate the Liberals' own recycling cartels and the government's unaccountable oversight agency Waste Diversion Ontario. The government's plan is to give this agency enforcement powers and the authority to set and collect from businesses fees which would then be passed on to consumers as part of the eco tax disclosed on the price tag. The Liberal government is turning over these powers to this agency even though for five long years they've authorized Liberal recycling cartels to impose exorbitant eco taxes on Ontarians, including, recently, the 2,000% tire tax hikes in April and \$40 levies on big-screen TVs in May of this year. Waste Diversion Ontario has broken the trust of Ontarians time and time again and should not be rewarded with more power and a bigger multi-million-dollar budget funded through eco taxes.

The Waste Diversion Act is nothing but sleight of hand. The government claims they're taking steps to meet the Ontario PC caucus's demands to scrap eco taxes. All they've really done is attempt to force busi-

nesses to bury these expensive levies in the cost of their products or to display them on price tags instead of receipts in the store.

What the Liberal government doesn't want you to know is that Bill 91 continues each and every eco tax program. This means that Ontario consumers will still have to pay eco taxes on tires, electronics and household hazardous materials like paint cans and batteries. The only difference will be a higher tax, or an eco tax, displayed on the price tag on the store shelf instead of on the receipt at the cash register. Mr. Speaker, this isn't change. It's a shell game to ensure all of the Liberal eco taxes and revenue will continue to be funnelled into their recycling bureaucracy, which costs Ontario consumers hundreds of millions of dollars a year.

Without telling the public, the Liberals raised this eco tax on big-screen TVs earlier this year by more than 40%, bringing the total levy on big-screen TVs to \$40. The government also targeted Ontario's hard-working farmers with a massive tire tax hike earlier this year. In fact, the environment minister raised the eco tax on John Deere combine tires, for example, to \$823 each, up from \$92—a massive increase.

Interjection: Who can afford that?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Yes, who in the farm community can afford that? Who in any community can afford that?

Still without a real plan for the economy, the Liberal government has spent more than a month claiming that continuing eco taxes and doubling the cost of the blue box program and creating new taxes for Ontario consumers will lead to more jobs. We doubt that, Mr. Speaker.

It's truly sad to see that the best job strategy that the Liberal government could come up with is taking half a billion dollars out of the Ontario manufacturing sector every year in order to subsidize a few green jobs. This is the same risky economic theory that the government used for the Green Energy Act, which cost the province thousands of manufacturing jobs, and we know how that turned out. Still, for some reason, this government actually thinks that to create jobs in the recycling industry, they need to revert back to the same risky economic theory and kill even more jobs in Ontario's manufacturing sector. What's worse is that their cohorts to the left, the NDP, support the Liberal reckless plan to saddle Ontario's manufacturing sector—

Mr. John O'Toole: It's a coalition.

Mr. Robert Bailey: My colleague from Durham, the learned member from Durham says, "coalition," coalition of the billing—with another half a billion dollars in costs, even at the price of killing good jobs at factories in cities

like Hamilton, London and Kitchener—Sarnia as well, I might add. Mr. Speaker, this is unacceptable. Governments shouldn't sacrifice jobs in one sector to create them in another; it should create the right conditions for economic growth in all sectors. Regulate the marketplace and let the private sector take care of job growth.

The reason the Liberals want to force half a billion dollars of new costs on Ontario consumers is to grow the size and power of the government's unaccountable recycling agency, Waste Diversion Ontario, the WDO—that's quite an acronym, the WDO. Bill 91 gives this agency the power to impose new taxes on Ontario's manufacturing sector and to dictate how much each business will have to pay for their recycling programs. Mr. Speaker, we feel this is wrong. Real job creation is not the result of new costs and bureaucracy; it's the result of setting the right conditions and getting the right economic growth because of those conditions.

We put forward a bold plan last November, in one of our white papers, to create jobs in the recycling industry without sacrificing Ontario's manufacturing sector. In our paper, and in the discussions that we had with the industry and consumers across the province, we would suggest that we start by scrapping the Liberal eco tax programs entirely and eliminating the government's useless recycling bureaucracy. We believe that businesses should do their part to recover and recycle materials into new products, but rather than create complicated bureaucracy and massive new costs for consumers, we would simply create the right conditions for economic growth and hope to see those implemented. We would do this by having the environment minister set measurable and achievable recycling targets for certain materials, establish environmental standards, measure outcomes and enforce the rules—that's it.

Having the Ministry of the Environment regulate the recycling industry would establish a direct line of accountability between the government and the business community. Unfortunately, the third party, the NDP, supports the Liberals' efforts to outsource the ministry's regulatory authority to an unaccountable organization called the Waste Reduction Authority, the WRA, hereinafter referred to as the WRA as opposed to the WDO. I don't know if there are any more acronyms here or not, as we go further. Some of the facts, Madam Speaker, on this—

Mr. John O'Toole: Strike a panel on it.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Yes, maybe they'll strike a panel on the WRO, the WDO, and it'll be called the PPO, the panel opposing—anyway, you'll come up with one, the member for Durham, for me, while I'm—

Interjection: Work on that.

Mr. Robert Bailey: —working on that one. I'm ragging the puck here.

Madam Speaker, Bill 91 is nothing more than the Liberal McGuinty government's and Wynne government's desperate attempt to change the channel on their failure to increase waste diversion. In 2008, the Liberals promised to achieve a 60% waste diversion rate. Five years

later, that rate is still stalled at just 23%. The reason is that the Liberals have ignored Ontario's largest source of waste. As a result, they've actually allowed recycling to drop at factories, shopping malls and government buildings. The industrial, commercial and institutional sector, otherwise known as ICI, accounts for 60% of Ontario's waste, yet the Liberals allowed recycling to decrease in this sector from 19% to 12%. Instead of showing leadership in this area, as the member for Caledon did with her bill on recycling cement and aggregates, which went a long way to—it's the kind of example that we should have in this House. Instead of showing leadership on waste diversion, the Liberals have spent all of their time running massive eco tax schemes for tires, electronics and household hazardous materials, which together only make up 3% of the province's waste. After focusing on just a fraction of the waste stream for five years, it's no wonder that this act has been such an abject failure.

0910

Some of the things that we've called for, Madam Speaker—I see I'm coming to the end of my time. We should have much more time to speak on this.

Mr. John O'Toole: Seek unanimous consent.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Yes, I'll ask for unanimous consent to continue.

Anyway, the PC Party plan would be—the Waste Reduction Act fails to meet our two biggest demands: to scrap eco taxes and to eliminate useless bureaucracy. That's why we can't support it.

In November of last year, the Ontario PC Party presented a better way forward: lower costs for businesses and to treat recyclable materials not as waste but as valuable resources that we should recover and recycle into new products. The Ontario PC Party, led by Tim Hudak, would scrap eco taxes, get rid of the Liberal recycling cartels and return all oversight authority back to the Ministry of the Environment, where it truly belongs. Under our plan, the government would set measurable and achievable recycling targets, establish environmental standards and measure outcomes.

That's simply it, Madam Speaker. I might seek unanimous consent for me to continue.

Hon. Liz Sandals: No.

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

Mr. Jonah Schein: I'm happy to stand this morning and speak as the party's environment critic and respond to Bill 91 and the comments made by the member from Sarnia-Lambton.

Speaker, we've heard clearly from Conservatives for a long time about eco fees or eco taxes. I couldn't agree more that we shouldn't be passing on a failed waste diversion plan. We shouldn't be passing on those costs to the people of this province. That's a big part of why we need a strengthened act here and a new framework going forward. Obviously, the other important part is that we're actually failing, absolutely failing this generation and future generations when it comes to waste diversion. We remain a laggard in this country.

But the role that the Conservatives are playing in this debate I find is counterproductive. This is complicated legislation; it's a complicated issue; it deserves serious thought and serious debate. You know, there are a lot of different players involved here, and we all in this House need to roll up our sleeves and make sure that we get this right. But to say that the existing system is not just—that things remaining the way they are is not going to continue to pass costs on to consumers is wrong. If the people of this party want to stop eco fees and eco taxes, then they need to stop the system that's in place right now that allows industry-driven monopolies, basically, to set prices and pass those prices on to consumers. Speaker, that is not working. It is not meeting our environmental obligations and expectations, and it is not driving the kind of innovation in the sector that's necessary to create better products, and it is not creating the incentive or the necessity not to pass those fees on to consumers. So I wish the Conservatives would roll up their sleeves and be part of this debate. Let's get it right. Let's work to deliver this for the province.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I think we really do need to get on with voting on this bill. Bill 91 has now been debated for over 12 and a half hours; 45 individual members have expressed what they have to say about this. In fact, I think it's well defined what the position of each of the three parties is now. What we need is a vote on this bill so it can get to committee, where it can be fine-tuned.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: It was a pleasure this morning to listen to the very eloquent member from Sarnia–Lambton. I like the way he organized his critique of the bill. He did make extensive use of the notes provided to him by our critic and his staff, Michael Harris as well as Shane. His staff did a great job of deconstructing the bill.

He outlined it. Our plan is pretty simple. We want to set measurable, achievable targets based on scientific research, and then we want to monitor it—independent monitoring would be our first objective—and then strict and often severe enforcement. By that, I mean that government should stay out of the business itself, but they've got to set the standards and then monitor and provide consequences for non-conformance.

I thought the member from Sarnia–Lambton summarized the bill succinctly, but I think he did focus on the hidden eco taxes. In his remarks, he made it clear that they haven't cut or reduced them; in fact, they have increased almost all the eco taxes.

Now, here's the larger issue he pointed out: They're focusing on the smaller component of the waste stream. When you think of it, and in his remarks—I might be wrong, but I listened carefully, and we have the same notes, basically. The ICI sector, the industrial, commercial and institutional sector, represents 60% of the waste stream. Really, the best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour, so what have they done? In the last 10

years, they've taken the ICI waste stream from, once upon a time, doing 19% recovery down to a measly 12%. So they've gone from first to last, just about the same way with the economy itself. So there's a predictor of future behaviour. This bill does not get us where we need to go.

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

Mr. Todd Smith: I would like to comment on the eloquent 10 minutes in which my friend from Sarnia–Lambton discussed the Waste Reduction Act. He clearly indicated off the top that this is just a Liberal shell game. There's no one who's denying that over on this side, and I don't think probably very many over on the government side would deny that as well. All they're doing is taking the eco fees, which were clearly marked on the shelves, and then embedding the eco fees, which they've received a lot of criticism about over the last two or three years, into the price that's going to be on the item at the cash register.

I was just down south of the border—I was recalling this story a couple of weeks ago—for my daughter's hockey game on Sunday. One of the dads on the hockey team, despite the fact I said he shouldn't do it because he's hurting the Ontario economy, had all four tires on his vehicle changed down there, and it saved him hundreds and hundreds of dollars. I don't recommend this for people, but this is the kind of situation that this government has created in this province, where people are driving south of the border and are planning a trip to have all four tires changed on their vehicle just to save a couple of hundred dollars. The retail sector is saying this is a huge problem, not just for tires but for television sets. Because of these eco taxes that this government has slapped onto all of these electronic devices, people are doing their shopping in other jurisdictions—not just south of the border, but you hear about people heading across the border into Quebec as well to do their shopping because they can save a few dollars because we are the most overtaxed jurisdiction in all of North America.

I would like to say to my friend from Sarnia–Lambton, Bob Bailey: You hit the nail on the head this morning, Bob. People need to wake up to these hidden eco taxes.

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

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you, Madam Speaker. First off—

Interjection.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Come on down to Sarnia. We'll sell you some good tires down at International Tire.

Right off the go, I'd like to thank the member for Davenport, the Minister of Education, the member for Durham and also the member from Prince Edward–Hastings for their comments today.

0920

Just in my referral here in my notes, I was looking at an article from August. This is from the Toronto Star by Robert Benzie, Queen's Park bureau chief, Wednesday, August 4, 2010. It says here:

“Premier Dalton McGuinty personally pushed for the recycling program that led to” the eco fee disaster “on consumer products despite objections from at least five”—five, count them—“of his cabinet ministers”—some of them might be in the room today, who told him that this would be a disaster and he shouldn’t do it, but he went ahead anyway.

“Government insiders”—you know, those ones who slip the brown envelopes under the door—“said at the February 2008 cabinet meeting, where the doomed scheme was approved, ministers loudly railed against it, fearing political damage to the Liberals.

“The senior minister who led the charge warned the Premier” of the day that “the policy could spark a backlash if eco fees were slapped directly on products.”

The Premier said, “‘We can’t do this fast enough’ ... who had been re-elected with a ... massive majority government just four months earlier.”

Anyway, what we’re here today to talk about is—well, one thing the member from Prince Edward–Hastings talked about was the individual who saved \$400 on his tires. Well, I think he would have to do that because then he could apply that \$400 savings to his electricity bill which has gone through the roof. That’s real recycling, I guess, if you want to look at it that way; that’s recycling your money to wherever you can use it for the most good.

To sum up, our bottom line is that we want to scrap the eco taxes and eliminate useless bureaucracy. We want to lower costs for business and individuals, treat recyclable materials not as waste but as actual viable resources, and we should recover and recycle these products.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: Timiskaming–Cochrane.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Timiskaming–Cochrane; sorry.

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you, Speaker. Once again, it’s an honour to be able to stand in this House and today speak about Bill 91, the Waste Reduction Act, 2013.

I’m going to do a more personal take on this. I first got involved in the waste reduction business when I was a member of the public liaison committee for the city of Toronto on the Adams Mine landfill proposal. I was the president of the Temiskaming Federation of Agriculture at that time. I was put on this committee, and I got a crash course in waste management. I remember very clearly—and this was 1995-96—that the focus of this landfill proposal was going to be recycling, because recycling then was the panacea. That’s where we had to go, and that was great.

I remember an evening on that committee, and the way they were going to ship the waste from Toronto to the Adams Mine was that they were going to compress it in rail cars. I believe it was 1,500 PSI. They were going to compress it and send it north, and at that point, we would have the chance to recycle. Being a farmer with a mechanical mind and mechanical questions, I stuck up my hand and I asked, “So after it has been compressed to

1,500 PSI, how do you propose that we search through it and recycle?” To which the answer was, “That’s why we’re giving you money for research, so you can look into that.” Basically, the plan wasn’t recycling.

There is a point to this, but just as another little point: When they did send the prototype car to northern Ontario—and they were smart. They did send it at the right time of year; it was 40 below when they sent the prototype. We didn’t have to worry about recycling because it couldn’t even unload. At 40 below, hydraulics just don’t work that well in northern Ontario. There was no recycling to be done from that car because nothing was coming out of that car.

But they really focused on the recycling part; that was the whole sales pitch. The funny thing about that is, not much has changed. I was recently asked to speak at a meeting regarding another big proposed landfill in this province. So as I went and looked and did my research, 20 years later, they’re still doing the same thing: talking about the opportunities in recycling. It’s practical proof that we really haven’t gotten that far in 20 years. It’s a real problem. It’s a real, identifiable problem. I looked at the website 20 years ago—it wasn’t websites back then; I’m really dating myself. I still have the material, and basically it was the same stuff. So we really haven’t gotten that far on the landfill side in 20 years. But if you look at our numbers, we haven’t gotten that far either.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: So do you like the bill?

Mr. John Vanthof: I’m getting to that. This bill, Bill 91, the Waste Reduction Act, has some positives and some negatives. The one thing I think—and I’m going to go back to the eco fees. I’m a farmer. Farmers really didn’t like it, especially—I’ve told this before on one of my hits. The first time I really had experience with eco fees, I went to buy oil filters for my tractors and there was an extra \$100 tacked on. I told the dealer, “That’s great. That means I can bring the filters back and you will recycle them for me.” No. You still have to bring them to the dump. And that’s the problem. With the tires and the rise in the tire price, that’s a problem, but there are things that Stewardship Ontario did. I’m going to stick up for them on one point: At least with the tires—we had a couple of big tire piles in my riding, and you could call up Stewardship Ontario, and because of the money they collected they came and they cleaned up the tires. So you know what? The rise in prices all of a sudden is a huge problem, but the fact is that you could actually see some value for the money, because in my riding we got action and we cleaned up a couple of big piles of tires.

It shouldn’t be that difficult an issue. My colleague from Nickel Belt—I was in the House and she was talking about mining. Nowadays, if you want to start a new mine, you have to have as part of your plan, and it has to be in your financials, how you are going to remediate it, how you’re going to clean it up when that mine closes. So it’s complicated, but that’s good legislation. And that should be here too, but I’m not sure if that is here.

One of the problems that we continue to have, and I really continue to, have is the concept of the Waste Re-

duction Authority. You know, it sounds good. It sounds like it could be a mediation tool. But it also could be, and it's not really well defined here, another government agency or semi-government agency—I don't know what the proper term is—which we have no real control over. We can name a few of those other agencies which we had no real control over. That in itself is a problem. It's a big problem, because if it's created without authority, these agencies have a tendency to run away with themselves, and I think that's a big problem.

Another problem with this that we have to look into is that specifically in places like where I'm from, northern Ontario, we don't have access to a lot of the same services as more urban parts of the province. Also, our municipalities might not have the same capability, or even want that responsibility, for the recycling portion itself, or with the waste diversion. I think we have to put more thought in how—with a lot of issues in northern Ontario, the distances are bigger and the populations are smaller. We have to look at how we can actually make that work. For those municipalities that have a blue box system, they're also concerned because where this bill comes back down to, and where almost everything comes back down to, is money.

0930

Getting back to the landfill issue, one of the problems we face with recycling, with diversion, in this province is that our neighbour to the south is willing to accept landfill materials at a very cheap price. That's a big problem because, at the end of the day, if it's cheaper to landfill something—unless you put regulations to stop that—it's going to go to landfill. That's a big problem. If you put those regulations in then, yes, the prices of some of your products are going to rise. That's something that we have to be cognizant of and something we're going to have to deal with. It's a big problem. We're hoping that this act finds the fine balance between hurting the retail side and doing what's right environmentally. That's a big issue, because you don't want to drive jobs away, but also you don't want to look the other way and just throw things in a hole and leave it for the next generation.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: So what do you want to do?

Mr. John Vanthof: We want to bring this to committee, and we would like to make—specifically, we need accountability in this, especially in the Waste Reduction Authority. We don't see the accountability in there that needs to be. This is another one of these acts that's over-arching and you can do lots of good things, but you can also do lots of bad things. What we have to do is bring this forward to committee, take our time, listen to everybody involved and actually try and do the right thing, not the political thing.

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

Hon. Jeff Leal: I was here for all the remarks for my colleague the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, who added, I thought, a great deal to the discussion this morning. I'll be very quick.

We look forward to having this move on and get to committee, and then we'll have a real discussion when it

gets to committee, when all parties will have the opportunity to provide input on a very important piece of legislation brought forward by my colleague the Minister of the Environment.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: Once again, I do appreciate the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane. He's always very fair-minded in his comments, and he raised some questions, as we have, on this bill. I think our position is pretty much the same, as we want to see it get to committee and basically deconstruct it and improve it. We'll have to see if the government is willing to listen to our well-thought-through suggestions.

I look at where we've been in Ontario, and I think one of the programs that affects my constituents is the Drive Clean program. Even the Auditor General of Ontario—this is the Ministry of the Environment's role, to make these programs work to clean up the environment, much like Bill 91. There's a program there that—everyone with any insight at all realizes that the old method of doing the test at the tailpipe was really potentially avoiding pollutants going into the environment—

Hon. Ted McMeekin: That's why they changed it.

Mr. John O'Toole: Oh no, but they've stopped that; they've cancelled that. Now it's the onboard diagnostics, the computer system. If the computer system in an older car has a little electrical malfunction within the system, then people have to spend \$400 or \$500, maybe twice, before they get a provisional pass. This is another example of a tax grab.

That's why this one section, number III—I think it's III, where they're actually hiding the tax—yes, it's in part IV; it says “Integrated pricing.” What a fancy term for hiding the eco fee inside the price. When you used to buy a battery, you could see that it cost you \$2 for an eco fee right on the receipt. Now the consumer is completely in the dark and it's a deliberate attempt to cover up, actually, if that's in the proper term, in the price—“Integrated pricing”: This is one more example of a government that would do anything to take your money.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: Good morning, Madam Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand up and to talk a little bit more about the proposed Waste Reduction Act, which will be replacing the Waste Diversion Act. I'm actually quite thankful that we're still debating this. I understand the Liberal government is expressing some frustration that it's still here, but it was exactly the situation not that long ago that the Minister of Rural Affairs stood up at the request of the Speaker and said, “We're looking to extend this debate,” and here we are. So you can't keep complaining about it, because you extended the debate. So here we are.

You know what? I think the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane actually raises the debate to a whole new level of integrity, because it's the real experience of a former leader in this regard. It must be something for

the young people in the audience to hear that 20 years ago we were still trying to figure out this recycling issue when really there's so much more that we need to take leadership on. The politics of Bill 91 are—you cannot fight it. The reality is, if we don't support this piece of legislation, with all of its flaws, quite honestly, and get it to committee and strengthen it and bring the real lived experiences of people who know this file better than anybody else in this House, we risk waiting another 10 years for this government to do the right thing. The reality is that waste-related issues are very difficult to get on the political radar.

It's amazing, because the PCs—one of their members just said they're supporting it, that they're going to try to make it better, and they're looking forward to it. Yet for two years, they hardly read anything, and they hardly did anything. So here we are.

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

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to join the debate. Like many other industries, the recycling industry has a job creation ratio. In auto, for example, for every job on the assembly line, you get about 10 in the community. With this issue as well: The recycling industry creates about 10 times as many jobs as just throwing the stuff away into landfill. Those jobs are out there.

The opposition members all have a right to speak. I don't deny them that. They have the right to speak on every bill in the House if they want to. They've chosen to speak on this one. I think that's great. I think the interest in the environment from the opposition parties is fantastic, and I hope it continues on into the next term.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Timiskaming–Cochrane has two minutes to reply.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'd like to thank the Minister of Rural Affairs, the member for Durham, my colleague from Kitchener–Waterloo and the member for Oakville for their comments.

I always enjoy listening to the member of Durham.

Ms. Catherine Fife: You do?

Mr. John Vanthof: I do. He always brings an interesting perspective. He always brings perspective from his past experiences.

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: He does; he has lots of practice in the House.

I was a bit surprised because his colleagues have been very, very negative on this bill, extremely negative, but he said he would like to get it to committee. I would like to thank him for that, because I think we all want to get it to committee. But we all want to make sure we get this right. Right? It hasn't been right for a long time. Anything that we can bring forward in this debate and any time we can get individuals to actually work things out behind the scenes to get this bill right makes a big difference.

I'll give you one that no one has come up with the answer to yet, an agriculture one: agricultural wrap, the

white plastic wrap. We use a pile of it. I'm sure farmers—at least I would: If I knew, when I buy a roll of it, that I have to pay an extra 10 bucks, and I knew I could recycle it, I would gladly do it. Where I am, I can't get rid of it. My dump won't take it. I can't get rid of it. So there's an issue that we should work out. If we could work that one out, I think a lot of the farmers across the province would be much more supportive.

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It's a pleasure to rise this morning to speak on the Waste Reduction Act. I want to cover a few issues, but I'm going to continue on the plastic wrap that the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane referenced. There is an excellent recycler who basically provides bins to the greenhouse industry and the agricultural industry. You call them when your bin is full. The plastic wrap: They take it away, they replace it, and they're recycling that product. It's an excellent program. It has a value. We have an innovative producer in Ontario who has found a use for that product. So there are opportunities there if government gets out of the way and doesn't impose all of these additional programs and mandates.

0940

We actually do have some pretty innovative producers across Ontario doing innovative things. In my own community we have a bottled water company that has figured out an opportunity on the recycling of spent water bottles. I think their concern and my concern is that Bill 91 will impede their ability to access that raw product.

What is happening with Bill 91 is, you're going to have to have producers who are negotiating with 444 municipalities to get the product out of the blue box. There are a couple of problems with that, not the least of which is: There are 444 municipalities in Ontario. So it's very challenging.

The second problem is, Bill 91 is talking about these intermediaries, which are basically going to become a de facto monopoly. You're not going to be able to negotiate with the municipalities that want to recycle, that want to find end uses for the products that are in the blue box—a great concern to me.

In Bill 91, one of the things that they make reference to in part II is this Waste Reduction Authority. The authority can set and collect fees and is required to appoint a registrar and inspectors. Speaker, we're not getting away from eco fees with Bill 91; in fact, we're entrenching it in legislation. We're actually enabling the Minister of the Environment to force companies to bury the taxes in the cost of their product.

I don't see how Bill 91 does anything to actually solve the problem that, four years ago, I raised in this House during question period when I was made aware of a tire tax that was being imposed on agricultural tires, obviously a much smaller market than the car tire market—larger tires, for obvious reasons. In October of 2009, I questioned the then Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs about a new \$250 fee. That's not the cost of the tire; that's the fee that they added on after you purchased

a single tire. It was being levied on tractor tires when, at the same time, as a point of comparison, a new car tire fee was a small \$5.84. At the time, the minister had what I considered a very disturbing response. It was basically that those fees are now the cost of doing business in Ontario under the Liberal government and that they should treat them as a business expense and “deal with it.”

Today, we see that same out-of-touch approach with Bill 91. This government doesn't seem to understand that government doesn't need to be in every single business. You can actually have innovation. You can encourage innovation without imposing all kinds of additional registrars and inspectors and enforcement agencies. You really just need to get out of the way sometimes.

What I would like to see, if we're talking about improvements to Bill 91: In our blue box—we all represent different parts of Ontario. We all have many municipalities that we try to represent and collect their views so that we can talk about their issues here in this chamber. Let's talk about the blue box, specifically. Again, back to the 444 municipalities across Ontario: Every single one of them has a different list of items that is included in their blue boxes. Why aren't we looking at actually making that consistent province-wide? We all know that the average Ontario resident moves every seven years, so we have—I'm dealing with it all the time in my own municipalities. We have people moving from Caledon to Orangeville, and their blue box items aren't consistent, don't stay the same. Why can't we get into some consistency in what is actually being put in the blue boxes? It would involve a couple of improvements to the system. For one thing, you'd actually have enough product so that there is a need to recycle. If one municipality is collecting—let's use cloth as an example—there isn't enough of the raw material to look at how you can recycle that. If you had every municipality across Ontario accepting the same items, then you start getting into a critical mass where there is an ability for creative thinking, for innovators in our manufacturing sector to actually say, “Okay, I've got enough raw product now. I can make something and I can build something with this new item that is available across the spectrum of Ontario residents.” I personally think that would go a long way to ensure that the current recyclers that are working and are manufacturing and are creating jobs in Ontario would actually see some improvements to a system that we all acknowledge can be better.

There's no shame in admitting that the program could be improved. My honourable colleague from Sarnia-Lambton made reference to the ICI sector—industrial, commercial and institutional. Again, I'm speaking often to manufacturers in my communities who say, “Why do we do a pretty good job of the blue box program, why do we provide that service, which most of us would acknowledge has done very well over the last 25 years, and yet with the ICI sector we're doing a terrible job?” Why can't we tap in to some of those existing programs and encourage the involvement of the ICI sector? Again, it would ensure that we have a critical mass of product

for the manufacturers to think of some innovative uses of stuff like the agricultural plastic wrap and actually use it in a way that is going to improve our economy. There are ways that we can actually do innovative legislation here that would encourage our economy to grow. Bill 91, unfortunately, is not one of them.

We've talked about a number of companies who have raised their concerns about what Bill 91 will ultimately do to their business model in Ontario. You think of the obvious: Canadian Tire, Walmart, Loblaws. When they're talking about how Bill 91 is going to impact their business and how they approach business in Ontario, we have a problem, because you can't be an anomaly. With those multinational companies you have to ensure that there is consistency across the provincial boundaries—quite frankly, across international boundaries. We have to make sure that Bill 91 is going to actually improve the situation in Ontario. What I'm hearing from my recycling companies—companies who are actually in the business today, right now, recycling product and doing an excellent job of it—is that Bill 91 is going to put up barriers. These intermediaries—who's going to pay for that? That's obviously going to end up being incorporated into the fees. I see no decrease in the eco fees under Bill 91. In fact, I see an escalating increase, similar to the College of Trades. If you have enforcement, if you have these intermediaries, if you have a registrar, there's going to be a cost to that. It's the classic: Liberals come up with an idea. It's the Liberal way. Someone else has to pay. That's what I see in Bill 91 and it disturbs me greatly. Thank you.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It's good to stand here today and continue on with this debate, because we've heard many members from the Liberal side explain that there has been 12 hours of debate and it's time to move on. But, as we know, the Liberals extended the debate, and that's a good thing, because there are a lot of speakers here that, as we can see, still want to contribute to this bill.

0950

I enjoyed listening to the member from Dufferin-Caledon. She mentioned the Blue Box Program and the fact that there needs to be consistency in the kind of things you put in the blue box, so that everyone has an understanding of what they're recycling. If you're moving from one town to the other, it can get confusing. I know that when we started the Blue Box Program sometimes your blue box wouldn't be picked up if you didn't have the right material in there to recycle, which gets frustrating. We want to make sure that we have education for the public and make it convenient for them to recycle. When you're in committee and you do the work with the committee, part of that could be looking at a system to deliver information to consumers about what to put in the recycling box, and keep it consistent all over. I did like that suggestion.

There are concerns about the bill, of course. The Waste Reduction Authority is one concern that has come

up. The Canadian Environmental Law Association has concerns about taking away that power of oversight from the ministry; if there are issues with waste reduction and the Waste Diversion Act; if it's going to be fair if the Waste Reduction Authority deals with that, because right now we have a system in place where there's accountability. The ministry has their lawyers that would deal with those infractions, and then, in turn, the Attorney General looks after that. So those systems are in place, and moving that to the Waste Reduction Authority, we have to make sure that there is the right oversight in order to do that before we look at changing authority.

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: I believe there has been more than 13 hours of debate on this bill, and I think it's probably time to send it to committee.

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

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's a pleasure to stand and comment on what I've been hearing with regard to Bill 91, the Waste Reduction Act.

Really and truly, when we take a look at what the government has done, all they've done is table a bill with the stated purpose of, in fact, revoking the Waste Diversion Act, which was passed by the former PC government as a way of extending the life of Ontario's landfills, create jobs in the recycling sector, as well as assist our municipal partners by creating a more stable Blue Box Program.

I listened to the debate on both sides and, really and truly, what this boils down to is the fact that the Waste Reduction Act is a Liberal shell game that really, in fact, shifts the eco taxes from consumer receipts to price tags on store shelves. I look at it this way: Before they had eco taxes—you were buying a product; now they add the eco fees, which is a form of tax. Now they're going to put that on, and then they're also going to charge an additional 13% on top of those eco fees, so they're getting more tax money, more revenues, to probably pay for a lot of the scandalous things that this government has been involved in over the last 10 years. It's just another way of getting more revenue as well.

The bill also not only fails to meet the Ontario PCs' demand to scrap eco taxes, but it also fails to eliminate the Liberals' recycling cartels and the government's unaccountable oversight—Waste Diversion Ontario. As you can see, Speaker, this particular bill isn't doing anything other than crippling the economy, crippling—

Interjections.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's nice to hear that I've actually hit a sore spot.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Order. We have one person speaking: the member for Chatham-Kent-Essex.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Thank you very much, Speaker. I'll wrap it up very quickly—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): That's it.

The member for Welland.

Ms. Cindy Forster: It's been interesting to actually participate in this debate on Bill 91. It is a very important environmental issue.

I come from a riding where we have a landfill, and right now there's an environmental assessment being done to try to increase the height of that landfill by about six metres. Certainly, it's not—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'd ask the member for Oakville to come to order. I can't hear the speaker.

Please return to your comments.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I can hear myself, Speaker, so, hopefully, the viewing audience can hear it.

I was talking about a landfill in my own riding of Welland. It's only one of two landfills that are left in the whole Niagara Peninsula. The one in Grimsby, in the Leader of the Opposition's riding, cut themselves a deal, way back when, where they would only take the waste from four surrounding municipalities. My municipality wasn't as "on" at the time; they didn't put that into their agreement. So we're getting waste from eight of the municipalities across the region, because all the other landfill sites had reached their capacity, and they have subsequently closed.

Certainly, people who have to live in residential neighbourhoods around landfill sites aren't happy about it, just like people aren't necessarily happy about gasification or other methods of dealing with waste. So it's very important to continue to divert waste in any way that we can.

I have to agree with the member from Dufferin-Caledon. There are better ways to make it easier for people to divert. There are some provinces where you can just throw all your recycling together in a blue bag and they take it somewhere and it gets diverted at some kind of a facility. So the diversion rates in those kinds of jurisdictions are much higher.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): We'll return to the member for Dufferin-Caledon. You have two minutes.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I appreciate the feedback. I think what is most important to remember about Bill 91 is that this is not a jobs plan. This is not encouraging innovation. This is not encouraging new businesses or existing businesses to figure out innovative ways to recycle the products that we all acknowledge and understand need to be recycled and can be recycled.

Bill 91 would enable the creation of more new taxes, more new fees, more bureaucracy and half a billion dollars in new costs for Ontario's manufacturing sector, which I think we need to remember is shrinking under the Liberal government. If we keep putting more and more "thou shalt" on the manufacturing sector, then they will go elsewhere. We have to understand that there is a cause and effect of what happens in this chamber. When we impose new rules, new legislation, there are decisions that are being made on, "Will I continue to operate in

Ontario? Will I go to another jurisdiction that has a better way of managing their waste diversion products?"

Red tape is not the solution for more waste diversion. All that it's doing is monitoring and putting enforcement on a product that is already monitored by our municipal level of government.

Quite frankly, I think that our municipal partners understand the value of recycling and understand the value of encouraging blue box use. I think we can do some stuff here at the provincial level to help them, but we certainly don't need to pretend that they have no level of knowledge and understanding of how it can be improved.

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

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I'm very pleased to have been asked to speak on this bill this morning. I'd also like to thank our PC MPP from Kitchener-Conestoga for his strong leadership in opposing Bill 91.

Speaker, Bill 91 fails to scrap eco taxes and the government's unaccountable oversight agency, Waste Diversion Ontario. After many years of having broken the trust of Ontarians, they should not be awarded with more power and an even bigger multi-million-dollar budget at the price of eco taxes.

I know this eco tax issue very well. I remember working in our family's hardware and auto parts store in June 2010. In fact, on June 30, 2010, a bag of concrete mix, which is every hardware and building supply store's number-one seller apart from products like two-by-fours and drywall and things like that, was selling for \$3.99. The store was closed on July 1 for Canada Day. When our store opened on July 2, the very first customer of the day went up to the checkout and bought 70 bags of concrete mix. That concrete mix sold for \$3.99 plus a \$4 eco tax. The Dalton McGuinty Liberals put a \$4 eco tax on top of a \$3.99 product. It more than doubled the price of the number-one selling product in any hardware and building supply store across the province.

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The list goes on and on. On July 2, 8,000 products in hardware and building supply stores across the province of Ontario had massive eco taxes applied to them. A bag of sheep manure had a 50-cent eco tax on top of that. A bag of cattle manure had a 50-cent eco tax on top of that. A bag of grass seed had a 50-cent eco tax. A bag of potting soil—I mean, the list went on and on and on. A clock radio that sold for \$3 had an \$8 eco tax on top of that. That's the legacy of the Dalton McGuinty-Premier Wynne Liberals when it comes to this failed eco tax policy.

It's frustrating for Ontarians to see a government now introducing a piece of legislation that's going to bury those eco taxes into the price of the products. People in Ontario will have no idea why a bag of concrete mix is going to jump 100% in cost. It's going to kill jobs in the province of Ontario. It's despicable that the Liberal government can sit here and pass a piece of legislation that is

going to, quite frankly, take the people of Ontario for a ride. I think they're going to live to regret this.

Interjection.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Of course, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration is sitting here trying to shout me down when I'm actually speaking the facts. I know first-hand what the Liberals have done to eco taxes in the province of Ontario, and I'm going to explain what they're going to do further with Bill 91.

It's simple why the PC caucus cannot support this bill. It fails to meet the two very clear demands that Ontario needs right now: (1) eliminating useless bureaucracy; and (2) and most importantly, scrapping eco taxes.

Bill 91 is going to increase the price of everyday products for the people of Ontario. iPods are going to skyrocket in price, much like their federal cousins, when Stéphane Dion was the leader, wanted to bring in the iPod tax. This is what Bill 91 is going to do. It's going to increase the price of iPods and iPads, too. Televisions are going to skyrocket. In fact, I represent a riding in south-western Ontario. I fear that Bill 91 is going to drive customers to the US to shop. Televisions are going to go up—in some cases \$70, in some cases \$100, depending on the price of televisions. Cross-border shopping, mark my words, will skyrocket with Bill 91. We're talking about everyday items that are going to have an eco tax buried in them. Consumers are not going to know what they're paying. They're just going to know that products in Ontario are a heck of a lot more expensive than anywhere else outside of Ontario.

There are better and more realistic ways, going forward, to protect our environment, to handle our recyclable materials while lowering costs for businesses. Instead of creating more waste, we need to be looking for ways to recover and recycle them into new products. A year ago, our colleague from Kitchener-Conestoga presented our PC plan to set measurable and achievable targets for recycling, establishing environmental standards and ways to measure these outcomes, one that would not sacrifice Ontario's beleaguered manufacturing sector.

We would start this by scrapping the eco taxes, getting rid of the government's recycling cartels and allowing the Ministry of the Environment to truly do its job by restoring oversight authority back to the ministry.

Speaker, I want to be clear again about Bill 91. It is going to kill jobs in the province of Ontario. Probably the best story that I've heard on Bill 91—and I'm hoping the Minister of the Environment is listening to this debate in the House—is that I had a large electronics consumer company in to Queen's Park. Their sales in Ontario a number of years ago were \$1.2 billion. That's what they sold just to consumers in the province of Ontario—an electronics manufacturer. This year they're going to be down to \$550 million—so from \$1.2 billion to \$550 million. They told me directly that with Bill 91 there's a good chance that they're going to move their head office outside of the province of Ontario. That's going to create more unemployment in Ontario. I truly do hope that the Minister of the Environment is talking to these large employers in Ontario.

Our party put out, when I was the economic development critic, a plan to create 300,000 manufacturing jobs in the province of Ontario. Our leader, Tim Hudak, and I announced our plan in the summer. We have a plan to create 300,000 new advanced manufacturing jobs. We're going to eliminate the productivity gap in Ontario when it comes to manufacturing versus our southern neighbours, and we're going to make Ontario the number one jurisdiction in the world for advanced manufacturers to come to.

We know, through several studies—Boston Consulting being the latest—that the United States is going to create five million advanced manufacturing jobs over the next five years. Ontario needs to get a share of those, and our plan is to create 300,000 manufacturing jobs. Again, Bill 91 is going to, I think, further devastate the manufacturing sector in the province of Ontario. I hope the Liberal government is paying attention and speaking to these stakeholders, because now, more than ever, we need these jobs in Ontario.

The Liberal government claims that they're taking steps to meet the PC caucus demands to scrap eco taxes, but all they're really doing is attempting to force businesses to bury these expensive levies in the cost of their products or to display them so that consumers can't see them, and we think that's wrong. The bill, as it currently stands, would give the Minister of the Environment the ability to wind down ineffective programs and regulate organizations, if desired. However, this is highly unlikely or could reasonably take a very long time before happening, if ever.

Again, this government claims to be scrapping eco taxes. They're doing the complete opposite. All that they're doing is burying this cost in the price of the products. I just can't state strongly enough that in my region of the province, cross-border shopping is running rampant right now. I fear that with the prices of televisions and iPods and clock radios and iPads and computers—and the list goes on and on—with the prices of products going up, it's just driving people across the border. Whether it's across the ferry in Sombra near Sarnia-Lambton or across the bridge to Port Huron from Sarnia or across the Ambassador Bridge in Detroit, people in Ontario will be buying products in the United States, killing jobs at the retail level in all of our towns along our main streets. I just hope the government is listening.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): It being close to 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1009 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'd like to introduce members from the Chicken Farmers of Ontario today in the gallery: Henry Zantingh, Murray Opsteen, Gary Raycroft, Rob Dougans and Paul Bulman. It was a pleasure to meet with them this morning.

I would like to encourage all members to attend the Chicken Farmers of Ontario reception this evening in the dining room.

Welcome to Queen's Park to the Chicken Farmers of Ontario.

Hon. Teresa Piruzza: Speaker, it's not an introduction but a point of order: I believe we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear lapel pins in recognition of Lung Cancer Awareness Month.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Children and Youth Services is seeking unanimous consent to wear the ribbon for this month. Do we agree? Agreed.

Carry on, member from Oakville.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Today, the page captain is Nicholas Edward Scarcelli. He's joined today in the members' gallery by his dad, Dan Scarcelli; his sisters, Vanessa and Olivia Scarcelli; and his uncle Dan Demsar. Please welcome them to Queen's Park.

Mr. Peter Shurman: I am pleased to introduce, from the Canadian Automobile Association—here today for their annual lobby day—CAA's president, Mr. Jay Woo, CAA CEO Mr. Nick Parks, and the CAA vice-president of insurance, Mr. Matthew Turack.

I'd also like to remind all members of the House about the CAA reception in the legislative dining room after question period today.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Particularly in my capacity as Minister of Agriculture and Food, I'd like to welcome the Chicken Farmers of Ontario and the Association of Ontario Chicken Processors to Queen's Park today. I hope everyone will join them in the legislative dining room for their reception.

Mr. Michael Harris: I too would like to welcome representatives of the CAA visiting Queen's Park today; two representatives in fact representing CAA North and East Ontario: President Christina Hlusko and board member Frances Mannarino. Welcome to Queen's Park. I look forward to meeting with you later today.

Mr. Steven Del Duca: I want to echo the comments from the member from Thornhill and the member from Kitchener-Conestoga and welcome the Canadian Automobile Association to Queen's Park for their advocacy day.

Specifically, I'd like to welcome the chair for CAA South Central Ontario, Bill Carter; board members Janet Lafortune and Ethel Taylor; and members of CAA's government and community relations team.

I, like the member from Thornhill, invite everyone to join the CAA for their lunch reception in committee rooms 228 and 230 following question period.

Mr. Robert Bailey: It's my pleasure today to welcome Mr. Bill Laidlaw, who's with us in the gallery. He's executive director of the Ontario Association of Food Banks. Welcome to Queen's Park, Bill.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I too would like to welcome representatives of the CAA here to Queen's Park for their annual advocacy day, including a resident of Windsor

and chair of the CAA South Central Ontario, Mr. Bill Carter.

Mr. Grant Crack: It's also a pleasure for me to welcome members of the Chicken Farmers of Ontario and also the Association of Ontario Chicken Processors across the province. We have a number with us today: Henk Lise, Murray Opsteen, Gary Raycroft, Adrian Rehorst, Mike Terpstra, Ryan VanTil, Ed Verkley; CFO director and chair, Henry Zantingh; and Lucy McKee. Again, I welcome them. I know the Minister of Rural Affairs has some more to introduce as well.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's a pleasure to introduce in this Legislative Assembly here today one of my constituents from Barrhaven. Fighting for distracted driving demerit points is Rick Levesque. It's a pleasure to have you here.

I'd also like to introduce a couple of my other colleagues who support our initiative as well. We have both Matt Hiraishi and Doug DeRabbie from the Insurance Bureau of Canada; Elliott Silverstein from CAA; and, of course, Frank Notte from the Trillium auto dealers.

Mr. Jonah Schein: I'd like to welcome friends and students from the grade 5 class at Dewson Street Public School, and their teachers and parents. Welcome to the Legislature today.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I'd also like to introduce some other members of the Chicken Farmers of Ontario, a group that is visiting here today: Murray Booy, Paul Bulman, Michael Burrows, Rob Dougans, Michael Edmonds, Chris Horbász, and, from the riding of Peterborough, my good friend Tim Klompmaker.

Mr. John Yakubuski: On behalf of my colleague Jack MacLaren of Carleton-Mississippi Mills, I would like to introduce the mother of page Phoebe Gao, Sharon Gao; her father, Wei Gao; and brother, Leo Gao. They will be in the public gallery this morning.

Mr. John Fraser: I'd like to recognize Dave Smith, a great restaurateur and philanthropist from Ottawa, and his friend Bob Simpson, here today in the Legislature.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Premier. Premier, every day I worry about Ontario's growing debt and our anemic pace of economic growth and job creation, which has caused you to lower expectations on economic growth. I do sincerely hope that Thursday will be a turning point and we'll finally see the Wynne Liberal plan to grow our economy that's spinning out of control. But I worry about your penchant for kicking things down the road. In 10 months, you've launched 36 different panels. Your governing philosophy seems to be, "Why put off till tomorrow what you can delay indefinitely with a panel today?"

Let me ask you directly, Premier: Will the fall economic statement on Thursday contain any more panels that will kick this can down the road even further?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just respond to the Leader of the Opposition by asking him if his party is going to support the Supporting Small Businesses Act. We're trying to get that piece of legislation through, so my hope is that we'll be able to get it through committee. My understanding is that the opposition needs to support us in getting that through committee and getting it back to the House.

In terms of the work that we've been doing, I would say to the leader of the party that he would remember that we have more than recovered all of the jobs that were lost as a result of the economic downturn. We continue to work to invest in people and invest in infrastructure and to create a business climate—including with the small businesses act—that will allow businesses to thrive and will allow businesses to continue to hire and expand. I hope they will join with us in that work.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: I don't think I got an answer to the Premier's question. She asked me a question, Speaker, and I'm glad to say that, yes, we did vote for that bill—yesterday, as a matter of fact, Premier—so you might want to loop in with your House leader to get updated information.

Let me get back to a more serious matter. Your philosophy continues to be to postpone tough decisions to panels, to conversations and consultations. It has now been 10 months. You say that you're for job creation, but, Premier, not everybody can work for the government. We also need a healthy, thriving private sector.

You've abandoned any attempt to try to control spending. Your wage freeze has been abandoned. You have not moved on fixing the broken arbitration system. Don Drummond has basically become a missing person in the province of Ontario when it comes to his report.

I worry that your only alternative, if you won't control spending, is to increase taxes. Will the fall economic statement contain a study, a panel, a consultation—anything—that's going to increase taxes on hard-working Ontario families?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I appreciate that the party opposite supported the bill yesterday. They are now blocking it at committee, so it would be very helpful if they would help us move it through committee so that we could get that act in place, so we could support small businesses.

In terms of what the member opposite will see in the fall economic statement, we've been very clear that investing in people, investing in infrastructure and investing in a business climate that will allow businesses to thrive, we believe, is the way forward.

1040

Now, the Leader of the Opposition would like to focus everything in our power on fighting the deficit. The trouble is, if we do that—if we do not make the investments in business and in people and in infrastructure that are necessary—at the end of the day, according to his plan, there will be nothing to fight for. We want to fight for jobs; we want to fight for growth. We want to put the

conditions in place so that that growth can happen. That's what we're doing. My hope is that he will join with us and help us to support that kind of growth.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Well, we're going to fight against the growing Liberal debt and fight for job creation and opportunity to make Ontario again—I do that each and every day because, quite frankly, somebody has to do it because you're not.

All we see now are 36 studies. You've made no difficult decisions to actually control spending in the province of Ontario. We've put forward 10 questions to the finance minister. I hope he'll take the time to respond to those questions, standing in the name of Mr. Fedeli, including the fact that you had counted it in your plan on \$6 billion in savings for a wage freeze that you threw under the bus when you became Premier. So where are you going to find those \$6 billion?

Let me ask you a direct question, because I'm concerned about this. I understand the Liberals are contemplating increasing education property taxes. They're going to try to do it. It's a very sneaky education property tax hike. Other than an economic study, statement or studying that further—please tell me that that is not being considered by the Liberal government. You're not going to ask hard-working families, already strapped, to increase their property taxes to pay for your overspending.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think the leader of the third party really wants—of the opposition, sorry. The Leader of the Opposition wants to have it both ways. On the one hand, he says Don Drummond is not someone we've paid attention to, which is just not true; 60% of what Don Drummond recommended, we have paid attention to. There are other issues that Don Drummond raised in his report that we have said, "Yes, we have to look at those things." He can't have it both ways. Either we take the advice of a well-respected economist like Don Drummond, which we have done and are doing, and we examine all of those issues and we put those into our documentation to say, "You know, these are things that we have to look at"—we are interested in investing in people, investing in infrastructure and the business climate. What they want to do is slash and cut services to people; we are not going to do that. We believe that the people of Ontario deserve better than that.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Good morning, my question is for the Premier.

Leader, I think you got your answer about the new taxes, by the way.

This week marks the fifth anniversary of Ontario becoming a have-not province. Let me remind you that when you took office, Premier, Ontario was a robust province and actually paid out equalization payments to those needy provinces. So far, your government has received nearly \$10 billion in equalization payments. In

those same five years, provincial revenue has increased by \$17 billion. So between equalization payments and increased revenue, we're talking about tens of billions of extra dollars in extra tax.

I have a simple question: How is it that you're still running a deficit and can't balance a budget?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: It's evident from the question that the member hasn't been reading the budgets year over year. It's evident that the member opposite hasn't been looking at the tremendous—and is not aware of a global recession that has hit the entire world. And he has not, obviously, paid attention to the effects it's having on all provinces and that of Canada. Ontario—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock.

I have a list of about six names in my head. I'll only use one for now, but I'll come back to you. Member from Renfrew, come to order.

Carry on.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Our priority has been clear throughout. We have been controlling our spending. We've been very disciplined in the way we're taking the measures necessary to respond to the recession, and it's working. We're creating more jobs. We're cutting our spending, and Ontario and Ontarians are getting ahead.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: You know, during the recession, the member from Leeds–Grenville actually had hair. That's how long ago we're talking here, Speaker.

Let me tell you that Don Drummond had some—and I did that with his blessing, Speaker. Don Drummond had some serious recommendations. He called for a sharp degree of fiscal restraint, for a wrenching reduction from the path that spending is now on, and for you to act swiftly and boldly. But you didn't do any of that. Spending continues. It's absolutely out of control. So how are you going to balance the budget by 2017-18?

Your finance minister says, "We'll grow the economy to get increased revenues." But the Bank of Canada, only two weeks ago, said that we will not meet our growth expectations this year or next. We've failed on spending—

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

Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: And there's a dichotomy, Mr. Speaker. There's no leadership from that side. They feel that austerity measures that we've taken—and we have taken many to control and actually cut spending year over year. We're the only government in all of Canada to have achieved that, but we are also the government that's investing in its people. We're investing in infrastructure; we're making strategic investments to provide for more jobs and stimulate economic growth. They choose not to do that, and we will.

We choose also to lower taxes for small business. They're holding that up, Mr. Speaker. I ask them: Why are they holding up small businesses, 90% of which would no longer pay this health tax, and holding up a

committee? Stand up for the people of Ontario and our businesses.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Well, I'll stand up for Ontario right now, right behind my leader, Tim Hudak.

We have some serious questions about your ability with numbers. You haven't made the tough decisions the Drummond report called for. Spending is not going down and the Bank of Canada says we won't hit our growth targets, so revenues will not go up. As spending is not going down, it's not possible to balance the budget without the \$6-billion planned savings from the wage freeze. And with revenues not going up, you're obviously planning further tax increases. We just heard one acknowledged to our leader a few minutes ago.

Enough of this nonsense; enough of the political spin. Come clean. Will you tell us how it's even remotely possible for you to balance the budget in 2018, with spending up and revenues down?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, I tell them to come clean. I ask them to come clean as well. Pass the bill to support small business. That is what we're doing. That is creating jobs and that is stimulating growth.

When it comes to some of the measures that we've taken to reduce spending, we've done it without their support. They voted against the very issues that we're putting forward that Drummond recommended, and as a result we've actually cut spending year over year.

More importantly, to those watching on TV, a number of austerity measures have been taken right across Canada, more so than anywhere else right here in Ontario. We know that other parts of the world have had to suffer through their austerity measures because they haven't made the necessary investments in their future. We're doing both, and now it's time for us to make those investments, to create those jobs, to stimulate that growth—

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

Hon. Charles Sousa: —and to ensure that Ontarians have a future, have a better tomorrow.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. I continue to be concerned about people who continue to stand when I stand. The tradition and the convention is that you immediately sit down. Your microphone's turned off anyway, and you're stealing my time.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. Ontario families are more and more concerned about a government that seems less and less clear about their plans for Ontario's future. For months the Premier insisted that new tolls and taxes that hit family budgets were the only way to pay for new transit. Then, last week, she announced a different plan that involved floating bonds.

Has the Premier ruled out new taxes and tolls that hit family budgets?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: What we are determined to do is to build—to continue to build—transit across the province and particularly in the GTHA. We know that investment in infrastructure across the province, whether it's roads and bridges in rural and northern communities, whether it is transit in our urban centres and in the GTHA—all of that investment is necessary. It's necessary in the short term because it creates huge job opportunities, but in the long term it is what will drive the economic growth that is so necessary. If we do not have that infrastructure in place, if we do not have those transit projects in place, then people's quality of life will continue to suffer and businesses will not be able to move through the congested areas. So we are going to continue to build transit, and we hope that the third party will support us.

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: A few short months ago, the Premier made a splashy announcement about a transit funding panel whose job was to study the studies on studies about new taxes and tolls. But now, before the panel has reported back, she has floated a totally different idea. Can the Premier tell us anything about her plan?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Contrary, obviously, to the belief of the leader of the third party, there are a number of things that we need to do in order to be able to continue to invest in infrastructure across the province. The green bonds are one part of that, Mr. Speaker. Anne Golden is working with her team to put out a report by mid-December that will give us some advice on what other kinds of mechanisms we should put in place in order to have a revenue stream to be able to continue to build transit. So we continue on that path. There's not one answer to the question of how do we continue to build transit in the GTHA. It's a complex issue. There are a number of things that we're going to have to do. The green bonds are part of that infrastructure answer, but there is more that we will have to do, and that's why Anne Golden will be giving us her report.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: People want some sense that their government has a plan to confront Ontario's challenges, but when they look at the Liberals at Queen's Park, they see a party throwing everything at the wall in a desperate hope that something will stick. The Premier was clear that her plan was to slap new taxes and tolls on family budgets. Now she's throwing out different ideas but can't say what they'll cost, what they'll achieve or when they might happen. Speaker, can the Premier tell families in Ontario that she won't be hitting them with new unfair taxes, or do they have to wait for the endless panels, conversations and discussions to actually get an answer?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I'm just going to address the last part of that comment, the ques-

tion, first, which is to say: Yes, we do believe in talking to people about decisions. We do believe that getting input on issues is important. I'm sorry that the third party doesn't agree with that, but we do think that it's important to talk to experts and to the people of Ontario about issues before we make policies.

In terms of a plan, we have invested \$16 billion in transit across this province. We are building transit in the GTHA, in particular. The Big Move is in place, but we have put in place funding for transit in municipalities across the province, through the gas tax. We have a plan; we know that it's very important to implement that plan. We are implementing that plan and we are working on getting the revenue to make sure that we'll be able to continue implementing it.

What we have not seen is the plan from the third party on how they would build transit or what transit they would build.

JOB CREATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Premier. I want to turn to another issue where the government seems to be scrambling for some answers. People in this province are worried about finding and keeping good jobs. For years, the government championed a policy of no-strings-attached corporate tax giveaways and insisted that those giveaways would help create 600,000 jobs in this province. Does the Premier think that plan was working?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Well, those changes that we made, and I think the leader of the third party is referring to, among other things, the HST—and, of course, those predictions are coming true. Job creation: Since the bottom of the recession in June 2009: almost 500,000 jobs have been created; 95% of those jobs have been full-time jobs and over 80% of those jobs have been created in the private sector, exactly where we want to see them. So we actually are making success in precisely this area. We have nearly a million people working in the manufacturing sector in this province, and we're working hard to continue to create jobs there. We've got two regional economic development funds that have also helped to create and sustain more than 20,000 jobs across this province. We are meeting with success as a result of these changes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Finance spoke vaguely about a plan for targeted tax relief to help companies that are actually ready to make investments in this province. It's exactly the sort of plan that the Liberals have insisted wasn't necessary for years, because their no-strings-attached corporate giveaways were supposedly creating hundreds of thousands of jobs. Is the Premier now admitting that the old plan was a failure?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, the NDP wants to go back to reckless taxes and uncontrolled spending. That's not what we're doing here. More importantly, they'd prefer us not to take those measures that are being used in other parts of the world to promote and support R&D spending.

We are looking for ways for our companies to be more innovative, to improve their productivity, to be more competitive, and in Ontario we'll achieve that by partnering with them and taking the measures necessary to support business in Ontario.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, once again we see Liberals scrambling and people paying the price.

Richard is one of the many young people who wrote us concerning his job prospects, and he's in a pickle. He moved to a new town to improve his job prospects and so that his fiancée could go to school. But jobs are in such demand that 300 people are showing up for temp positions, and he and his fiancée are wondering how they're going to make the bills. Richard and his fiancée don't need empty promises of a vague plan for the future from a scrambling government. They need real plans right now.

Will the Premier's fall economic statement include anything for people like Richard, or just more warmed-over, vague plans that don't have any details?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, young people in Ontario, people like Richard, who are starting off, are looking for opportunities—opportunities that can only be had if we partner with business, not fight against them. The NDP voted in committee against supporting small business yesterday—that's uncalled for; that's unacceptable—and you partnered with the PCs, no less, to do just that. We have to work together for the benefit of the people of Ontario, not for your political gains.

We will support them. We will continue to do what's right, and that includes incentives to promote those jobs and to help people like Richard.

CANCER TREATMENT

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: This is a question to the Minister of Health. Minister, yesterday you indicated that you could not intervene in the case of Kimm Fletcher because your Committee to Evaluate Drugs determined that Avastin isn't proven to be effective in prolonging survival in those with her diagnosis. But that committee's report, which you shared with me yesterday, in point 4, states: "The ... studies showed that the use of" Avastin "in patients with ... GBM was"—was—"associated with higher progression-free survival rates..."

Minister, how can you continue to duck this issue? Will you now stand in your place and act on what your committee says: that Avastin can help prolong Kimm Fletcher's life and others with the same cancer? Why are you failing to take action to save the lives of Ontarians?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Well, Speaker, this is kind of remarkable. If the member would actually read the next paragraph, he would see that the committee noted

that using historical estimates of survival as a basis of comparison is not reliable because treatment standards have evolved and historical rates are derived from studies that used older, less effective treatments.

If the member opposite would tell me what exactly he is recommending—is he recommending that we move back to the days when ministers, when political people made determinations about what drugs were covered? I would disagree with that. The right thing to do, Speaker, is to let these decisions rest with the experts. If he's recommending that we have one solution for one patient, I reject that as well.

So my question to the member opposite is: Tell me what your policy is on appropriate coverage of drugs.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Minister, I want you to be the Minister of Health. I think it's shameful that you continue to hide behind the Committee to Evaluate Drugs as if its recommendations were binding pronouncements, when they are not. You would be aware that the committee's recommendations are frequently rejected by executive officers. At no time is any mention made that you, as Minister of Health, cannot have any input into what can only be described as an ambiguous drug evaluation process at best.

Minister, helping Kimm Fletcher won't save Liberal seats. There are no gas plants involved here.

On behalf of Kimm Fletcher and others like her, I'm asking you to show some compassion for a brave young woman who only wants to spend as much time with her family as possible.

1100

Premier, is this the kind of health minister that you want running Ontario? If she can't provide health care to vulnerable Ontarians, she—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Stop the clock.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Under the circumstances that we find ourselves in, I'm going to ask that all members show some restraint, please. I would appreciate all members doing that.

Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, we're talking about a mother. We're talking about a mother with two little children, a little seven-year-old and a little nine-year-old. This is a woman who has been given a very, very serious and tragic diagnosis.

Our health care system, every single day, does everything it can to support people as they struggle with various health issues. I ask the member again: Is he asking that we revert to a situation where political decisions are made around who gets what drugs, or do we respect the advice we get, not just from our Committee to Evaluate Drugs, but Health Canada? Health Canada has said there are no data demonstrating an improvement in disease-related symptoms or increased survival with Avastin in the treatment of GBM.

This is a tragic story, and I'm asking the member opposite to take the politics out of this.

CANCER TREATMENT

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Last week, I asked the minister about threats by Cancer Care Ontario to cut all cancer surgery in Windsor due to an escalating dispute regarding thoracic surgery. The minister brushed off my question and refused to intervene or to promise the uninterrupted continuation of these services in our home community. Windsor and Essex county residents do not take lightly threats to our health care services, and neither do I. So I ask again: Will the minister act immediately to protect cancer services in Windsor and Essex county?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you for the question. The member from Windsor West and I have spoken about this issue on several occasions because she is determined to do everything she can to provide the highest-quality care for people in Windsor.

Cancer Care Ontario has changed how they determine what level of hospital should be performing surgery for specific conditions. In this particular case, for this kind of surgery, they've set a threshold of 150 surgeries. The evidence is very clear: Mortality rates have been cut in half as a result of the quality improvement initiatives that Cancer Care Ontario has put in place. I want every person in this province to have access to the highest-quality care. That does mean sometimes consolidating so that volumes deliver the best outcomes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: That's an unfortunate response. Today, Doreen Gravelle, a 75-year-old Windsor woman who is both a cancer survivor and a patient, is staging a sit-in at Windsor Regional Hospital. She's there today to send a message that care close to home is indispensable for both patients and their families. This brave and ill woman is doing all that she can to protect services for the people in her community. Can the minister tell this House why she has not felt the same obligation as Mrs. Gravelle to stand up for Ontario patients?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, you've heard me say in this House many times that Ontarians have amongst the highest cancer survival rates anywhere in the world. They will continue to drive even better outcomes for people with cancer, and that does mean that sometimes programs are consolidated in order to reduce mortality rates for patients.

It's important to note that cancer services will continue in Windsor. They will continue. I have spoken to Cancer Care Ontario about the issue, around the tone of the letter, and I have been assured that patients in Windsor will continue to receive cancer care. One particular procedure, thoracic surgery, will be moved to a centre with higher volumes because it saves lives.

SKILLS TRAINING

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Ma question est pour le ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités, l'honorable Brad Duguid. During challenging economic times, various employment services and training pro-

grams offered by government are especially important and valued. This is particularly true of the Employment Ontario network.

I've heard from some of our local community service providers that they are concerned about losing funding for some of the critical programs they provide to Etobicoke residents. Service providers like Community Micro-Skills Development Centre on Vulcan Street, the Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, and the YMCA of Greater Toronto on Albion Road will all be victimized by funding cuts the federal government is planning to make.

Can the minister please provide some reassurance to myself, as well as members of my community and these critical training organizations, that they will not be hurt by the proposed cuts by the feds?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I wish I could give the member that reassurance, but unfortunately I can't. The current federal proposal is to fund their untested, untried Canada jobs program by cutting 60% of funding to the labour market agreement which funds those programs that serve our most vulnerable Ontarians. They're also demanding that the provinces match their funding, which represents a combined hit to Ontario's training programs of \$232 million.

The community groups ought to be concerned about this federal proposal, as should all Canadians. The federal government is asking us to fund their new program at the expense of programs for literacy and basic skills, aboriginal workers, people with disabilities, youth, newcomers and older workers.

The member can reassure his constituents that this government will not support any program that is funded on the backs of marginalized workers. We will stand up for them and ensure that our training programs are available to all Ontarians—

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

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Although I appreciate the ministerial update, I am disappointed to hear that the federal government intends to cut program funding for our most vulnerable workers, regardless of the impact to small business owners. Perhaps this is another example of a hard-right turn that Canada can do without, but I'm pleased that our government is standing up for those Ontarians who need training. As parliamentarians, we have an obligation, duty and responsibility to make sure that no one gets left behind.

I've also heard concerns from small and medium-sized businesses within my own riding. The fact is, these organizations are creating the bulk of new jobs in our economy. We want to make sure that any programs proposed to help businesses with worker training are not ignored by the proposed fed cuts.

Can the minister advise this House what is being done to ensure small and medium-sized businesses that they will not be neglected by the Canada Job Grant proposals?

Hon. Brad Duguid: The member raises a very important point. The federal government's Canada Job

Grant proposal has not been well thought out. The original proposal ignored the needs of small businesses. It failed to recognize that most small businesses would not be able to afford to participate in a program that would require them to invest \$5,000 up front in training a new worker.

Ontario and the other provinces and territories, as well as our Ontario Chamber of Commerce, have been very vocal on this. While the federal government has indicated that they would provide some greater flexibility in the program to address our concerns, we're of the view that they need to go further to make this program effective.

We need to do everything we can to help small businesses succeed. That includes getting Bill 105 approved and passed by January 1, so that 60,000 small businesses in Ontario can get the tax break that they deserve. I urge the opposition parties to co-operate, stop stalling this important bill and join us in supporting Ontario's small businesses.

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: My question today is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, and I see he hasn't gotten the job grant right, either.

Minister, I understand you are now going to consult with barbers and hairstylists. My understanding is, your enforcement thugs will no longer be harassing barbers for a while. Now that's amazing, because you said they were a self-regulating body; they were standing alone, and you wouldn't be interfering when some messy situation came up like this embarrassment to you with the barbers and the hairdressers.

So can you explain why your government didn't consult with tradespeople before you implemented your nanny-state College of Trades? And by tradespeople, I don't mean Pat Dillon and the Working Families coalition; I mean the tradespeople in Ontario. You never consulted with them. Why didn't you?

Interjections.

1110

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

Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I can probably see why, but unlike the member opposite, I have a great deal of confidence in my barber. He's been cutting my hair for over 40 years. I think he does a good job.

I don't only have confidence, as we all do, in our barbers, in their ability to do the work that they do; I also have confidence in their judgment. I believe, like all skilled tradespeople—and barbers are skilled tradespersons—that they know better than the member opposite what's best for them and how they should be categorized in terms of their trade. Should they be a separate barber trade? Should they be under stylists, which is something that the PC Party did when they were in office, when they categorized all of the barbers, the hairstylists and the

hairdressers together? I daresay I don't know what kind of consultation was held then; probably not a lot.

We're reaching out to barbers across this province to let them have a voice in how their trade is going to be governed. I don't know for the life of me what the member has—

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I know this is humiliating to you. It's an embarrassment. I really feel happy that you like your barber; that's a great thing—because my hairdresser, the guy that I get my hair cut by, they don't like you at all; they don't like you at all.

Minister, you have to know by now that the Ontario—
Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Order, please.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All right. Get it all out. Get it all out.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Don't set it up that easy.

All right. Could you please finish your supplementary?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Thank you very much. I know I've got nice hair, okay? But not as nice as Frank Klees's hair.

But you have to know that the Ontario College of Trades is a complete disaster. At a time when we are trying to create jobs in this province, the Ontario College of Trades is actually driving jobs away. The ratio review is severely flawed, and in fact, your Liberal cabinet has only approved one ratio review, not all the ones you're bragging about each week.

This expensive tax is simply not working. Will you agree with Tim Hudak and the PC caucus that the Ontario College of Trades should be abolished once and for all?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, I will put my barber, John Spanos in Scarborough, up against the member's hairstylist any time. I'll go toe to toe. I'll invite the member out to Scarborough, and at Bellamy and Ellesmere, he can get himself a great haircut by a barber who's been cutting hair for over 50 years.

The member mentioned—I don't know if I could continue with this answer. The member mentioned ratios. Look, our record on ratios was that we reduced seven. When the member's party was in office, in eight years, they reduced none. The College of Trades has produced 14 more ratio reductions than all three parties put together over the last 20 years. I'll not only put my barber up against his hairstylist; I'll put our record on reducing ratios up against his any time.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Be seated, please.

New question.

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Mr. Jonah Schein: My question is to the Premier. Premier, people who go to work each day in this province deserve fair compensation. Unfortunately, thousands of young people in Ontario work for no pay. They receive no compensation and they have few rights or protections in their workplace. Despite clear rules regarding unpaid internships, most of these workers are reluctant to speak up and risk being blacklisted by their employers. The current complaint-based system is unfair and it's ineffective. When will the Liberal government do its job and proactively enforce the law on unpaid internships?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I appreciate the question from the member for Davenport. It's very important to me that we make sure that interns in these situations are fairly treated. I think it's a very good issue to raise.

As far as health and safety for interns, all workers in Ontario should be covered by the Occupational Health and Safety Act. We're currently looking at including co-op students working through accredited university and college programs under Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act.

In terms of the Employment Standards Act, the rules on internships are very clear. While most workers in Ontario are covered by the Employment Standards Act, there's a narrow exemption for co-op students, and this exemption is only for accredited university and college programs to give their students a valuable opportunity for workplace experience while they're pursuing their degree.

We believe that covers the situation, but as I say, we're acting on including co-op students under health and safety. It's a very important issue.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jonah Schein: Back to the Premier: You're not covering the situation. Often the best that most workers in these situations can hope for is a letter of reference that will help them get a paid job in the future. But, Speaker, vulnerable workers should not be forced to choose between their rights at work or a letter of reference. Enforcing the law should be responsibility of the Ontario government and not the responsibility of vulnerable young workers. This is the issue, this is what's critical here, and the solution is clear. When will this government do the hard work, admit that their complaints-based system does not work for unpaid interns and start to proactively enforce the law?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I say, there's only an exemption for some students who are involved with university and college degrees. It's the responsibility of the university or the college to ensure that the placements are fulfilling their mandate.

If there is a situation where a worker in Ontario feels that their rights are being violated, they can—and should—get in touch with the Ministry of Labour, be-

cause we are very clear that that enforcement should be in place.

We are acting on making sure that co-op students are included under the workplace safety act. As I say, I think it's important that we pursue this issue, that we make sure that there aren't other loopholes. We will continue to work with anyone, including the opposition, who wants to ensure that we have those gaps closed and we make sure that all workers in Ontario are safe.

BIODIVERSITY

Mr. Steven Del Duca: My question today is for the Minister of Natural Resources. In Ontario, we are fortunate to have a diverse natural landscape with an abundance of biodiversity and wildlife.

On October 21, I was delighted to attend and participate in an announcement that the minister made in my riding of Vaughan, at the Earth Rangers Centre, about the Land Stewardship and Habitat Restoration Program. I know that MNR announced this program earlier this year to support local projects across Ontario that help to conserve our province's rich biodiversity. The program provides funding so that community groups can support local land stewardship initiatives and projects that enhance biodiversity and wildlife habitat. Could the minister please explain to the House how this Land Stewardship and Habitat Restoration Program is helping to protect the biodiversity of our province?

Hon. David Oraziotti: I want to thank my colleague for the question, and I appreciated the opportunity to make this announcement with him last week in his riding. The residents of Vaughan are certainly fortunate to have a capable representative.

As he mentioned, the Land Stewardship and Habitat Restoration Program will provide funding to projects that conserve Ontario's biodiversity. The program builds on our government's ongoing commitment to protect and conserve our biodiversity and to maintain healthy and sustainable habitats right across the province.

Recently, we announced that our ministry will be contributing \$300,000 in funding 24 partnership projects focused on land restoration, rehabilitation and enhancement efforts. Together these projects will help restore more than a 1,000 hectares of important habitat right across the province. Protecting the environment will enhance the quality of life for Ontario families and ensure a dynamic economy for future generations. This project is part of our government's plan to invest in people and infrastructure and build a strong business climate.

1120

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Steven Del Duca: I thank the minister for explaining to the House about this particular funding. This is indeed a great initiative, and I was excited to hear that a group in my riding, Earth Rangers, received a grant from the ministry. With the support provided by the ministry, the Earth Rangers Foundation will be able to carry out Project iRestore, which is an important project

that will restore the fields around their headquarters that have been overrun with invasive species.

Peter Kendall, executive director of Earth Rangers, had this to say: "Project iRestore is working to restore ... what was primarily invasive plant species into native tall grass prairie habitat. Funding from" the ministry "will ensure we can continue this important work and see more biodiversity return to this area."

Could the minister please tell the House about some of the other great projects that will be receiving funding under the LSHRP?

Hon. David Oraziotti: Again, thanks to the member for the question. I certainly appreciate the opportunity to let members know a little bit about the great projects that local residents are working on to protect animals, plants, forests and wetlands in their own communities right across the province.

I want to point out that the 24 projects being funded this year will engage close to 80 partners and leverage an additional minimum \$300,000 from other community partners and funding sources, making this truly a community-based initiative.

These community groups will bring great value to these projects through their knowledge of local issues, work experience in their communities and the established relationships that they have with local landowners.

The member mentioned Earth Rangers, which is a group carrying out an important project in Vaughan, just one of the many projects. The Credit Valley Conservation Foundation will rehabilitate damaged sections of a cold-water tributary to enhance the existing brook trout population in the Thunder Bay area. The Bright Lake Association will also work with farmers in the Algoma region to help rehabilitate more than 17 types of fish species.

This is just one important investment our government is making to help strengthen our biodiversity.

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Mr. Tim Hudak: A question to the Premier: Premier, 15 years ago, I fought to get slots at the Fort Erie Race Track. I did so because the track faced closure, and it gave them a 15-year lease on life. It helped to preserve and enhance hundreds of jobs at Fort Erie Race Track and hundreds more in the broader community.

The Liberal government decided, basically in the dark of night, to rip out the slots, supported by your NDP, who drove the getaway car. As a result, that track is spiralling towards closure.

I wrote to you a week ago and I said that I have a three-point plan, actually, to save the Fort Erie Race Track and give some economic stability and opportunity to the people who work in that sector. It results in restoring the slots; forming a public-private partnership with an operator who knows how to run the business; and local revenue sharing.

You haven't responded to my letter yet or asked for me to discuss it. If you want to steal the plan, steal it, but,

please, do something. Will you follow the PC plan and restore the slots at Fort Erie Race Track to save those jobs?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: No, we won't, because the plan that the Leader of the Opposition has acknowledged he fought to put in place was not accountable, it was not transparent and it had to be changed. We made a decision that we would change it.

At the same time, we have put in place a five-year plan with \$400 million attached to it, that will allow horse racing in this province to be sustainable, including, if the Fort Erie Race Track chooses to, to work with the Ontario Racing Commission and to establish their future. There is absolutely no reason that the Fort Erie Race Track shouldn't be able to have a sustainable future if they work with the ORC.

My hope would be that the Leader of the Opposition would work with the folks in Fort Erie, would encourage them to work with the ORC and put in place a plan that would be transparent and that would focus on the customers and on the industry. I hope he'll work on that, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Well, Premier, I am working with the folks at Fort Erie. I was there yesterday. I'll tell you, they like our plan, and they say the Liberal-NDP plan is going to close down that racetrack.

You've got to make a decision and you've got to make it now. I think you know, as I heard from Ben Vander Meer yesterday when I was at his farm, that they need to make a decision now about where they're going to race next year. If the track has closed, if it has no future, they'll pick up stakes; they'll lay people off; they'll eliminate jobs; they'll move to the States or elsewhere. That's what's at stake here.

You, in the dark of night, ripped out the slots. You've decided that if a program had a flat tire—if a car had a flat tire—you would junk it entirely. It's going to cost us tens of thousands of jobs. My colleague from Perth-Wellington, Randy Pettapiece, has a plan that will actually give the sector a better future. That should give it some stability and make it a world-class jurisdiction.

Why are you so hell-bent on closing down the race-track and rejecting any idea that's going to save jobs? I'm on the side of jobs; I'm on the side of saving the track. Why aren't you?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm on the side of jobs, and I'm on the side of an accountable and sustainable horse racing industry in this province.

I would encourage—

Applause.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Okay, sit down.

I would encourage the Leader of the Opposition to have a conversation with John Snobelen, who has worked very closely with us. He has been part of the panel that has worked with us to put in place a five-year plan that will lead to that sustainable horse racing industry.

It's very unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that the Leader of the Opposition, for purely political reasons—and we all know what those are, as it's transparently political—has stirred the pot in terms of encouraging the people at Fort Erie to suggest that they don't have a future. That is just not true. If they work with the ORC, they have a future, and he should help them to do that.

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier.

The Premier wants to cut her way to sustainability. She is cutting jobs in rural Ontario because she thinks the only way to save thoroughbred racing in our province is to thin the field down to one private operator: Woodbine. But she also says the Slots at Racetracks Program had to go because Woodbine used a pile of purse money to stuff the wallets of their executives.

The government audited Ontario's racetracks. If the Premier isn't picking winners, why won't she make those audits public?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I've answered this question a number of times. I think the leader of the third party knows that those audits were done with the understanding that they were confidential, in order to work towards a transition plan for the tracks in the province.

If the leader of the third party thinks that there shouldn't have been work done to create transition plans so that we could have a plan going forward, well, that's one thing. But if she thinks that we needed to have a plan going forward, then it only makes sense that we would have worked with the tracks, that we would have had those audits. The Auditor General is looking at the situation now, and she will release a report.

The fact is that those discussions with those audits with the tracks were done as confidential audits in order to put a transition plan in place.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the Premier likes to brand her government as open and transparent. I guess transparency is only of value when it's convenient for the Premier.

She is asking Ontario horse people and track workers to trust her and not to ask too many questions. But people are losing their livelihoods in communities like Fort Erie, and they deserve some answers.

Before the Premier closes down the Fort Erie Race Track and other tracks across the province, will she pony up the results of government audits so we can see just how much horse money went to executive compensation and perks at Woodbine?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the leader of the third party will read the Auditor General's report when it's released.

Mr. Speaker, it's very interesting that the leader of the third party seems so interested in the health and stability of the horse racing industry and yet did not support the appointment of a former NDP agriculture minister to lead the Ontario Racing Commission. It is beyond understanding why they would not have supported the appointment of Elmer Buchanan, given that he has such a deep knowledge of the sector and that he has worked on putting a sustainability plan in place. It says to me that the leader of the third party is not interested in a sustainable plan, but is actually more interested in political gain on this, which I think is shameful.

We want a sustainable industry. That's why we've worked—

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

Interjection.

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

ROAD SAFETY

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: My question is to the Minister of Transportation.

This past Thursday, second reading on my private member's bill carried. Bill 116, the Manoranjana Kanagasabapathy Act, was introduced to address the number of drivers who disregard the law and still continue to use a hand-held device while driving, despite the fact that it is illegal. My bill will increase the fines for distracted driving and assign three demerit points to offenders.

Speaker, distracted driving is responsible for causing more than 20% of vehicle road accidents in Ontario. As legislators, it is our responsibility to review the current laws regarding distracted drivers and strengthen them to ensure that the fines and penalties in place deter drivers from using any hand-held device while driving.

1130

I know the government has a lengthy history of taking action on making our roads safer. Can the minister tell us about these steps but also if he supports the initiative in my bill?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to thank my colleague and my friend from Scarborough—Rouge River for his very solid leadership on this issue, Mr. Speaker.

I just came from spending the morning with Chief Blair and the volunteers of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, which is a really remarkable leader, with incredible integrity.

The success of our drunk driving laws have brought fatalities down to where we're almost 50% less than the Canadian average, and they have dropped from 227 deaths to 160, but distracted driving losses have gone up by 65. That's 65 families who have lost a father, a mum, a child, and that's devastating. We need to look to the success of things like drunk driving laws and apply those lessons to distracted driving.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I'm glad to hear that our government is taking the problem of distracted driving seriously. Initiatives taken by our government have made our roads safer, much more than many other jurisdictions in North America, but we all know that there's more that can be done. There have been too many innocent lives lost because someone else feels that their text message or phone call is more important than focusing on the road.

It is also reassuring that the minister supports my bill and that he identified that it is important to take action now on making our roads safer and penalize those who break the law. But we need to take action on this issue now.

Can the minister tell us some of the measures his ministry is working on and what new action we can expect from this government?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to commend the member on his private member's bill. This is really an excellent step forward.

Mr. Speaker, it's great that we have young people in the audience today, because they are often the victims of distracted driving and drunk driving. I was just with several mums who have lost to that, and one of the things they raised with me was that we've done it on drunk driving and now we've got to do it on distracted driving. That's a mixture—I know the Canadian Automobile Association is here. I want to thank them and recognize them in the gallery, because they are running some of the best education programs on distracted and drunk driving.

We need to increase both our regulations and penalties, and we're reviewing the law right now. I know there are members opposite, as well, from Nepean—Carleton and other constituencies, who have also been in support of this. We will be bringing forward an action plan considering legislation and regulations, as well as education, in the very near future.

DRIVE CLEAN

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Minister of the Environment today. Now, Minister, I have repeatedly asked you in this House if you're going to pay back the money that the Liberal government stole from Ontario drivers using the Drive Clean—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Withdraw, please.

Mr. Michael Harris: Withdraw—took from Ontario drivers using the Drive Clean program, and every time you avoid my question, saying you will potentially stop stealing money—or taking money, rather—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I know what I'm doing. Withdraw.

Mr. Michael Harris: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ask the question.

Mr. Michael Harris:—potentially stop taking money in a few months from now. Minister, that's not good enough. The Supreme Court ruled that profits made off revenue-neutral programs are illegal, and they must be

paid back. That means you owe Ontario drivers \$19 million. Minister, will you commit today to repay the money you illegally took from Ontario drivers, or will—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. I'm loath to miss any question, but if the member wants to go down that road, I have warned him to make sure that he's perfectly clear that if he goes down that road, I will pass the question.

Finish the question; you've got 10 seconds.

Mr. Michael Harris: Will you agree to pay back Ontario monies today, or will it take a lawsuit filed in court to get the money back?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has already indicated that the program will be made revenue-neutral. You will know that it was, of course, in deficit for at least the first decade.

But, you know, it's interesting that you ask this question on the day when all of us are wearing a pin which deals with those who suffer from lung cancer, because the Ontario Lung Association says that there are problems: "These pollutants cause breathing difficulties, irritated eyes, coughing and headaches. They also trigger asthma attacks, worsen symptoms in people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and contribute to other serious health problems including heart disease and cancer."

This is a program which the Ontario Lung Association and the medical community indicate tremendous support for. It's one that saves lives—

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

Mr. Michael Harris: Again to the minister. Minister, your answers prove you will stop at nothing to defend this temporary program which the vast majority of Ontarians oppose. And now even the Toronto Star—you heard that right; the Toronto Star—has adopted our position to scrap Drive Clean. So clearly you're on the wrong side of this issue.

Minister, there's time to save face here. You can do that today by committing to Ontarians that you will meet the demands of the Ontario PC Party and our leader, Tim Hudak, which we made more than two years ago, to get rid of Drive Clean. Minister, will you back down from your unreasonable defence of this useless program today and commit to scrapping Drive Clean?

Hon. James J. Bradley: First of all, I must call into question—here we have history in this Legislature. We have a member of the Conservative Party quoting what you usually refer to as the red Star. I simply can't believe that you would be doing so.

But let me quote someone who's very credible on this issue, Gord Miller, the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario: "The Drive Clean program has undergone a number of independent program reviews that concluded significant reductions in smog-causing pollutants were being achieved, but that further reductions could result from program improvements, including the implementation of on-board diagnostic emissions testing which is

currently underway." That's the highly reputable—and one who has been supported by all in the Legislature—Gord Miller, Environmental Commissioner of the province of Ontario.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Premier. This government has been sitting on a falls prevention safety strategy since 2010. It is now 2013 and still we are hearing from this government that consultation is ongoing and something will be coming soon. In Newfoundland and Labrador the provincial government reviewed its health and safety regulations in 2009. The result: By 2012 falls from heights were reduced 25%. There are nearly 3,500 serious falls on the job each year in Ontario. A 25% reduction would mean 800 fewer serious workplace falls. I ask the Premier: When does this government expect the heights training regulation to come into force?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm very glad that the member opposite has asked this question. I know that the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities actually has some information. But what I will say is that we want very much to make sure that this program is in place. We think it's very important that we do everything we can. It's absolutely consistent with prevention of illness, prevention of injury, that we know is in the best interests, obviously, of individuals, but is also in the best interests of workplaces and of the health care system. I'm glad that the member opposite asked this question.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: To the Premier: Last week this House heard that nine workers have fallen and died on construction sites across Ontario since June of this year, and yet your Minister of Labour cannot tell us when the training standard to prevent falling on job sites that, which was drafted and endorsed by the former Minister of Labour three years ago, will be in place. Last week I spoke to Tom Beegan, the former chief prevention officer for the province of Ontario. His opinion on the matter? There's no reason for this standard not to be in place today. When will this government do what it claims is its number one priority, enact the fall prevention regulation and put worker safety first?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'm sure the Minister of Labour would be able to provide more specifics to the member, but I know the Minister of Labour and his ministry have been working very hard when it comes to falls prevention. In fact, I think just recently they've been out in workplaces right across the province on an action plan to reduce falls, to be out there and try to enforce it in a way that really has been effective.

But, Mr. Speaker, any tragedy in the workplace is one tragedy too many. It's something we take very seriously. It's the reason we've brought forward many preventative

measures that have helped reduce workplace injuries to a level that's far lower than it was when we took office. It's something that's incredibly important to us.

I thank the member for raising the issue. It's a very important issue, and I know that the Minister of Labour is on it.

VISITORS

Mr. Jonah Schein: I'd just like to take a moment to welcome food pioneer and executive director of Food-Share Debbie Field to the Legislature. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): In the members' west gallery, we have someone who has represented Beaches–Woodbine in the 35th and 36th Parliaments and Beaches–East York in the 37th Parliament: Madame Frances Lankin.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stole your thunder.

DEFERRED VOTES

LOCAL FOOD ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LES ALIMENTS LOCAUX

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 36, An Act to enact the Local Food Act, 2013 and to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to provide for a tax credit to farmers for donating certain agricultural products that they have produced / Projet de loi 36, Loi édictant la Loi de 2013 sur les aliments locaux et modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts pour prévoir un crédit d'impôt pour les agriculteurs qui font don de certains produits agricoles qu'ils ont produits.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1141 to 1146.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On November 4, Mr. McMeekin moved third reading of Bill 36.

All those in favour, rise one at a time to be recognized by the Clerk, please.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Hardeman, Ernie	Moridi, Reza
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Harris, Michael	Munro, Julia
Arnott, Ted	Hatfield, Percy	Murray, Glen R.
Bailey, Robert	Hillier, Randy	Natyshak, Taras
Balkissoon, Bas	Holyday, Douglas C.	Nicholls, Rick
Barrett, Toby	Horwath, Andrea	O'Toole, John
Bartolucci, Rick	Hoskins, Eric	Oraziotti, David
Bisson, Gilles	Hudak, Tim	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bradley, James J.	Hunter, Mitzie	Pettapiece, Randy
Campbell, Sarah	Jackson, Rod	Piruzza, Teresa
Cansfield, Donna H.	Jaczek, Helena	Prue, Michael
Chan, Michael	Jeffrey, Linda	Qaadri, Shafiq
Chiarelli, Bob	Jones, Sylvia	Sandals, Liz
Chudleigh, Ted	Klees, Frank	Sattler, Peggy
Clark, Steve	Kwinter, Monte	Schein, Jonah
Colle, Mike	Leal, Jeff	Scott, Laurie

Coteau, Michael	Leone, Rob	Sergio, Mario
Crack, Grant	MacLaren, Jack	Shurman, Peter
Damerla, Dipika	MacLeod, Lisa	Singh, Jagmeet
Del Duca, Steven	Mangat, Amrit	Smith, Todd
Delaney, Bob	Mantha, Michael	Sousa, Charles
Dhillon, Vic	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
DiNovo, Cheri	Matthews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Duguid, Brad	Mauro, Bill	Taylor, Monique
Dunlop, Garfield	McDonell, Jim	Thompson, Lisa M.
Elliott, Christine	McKenna, Jane	Vanthof, John
Fedeli, Victor	McMeekin, Ted	Walker, Bill
Fife, Catherine	McNaughton, Monte	Wilson, Jim
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McNeely, Phil	Wong, Soo
Forster, Cindy	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Fraser, John	Miller, Norm	Yakubski, John
Gerretsen, John	Miller, Paul	Yurek, Jeff
Gélinas, France	Milligan, Rob E.	Zimmer, David
Gravelle, Michael	Milloy, John	

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time to be recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 101; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1150 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have great pleasure in introducing to the House this afternoon two long-time friends from Windsor, Al and Alberta Clark. Thank you, and welcome to the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We welcome our guests.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

FRANK STRONACH

Mr. Frank Klees: I rise to pay tribute to a great Canadian, an exemplary citizen of this province, a visionary, an entrepreneur, industrialist, philanthropist and a man who personifies the very best of Canadian values. Frank Stronach has touched literally millions of lives through his visionary and courageous entrepreneurial spirit and philanthropic generosity.

Frank Stronach immigrated to Canada in 1954 and, by 1957, had translated his working background in tool and machine engineering into his first company, Multimatic Investments Limited, which would expand into the production of automotive components. That was the beginning of what would become an international business success story that would span 29 countries and provide employment to more than 123,000 people in 314 manufacturing operations.

At the heart of that success was Frank Stronach's management philosophy, known as "Fair Enterprise," that is enshrined in a business charter of rights that sets out annual profit sharing between employees, management, investors and society.

Among the many honours that have been bestowed on Frank Stronach are the Order of Canada, the Business Leader of the Year award presented by the Richard Ivey School of Business, and the Fraser Institute's highest honour, the T. Patrick Boyle Founder's Award, in recognition of excellence and accomplishment in the promotion of entrepreneurship, philanthropy and free-market ideas.

Interwoven in this extraordinary life is a personal commitment to never forget those less fortunate. Untold lives have been touched through Frank Stronach's personal benevolence and the generosity of Magna International to a wide range of charitable and community organizations. One of those organizations is Big Brothers Big Sisters of York, who are honouring Frank Stronach at its 100 years of mentoring celebration.

Speaker, I ask all members of the Legislature to join me in congratulating Big Brothers Big Sisters of York and to thank Frank Stronach for making a difference in the lives of so many, yes, as a Big Brother, and as a visionary leader whose legacy will be celebrated for generations to come.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Earlier this week, the Toronto Star reported on the failure of the federal government to act on climate change. Unfortunately, the Harper Conservative government isn't the only one to fall short on its climate responsibilities. Ontario's Liberal government is Failing our Future, according to the Environment Commissioner's 2013 report.

I'll just read an excerpt. He comments: "As in past years the prognosis is bleak"—referring to further action. "There has been no improvement in the emissions from the three biggest sectors (transportation, industry and buildings) since the climate change action plan began in 2007. We have only a slim chance of meeting the government's 2014 target ... and no chance at all to meet the subsequent targets for 2020 and 2050 unless something markedly changes."

Speaker, climate change is already affecting our lives. It is irresponsible for the federal and Ontario governments to be failing their responsibilities.

VETERANS

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I rise in the House today to acknowledge the 12th Annual Veterans Appreciation Luncheon and to thank Kristin and David Courtney, owners of MEDiChair Halton, for hosting and inviting me to attend. They know first-hand the devastating effect that a life-changing injury or disability can cause. Their passion for helping others came about after witnessing how the life of their friend was positively transformed by

the many medical devices he needed following a horrific motor vehicle accident.

MEDiChair Halton was the recipient of the 2011 Oakville Award for Business Excellence in Professional Services. It has been providing home health care solutions to residents in Oakville, Burlington and Milton, along with many other areas in the Halton and Peel regions, since 1994.

It was an honour to attend their luncheon to recognize local veterans. We took a moment to recognize and honour the hundreds and thousands of Canadians who made the greatest sacrifice for our country. They may have served in the First or the Second World War, the Korean War, Afghanistan, or many other places. These Canadians made a conscious decision to volunteer their lives to be a part of our country's military. I would like to thank them for their service to our country, for enduring what they endured, and for being there when we needed them most.

ROAD SAFETY

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's a pleasure to rise in the House today to bring awareness to an issue that has been very important to me and particularly to one of my constituents, namely Rick Levesque, who has started a campaign to bring demerit points to your licence if you are caught in distracted driving.

Earlier today, I had the opportunity, which I believe is a rare moment in this assembly, where I was able to co-host a press conference with Liberal MPP Bas Balkissoon, as well as my colleague Jeffrey Yurek from the London area. The three of us were able to work with not only Rick Levesque but also CAA, the Insurance Bureau of Canada, the Trillium Automobile Dealers Association and so many other Ontarians who are concerned about distracted driving, which is causing lives to be lost in Ontario and many cars and vehicles to be destroyed, and is a growing concern on our highways. It was a pleasure today, and I'm looking forward for this initiative to be brought forward by the Minister of Transportation, who I will give credit to for saying that he does see that this is an area of concern and one that we can work on.

So, Speaker, if I could impart upon this assembly one final time my support for Mr. Balkissoon's initiative, but even one step further: I think that we can act, and we can act firmly now, and I would encourage the government to bring forward either regulation or legislation on distracted driving immediately.

STEEL INDUSTRY

Miss Monique Taylor: My home city of Hamilton has a long history of steel production. Thousands upon thousands have brought up their families and put their kids through school thanks to the good wages they managed to negotiate through their own hard work and through collective action with their colleagues. The United Steelworkers and their members have served Hamilton well over the years.

Unfortunately, those workers have been let down as US Steel announced last week that there will be no more steel production at the Hamilton plant. US Steel struck a deal with Investment Canada in 2007 that would allow them to buy Stelco. That deal included promises of investments and jobs that would secure a future for steel production in Steeltown. Last week, we saw yet more evidence that those promises mean absolutely nothing.

Last Tuesday was a sad day for Hamilton, and workers are rightly worried about what the future holds for them, not just for those who are still working at US Steel but also the 8,000 retirees who deferred some of their pay for decades to ensure that they had a decent pension when they retired. Now they're not so sure, and with good reason. I've also heard from a number of their widows, with the same concerns.

I'm pleased to hear that the city of Hamilton council is reviving its steel committee to take a good, hard look at what is happening in Canada's steel industry. I wish them every success and offer my services if I can be of assistance.

EMERGING LEADERS NETWORK

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: This past weekend, I had the pleasure of attending CivicAction's Emerging Leaders Network studio conference. It was so great to be back amongst my peers at CivicAction discussing a topic that is a priority for me and my constituents of Scarborough-Guildwood: how to improve jobs and the economy in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area.

The Emerging Leaders Network studio conference has been running for the last five years and brings together our region's young and rising leaders to develop new ideas and incubate concrete actions. Incredible past projects born out of ELN conferences include Toronto Homecoming, which connects top talent that has gone abroad—we're trying to attract them back home here to Canada and the GTA; Project Neutral, which is committed to enabling a neighbourhood in Toronto to become carbon neutral; and the Pan Am Path, which is a city-wide project whose goal is to create an active-living and community-building legacy for Toronto's Pan Am/Parapan Am Games. The Pan Am Path will weave through my riding of Scarborough-Guildwood and undertake improvements in our Kingston-Galloway neighbourhood.

1510

We know that young people and their successes are big drivers of our economy and our growth. That's why it's so stimulating to be among our conferences' many young leaders at the ELN Studio conference, who are passionate and dedicated to improving the economic future of the GTA. I can't wait to see what brilliant initiatives stem from the work that they did this past weekend.

TOBACCO CONTROL

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Illegal contraband tobacco products are easily accessible in my riding of Nipissing and,

indeed, in many other areas of Ontario. The RCMP recently estimated there are 50 contraband tobacco manufacturers operating in Ontario and Quebec. Moreover, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation estimates federal and provincial governments lose up to \$1.1 billion a year in tax revenue from contraband tobacco sales each year.

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Yes, you could build a gas plant or two with that.

City council in North Bay has recognized this is a great concern. In a January 2012 resolution, they noted that 42% of smokers in northern Ontario purchased cigarettes from an outlet not paying full taxes in the past six months. And 53% of grade-7-to-grade-12 students who smoke say they smoked contraband cigarettes in the past year.

The North Bay council resolution was directed at health and finance ministers and encouraged those ministries to "maintain a strong focus on tobacco control and to work with local law enforcement agencies in this regard."

The lack of will by this government when it comes to enforcement is hurting us all. It hurts retailers, it hurts our finances, but it also hurts our kids and their health, and that in itself is shameful.

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Bill Mauro: I'm rising today to make a plea on behalf of my riding of Thunder Bay-Atikokan—actually, on behalf of all of Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario—relative to the Pan Am Games.

I know that the Pan Am Games are in 2015. It's closing in fast. They will be on us before we know it. I know it's going to be fantastic for the people in southern Ontario. There's going to be a tremendous legacy down here from the facilities that are created for their athletes in the GTA—for all Ontario athletes at some level, obviously.

What I want to say is that it's my understanding that as part of the Pan American Games, there is going to be a torch relay of some description. I'm sure the people involved in making these decisions are hunkered down as we speak, trying to decide on that route. What I'm here to say is that even though we can't be part of the legacy when it comes to the physical facilities of the Pan Am Games, it's my hope that that group of people is going to find a way to see that torch find its way to Thunder Bay or somewhere in northwestern Ontario. That will be our legacy.

Thunder Bay has got a tremendous reputation when it comes to putting athletes at the professional levels of a variety of different sports in a tremendous way. We've got a great volunteer base when it comes to hosting just about anything. This is my plea to the Pan Am Games folks on behalf of the people of Thunder Bay-Atikokan, Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario generally: Find a way to bring that torch from the Pan Am Games through Thunder Bay before it finishes here in Toronto in the summer of 2015.

CANADIAN AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my pleasure to rise today and congratulate the Canadian Automobile Association for 100 years of service and advocacy on behalf of Canadian drivers. They hosted a wonderful luncheon this afternoon that many of the members in this House actually attended.

The founding meeting of what is known as the Canadian Automobile Association, CAA, took place in the offices of the Ontario Motor League in Toronto back on September 3, 1913. Their founder, Dr. Perry E. Doolittle, envisioned the expanding role of the motor vehicle and realized just how important it would be in Canadian life. He was a key player in the building of the Trans-Canada Highway.

CAA's advocacy efforts include initiatives like School Safety Patrol, Worst Roads, CAA's Traffic Safety Coalition and much more.

I've personally been a member of the CAA for over 30 years now. It was due to my father, who actually got me involved in it as well. Now my wife and children also have CAA memberships. As a husband and a father, nothing is more important to me than the safety and security of my children; while my children are grown now, and living on their own, the peace of mind CAA provides is incredibly important. Many miles from home, I can rest assured knowing that my family will be taken care of, if the event arises and they do need assistance.

So again, to the CAA, I want to say congratulations on 100 years of service.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated November 5, 2013, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

LUNG CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I rise to recognize November as Lung Cancer Awareness Month in Canada. It's an opportunity to raise awareness of this very serious form of cancer.

I'd like to acknowledge some people who are in the House today. Anne Marie Cerato is a young woman who

is on the Lung Cancer Canada board, and she is living with lung cancer. Geoff Ogram is with us; Geoff is also on the board of Lung Cancer Canada, and also living with lung cancer. Geoff's wife Dawn is here; Dawn is a former proud OPSer, and she is here in her capacity supporting her husband. Shem Singh and Christina Sit are both here with us today; they are both with Lung Cancer Canada. Welcome, all.

My heartfelt thanks go out to the dedicated staff and volunteers of organizations like the Canadian Cancer Society, the Ontario Lung Association and Lung Cancer Canada for their ongoing commitment to battle cancer. Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer-related deaths for both men and women in our country. On average, every day 55 Canadians die of lung cancer. This means that this year an estimated 3,600 men and 3,300 women in Ontario will die of lung cancer.

That's why we need to do more to help the patients and families affected by this disease and, more importantly, to prevent it. I'm pleased to say that our government and its partners, like the Ontario Lung Health Alliance, are making progress in the fight against lung disease.

We know that smoking tobacco is a leading cause of lung cancer. Although neither Geoff nor Anne Marie were smokers, and they still have lung cancer, smoking tobacco is a leading cause of lung cancer, and that is why I am firmly committed to our Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy. Our goal is to achieve the lowest smoking rates in the country.

The good news is that smoking rates are down in Ontario. In the year 2000, 24.5% of us smoked, and now we're at 19%. The government has already taken concrete steps to help more people quit smoking, and to make sure young people don't get addicted to cigarettes.

I'm proud to say that Ontario is a leader in Canada when it comes to tobacco control. In addition to increased school-based and youth-led prevention efforts, in 2006 we banned smoking indoors in workplaces and in enclosed public spaces. Two years later, we banned the display of tobacco products on retail "power walls" across Ontario. In 2009, we banned smoking in motor vehicles when children are present. And in 2010 we banned the sale of flavoured cigarillos.

We now fund smoking cessation drugs, and we've expanded access to nicotine replacement therapies to family health teams, community health centres and aboriginal health access centres, as well as to patients in treatment for addictions. Forty-six community health centres, 132 family health teams and 14 addiction treatment centres across Ontario now provide over-the-counter nicotine replacement therapy and cessation counselling at no cost to smokers.

1520

Earlier this year, to build on our supports for smokers who are ready to quit, I announced that we're launching two new, innovative smoking-cessation initiatives in collaboration with community, workplace and health care partners. The first is a partnership with 25 employers,

aimed at reducing smoking among workers in the industrial and service sectors. We continue to work with 19 public health units and employers across Ontario to develop and implement an approach to quitting smoking. This includes specific strategies to enhance tobacco-use cessation, such as adopting smoke-free-worksites policies and compliance strategies. To support the workers in their attempts to quit smoking, both the Smokers' Helpline and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health provide access to counselling and no-cost nicotine replacement therapy.

The second project helps patients who are in hospital to quit smoking, using strategies such as brief and intensive counselling. Our government is providing nearly \$2 million for this program over two years, to improve care for patients with chronic conditions such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder, lung cancer, cardiovascular disease and diabetes. We also want to strengthen the links among hospitals and the supports available to patients after they're discharged, including primary care, public health, community pharmacies and the Smokers' Helpline.

To build on our measures to create smoke-free communities, we've started to take aim at so-called social smokers, targeting mostly young adults who believe that if they're only occasional smokers, they're not damaging their health. Some of you have seen our government's social media campaign to raise awareness about the dangers of social smoking. In Ontario, smoking prevalence is higher among young people age 20 to 29 than in any other age group, yet many don't even consider themselves to be smokers. However, research indicates that a majority of so-called social smokers will become regular smokers. That's why we need to reach them.

Speaker, I'm also pleased to note what our government is doing to clean our air, which has a significant impact on improving the health and well-being of Ontarians, young and old. We remain committed to closing all coal-fired plants by 2014. Just the other week, Minister Chiarelli announced the closure of the Lambton generating station by the end of this year, leaving only one coal-fired generator online. When we finally close the Nanticoke generating station next year, we will have closed 19 coal-fired power plants across Ontario. That's progress for our air, our lungs and our environment.

On the treatment side, I'm proud to say that according to the International Cancer Benchmarking Partnership, our province ranks among the best jurisdictions with comparable health systems when it comes to cancer survival rates for major cancers, including lung cancer.

I'd like to thank our partners at Cancer Care Ontario for driving quality, accountability and innovation in all cancer-related services.

As we mark Lung Cancer Awareness Month, we should reach out and thank the dedicated physicians, nurses, medical radiation technologists and all the other health care providers who work hard every day keeping Ontarians healthy.

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

Mrs. Christine Elliott: As we've heard, November represents Lung Cancer Awareness Month.

Mr. Speaker, one in 12 Canadians will develop lung cancer in their lifetime. More Canadians will develop lung cancer than any other type of cancer. There are approximately 24,000 Canadians who are diagnosed with lung cancer each year, with roughly 20,600 Canadians dying from the disease.

Initiatives by organizations such as Lung Cancer Canada, the National Cancer Institute, Cancer Care Ontario, the Lung Association and the Canadian Cancer Society are using various education tools to increase awareness.

Studies show that smoking is the leading cause of lung cancer in Canada. The second-leading cause of lung cancer is radon, followed by second-hand smoke, asbestos and occupational exposures to cancer-causing chemicals.

As I've said, the leading cause of lung cancer is smoking, which is responsible for 30% of all lung cancer cases. Organizations focus on educating Ontarians about the dangers of smoking and the direct link to cancer, as well as the long-term benefits of quitting. Studies show that within 10 years of quitting smoking, an individual's risk of dying from lung cancer is cut in half.

Through online and print help manuals, labeling on packaging as well as social media, more Ontarians are quitting smoking because of the long-term risk of developing lung cancer. The many organizations that are working to raise awareness to lung cancer offer helplines to those trying to quit.

The second-leading cause of lung cancer is radon exposure, accounting for roughly 16% of lung cancer cases. This is something that I don't think is very well known by Ontarians or Canadians, Mr. Speaker.

Health Canada research has indicated that there are hundreds more cases each year of lung cancer linked to indoor radon exposure since the 1970s. Organizations, including Health Canada, continue to encourage Ontarians and Canadians to check levels of this colourless and odourless gas in their homes. Scientists are finding that Canadians are at a greater risk of higher-than-acceptable levels of radon in their homes.

Health Canada recommends that homes be tested for a minimum of three months, ideally during the winter months, to determine if there are unhealthy radon levels in the home. Ontarians can purchase an inexpensive at-home radon detection kit from their local hardware store or hire professionals to test the levels in their home. We would encourage all Ontarians to do this inexpensive testing in their homes. If higher-than-normal levels of radon are detected, Health Canada recommends consulting with a professional to find solutions for your home.

Organizations such as Lung Cancer Canada, the National Cancer Institute, Cancer Care Ontario, the Lung Association and the Canadian Cancer Society have made good progress in the last decade. Innovation and discovery in lung cancer diagnoses and treatment are at an all-time high. Advances are being made with targeted drug therapies that offer more effective and less toxic

alternatives to traditional chemotherapy. High-precision radiation treatment, minimally invasive surgery and robotic surgical techniques are just a few examples of the great strides being made in treating lung cancer.

However, despite the great advances being made, the average survival rate for lung cancer is still only five years, so we still have a lot of work to do to continue to educate all Ontarians about lung cancer and the importance of preventative measures, like smoking cessation and testing your home for radon levels.

Throughout the month of November, I encourage all Ontarians to learn more about lung health and the steps that can be taken to prevent lung cancer.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I know that I don't usually share time, but I doubt that I'm going to make five minutes on that one, so I beg your indulgence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's fine.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Now we know why you haven't been asking any questions this week.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have a cold that doesn't know when to go away.

I certainly would like to welcome the people who made the journey to come and be here as we celebrate this very special month dedicated to lung cancer.

This is a disease that everybody in Ontario knows. We all know someone who has faced the disease, maybe has lost their battle or is still going at it, trying to fight for their life. Make no mistake: For 80% of the people who are diagnosed with lung cancer, the end is very bleak. The end means that you lose your battle and cancer takes another life.

I'm always proud to say that you and I, Speaker, in 2008, introduced a bill to ban flavoured cigarillos. It is almost impossible in Ontario to talk about lung cancer without talking about smoking. You and I got together back in 2008 because we knew that the tobacco industry was seeing the statistics. They were seeing the steps that Ontario had taken to decrease the smoking rate, and they wanted to make sure that the next generation of smokers was going to be addicted. They wanted to make sure that there would be a next generation to buy their tobacco products. And what did they do? They came out with flavoured cigarillos. Now, a young person who's a non-smoker—we all start as non-smokers—will never spend \$8 on a package of cigarettes; \$8 is a lot of money and a package of cigarettes, when you don't smoke, doesn't make much sense. But they would spend a buck; they would spend \$1 so they can look cool and carry a flavoured cigarillo.

1530

For those of you who have never seen them, if you saw them, you would think that, really, they belong in a kid's knapsack. They come in all sorts of fruit flavours, candy flavours and a lot of alcohol flavours—martini etc. They are flavourful. The packages look very much like a fruit roll-up or a lip gloss. But what they are is, they are a way for the tobacco industry to make sure that there will

be a next generation of smokers. They are flavoured tobacco products.

So the bill we introduced in 2008 finally became law and the sale of flavoured cigarillos was banned in this province. Unfortunately, the ink on that bill was not even dry, when the tobacco industry had found a loophole. They had found a way to continue the sale of this product. Which is why, during the month of November—the month dedicated to lung health in many ways—I will be reintroducing a bill that bans flavoured tobacco products, so that what you and I tried to do together will finally be completed. This is an issue that is dear to me.

This summer, while I was back in my riding, I spent a lot of time on baseball diamonds. I saw at least 34 different flavoured tobacco products being used. There was smoking tobacco, just as much as there was smokeless tobacco. If you go to any baseball bench, you will see those little cans of chews that come in all sorts of flavours. Lots of kids start to chew while they are actually trying to do physical activities, while they're actually trying to play ball. Some of them actually do it pretty good; some of them actually play ball very good. But they see all of those chews on the bench and, at some point, they will try one.

Now if it was just chewing tobacco—it tastes horrible. The first time you put this in your mouth, you have one thing on your mind: How can I get this out? But if it's the flavoured one—the bubble gum one, some of the martini one—you can keep that in your mouth for quite a while before you get the yucky taste of tobacco. But what is really happening is that you're getting hooked on nicotine.

It doesn't take long after that and you want the real tobacco, and you move on to the flavoured cigarillo. Then, you don't want the flavouring anymore; you want the cigarettes. And the industry gets its next lung cancer recipient, gets its next person hooked on tobacco.

We can do better. We will do better.

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

To the member from Nickel Belt: You got through all five minutes. Congratulations.

PETITIONS

AIR QUALITY

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

“Whereas Ontario's Drive Clean Program was implemented as a temporary measure to reduce high levels of vehicle emissions and smog; and vehicle emissions have declined significantly from 1998 to 2010; and

“Whereas the overwhelming majority of reductions in vehicle emissions were, in fact, the result of factors other than the Drive Clean program, such as tighter manufacturing standards for emission-control technologies; and

“Whereas from 1999 to 2010 the percentage of vehicles that failed emissions testing under the Drive Clean program steadily declined from 16% to 5%; and

“Whereas the environment minister has ignored advances in technology and introduced a new, computerized emissions test that is less reliable and prone to error; and

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

“That the Minister of the Environment must take immediate steps to eliminate the Drive Clean program.”

I support this petition, I’m happy to affix my name to it and give it to page Aiden.

ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLES

Mr. Michael Mantha: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas these vehicles are as safe as any motorcycle carrying a passenger since all of the manufacturers of the ‘2-up machines’ have redesigned their original models by extending the wheel bases, beefing up their suspension to allow the carriage of passengers on the machine safely and providing a rear seat, many with handholds;

“Whereas the privilege to ride on secondary highways and trails with two people on a recreational vehicle is denied to off-road vehicles (ORV) operators but is granted to snowmobiles;

“Whereas the definition of an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) in regulation 316/03 no longer reflects the majority of ATVs being marketed and sold in Ontario;

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

“Amend the definition of an ATV to include those that are: (a) designed to carry a passenger; (b) with more than four tires and designed to carry passengers; (c) without a straddle seat; and (d) carries passengers and has a steering wheel.”

I support this petition and will present it to page Anal to bring down to the Clerks.

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I’ve got a petition here, signed by a number of people from Ontario. It says:

“Whereas small businesses not only employ thousands of Ontarians with well-paying jobs, they also play a vital role strengthening Ontario’s economy; and

“Whereas providing tax relief to small and local businesses strengthens the economy and creates a business climate that attracts investment and helps create jobs; and

“Whereas the government has taken several other initiatives to making Ontario the most attractive place to do business in North America;

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

“That the members of the Legislative Assembly pass Bill 105, Supporting Small Businesses Act, 2013, intro-

duced on September 24, 2013, by the Ontario Minister of Finance.”

I agree with this petition, will sign it and will send it down with Sarhan.

DARLINGTON NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Petitions? The member from Durham.

Mr. John O’Toole: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker; it’s better late than never.

“Whereas the net benefit of the retained nuclear scenario is \$60 billion. Forgoing the wind options in the long-term energy plan (LTEP) will have a positive benefit to the economy of \$21 billion. Forgoing the nuclear option in the LTEP will have a negative economic impact of \$38 billion;

“Whereas the Durham region economy is predicated on the new build. It was Premier Wynne who cancelled the new build at Darlington, costing Ontario 20,000 direct and indirect jobs associated with the new build;

“Whereas this severely limits employment opportunities for university graduates from the University of Ontario Institute of Technology who were to gain experience in Darlington nuclear’s training centre;

“Whereas in addition to refurbishing the four existing reactors at Darlington the building of new capacity is important for the future of Ontario’s manufacturing sector and for jobs and investment in our Ontario;

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

“That Ontario’s elected MPPs and the provincial government reaffirm their commitment to the complete refurbishment of all four units at the Darlington generating station and that the Ontario government reinstate the original plan for the completion of the two new reactors at the Darlington generating station.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this petition and present it to Kate, one of the pages in their last week here at Queen’s Park.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Ms. Catherine Fife: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Enbridge Canada is proposing to reverse the flow of the Line 9 pipeline in order to transport western oil and tar sands oil through the most densely populated parts of Ontario;

“Whereas this pipeline project proposes changes to the pipeline that merit serious consideration, like the increase in oil carrying capacity and the transport of significantly more corrosive oil through the pipeline;

“Whereas this pipeline passes under cities and major rivers and a spill would risk the drinking water and health of millions of Ontarians and cause permanent damage to ecosystems;

“Whereas Line 9’s reversal will have impacts that must be analyzed beyond the National Energy Board hearings held by the federal government;

“Whereas the government of Quebec has already indicated its intention to conduct an independent review of the line reversal impact, including the flow of oil sands crude into Quebec;

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

“That the province of Ontario acts in the best interest of the health and environment of the province and conduct a full environmental assessment of Enbridge’s proposed Line 9 reversal and capacity expansion projects.”

I am proud to affix my signature to this petition, and I will give it to page Evan.

1540

WASTE REDUCTION

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I’ve got a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly signed by a number of people from around the province on the environment. It reads as follows:

“Whereas protecting the environment should be everyone’s responsibility, including manufacturing and material producing companies; and

“Whereas it is important to require producers to be financially and environmentally responsible for recycling the goods and packaging they sell in Ontario, and to divert these wastes from landfill to recycling to drive innovation, generate new jobs, and new Ontario-made products; and

“Whereas new approaches are needed that reflect ideas and recommendations from the recycling sector that are designed to improve current recycling systems, to increase recycling and diversion rates, and better protect our environment;

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

“That members of the Legislative Assembly pass Bill 91, the Waste Reduction Act, 2013, introduced on June 6, 2013, by the Ontario Minister of Environment.”

I agree with this petition, will sign it and will send it down with Louis.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Victor Fedeli: This is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas many residents of Nipissing depended on the Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit (CSUMB) to assist with moving expenses, help stay in a current home, assist with utilities and pay overdue rent; and

“Whereas cutting the special diet allowance made it more difficult for many ODSP recipients to achieve a healthy diet;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to restore the Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit and special diet allowance.”

I agree with this, sign it and give it to page Aiden.

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas there are a growing number of reported cases of abuse, neglect, and substandard care for patients at our hospitals;

“Whereas there are more and more cases of hospital acquired infections;

“Whereas people with complaints have no independent body to listen to their concerns;

“Whereas Ontario is the only province in Canada—including the three territories—where our Ombudsman does not have independent oversight of hospitals;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to expand the Ombudsman’s mandate to include Ontario’s hospitals and other front line care organizations.”

I couldn’t agree with this more, Mr. Speaker. I will affix my name to it and give it to page Christina to bring to the table.

WASTE REDUCTION

Mr. John Fraser: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas protecting the environment should be everyone’s responsibility, including manufacturing and material producing companies; and

“Whereas it is important to require producers to be financially and environmentally responsible for recycling the goods and packaging they sell in Ontario, and to divert these wastes from landfill to recycling to drive innovation, generate new jobs, and new Ontario-made products; and

“Whereas new approaches are needed that reflect ideas and recommendations from the recycling sector that are designed to improve current recycling systems, to increase recycling and diversion rates, and better protect our environment;

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

“That members of the Legislative Assembly pass Bill 91, the Waste Reduction Act, 2013, introduced on June 6, 2013, by the Ontario Minister of Environment.”

I fully support this petition, affix my name to it and give it to page Jack.

TIRE DISPOSAL

Mr. John O’Toole: I have a petition from my riding on Bill 91, which is the Waste Reduction Act. It says:

“Whereas the Ontario government has approved massive increases to Ontario Tire Stewardship’s eco fees

for agricultural” and off-road tires, increasing fees from \$15 to \$352, a 2,000% increase in some cases; and

“Whereas Ontario imposes tire eco fees that are dramatically higher than those in other provinces” and in Canada; and

“Whereas other provincial governments either exempt agricultural tires from recycling programs or charge” a modest fee of up to \$75; and

“Whereas these new fees will result in increased costs for our farmers and lost sales for our farm equipment dealerships” and potential loss to the US market;

“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” thoughtless “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’m pleased to sign and support it, and present it to Sarhan, one of the pages.

TAXATION

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

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the cost of living in northwestern Ontario is significantly higher than other regions of the province due to the high cost of necessities such as hydro, home heating fuel, gasoline and auto insurance; and

“Whereas an increase in the price of any of these essential goods will make it even more difficult for people living in northwestern Ontario to pay their bills and put food on the table;

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

“To reject any proposed increase to the harmonized sales tax, gas tax or any other fees or taxes in the northwest; and instead investigate other means such as increasing corporate tax compliance or eliminating corporate tax loopholes in order to fund transit in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area.”

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

GOVERNMENT’S RECORD

Mr. Victor Fedeli: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas a want of confidence motion has been tabled before the Legislative Assembly of Ontario; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario remains in power only while it has the confidence of the assembly; and

“Whereas the debate of a want of confidence motion requires the consent of all three parties’ House leaders; and

“Whereas the recent scandals, including the Ornge air ambulance fiasco, the Mississauga and Oakville power plant cancellation and eHealth have shown Ontarians that the McGuinty-Wynne Liberal government cannot be trusted with the administration of our province; and

“Whereas it is evident that the McGuinty-Wynne government has lost the confidence of Ontarians;

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

“To immediately exercise its prime duty of holding the government accountable and bring a want of confidence motion to debate at the earliest opportunity.”

I agree with this motion, sign it and give it to page Phoebe.

ONTARIO RANGER PROGRAM

Mr. Michael Mantha: I have hundreds more signatures in regard to saving the Ontario Ranger Program.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“We, the undersigned residents of Ontario, draw attention to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to the following:

“The Ontario Ranger Program takes youth out of their comfort zones by taking youth from the south and placing them in northern camps and vice versa, allowing for personal growth;

“The Ontario Ranger Program also helps nearby rural communities as the Ontario Rangers help with various work projects and build partnerships within the communities; the work is recognized and appreciated by these small communities;

“An extensive amount of work maintaining the interior routes in major provincial parks such as Quetico, Algonquin and Temagami is completed by Ontario Rangers on multi-day overnight canoe trips (and is otherwise unreachable);

“The lifelong skills and friendships built during the Ontario Ranger Program help youth develop into mature, confident, independent individuals, which is well worth the money spent on the program;

“Low-income and high-risk youth sent to rangers are isolated from their home situation and are exposed to the positive team-building environment within the Ontario Ranger Program;

“Therefore, your petitioners call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demonstrate that the Ontario Ranger Program is a valuable program to the youth of Ontario, reverse the decision to close the Ontario Ranger Program and continue to help youth make a difference in Ontario.”

I support this petition and will present it to Jake to bring down to the Clerks.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

REGISTERED HUMAN RESOURCES PROFESSIONALS ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LES PROFESSIONNELS EN RESSOURCES HUMAINES INSCRITS

Mr. Dhillon moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 32, An Act respecting the Human Resources Professionals Association / Projet de loi 32, Loi concernant l'Association des professionnels en ressources humaines.

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

Mr. Vic Dhillon: I would first like to start off by thanking the co-sponsors of this bill, the member from Whitby–Oshawa and the member from Beaches–East York. As always, throughout the process of bringing this bill forward, I really appreciate their support for co-sponsoring this private member's bill.

1550

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the Human Resources Professionals Association, known as the HRP, is Ontario's HR thought leader, with more than 20,000 members in 28 chapters in Ontario. Those members represent approximately 8,000 organizations in every industrial sector and between them employ around 2.5 million Ontario workers.

HRPA is governed by legislation encoded in the Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario Act, 1990. It sets out the objects of the association and its purposes, and these are:

“(a) to establish and encourage the acceptance and maintenance of uniform province-wide standards of knowledge, experience and ethics for all persons engaged in the field of human resources management;

“(b) to promote and further the education and improve the competence of persons engaged in human resources management by granting registration and membership to persons who meet the standards of the association;

“(c) to hold examinations and prescribe tests of competency deemed appropriate to qualify membership in and certification by the association;

“(d) to maintain discipline among members of the association;

“(e) to provide a medium for communication and exchange of information, knowledge and ethical standards for those persons engaged in the field of human resources management;

“(f) to sponsor, encourage and promote liaison with other individuals, associations, and groups engaged in similar or related fields of activity....”

In summary, the core purpose of HRP is to ensure that HR professionals who are members of the association are competent and act in an ethical manner.

The major goal as a regulatory association is to protect the public interest, and they do this by:

“—setting standards for our members who enter and work in the HR profession;

“—creating rules of professional conduct for when and how members may be removed from the membership;

“—the power to regulate the practice of members;

“—the power to establish a professional liability insurance requirement;

“—the power to establish requirements for membership and certification; and

“—updated member conduct procedures.”

HRPA members possess a high level of professionalism and are protected by regulatory safeguards to complete this work, to both create value for the organizations that employ them and to ensure the legislative rights of workers in the workplace.

As you know, Ontario businesses are in the midst of great change as business practices, economic conditions, workforce demographics and labour law all become more complex and interrelated. HRP's HR professionals are at the centre of this rapid change.

HR professionals are now often seen as champions of change as organizations continually assess and seek to increase their operational effectiveness. HRP members make huge contributions to the success and productivity of the business community and organizations of all types.

As regulated professionals, HRP members specifically possess a high level of professionalism and human resource capital management knowledge that creates enormous value for the organizations that employ them. HRP members provide this value by:

—identifying workforce trends and forecast changes before they happen;

—discovering potential problems before they materialize and adversely impact the organization;

—identifying key talent for retention and leadership development; and

—forecasting changes in human capital resources within the organization and in the changing economic environment.

To sum up their key role in Ontario organizations, HR professionals put the right people in the right place at the right time.

What will this bill do for members of the HRP? This bill provides HRP members the long-sought recognition as true professionals.

HRPA completed a recent study that showed that human resources leaders with CHRP designations are promoted faster and are increasing their job opportunities and pay. The report showed that 45% of generalists with CHRPs became HR managers in five years, whereas only 20% of HR generalists without the CHRP designation became HR managers in five years. The number of job postings requesting applicants to have a CHRP has nearly doubled, from 36% to 67%. The median pay for an HR manager without a CHRP is \$63,100. For HR managers with a CHRP, their median pay is \$73,000.

This confirmed confidence in HR accreditation is reflected in the greater career opportunities for HRP members to advance to more senior corporate positions who possess the CHRP designation. Bill 32 reinforces the

value of the CHRP designation for members of HRP and for employers who hire them. This act will better safeguard the public interest by enhancing its regulatory and oversight powers to ensure that their members' workplaces are fully compliant with existing and future provincial workplace legislation. This is supported by a recent HRP study that looked at the information about convictions under the Employment Standards Act, 2000, posted on the Ministry of Labour's website. HRP cross-referenced the list of convicted employers with HRP membership records. Of the 489 ESA convictions between October 2008 and January 2010, none could be linked to any HRP member.

When HRP's board of directors committed to updating our current act, we sought an independent expert opinion on the bill from Richard Steinecke, a legal expert in the area of professional regulation. Mr. Steinecke believes that there are numerous advantages to modernizing and upgrading the existing HRP act. He notes that, in general, Bill 32 addresses many of the gaps found in the current private statute of 1990. Mr. Steinecke concludes by stating that Bill 32 "provides numerous advantages for both members and the public and is consistent with similar statutes."

Bill 32 will assist HRP and its members to evolve into a strong and credible tier-one profession. This is because there are risks—

Ms. Cindy Forster: Point of order, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order, the member for Welland.

Ms. Cindy Forster: We don't have a quorum.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Do we have a quorum?

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

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): A quorum is present.

Proceed, the member from Brampton West.

Mr. Vic Dhillon: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

This is because there are risks to consumers and businesses that are not fully addressed in the 1990 act.

These include harm to the public. In 2010 and 2011 alone, more than one in seven former HRP members continued to use the CHRP designation without authorization. This number is growing, and it does not include misuse by people who were never members of the HRP, or unreported or undetected cases of misuse. The HRP currently has little power to stop this.

There is harm to business. Unregulated persons may not know the laws regarding workplace safety, violence and discrimination and the Employment Standards Act, in which businesses could be fined by the Ministry of Labour as a result of ill-informed advice from unregulated HR professionals. In many cases, businesses relied on these persons to provide them with advice on employment standards and proper accommodations for employees.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order, the member from Kitchener–Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: We don't have a quorum. People need to keep their seats.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Is there a quorum present?

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

The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.

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

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): A quorum is now present.

The member from Brampton West, you have the floor.

1600

Mr. Vic Dhillon: Thank you, Speaker.

Bill 32 will also add HRP to the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006, as a schedule 1 signatory, which it voluntarily adopted three years ago as testimony to its commitment to transparent, objective, impartial and fair employment treatment and career opportunities for all Ontarians.

Another distinction would be that HRP's board would include three individuals who are not members of the association or a self-regulated human resources body, and who are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Some stakeholders have said that Bill 32 will be a burden to employers. I would say that this is simply false. Membership in both the HRP and the CHRP designation is voluntary. Employers always have the choice whether to hire or not to hire CHRPs for their firms or businesses.

The public can enjoy greater confidence in regulated HR professionals who are HRP members. This new act gives consumers and businesses a fair and transparent vehicle to make complaints about HR professionals. It will protect consumers and businesses from unregulated HR professionals and will provide a practical way to achieve the goals set out in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the Employment Standards Act.

Ultimately, strengthening the protection of the public is what Bill 32 is all about. As the Ontario workplace evolves and as the government continues to introduce legislation to govern the workplace, organizations need professionals who can interpret and implement these rules for the benefit of employers and employees.

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It's an honour to rise this afternoon, on behalf of the residents of Dufferin–Caledon, to discuss Bill 32, the Registered Human Resources Professionals Act, 2013.

I'll tell a brief story that relates directly to the Registered Human Resources Professionals Act. You will recall that we were all participating in an election in 2011, in the fall. Of course, one of the things that we all like to do is canvass homes for votes. I'm not sure how

many of the members in the House are familiar with a small hamlet in Dufferin county called Mansfield, but if you ever travel up Airport Road towards Collingwood, perhaps to go skiing, Mansfield is a small hamlet in the northern part of my riding, in Dufferin county. I was canvassing in Mansfield. This rural subdivision has maybe 30 homes in it. Most people were shocked that they actually saw a politician canvassing in a rural subdivision—but regardless, one of the doors that I knocked on wanted to talk about the Registered Human Resources Professionals Act. Of course, that was 2011, and we're now at 2013. We've already seen this bill. This bill was in the 39th Parliament and didn't get through, and now, of course, we're in the 40th Parliament, and we're still discussing it, three years later. I won't presuppose that that woman I spoke to at the door voted for me, but she seemed absolutely amazed that I was familiar with the legislation, had participated and knew where it was at the committee stage.

So here we are, three years later. Perhaps I should go back to that Mansfield home, after we have finally finished discussing the Registered Human Resources Professionals Act, and let her know that we're one step closer.

Bill 32 was introduced earlier this year, in March, and is clearly supported by all parties in this Legislature. It was actually co-sponsored by a member from each party. The bill was co-sponsored by the member from Brampton West, the member from Beaches–East York and, of course, my Progressive Conservative colleague and deputy leader, the member for Whitby–Oshawa. This is an initiative that the people over at the Human Resources Professionals Association—HRPA, as it is known—have been pushing for, as I said, for quite some time.

This bill was already introduced immediately following the last election, in December 2011, and received all-party support at that point. The 2011 version, however, again, introduced by the member for Willowdale, was also co-sponsored by the member for Whitby–Oshawa and the member for Beaches–East York.

So that the viewers at home understand—and I'm sure they're wondering, "How could it have taken this long for a bill that is supported by all three parties to get to third reading?" Well, the answer is actually quite simple. In October of last year, then Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty prorogued the Legislature and resigned from office. You see, things had gotten particularly heated, as we know, at that point in time, as Dalton McGuinty was under a microscope from the official opposition to come clean with Ontario taxpayers about the true cost of the Oakville and Mississauga gas plant cancellations. Back then, Dalton McGuinty, soon-to-be Premier Wynne and the rest of the Liberal caucus and cabinet were still citing low-balled cost estimates for the cancellation. We have since learned, of course, that those cancellation costs are in excess of \$1 billion.

My point for mentioning this is to make sure that those in the galleries and those listening at home understand why this bill has been delayed so long before finally

making it to third reading today. It was delayed because when Dalton McGuinty prorogued the Legislature, all the work that had been done up to that point, over a year of legislation and over 100 bills, were all erased—died on the order paper, as they say. So good bills like this one had to be reintroduced to start the entire process over from scratch.

Bill 32 was one of a number of bills included in a proposal put forward by my leader, Tim Hudak, and the PC caucus to clear the decks and focus on the economy here at Queen's Park. What PC leader Tim Hudak said was, "There are some bills we all agree on. Let's get them done, and let's please focus on the economy and creating jobs in Ontario." While I'm glad to see Bill 32 up for debate today, I must say I am disappointed that we still have not seen any semblance of an economic plan from Premier Wynne and her Liberal government.

What Bill 32 sets out to do is update the Human Resources Professionals Association's existing self-regulation act. HRPAs regulate the human resources profession in Ontario and issues the certified human resources professional designation. HRPAs have 20,000 members working in 8,000 organizations across Ontario. These organizations employ more than two million Ontarians.

Some of the things that HRPAs determine for its members are:

- the right to set standards for who may enter the profession;
- the right to set standards of practice for those working in the profession;
- the right to create rules for when and how members may be removed from the profession;
- the power to regulate the practice of members;
- the power to establish a professional liability insurance requirement;
- the power to establish requirements for memberships and certification; and, finally,
- the power to discipline its members.

Bill 32 addresses a number of issues in the industry. Bill 32 provides a framework for membership in the association and prohibits the use of specified designations and initials by unauthorized individuals or entities. It also sets out procedures for dealing with complaints against the association's members, establishes a disciplinary process and authorizes practice inspections.

Bill 32 will also establish procedures for determining whether a member of the association is incapacitated and creates accommodation in cases where incapacity affects a member's practising ability. Bill 32 provides for the appointment of inspectors and investigates and sets out their powers and also stipulates that these powers apply only to members of HRPAs, not all HR professionals. Bill 32 introduces mandatory professional liability insurance to consultants who do not work for organizations that provide such insurance.

Bill 32 will therefore mean that HRPAs will be better able to ensure the quality of the HR profession in Ontario. This will mean better control over its members'

profession. Bill 32 is also important because it will provide more regulatory strength for HRP, which will allow the organization to better protect the public, employers and employees.

I support Bill 32 because I feel that by providing a necessary, fair and strong regulatory structure to the HR profession in Ontario, we are achieving a win-win for business, the public and Ontario's HR professionals, and hopefully at the next election, I will be able to knock on that door in Mansfield and say, "This time we got 'er done." We are finally getting that much closer to passing Bill 32, protecting employers and employees and ensuring that the HR Professionals Association gets what they need to service Ontario.

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: It's my pleasure to get up and actually speak about Bill 32. The member from Beaches–East York also wanted me to extend his thanks that this bill is finally here. He is busy chairing a committee as we speak here today, so I'm going to speak on his behalf, along with some of my other colleagues.

The member from Beaches–East York asked me to applaud the people who have brought this bill forward, I think three times. You've been here, you've heard it debated, you went away, it never went anywhere, you brought it back again, it got debated, the House got prorogued, it died, and now you're here again with this bill. Hopefully, it will get passed in the next day or two.

I have had a lot of experience on the other side of the table from HR people across the province. I worked for many years for the Ontario Nurses' Association. Before that, I was one of those union hacks, as the Tories like to talk about.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Not a union boss? You weren't a union boss?

Ms. Cindy Forster: Not a union boss. I was one of those union hacks for 20 years.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Show it to me in Hansard. Never said it.

Hon. David Zimmer: She never said it. Never said it.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Oh, I'm proud to be a union hack. For 20 years I represented nurses at an elected level, and then for 20 more years I represented nurses in this province as a staff person for the Ontario Nurses' Association. I tell you, they're great people to represent. Now I'm telling my age, because I really did that for 40 years. I'm only 50 now.

The human resources sector has grown immensely over those years. Whether it's a small employer or a large employer, the role of human resource professionals has grown immensely. In the old days, you might in a small employer have one person who was looking after all of it: They were looking after the hiring, the firing, perhaps the negotiations if it was a unionized setting, and the health and safety issues. But as legislation has grown in this province, you really have to have people with credentials,

people with a designation, to be able to deal with employees in an appropriate way.

I want to talk a bit about this bill being included in the so-called programming motion. We actually call it a time allocation motion. This bill is included with the Skin Cancer Prevention Act, the act to enact the Local Food Act—that's kind of a tongue twister—the Stronger Protection for Ontario Consumers Act, the Wireless Services Agreement Act, the spousal exemption act, the EllisDon act, and the carbon—I don't know if this is a typo; is it dioxide or monoxide?

Interjection: Monoxide.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I think it's the carbon monoxide detectors act.

Anyway, we weren't part of this time allocation. We weren't asked to be part of this time allocation. There were these kind of secret negotiations going on between the Liberals and the Tories. The Tories are always talking about the NDP propping up the government, but, in fact, the Tories are propping up the government in this actual programming/time allocation motion.

This really was all about EllisDon. It was all about Bill 74, and it was all about the Liberals, who didn't want to take ownership of that bill, getting the Tories onside. They brought a few of the Tory bills in here so that they could actually get their EllisDon bill passed, a bill that would have protected a large construction company in this province that has billions of dollars of work and has had an agreement for 60 years with the construction unions, and this bill would have seen that end. At the end of the day, the Liberals voted against their own motion, except for a couple of people who supported it.

Really, that's why we're here today about this particular bill, the Registered Human Resources Professionals Act. I think we're probably doing a disservice to this act because there are so many issues that you could actually talk about around human resources. There are millions of employees in this province, and there are thousands of people who work in the HR sector. I've got many stories that I could actually share with you.

There were NDP bills as well that should have been included in a programming motion, had we been asked to participate—unlikely we would have because we never would have been able to support the EllisDon bill, but there were things like an amendment to the Planning Act that would have actually dealt with inclusionary zoning so that we could actually get some more affordable housing built in this province.

The Ombudsman Act—the member from Hamilton Mountain's act about the children's aid societies and about protecting the children in this province by having Ombudsman oversight.

We had the Mining Amendment Act. That's an act from the member from Algoma–Manitoulin, and that would be about processing resources here in the province that would create many jobs.

The Protecting Employees' Tips Act, Michael Prue's act that would protect all of those people who are working in low-paid precarious work in this province

who are not getting to keep all of their tips in many cases—a bill that has come forward a couple of times as well.

There are some health bills that are still on the order paper—Meningitis Awareness Day, the Sikh Heritage Month Act, the Healthy Decisions for Healthy Eating Act, and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Amendment Act for post-traumatic stress disorders—all very important bills in their own right, but nobody asked us if we wanted to actually be included in that programming motion. So those bills are still sitting on the order paper even though they affect many people in this province.

In my experience in working with HR people, I have to say that the vast majority of them were great. Whether they have CHRP designation or they didn't have a CHRP designation, the vast majority are really good people who are looking to do the right thing for both the employer they work for as well as the employees.

I had some experience in both the private sector and the public sector, in small private nursing homes owned perhaps by one family in Niagara Falls—the Simons owned a couple of little homes in Niagara Falls—or the big employers that had 1,500 nurses. We often say in the NDP that our health care shouldn't be for-profit, and so it's an opportunity for me to raise that issue here because, under the Tories, back in the Mike Harris days, they actually started to tender out those RFPs. So where are home care and—

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Where's Bob Rae these days?

Ms. Cindy Forster: I don't know.

Where our community workers, our community nurses, our community RPNs working in community health care were actually working for the Victorian Order of Nurses and the Saint Elizabeths of the world, and they were actually paid a fairly decent wage; they had benefits and pensions—all of that went by the wayside when the Tories moved to an RFP tender, and private companies actually got involved in health care.

The interesting thing is that many of these private companies didn't even have any employees. They bid on these contracts. They lowballed the contracts and they ended up with them. Then we had nurses and personal support workers and other workers actually ending up having to go and work for the private sector at a much reduced rate of pay, without full-time hours in many cases, without a pension plan or without any benefits, all for the sake of somebody making a profit on the backs of people who require health care in this province and on the backs of workers in this province. Those are my comments around there.

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I also wanted to bring into this that I think HR's job is more difficult these days because of all of the precarious work that we see in this province. There was a report done by McMaster University and by the United Way, I think, in conjunction with perhaps the federation of labour. It just goes to show that it's mostly women who are in precarious work. I've brought the report with me, because I thought that some of the stuff was quite interesting.

They did this study around the Hamilton area. Only 50% of people that they studied are in jobs that are both permanent and full-time. That has increased by 45% over a 20-year period. So I think it's difficult for people working in the human resource area to have to deal with people that are struggling. They might have to go and work two or three jobs. People end up mentally stressed, and the report speaks to that. It says that, in fact, people who are in this precarious employment, earning minimum wage and lower wages or having to juggle three or four jobs to make ends meet, often end up ill. They can end up with some mental health issues related to all the stress that is actually put on them by not having a permanent job and not having benefits and those kinds of things.

Now, back in the 1970s and 1980s, I'd say, when I was dealing with human resource people, many of them weren't designated; they didn't have the education. But they weren't dealing with the multitude of issues that we're dealing with here today.

I know that things like pay equity came up in the last 20 years, and I think Michael talked about that in his debates the last time and the time before. It's an issue that is still in the forefront, although we achieved pay equity in many instances across this province. Although it took the federal government 20 years, I think, to actually settle pay equity for one group of women, they finally paid that out. It is still prevalent because we need to maintain pay equity in this province, so people in HR need to have either the education or the experience to deal with that issue.

The Ontario disabilities act has been in the forefront in the last few years, so human resource people need to ensure that employers across this province, whether they're in the public sector or the private sector, are actually complying with the rules as they start to get implemented.

They also deal with things like the Human Rights Code and the Employment Standards Act. We know that across this province, there is a huge problem, particularly under ESA, with respect to the monitoring of the benefits that should be afforded to employees in this province. We hear that in our constituency office time and time again. If you have good HR people who are designated and trained, they can give some advice to employees about how to manoeuvre their way through those systems.

We don't have all good employers in this province, though. Sometimes that is very problematic. But I think, because of social media and because of the Internet, employees are much more aware of their rights today. They can go online and they can have a look at the ESA bulletin or the human rights bulletins. That actually creates some work for human resource people—all the more reason why they need to have that designation and we need to ensure that the people who are actually dealing with employees in this province are up on all of those pieces of legislation as well.

The duty to accommodate certainly has become a real issue—well, in my experience—over the last 10 years. In

the early days, if a nurse, for example, injured her back and needed some permanent accommodation, employers might say, “We can’t accommodate you; so sorry; too bad. If you can’t come and do all of the duties of your job, well, you’ll just have to stay home, and we’re not going to pay you.” Today, employers work very hard at trying to accommodate, because there is legislation there and they have to. So you need people who are trained to do that.

With some of the bigger employers, it won’t necessarily be HR which is working on these programs. But with small employers where there are only three or four people in HR—payroll, hiring—they need to be a real generalist because there are so many pieces of legislation that face them on any given workday.

The other area, of course, is workplace harassment. I hear about that quite often, and I certainly did in my role at ONA, when I was working for the Ontario Nurses’ Association. It could be worker-to-worker harassment; it could be worker-to-manager harassment; it could even be worker-to-patient harassment or worker-to-patient’s-family harassment. There was not a real good understanding of that legislation. I know that in my 20 years of dealing with people—probably in the last five years, it was more prevalent—when that legislation was introduced, there was a real learning curve for not only the union side, but for the employer side as well, as to, what does the legislation mean? That legislation is still lacking today because enforcement isn’t there, and there is no kind of penalty to employers if they’re not complying with that particular legislation.

I’m going to try to wrap up because my fellow colleagues want to speak to this issue.

This bill, once again, has been a long time coming, and it’s certainly something that we’re going to support, whether it actually needed to—

Ms. Catherine Fife: Come in this way.

Ms. Cindy Forster: —come in this way. I don’t think we necessarily agree with that. But it’s here, and so we are going to be supporting it, and we’re going to be dealing with this in this short period of time.

I will once again, on behalf of the member from Beaches–East York, thank the people who have been so patient and tenacious in trying to get this passed through. It really mirrors many other types of careers—professional engineers, various health professionals—and the legislation is probably long overdue.

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

Hon. David Zimmer: I want to speak for a few minutes on this bill. Before I became a minister, when I was a parliamentary assistant, I had the pleasure of introducing this bill on two previous occasions, and for technical reasons, it never made it through. The last time it came up was about this time last fall, October 2012, when the Legislature was prorogued. So I am very, very pleased that the member for Whitby–Oshawa, the member for Beaches–East York and the member for Brampton West have brought this bill forward. I think

it’s a fine example of all three political parties—Liberal, Conservative, NDP—recognizing a very worthwhile piece of legislation and uniting together, speaking to their respective caucuses and getting us here today.

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I do want to introduce two representatives of the Human Resources Professionals Association who are with us today and have been following this bill in its two previous incarnations and, indeed, following it in its current incarnation: Mr. Claude Balthazard, who is the vice-president of regulatory affairs, sitting over here, and Scott Allinson, who is the vice-president of public affairs. They’ve done yeoman’s service with members of this Legislature from all parties to get this legislation to the stage that we’re at today.

I’ve listened to the debate, but the overarching question is: Why is this a good piece of legislation? What will it do for Ontario? Why is it that all members of all political parties have gotten behind this bill? I think it’s a realization that in Ontario, we are trying to build an economy which will be one of the leading economies in the world, certainly in the country.

We have been, over the years, stressing the need for high-tech industries, banking industries, investment industries, manufacturing industries, large industries and small industries. We have been doing everything possible, in effect, to make Ontario the first choice for an organization or an individual who wants to do business. Whether they’re a creative young entrepreneur or whether it’s a large existing business operating in another country that wants to open a Canadian branch office or Canadian branch plant, we want those businesses to come to Ontario, because to the extent that they can come to Ontario and generate jobs and tax dollars, that’s all going to filter into the system, and we’re going to be able to use those revenues for better hospitals, better roads, better schools and everything else.

One of the keys to attracting industry—large industry, small industry, entrepreneurs, people with ideas—to Ontario as a place to do business is the condition, the quality of its workforce. Is the workforce well-trained and well-educated? Is the workforce well-managed? Are there great histories of strikes? Are there great histories of labour disruption? Is the relationship, broadly speaking, between the employer and the employee a healthy one? Are both those parties, the employer and the employee, working in an environment in which the employee achieves their ambition and develops their confidence? Is it a situation in which the employer can engage with his or her employees and whatever type of business they’re doing? Can they engage in that business with confidence and pride?

If all of those positives come together, it tends to lead to successful businesses and successful employer-employee relationships. It’s the role of HRP to assist in building that relationship between employer and employee. The members of HRP have got all of the skill sets to make that kind of a contribution so that, at the end of the day, everybody wants to do business in Ontario. It

becomes the place of choice to start business, to continue business and to relocate business.

As I said in my earlier remarks, one of the keys to that is to have a working relationship, a working environment where everybody has pride and confidence. I don't want to repeat the various skill-sets and training programs and all of the assets that the members of HRP A bring to this exercise—you've heard them all from the previous speakers—but they are high-quality skill-sets, they are necessary skill-sets, and the contribution that HRP A will make to this environment that we want to create in Ontario, where Ontario becomes the destination of choice for new businesses, small businesses, large businesses and entrepreneurs is, to a considerable degree, due to the climate that HRP A can create in the Ontario workforce.

HRP A can give employees advice. HRP A can give employers advice. Often, a business relocating to Ontario or opening a new branch plant, if you will, in Ontario, especially a foreign company—perhaps from the Far East, perhaps from Europe, perhaps from South America or perhaps from one of the states south of the border—comes to Ontario and it can be very difficult for them to understand the employment culture, the work culture in Ontario.

If they relocate their business and they don't get that employment culture right, they can often get off on the wrong foot. It is in HRP A's skill set to be able to advise those businesses—ones that are already located here, but especially the ones that are coming from afar that are trying to understand the Ontario system.

To the extent that HRP A can make that contribution and help Ontarians—whatever their walk in life is, whatever their job is, whatever their businesses are—to create that climate where people in Canada, in Ontario and outside of Ontario will say, "Ontario is our number one choice to locate our businesses"—one of the reasons they'll do that is because organizations like HRP A have created a first-class employment employer-employee relationship. That's why I'm supporting this bill.

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

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my pleasure to rise today and to speak to Bill 32, the Registered Human Resources Professionals Act. I was fortunate enough to speak to Bill 32 at second reading, as well as to see it pass through the regulations and private bills committee. It's my hope that this bill will pass third reading and receive royal assent.

The folks who have been pushing hard for this legislation have been waiting for just a few years for this bill to get to third reading. They saw a bill being debated, only to look on as the House prorogued for the 2011 general election. Then they saw the bill debated again last year, only to witness the resignation of Dalton McGuinty and another prorogation. Many good bills were killed on that October afternoon.

But there is good news: Bill 32 is being debated at third reading here today, a day that surely couldn't come soon enough for those HR professionals pushing for this sensible piece of legislation to pass.

Bill 32 seeks to repeal the Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario Act, 1990, and replace it. What is more important to note is that it would be a public bill, while the previous legislation is a private act. This confers status and recognition to the act by declaring it as the will of the Legislature. It also sends a clear message to the HR professionals around the province that their role is absolutely taken seriously.

Since 1990, the Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario has regulated the HR field by granting the certified human resources professional, the CHRP—or, as I call it, chirp—designation.

HRP A regulates the profession in a number of ways, through:

—first, the establishment of standards or requirements for registration with and certification by HRP A; the assessment of the qualifications of individuals against established standards or requirements for registration with and certification by HRP A; and the official recognition that an individual has met established standards or requirements for registration with and certification by HRP A;

—second, the establishment of standards of professional conduct by prescribing a code of ethics, rules of professional conduct and practice standards;

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—third, the establishment of a complaints investigation and discipline process whereby alleged misconduct, incapacity or incompetence of members of the HRP A are in fact investigated, leading to appropriate disciplinary measures in cases where such disciplinary measures are warranted; and

—last, the establishment of effective appeal mechanisms whereby regulatory decisions may be reviewed.

Speaker, for the last 20 years, the HRP A has done great work for its 20,000-plus members in Ontario. But times have changed, and legislation must change with them. Those within the human resources industry have told us that the original act is outdated and needs a change. Bill 32 creates a modern, professional statute for the association and its members by addressing many of the gaps in the current private statute.

One positive aspect of Bill 32 is that it will prohibit the use of specified designations and initials by unauthorized individuals. This will close up a potential loophole, to prevent those wishing to exploit the benefits of having a CHRP designation. It is a critical right for a professional association to safeguard the use of designations or initials to guarantee their value. We learned in committee that under the act that Bill 32 seeks to replace, the Human Resources Professionals Association had no way to control people leaving the association and still using the CHRP designation. Human resources professionals are given an enormous amount of responsibility and require a great amount of trust from their employers and fellow employees. They're asked to handle a wide variety of situations. It's great to know that your HR professional is acting competently and ethically. Those who leave the association are not receiving ongoing

training and are not bound to HRPAs professional standards. The Human Resources Professionals Association has heard complaints about these former members who have clung on to their designation falsely, but are powerless to stop them. They can only enforce sanctions or quality standards on the current members, as it stands today. Closing up this loophole to ensure that only those who are currently members of the association and bound to its standards can use the CHRP designation is a good thing. It will protect the value of the designation for those who have it and will benefit employers and employees, who can be sure that they are in good hands.

Members of the HR profession with a CHRP designation do a great job of keeping up with legislation for their employers, which is, of course, of critical importance. I suppose that they've had some practice over the years following their own bill.

Members of this House are surely aware of how often laws, rules and regulations change and how difficult that can be on business owners. Many members have owned their own businesses.

Designated human resources professionals do a great job to make sure the companies they work for are compliant with legislation and regulations as they change over time. The HRPAs help keep them updated on any changes, through educational programs that detail how new laws impact the workplace. If a law is broken, even if it was a simple regulatory oversight, there could be an investigation launched into the workplace, which could, and would, be incredibly disruptive and time-consuming for employers and employees alike. Ensuring that your company is up to date on legislation is incredibly important. The CHRP designation ensures this for business.

The act also sets out procedures for dealing with complaints against the HRPAs members, establishes a disciplinary process and authorizes practice inspections. As HR professionals are given very personal information—for example, financial or health information of individuals—we must establish an adequate mechanism to handle complaints. By establishing a procedure for such matters, it depoliticizes what can often be a heated issue.

Another positive aspect of the bill that I would like to highlight is the increased oversight of the HRPAs. Under the new bill, three members of the association's board would be non-members. These independent board members will increase the accountability of the HRPAs moving forward.

Some critics of the bill are concerned that it will be a burden on employees and employers. This couldn't be further from the truth, Madam Speaker. Membership in the Human Resources Professionals Association and the certified human resources professional designation are in fact voluntary. HR professionals will have the freedom to choose whether or not they will belong to the association and earn a designation. Similarly, employers will be free to hire members or even non-members. The powers in the new act apply only to members of the HRPAs and not to all HR professionals.

At the end of the day, strengthening protection for the public is what Bill 32 is all about. In the corporate world, HR professionals are counted on to ensure workplaces evolve to meet the changing demands of employers and employees. Similarly, it's our duty as legislators to ensure that legislation evolves with the needs of society and the professional associations who serve them. This bill modernizes a professional statute, increases oversight and accountability, and puts mechanisms in place to establish ethical standards in an incredibly important profession.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Whitby-Oshawa as well as the members from Brampton West and Beaches-East York for co-sponsoring this bill and bringing a positive piece of legislation to this place.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this bill in the Legislature today, as I know that the human resource professionals who have been promoting it for some time will be very pleased to see it finally make its way to a conclusion. They, and we, have been here before, of course, as this bill, in a previous life, was yet another of those bills we lost due to prorogation in October of last year. The history of this legislation goes back even further than that. It's good that we have reached this stage now. Speaker, I, along with the human resource professionals, hope to see it passed and brought into law.

As the workplace changes, the role of those who work in human resources is becoming ever more important, and it is past time that we have legislation that replaces an out-of-date act from over 20 years ago. It is important that we recognize the professionalism required in human resources and that the people in those positions are treated as professionals and also that they be required to act as professionals. The bill will allow the HRPAs to take a much more hands-on approach to training, monitoring and disciplining its members, to ensure that a higher standard is expected and delivered in the field.

The bill will not require companies to hire only someone with a certified human resources professional designation, but it will allow employers to know, when they are hiring, whether an applicant, through their professional designation, has the proven skills and knowledge to do the job. It also allows employees and the public to know that they are working with someone who knows their job. It offers choice and accountability.

In unionized workplaces, employees have developed, along with management, collective agreements that work to the benefit of employees and employers alike. These contracts ensure that both parties know the rules and their shared responsibilities. They bring a stability to the workplace that is envied around the world. Sometimes those contracts can be very detailed, and it requires a significant degree of professionalism to work with them, both on the union side and on the side of management. Thankfully, as contract language has developed, professionalism has developed along with it.

Similarly, our employment laws have been developing over the years. We have employment equity laws. We have laws about harassment in the workplace. We have the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Human resource personnel need to understand these laws, which requires a good degree of professionalism, whether it's in a workplace that is unionized or not.

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This act will allow the HRP to build upon their credibility, giving increased confidence to the public. They can train their members in an ongoing way to make sure that they are up to date with all of the legal requirements of their profession.

Also, in a world where our technological possibilities grow at an alarming pace, they can make sure their members are aware of and trained in the use of any new tools that become available to assist them in their work.

As an organization, they will be available to provide advice to their members on a daily basis and help them to make the correct decisions.

They can be a force for good by insisting on fair and honest treatment in the workplace. When they hear of members who are not living up to, who are not complying with the professional standards they have set, they will have the ability to discipline them. This can only raise the bar, and everyone—employers, employees and the public—will know what they should expect from a human resources professional. When they see the letters “CHRP” after someone's name, they will know that it means something. They will know that they are dealing with someone who has the knowledge and trust of their peers. If that turns out not to be the case, they will know that they have someone to report that to.

Throughout Ontario, we have people in all walks of life who are dedicated, skilled and proud of the work they do. They get annoyed and frustrated when others in the same line of work do not meet these same high standards. Maybe it's a builder, maybe a doctor or maybe a car mechanic; we've all heard the frustrations of those dedicated workers who get tarred with the same brush as those who don't put their best foot forward.

In some cases, we certify people in a profession—we give them the authority to regulate themselves; in others, all that is needed is for someone to put a little title after their name, and that's it—no training, nothing. You just say who you are and you start doing a job with no oversight or accountability.

Increasingly, the public wants to know that when they ask someone to do a job, they are trained and qualified to do it. They want to know at the start of that job, not at the end when it's too late.

That's what this bill does for human resources professionals. Those human resources professionals who have been pushing for this for years are proud of the work they do. They've taken the time to get trained and keep themselves updated on the changes in legislation and in the workplace. They want those high standards that they set for themselves to be the expected standard across their profession, and they should be commended for that.

I thank the members from Brampton West, Beaches–East York and Whitby–Oshawa for bringing this bill forward, and I thank the HRP for their diligence and commitment in promoting the issues within.

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

Mr. Todd Smith: It's a pleasure to rise and speak to Bill 32 this afternoon, the Registered Human Resources Professionals Act.

Oftentimes we have professionals from different sectors of the economy approaching us here at Queen's Park, asking us to raise the bar for their particular profession. We've all had conversations like that. Recently, I met with the financial advisers many times. They're asking for this type of legislation in their field as well. There are many others who want to ensure that their professions are held to the highest standard possible here in Ontario. They want to ensure that the reputation of the profession is protected against bad and irresponsible actors who are out there. Let's be very clear: All it takes is one bad apple to ruin the whole lot, and this is what these organizations want to protect against.

It's a responsible act, Bill 32 is, for leading members of this profession. This is the type of legislation we see coming from various professions as well here to Queen's Park. They ask us, as legislators, to ensure that members of their profession are held to a higher account, that they're held to a higher standard, that we're raising the bar for their profession. That's because we all should believe in higher standards, Madam Speaker. We should always strive to raise the level of debate, raise the level of discussion, and raise the level of the profession that we're involved in.

Just last night here in the Legislature we had one such organization. It was the registered veterinary technicians. They were asking, basically, for this type of legislation in their field as well: that we require all veterinary offices out there to have certified RVTs in those veterinary offices. So it happens almost on a daily basis that there are professions out there that want the standards of their profession raised to a higher level.

This act has tri-partisan support for a very good reason. It establishes a regime for the designation of a human resources professional. It establishes a framework for membership in the Human Resources Professionals Association, and it gives that association the ability to govern and regulate its members. This is something that we've done for several other professions, including the engineers—who are here often at Queen's Park—and physicians and lawyers as well.

By giving the association the ability to govern, regulate and, most importantly, discipline its members, we've empowered this organization to uphold the integrity of the profession. We understand that certain professions are self-governed in the interest of the broader public, and the reason that we have granted that designation is because those professions have moral and ethical standards of conduct that may not transgress any legal statutes. As people who interact with the ethical stan-

dards of the industry every day, they have the experience to understand the implications of the actions of their members. We've heard all kinds of examples today from all three sides as to how this would work in the human resources profession.

More importantly, the passage of Bill 32 has a greater symbolism. For almost two years this government refused to acknowledge the presence of a minority government here in the House. I can tell you that the only bills that ever seemed to pass here in the Legislature were the budget bills in the spring every year, and that's because the third party was supporting the Liberal government when those very important confidence votes took place. We here in the official opposition did not believe that those budget bills that were put forward were in the best interests of Ontarians. We could not support those bills, Madam Speaker, and we've seen the evidence as to why we shouldn't have supported those budgets, because they've continued to dig the hole deeper in Ontario. Yet the third party continues to support those budget bills.

Other than the budget bills, we've seen very little as far as legislation pass here in this minority Parliament. If bills came before the House that weren't government bills, they were sometimes passed at second reading. There was almost a sigh of indifference from the government as they passed second reading. The government seemed to be confident in the knowledge that these bills would never get out of committee and see the light of day. Why would they do that, Madam Speaker? It's because the government was trying to create this narrative that the minority Parliament wasn't working. For two years, the government made that happen. They weren't calling bills forward for third reading. They weren't calling bills forward so that they could receive royal assent. There was a narrative that they were trying to create in the Legislature that the minority Parliament wasn't working. Whenever they decided that they would go to the public for a mandate, they would be able to say that, "The official opposition is responsible for this minority Parliament not working."

I think it's quite clear that when you look at what happened here this morning when it came to the small business act that's before the House right now—Bill 105, I believe is the number; that bill passed unanimously yesterday in the House, and the government is trying to claim that that bill was being held up by the official opposition. The Premier made that claim this morning during question period, and nothing could be further from the truth. As a matter of fact, Bill 105 was sent to the general government committee. The reason that it was sent to the general government committee by the members of the government side was because they're trying to suffocate the committee's work when it comes to investigating the emerging scandal with the Pan Am Games. That's why they sent it there, yet they're trying to create this narrative again that the official opposition is blocking the bill, whether or not the small business act is going to—well, it's not going to encourage our economy

to grow. It's a very minor bill. We supported it because we said we would support it, and we've lived up to our word when it comes to the programming motion that was agreed to by our House leader in the official opposition, the member from Simcoe–Grey, Jim Wilson.

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It was our party that actually decided that it was time to clear the decks—you've heard that phrase many times here in the Legislature—but nothing was getting through. We had all of these minor bills like the small business act that's going to give small businesses \$800 or \$900 a year. That hardly pays for a newspaper ad for these businesses. It's not going to trigger an uptick in our economy in Ontario—far from it.

At least we, here in the official opposition, led by our House leader, Jim Wilson, decided that we were going to get some bills passed. To the government House leader's credit, at least he agreed to make that happen and that we would clear the decks. We're waiting to see some kind of plan from the government members and from this Premier, who has no mandate. She hasn't been elected by the people of Ontario, and she clearly has no plan for kick-starting the economy, which is stuck in growth rates at about—what, 1.5% or 1.6%? The bills that we've seen coming from the government side are not going to pull us out of this downward spiral that we're in. I credit our House leader, the member from Simcoe–Grey, for helping to push these bills forward and getting them into the programming motion so that we could actually turn some of these good bills into law.

There have been some good bills that have been a part of this programming motion. One of them just received royal assent this morning: Bill 70. Our member from Leeds–Grenville, Steve Clark, was responsible for putting Bill 70 on the floor of the Legislature. It received royal assent this morning. The Ontario Dental Association did a great job in lobbying members of the Legislature and lobbying on behalf of its members in the dental community, and there are dentists out there who are very appreciative.

As a matter of fact, I was at my dentist's office on Friday morning, the Family Dental Centre in Belleville, Ontario, and I received a positive check-up; everything looks good. They were very pleased with the fact that Bill 70 was going to receive royal assent.

When you're in a rural community, there is sometimes only one dentist in town. If the spouse of that dentist can't get treatment from the only dentist in town, who happens to be her husband or his wife, then they have to leave town to get dental services. Bill 70 is one of those common sense bills that should have passed an awfully long time ago.

Congratulations to Steve Clark for putting that on the floor. He has been on quite a record. I believe he has only been in the Legislature for three years and he has already had three private members' bills pass. He's three for three; that's a pretty good average. It's kind of like Big Papi with the Red Sox in the World Series recently—a very solid batting record.

I know that Bill 32 isn't dissimilar from bills like Bill 70 that I was speaking of earlier. Every single party in the Legislature supports these bills, like Bill 32 and Bill 70, and there are so many others that are out there. We couldn't pack them all into this programming motion, but just last week we had our member Ernie Hardeman from Oxford—I think four times now. Am I right? Four times he has debated the Hawkins-Gignac bill.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Five years.

Mr. Todd Smith: For five years he has been debating that bill to make it mandatory for carbon monoxide detectors to be in homes to protect people in the province from carbon monoxide poisoning. Why couldn't we have that bill come out of committee for third reading and receive royal assent so we can protect the people of Ontario? The government wouldn't call bills like that and many others to third reading; even when they made it out of committee, they weren't being called forward.

So we've cleared the decks. Minor legislation that should have been called and, in many cases, has been introduced multiple times, like the Hawkins-Gignac Act, has now been enacted into law. We've removed the government bills that enjoyed wide support, like Bill 32, from the order paper, and we did this because we don't disagree with these small bills. Where we disagree is on the fundamental, larger issues that are facing the province of Ontario. We don't disagree on Bill 32. The bill, in fact, went through committee with almost no changes made to it.

This government doesn't want to talk about the economy. They don't want to talk about the big issues. They don't want to talk about the \$12 billion that we have pegged as our deficit for next year in Ontario. They don't want to talk about the \$280 billion worth of debt, a debt that has doubled under the McGuinty-Wynne government. This government is responsible for tacking \$140 billion onto our debt in the last 10 years. They don't want to talk about that. They want to talk about the small things. They don't want to talk about the large things that are going to kick-start the economy in Ontario. We have cleared the decks, and we're waiting to see what the plan is from this Liberal government. We fear, as most Ontarians fear, that they don't have a plan; they don't have a plan to kick-start our economy.

So we're pleased to support Bill 32, and of course it came to the floor of the Legislature with the name of our member from Whitby-Oshawa on it. She's a co-sponsor on this bill, Christine Elliott, our deputy leader, and her endorsement of this bill adds to its credibility. Our deputy leader is one of the great legislators in this Legislature, and I'm pleased that we're able to support Bill 32, the Registered Human Resources Professionals Act, here in Ontario. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Paul Miller: I would just like to start off by saying I'm thrilled about the regulation of the human resources professionals. Over the years, Speaker, I also represented one of the strongest unions in Canada. I was

with the United Steelworkers, and many times we sat across the table from HR people. Sometimes it wasn't too bad and at other times it could be ugly.

The bottom line was that in those days, many, many years ago—decades ago—with some of these people I wasn't quite sure about their credentials and where they got the title of HR person, because if you looked into their record and where they came from, a lot of them may not have qualified by today's standards. In those days—and maybe even today—in some places they had a tendency to favour the company as opposed to the hourly worker. Many times we got into some pretty heavy disputes and grievances and arbitration because of the leanings toward the management and the company. So I'm glad this has come forward, because it certainly sets out some guidelines that will make it fairer for the worker.

The regulation of human resources professionals is very welcomed by the profession itself, and by so many everyday workers. Today we are so used to HR people holding information that is our whole life: our work history, our age, our family information, who our beneficiaries will be, and even how our health has affected our work. Without really thinking about it, we trust them completely with this very personal information. More importantly, Speaker, we trust them to advise us about how to plan for our future, how to enhance our pension planning, when to think about retiring, and how to protect our families with insurance and health plans. Really, they are the professionals who advise us through life's sometimes biggest decisions. When we think about this and the impact that their advice can have on so much of our lives, how can we think of anything but ensuring the highest standards for these professionals?

Right now, the 47 non-union staff at Stelco/US Steel who are going to be let go will need extreme compassion from the HR people and the best advice possible given by professionals concerned with their welfare and not necessarily just their employer's goals and bottom lines. The HR staff will provide up-to-date, accurate information and give advice on how to use that to make decisions about retiring, getting new training for a needed new job, or buying insurance to help keep health care coverage that may be outdated and discontinued. They may even be asked to provide input on how to challenge decisions of US Steel for the maximum benefit of the employee, something that could be seen as contraindicated for an HR employee at US Steel.

Having a registered professional designation with the force of an association to govern, regulate and discipline the practice provides that extra assurance that we need to rely on information given and advice provided.

Extra comfort is provided through the authority for practice inspections, which I would expect are snap inspections to ensure that the real picture is what the inspector gets.

As one would expect, Bill 32 sets out the details about how this new structure will work, including transitional bylaws, committee structure and administrative structure.

It also establishes high minimum standards of qualification, of practice, of professional ethics, of knowledge, skills and proficiency. It regulates competence and conduct, and promotes knowledge, skills and proficiency, welfare and the interests of the association and inter-professional collaboration—all of the things that we need to ensure the safety and security of HR function in every organization in this province.

1710

One of the areas that is of high concern to me is the advice that an HR professional gives to an injured worker. Filing a report immediately is such a significant first step to ensure that, should there be a lifelong injury, the employee is fully protected by having filed the report, not by taking a management deal to keep working.

I know well the kind of lifelong damage one can suffer from not having that external medical examination and report to the WSIB.

I can give you a personal example of what happened to me, Speaker. At one point, I was working in a blast furnace. Unfortunately, there was a plank missing, and I fell from a three-high scaffold and burnt myself with a torch as it fell with me. I was injured. The company decided, in their infinite wisdom, that they would let me come in on light duties, as they called it. I would come in and just answer the phone and sit at a desk. Being a young, naïve employee, I thought, “Boy, that’s not bad. I still get my regular pay. I’m not on sick pay,” which was 70%. “I get my full pay, and I get to sit there.” Little did I know that when I had an injury later on in life and my knee bothered me—a combination of sports and my fall—and I went to look for any kind of help or compensation, the answer I got was, “Mr. Miller, you never reported that. We don’t have any record of that.”

So I got shafted for being a good employee and trying to do what was right for my company. They led me down the path. It’s terrible. It has happened to thousands of people—thousands. I can name many of my friends who are suffering now from injuries because they were good employees who didn’t report.

Another reason they didn’t report the accident is because the company would get a rebate from the WSIB for not reporting, for having a good safety record. So not only was I getting shafted, they were getting a big cheque back at the end of the year for not reporting injuries—that it would be a safe place to work—until there was a fatality, and then they couldn’t get around that.

So I’m glad this is being looked at. I’m glad that these people will be held accountable by themselves, by their own organization—to work to benefit the employees as well as the management and the companies you’re going to work for. When a person dedicates 30 or 40 years to an organization, and they find out in the end that they didn’t report something and now they’re going to be suffering for the rest of their remaining years because the company didn’t do due diligence, because the company let them down, it’s very scary.

Often, the HR professional is the one who gets the job of advising an employee that they may need to contact

the employee assistance program for any number of reasons, but primarily for those that have an impact on their colleagues.

It is the HR professional on whom we rely, particularly in a non-union environment, to provide the correct advice to an injured worker.

Speaker, in a non-union environment, you don’t have much say. You rely on these people. If they let you down or mislead you, you have no grievance procedure; you have no arbitration; you have no one to go to to fight for you. If you try to take them to court or try to go into a situation where you’re trying to retrieve some kind of benefits or coverage, good luck, because they’ve got big lawyers—you’re in trouble.

The role of an HR professional is always evolving. They now have the watchful eyes of the Human Rights Commission ensuring that there is employment equity. They have to know the worldwide educational equivalencies to those required in a job. They have to know and understand many cultures and be sure that we are inclusive in our hiring practices.

I’m always amazed at the HR staff’s ability to write up job descriptions and job advertisements, to write interview questions, to review every applicant’s submission and whittle down the list to the best candidates to be interviewed. And the job doesn’t stop there. Once they’ve led the interview process, they have references to check—and recommend to the employer that an applicant qualifies for and is well recommended by references for the job.

I think probably the hardest part of the job is when there’s a massive layoff or shutdown and the HR rep has to take the employees through the often very painful process to move to their new reality; that is, without work. Every employee has to have complete confidence that their HR is working for them, to ensure that they are treated as fairly and equitably as possible at every stage of their working life.

It’s a pretty tall order and there will be failures, but having a professional organization to provide ongoing training, requalification, certification and inspections should provide some security for those affected by HR decisions. But the inspections piece is one that could leave employees somewhat unnerved. The idea that an inspector can remove their personnel file for the purpose of inspection appears to be without their prior knowledge or permission. That’s pretty scary, especially if, for some reason, the company wanted to build a file against you to get rid of you for whatever reason, to make room for someone else, maybe a relative or friend they want to hire, and all of a sudden they start a paper trail on you, and you don’t even know what’s going in there. You don’t even know what’s in your file. You can’t even defend yourself, because you don’t know what they put in, when they put it in, what date they put it in; but this will change that, and that’s good.

Because of this access to very personal, private information, I would hope that those hired as inspectors are also required to hold the same HR designation and oath and commitment to the same standards of confiden-

tiality as the HR professionals, and that their handling of the materials and writing of reports is governed as tightly as the creation and use of the file and information in the first instance.

Along those same lines, any committee of the association whose members will receive a copy of an inspection report should also ensure that each member is an HR professional, bound by the same requirements of confidentiality and professional standards. Likewise, the registrar, who holds significant personal information about each member of the association, should be required to hold the same HR designation and be governed by the same requirements for professional confidentiality and conduct. What we need is uniformity throughout the whole organization. You can't have a guy or woman with no qualifications in HR investigating and reporting on an HR person; a professional has to deal with a professional.

Although I have expressed some concerns about how I think certain employees must be treated by their HR professional and I have suggested designations and behaviours for officers and employees of the association itself, I am pleased to support the bill. It's long overdue. For companies, HR people and employees to have a good atmosphere, to have an atmosphere of working together for the betterment for their community, their company and their personal lives, professionals are needed.

I'm pleased to support a bill to ensure that those HR professionals, who can significantly impact the lives of so many of us unknowledgeable employees who need their knowledge to get them through tough times, who are unskilled in many details of their employment lives—these people are the guides through that maze. They will be held to the highest standards of their association. They will be disciplined by their association if they're not fair and they don't do what's right by the employee, or the company for that matter.

This bill provides the extra security to reduce errors that can impact significantly the lives of so many everyday workers. This is an important part of this legislation. It's also good that we've all seen eye to eye in here on this HR bill. I think it's going to help the working people of our province. I think it's going to let companies stand up and take notice that they're being watched and they'll have to treat their employees with respect and fairness. It's a very good thing that's happening. Are there holes in it? Are there things we can improve on? Absolutely, but I'm hoping that as we move forward with this people will come up with more suggestions at committee level or wherever we go with it that will enhance the bill and make it even stronger, to protect the workers of the province of Ontario.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm glad to follow the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek—and they let you speak today in the Legislature. I guess the government is not going to speak any further on this bill.

1720

So this is Bill 32, and it's An Act respecting the Human Resources Professionals Association. An earlier

version of this bill was introduced in December 2011, but then prorogation hit so everything was cancelled. The Liberal government then had time to try to change their leaders and cover up their message and their wayward ways with the taxpayers of Ontario. Nothing has really changed, but they've got a new leader right there. So we see Bill 32 back again.

As the member from Prince Edward–Hastings said, it's part of a programming motion and the fact that we collectively got together to put some bills out there that could clear the decks and move the legislation and the Legislature along so we could see what the Liberals might have in mind for the people of Ontario in some type of jobs and economy line. We've yet to see that, but we have cleared the deck for them to bring forward legislation, so we hope that eventually, in time, that does happen.

Bill 32, which we're debating here today, is sponsored by all three parties, so it's one of those times that it's been brought forward, as I said, for the second time by the members for Brampton West, Whitby–Oshawa and Beaches–East York.

It is human resources professionals that play an imperative role in the workplace, and I think more businesses do have human resource professionals that do work for them. It's updating legislation that will hopefully make human resources a career—and those who depend on them. The acronyms are quite long here—I'll try to get into it a little bit here—but the Human Resources Professionals Association, a leading organization representing human resources professionals in Ontario, ensures that its members are competent human resources professionals and that its members act in an ethical manner. As you've heard, there are more than 20,000 members of the Human Resources Professionals Association—

Interjection.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I don't know if that sneeze got in Hansard, but I'll say, "Bless you."

The Human Resources Professionals Association is represented across 28 chapters throughout the province. These members represent 8,000 different organizations from many different industries and sectors and provide services to two million employed Ontarians. We of course hope there are more employed Ontarians in the coming years than there are right now, but we still have some people that are out there working.

Human resource professionals help our corporate entities thrive in our competitive global marketplace. Not only do they hire employees, but they also train and offer professional development. They work with employees to set goals, improve their performance, ensure that employment and labour laws are followed, that the work environment is safe, and that employees have access to services to improve their health and well-being. They play an important role in any company. With such an extensive reach, it's important that they are properly accredited and held accountable, so the Human Resources Professionals Association grants the certified human

resources professional designation—that’s a lot of language; I feel like I’m back in nursing—to its members who have met a high professional standard.

The Human Resources Professionals Association Act of Ontario, 1990, the existing self-regulation act that allows the—I’m going to say “HRPA” now, until further notice—to grant the CHRP, the certified human resources—I’m just going to use those acronyms from now on. It was enacted 23 years ago, so it is time. Human resources professionals’ responsibilities, undertaken by those in HR, have certainly changed a great deal, and so we need to update these statutes. As I said, as seems to happen in these minority governments, especially with the Liberals in charge, it takes a long time—longer than is really needed—to get some of these housekeeping bills brought forward and some minor legislative changes made that could help, in this case the HR departments in companies and businesses.

They’ve certainly gone from the days of just handling payroll administration—they are now on the front lines of dealing with health and safety measures in the workplace, managing labour relations, and safeguarding confidential information about employees. So they’re a valuable resource to the workplace, offering support to employees in a variety of ways, mitigating disputes between employees or between an employee and an employer, and understanding the rights of workers. They’re also able to direct employees to services that can help them deal with problems outside of work, such as mental illness or family crises. They help to ensure that the workplace is a safe environment not just physically but certainly mentally. They contribute to creating an existing positive atmosphere that helps with productivity and attracts new talent to a company.

They’re exposed to some very sensitive and confidential information about a business’s employees. As such, they may be held to a very high ethical standard concerning treatment and protection of this information. Employees trust their HR managers to protect that information, which is an important aspect of Bill 32 that we’re debating here today: that the bill strengthens the protection of the public by offering assurance that accredited HR professionals follow appropriate standards in all aspects of their work.

The bill also acknowledges the changes that have occurred in the field of human resources since the 1990 version of the act was enacted. The HR profession has had to keep up with an ever-changing workplace and a larger, more diverse workforce today than has ever been before. For example, the way employers are connected with potential employees has changed dramatically—Internet usage. We often tell our young children, “Watch what you say on Facebook, because it’s going to follow you maybe forever as you apply for jobs out there.” There’s Workopolis—we could go on and on about how people look for and find jobs and how employers advertise for jobs.

University and college programs are constantly being created to meet the demands of this increasingly

technology-driven world of work that we live in. Employees have to adapt to and become proficient at computer, smart phone, tablet and other technology. I’m always amazed that the seniors in our ridings, some of whom have to go back to work to actually pay their bills, especially their hydro bills, have adapted to computers and trying to stay somewhat current in the workforce that they may have had to go back to in order to just stay in their house and pay their bills. Through all of these changes, the HR professionals have needed to keep up.

We’ve also seen a dramatic increase, of course, in the part-time and occasional work offered. So integrating these employees into the HR now—it’s unfortunate that under the Liberal government the province of Ontario has lost over 300,000 manufacturing jobs, necessitating lots of adults to have to do Second Career training, if they can get into that. Most people I know, especially in their fifties, who have gotten laid off, lost their jobs, want another job. They’re willing, open to training, but especially in rural Ontario we don’t have that big array of jobs that we could possibly qualify for. They’d like to get a job. Second Career training works for a small number of them. They need jobs. That’s our main job over here, if I can say that, in the PC Party: to create an environment where we can get jobs.

People want jobs. I’m desperate for jobs in Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. So is the rest of Ontario. People want to work; opportunities aren’t there. We as politicians, people who are making laws, would like to be more in control of making all the laws, but we need to create that climate, a business climate that will create more jobs, instead of driving manufacturers out of the province, driving small businesses out of the province, driving our young people out of the province, out west especially.

There isn’t a grandparent that I don’t speak to every week in my riding who has a grandchild who has had to go out west—especially in the skilled trades, with the apprenticeship ratios that are strangling our youth—for training for jobs that actually do exist in Ontario. They can get their training and get jobs at a faster pace out west. Let me tell you, the western provinces are saying, “Send us your young. We can train them, we want to train them and we want to give them jobs.” That’s a sad situation in the province of Ontario.

This bill—I know my time is coming to an end—certainly we support it. It’s an update. All three parties support it. Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to speak today.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I’m proud to contribute the small amount of time I have left on this debate, because my colleagues the members from Welland, Hamilton Mountain, and Hamilton East–Stoney Creek really did a good job in expressing the bill and bringing out some of the things that this bill will do for the industry of human resources. But there’s something I want to contribute just before the time is done for debate for our side here.

The member from Beaches–East York had spoken on this bill, and one thing that wasn't mentioned in the bill was that—he was on a committee a couple years ago and he was very surprised that in the last couple of years, the complaints on HR professionals that have come through the Ministry of Labour—not one of those complaints that has come in has been from an HRP member with regards to the way people were handling it.

1730

That's good to know, but this bill, of course, is going to strengthen that record. There's going to be oversight for that group now that they have been designated and regulated. It's just going to make things better for the workplace in general, on both sides. We do support the bill and we look forward to it passing.

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

Pursuant to the order of the House dated Thursday, October 3, 2013, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Dhillon has moved third reading of Bill 32, An Act respecting the Human Resources Professionals Association. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

I have just received a deferral slip" "Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on third reading of Bill 32 be deferred until deferred votes on Wednesday, November 6."

Third reading vote deferred.

PROTECTION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LA PROTECTION DU DROIT À LA PARTICIPATION AUX AFFAIRES PUBLIQUES

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 25, 2013, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 83, An Act to amend the Courts of Justice Act, the Libel and Slander Act and the Statutory Powers Procedure Act in order to protect expression on matters of public interest / *Projet de loi 83, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les tribunaux judiciaires, la Loi sur la diffamation et la Loi sur l'exercice des compétences légales afin de protéger l'expression sur les affaires d'intérêt public.*

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I guess I should begin by saying that before I was so rudely interrupted at the end of September, I was debating and doing our lead on Bill 83, An Act to amend the Courts of Justice Act, the Libel and Slander Act and the Statutory Powers Procedure Act in order to protect expression on matters of public interest.

For the sake of the people who were not listening at the end of September, basically, this bill will ensure that public participation can proceed and that individuals who wish to speak out against a proposal or against a politician are not subject to—some people call it a "slander chill," where you get a lawyer's letter that says, "If you speak one more time about this topic, then we're going to hit you with a defamation of character lawsuit that will send you to the poorhouse." Anti-SLAPP legislation, strategic litigation against public participation: If you can remember only that from this debate, then you will be better off.

At the end of September, when I was discussing this legislation, I was giving some examples of why this bill is necessary. The next example I had was quite concerning to us as elected officials, and I think we all need to be aware of the implications. It offers perhaps the most startling, but also clear case, of a SLAPP example that I will discuss here today.

In this case, the claimant was the mayor of an Ontario town and the defendants were members of the town's news media. One of them was also a former councillor with the town. In essence, one of the defendants, well-known for commenting on the town's municipal issues—he also frequently wrote articles dealing with municipal issues as a reoccurring column that was published on the Internet and, often, a local website—focused on current events in the town he lived in.

I'm sure all of us have examples of individuals who do this. In my own community, the Orangeville Banner has two different individuals who write semi-weekly columns commenting on municipal, federal and provincial affairs. I happen to quite enjoy Doug Harkness's columns. He's a good friend and tends to see the world through my view. The second is Rob Strang, who is also a very knowledgeable individual. He also happens to have run against me as a member of the Green Party, so I don't always agree wholeheartedly with his columns. Having said that, I would oppose anybody who suggests that he doesn't have the right to do this. This anti-SLAPP legislation will hopefully do that.

Back to the anti-SLAPP legislation that we were talking about: Throughout the mayor's first term in office, both defendants were vocal critics of the mayor's policies. In 2010, the mayor was running for a second term. Election day was set for October 25. On August 20, 2010, a little over two months from election day, one of the defendants wrote an article that was critical of the mayor and posted it on a website—pretty common these days. In it, he prompted the website's visitors to write over 50 comments about the article. So it was obviously an issue of concern to enough people that they then commented and provided feedback. As is typical with such sites, the comments on an article appear directly beneath the article and are published online as soon as they are submitted. There were many comments on the website in response to the article, and many were far more critical of the mayor than the article itself. Furthermore, many of the commentators used pseudonyms and fake names so they didn't have to identify themselves.

Then, on September 15, 2010, a little over a month from election day, the town's council passed a resolution authorizing the town's solicitor to "retain external legal counsel and to take any and all actions to bring a resolution to the matter" of defamation of the mayor. What this basically meant was that a SLAPP would be commenced against the defendants, and the town would pay for the legal fees since the town's solicitor was retaining the external legal counsel to pursue the legal action.

Surely one can see how, as I mentioned earlier, this particular example gives us perhaps the clearest example of how a SLAPP gets its name. It's pretty hard to find a more clear-cut case of an individual's right to participate in the public process being violated than when an elected politician sues someone for criticizing them.

Speaker, I dare say that just about every other member in this chamber would be embroiled in a SLAPP with one another if this is how we were allowed to operate.

I shouldn't joke, but you get my point. It is preposterous to think that a politician who is elected by the people is so above criticism that their detractors should not dare speak against them, lest they risk being sued. That, Speaker, is a SLAPP.

Anyway, on October 8, 2010, a little over two weeks before the election, the mayor proceeded with his lawsuit. Similar to the last SLAPP example I gave, where I pointed to a lack of legal follow-through on the part of the claimant as further proof that his claim was indeed a SLAPP, here, again, we see a disregard for typical legal procedure.

Bear with me, here, Speaker, because this may seem a little overly technical, but it is definitely an important point that needs to be made. I'll try to get through it relatively quickly, but I certainly hope that my point is not lost on my colleagues. Remember, this legal action was commenced by the mayor a little over two weeks from election day. Typically, most legal actions of this nature are initiated by having what's known as a statement of claim issued. In this case, however, the action was initiated by having a notice of action issued, under what is known as subrule 14.03(2). What does this matter, you may ask? Well, here's why. Because subrule 14.03(2) states the following: "Where there is insufficient time to prepare a statement of claim, an action may be commenced by the issuing of a notice of action ... that contains a short statement of the nature of the claim." So the question is, why was there insufficient time for the mayor to initiate a legal proceeding properly? The answer, I think, is obvious: because the only timeline of relevance was the impending election, which was under three weeks away.

The mayor sued the two defendants, as well as five others, and claimed \$6 million in damages from all of the defendants. Two defendants were served with the notice of action on the same day the action was commenced, October 8, whereas one of the original two defendants was served with the notice of action on Thanksgiving Sunday, October 10, while he was having Thanksgiving dinner with his family.

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Here's the catch: Remember subrule 14.03(2) that I just mentioned? Well, there is an accompanying rule, subrule 14.03(4), which very clearly states that, "The notice of action shall not be served separately from the statement of claim." So serving the defendants with the notice of action but no statement of claim directly contravened the rules.

My point of getting down into the weeds like this is not to bore you or my colleagues, Speaker; I promise. No, the reason I bring this up is because it demonstrates quite clearly that in this case, the mayor was far less concerned with taking the appropriate legal action properly and instead far more interested with simply proceeding in any way possible, as long as it was before the election.

It should come as no surprise, then, that one of the defendants swore in an affidavit that the mayor commenced the legal action in order to silence him days before the October 25, 2010, election. Moreover, the mayor did not file an affidavit in response to a motion by the defendants to have their legal costs recovered; nor did the mayor give any evidence that her motive was not to silence her critics as election day quickly approached.

The defendants in this instance outright alleged that this was a SLAPP. Furthermore, the defendants argued that because this was a SLAPP, they were entitled to an elevated award of costs. The master presiding over a motion by the defendants to have the mayor pay for their legal costs ultimately sided with the defendants resoundingly. The master found that the evidence was indisputable. The master was convinced that the mayor brought the lawsuit forward in her capacity as mayor of the corporation and the town. Moreover, because the mayor had access to the town's municipal money until December 14, 2010, the taxpayers, in effect, funded this entire litigation.

This is a totally clear case of a SLAPP being used to silence and/or intimidate those with a different view. And because the party initiating the legal action is a politician, it becomes a SLAPP even more clearly since they have a large, vested interest in silencing their opponents.

Even more shocking in this case is the fact that, technically, this legal action was commenced without complying with the prior notice provisions of the Libel and Slander Act respecting the broadcasts. The mayor expressly sought damages of \$6 million from the defendant, but the presiding master took issue with this, pointing out that, "In an action for damages, it is unusual for the plaintiff to claim a specific amount of damages in the notice of action."

As you can see, Speaker, it is difficult not to see this case from the beginning as nothing more than a desperate and ill-advised scheme to silence the mayor's political opponents. Perhaps more tellingly, the master concluded that the legal action initiated by the mayor was indeed SLAPP litigation.

Ultimately, this SLAPP was put to rest when the mayor dropped the case and delivered a notice of dis-

continuance on October 17, 2011, over a year after it was first initiated. Really, what good did it all serve? Here was this SLAPP sucking precious court resources and time, dragging on for over a year when it had absolutely no credibility. As I was mentioning earlier, this second example I have given is a clear case of an elected or a public official using a SLAPP against an opponent. The mayor was only interested in silencing her critics prior to the election, and she resorted to outrageous measures to do so.

While I have now spoken about an example of a private individual pursuing a SLAPP against another and a public, elected figure pursuing a SLAPP against a private individual, both of whom were trying to silence their critics, now I will go over an example of a corporation pursuing a SLAPP against an individual. This next example is perhaps one of the most infamous, or famous, SLAPP cases in Ontario. Indeed, this case is arguably the inspiration behind the creation of the Anti-SLAPP Advisory Panel that I discussed briefly earlier. I'm referring to the Big Bay Point development project near the township of Innisfil. This case has come to embody the most common perceptions of SLAPPs. It will be worthwhile to go over the details of the case and the multitude of issues surrounding it in order to, again, get a full grasp of these SLAPPs and why it is so important to change the laws to fight them.

In this case, what happened was that a developer, who is the claimant in this case, was planning to acquire approximately 600 acres along Lake Simcoe. The plan was to redevelop the lands over a 15-year period. This extended redevelopment was to cost an approximate \$1.5 billion and the development was to include residential, retail and commercial spaces. There were even plans for a golf course, a hotel, a conference centre, as well as theatres and recreational properties.

Needless to say, this was a very large and very ambitious development proposal. Moreover, as one would imagine, the township of Innisfil and the county of Simcoe were involved in the approval process for the development. In this case, the defendants owned property in the area and, due to a worry about an influx of people and traffic to the area, the defendants publicly opposed the development because they felt it would interfere with their enjoyment of their own private property.

How did this issue get its name, we're wondering? Well, actually a central plank of the development was Big Bay Point Marina. It was imperative to the claimant that they acquire the title of the property. It wasn't just the marina itself that was critical, but also its property, as it represented about 20% of the proposed total development acreage. Without the marina, the development would not be feasible.

The defendants, consequently, set out to do whatever they possibly could to taint the prospects of the claimant purchasing the marina and, thus, moving ahead with their development. Furthermore, the defendants resolved themselves to opposing the development at any cost—certainly their right. In reaction to the defendants'

consistent resistance, the claimant sued the defendants, alleging that the defendants conspired to interfere with the acquisition of the marina.

The claimant's primary argument was that by interfering in the sale of the marina by bidding against the claimant, the defendants forced the claimant to pay extra for multiple contract negotiation deadline extensions. Moreover, the claimant argued that the defendants systematically worked to injure the company and that the defendants' conduct was improper, deceitful and unlawful. The claimant claimed damages of \$10 million for intentional interference with economic relations, \$30 million for conspiracy to injure and \$1 million for punitive damages.

Once again, we have this consistently emerging theme where an individual is trying to do what they think is right for their community and they get hit with a massive lawsuit as a result, to stop them from doing so. In the defendant's statement of defence, he, unsurprisingly, denied all allegations made against him.

Now here is where this particular case gets interesting, because in this example the defendant brings forward his own claim of \$40 million in damages for abuse of process. The defendant also claimed the same amount in damages for conspiracy and special damages estimated at \$250,000, and punitive damages on top of that to the tune of \$10 million.

The defendant's argument here is based around his belief that he suffered irreparable damage and harm to his reputation due to the SLAPP the claimant pursued against him. This is interesting, I think, for a couple of reasons, the first being that it demonstrates that in actuality there is an argument to be made that the legal system already has a process for dealing with SLAPPs, or at least the damage suffered as a result of them.

That being said, I do understand the need for Bill 83 because, as we've all seen by the examples I've listed, these things can take many months or, in most cases, years to resolve. By instituting a timeline to decide if a matter is a SLAPP, Bill 83 will go a long way to ensuring these frivolous claims are taken care of expeditiously.

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In the Big Bay Point case we're discussing here, basically the claimant, the developer, sued the defendant for acting against the proposed development, and the defendant responded by not only fighting the legal battles but also by claiming damages as a result of the lawsuit because the defendant alleged that the claimant had abused the legal process. As I said, the defendant argued that the claimant had abused the legal process, and laid out the following argument supporting his claim: that the legal action brought forward by the claimant on December 15, 2005, alleging intentional interference with economic interests and conspiracy to injure was a false civil action because it was based on false evidence; that the legal action was brought forward to advance indirect and improper purposes such as pressuring the defendant into not expressing his thoughts and beliefs publicly concerning the development—the hope was that the defendant

would be pressured into not publicly opposing the development—and that initially the claimant had approached the defendant with a view to convincing the defendant to support the development.

To put it another way, Speaker: Basically, the claimant went to the defendant, knowing he lived near the development, and tried to convince him to publicly support and endorse the development, and when the defendant did not, the claimant sued him. One can argue, therefore, that the resulting lawsuit is a false action because it was based on no true facts and is not designed to hold up in court but rather to strongly intimidate the defendant into either not commenting on the development or supporting it outright. In other words, the resulting lawsuit had, at least on its face, many characteristics commonly associated with SLAPPs. To make matters worse, the defendant argued that the claimant also spread and publicized the allegations it brought against the defendant, with the aim of tarnishing defendant's reputation in the community.

In the Big Bay Point example I've just gone over, legal action was commenced on December 15, 2005, and the defendant's action to dismiss the case was not heard until August 1, 2006—some six and a half months or so later. In that specific instance, the motion to dismiss the case was, in fact, dismissed itself, and thus the legal action was able to continue. It wasn't until 2012—Speaker, seven years after the first legal action—that the last of the lawsuits in the Big Bay Point example have finally been settled. The developer sued for more than \$150 million in nine separate cases but never took a single one of these cases to trial. That is a classic indication of a SLAPP. The Big Bay Point example can be viewed as a classic example of a company pursuing a SLAPP against an individual or individuals for the purpose of silencing them on matters of importance to the company.

We've now gone over three different possible SLAPP examples: one a private individual pursuing a SLAPP against another private individual; one a public elected officer pursuing a SLAPP against his critics; and one a large development company attempting to silence critics of its proposal through the courts. I think this is very instructive because it demonstrates that a SLAPP is not always a big development company trying to silence environmentalists. This is an often-held stereotype that is, quite frankly, not true, as I have demonstrated here today. While, yes, there are instances like Big Bay Point where the situation follows that narrative, there are also vastly different contexts for SLAPPs as well. My point here is that a SLAPP is something that could be pursued by a variety of players for a variety of reasons, all of which have to do with silencing opponents' views. That is important to bear in mind when considering Bill 83 because it becomes particularly relevant to institute a mechanism for addressing potential SLAPPs, and that is something I believe Bill 83 does.

I'd be remiss, Speaker, if I did not mention that in the Big Bay Point case, when the judge was deciding on

awarding costs—it does say in the decision that this legal action was technically not a SLAPP. Far be it from me to challenge the legal opinion of a judge; however, my point is that these lawsuits bogged down our already-jammed court system for seven years, and not a single individual went to trial. There's something severely wrong with that situation, Speaker. That is why Bill 83's proposal to institute a 60-day time limit on deciding whether a lawsuit is a SLAPP is a critical component of this legislation.

That's not the only good proposal in Bill 83, and I'd like to take some time now to go over the bill itself. Now that we've had a chance to review some of the common examples of SLAPPs, I think the viewers at home and my colleagues here in the chamber will perhaps have a better understanding of how Bill 83 could help remedy the problem SLAPPs pose.

Bill 83, the Protection of Public Participation Act, sets out to combat SLAPPs by amending multiple pieces of legislation basically to create a process to determine if a lawsuit is a SLAPP and to have it dismissed accordingly if it is. In order to set up this process, Bill 83 amends the Courts of Justice Act to allow for fast-tracking of motions to determine whether legal actions are, in fact, credible SLAPPs. Essentially, how Bill 83 will work, if enacted, is that if a defendant believes that they have been targeted by a SLAPP, they will be able to bring forward a motion to have the presiding judge determine if the legal action qualifies as a SLAPP. If the judge determines the action to be a SLAPP, then the judge shall dismiss the legal action at that point. It remains incumbent on the defendant, however, to prove that the legal action brought against them is, in fact, a SLAPP. If they are unsuccessful in proving this to the judge, however, then their motion will be dismissed, and the case can proceed.

It's also important to note that, when rendering a decision to this motion, the judge would be able to award compensation regarding costs on the motion if they deem it appropriate. Moreover, the judge would also be able to award the defendant damages as the judge considered appropriate, if the judge determined that the claimant brought the initial legal action forward in bad faith.

A key component of Bill 83, however, is the 60-day timeline it passes on the motion for determining if a legal action is a SLAPP and can proceed. This timeline is essential for ensuring that SLAPPs do not bog down our already-overburdened court system any further. By instituting a 60-day timeline for a decision, Bill 83 ensures that vexatious and unwarranted SLAPP suits are dismissed expeditiously. That's a central premise of Bill 83 and an important one.

Another reason why the 60-day timeline on the hearing of the motion proposed under Bill 83 is so critical is due to the tribunal connection that Bill 83 establishes. I will confess this is one section of the bill that does make me somewhat uneasy. Bill 83 establishes that if the claimant has proceedings before a tribunal like the OMB, then the defendant moving the motion to dismiss the legal proceedings can provide written notice to the

respective tribunal informing them of the filed motion. At that point, the claimant's proceedings at the tribunal are deemed to be stayed until the motion is dealt with. My reservations come from the thought that this measure could potentially lead to backups at multiple other tribunals because, in theory, you could have multiple instances of these motions being filed and thus multiple proceedings being stayed at other tribunals. Again, though, this is why the 60-day timeline is so critical because we must always be mindful that balance is the key to situations like this. If there is no 60-day timeline, then a claimant's tribunal proceedings could all be stayed indefinitely while the motion proceeds, only to be vindicated in the end if the motion was dismissed. That wouldn't be right, so having the 60-day timeline ensures that these motions are dealt with.

Bill 83 amends two other pieces of legislation: the Libel and Slander Act, and the Statutory Powers Procedure Act. The Statutory Powers Procedure Act is amended to provide that submissions for costs shall be made in writing. The Libel and Slander Act amendment, however, is somewhat more significant. This act is amended to establish new privileges for certain individuals who do not have a direct interest in the matter of public interest. This is actually an important amendment as far as completing the goals of Bill 83: actually protecting public participation.

You see, as it stands currently, there are current privileges regarding oral or written communication that

are possessed by individuals who have a direct interest in the matter of public interest. What Bill 83 does is to amend the Libel and Slander Act to extend these privileges to individuals, reporters recounting or repeating any discussions on the matter, or those who do possess a direct interest in the matter. This is important, because if a journalist is writing a story on something an individual said at a public meeting, while that individual could have been discussing a matter that they have a direct interest in and would be fairly protected from legal action, the journalist would technically not be protected, as they arguably do not possess a direct interest but, rather, an indirect interest.

Journalism and reporting are tenets of a healthy democracy. If we are serious about protecting public participation, we absolutely must also protect the sanctity of the press to report on the news of the day and on the issues important to the local citizens.

Ultimately, the PC caucus stands behind the rights of individuals to express their opinions, and this is—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'm sorry, but the time has come—

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I was so close.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I know.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1800.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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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	
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
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 civiles et de l'Immigration
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
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	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Holyday, Douglas C. (PC)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
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
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	
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	
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	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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 Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
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
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
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	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
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 Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales 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	Niagara Falls	

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Laura Albanese, Steve Clark
Mike Colle, Joe Dickson
Rob Leone, Amrit Mangat
Taras Natyshak, Jerry J. Ouellette
Michael Prue
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Soo Wong
Steven Del Duca, Victor Fedeli
Catherine Fife, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Douglas C. Holyday, Mitzie Hunter
Monte McNaughton, Michael Prue
Soo Wong
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Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Donna H. Cansfield
Sarah Campbell, Donna H. Cansfield
Grant Crack, Dipika Damerla
John Fraser, Michael Harris
Peggy Sattler, Laurie Scott
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Rick Bartolucci
Laura Albanese, Rick Bartolucci
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Percy Hatfield
Mitzie Hunter, Jim McDonell
Randy Pettapiece, Monique Taylor
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

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Bob Delaney, Frank Klees
Jack MacLaren, Phil McNeely
Rob E. Milligan, Shafiq Qaadri
Jonah Schein
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Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Bas Balkissoon, Grant Crack
Vic Dhillon, Garfield Dunlop
Cindy Forster, Lisa MacLeod
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha
Todd Smith
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, Lorenzo Berardinetti
France Gélinas, Helena Jaczek
Bill Mauro, Phil McNeely
Norm Miller, John O'Toole
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
Donna H. Cansfield, Dipika Damerla
John Fraser, Monte Kwinter
Jane McKenna, Rick Nicholls
Peter Tabuns, John Vanthof
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ted Chudleigh
Bas Balkissoon, Ted Chudleigh
Mike Colle, Vic Dhillon
Cheri DiNovo, Ernie Hardeman
Rod Jackson, Helena Jaczek
Paul Miller
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

Select Committee on Developmental Services / Comité spécial sur les services aux personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle

Chair / Présidente: Laura Albanese
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon
Cheri DiNovo, Christine Elliott
Mitzie Hunter, Rod Jackson
Sylvia Jones, Monique Taylor
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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