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of Ontario

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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 1 April 2014

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mardi 1^{er} avril 2014

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Tuesday 1 April 2014

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Mardi 1^{er} avril 2014

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. John Milloy: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any standing order or special order of the House related to Bill 122, An Act respecting collective bargaining in Ontario's school system,

The Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly shall meet on April 2, 2014, from 12:15 p.m. until 6 p.m. and on April 3, 2014, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 122; and, in the event that clause-by-clause consideration is not complete by that time, during regularly scheduled meetings thereafter until completion of clause-by-clause consideration; and

That only those amendments which have been filed with the Clerk of the Committee by the time of adjournment of the committee's meeting on Wednesday, March 24, 2014, shall be considered by the committee; and

That on April 2, 2014, at not later than 12:15 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

Upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith; and

When the order for third reading of Bill 122 is called, one hour shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further amendment; and

The vote on third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

In the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Milloy has moved notice of motion number 43.

Mr. Milloy.

Hon. John Milloy: I think this is a very straightforward motion that we've put forward here today. It concerns Bill 122, a very important bill and a very time-sensitive bill that concerns bargaining in the education sector.

Just to outline what this somewhat complicated-sounding motion does—it's very straightforward—it sets out a timetable for committee hearings to finish up on this bill, and, should the committee decide to pass it forward to third reading, a way in which it should be dealt with by this Legislature in an expedient manner, and, again, should the Legislature see fit to pass it, to make sure that it is put to a vote.

Just to give you a little bit of history, Mr. Speaker, very briefly as to why we have come to this moment when we're introducing a motion to create this timetable, I'll give you some of the statistics of how much debate we have had on this bill thus far. It saw a significant period of debate in the House at second reading: 32 members, according to our count, spoke to this bill, and 59 members participated in debate through questions and comments. It was debated for 14 hours over nine days. It passed second reading on December 2, 2013, only after the government moved closure on the debate due to stalling tactics by—and I'm going to name the Progressive Conservatives. We referred the bill to the standing committee on legislative affairs for further scrutiny, where again we have unfortunately seen the official opposition not wishing to engage in debate in the usual back and forth on these matters, but instead to filibuster and to delay. It's clear that the official opposition has no interest in participating constructively. I'll give you one example: We're on clause-by-clause consideration; we have done six hours of consideration, and only three sections of the bill have been dealt with by the committee.

It's unfortunate that the official opposition continues to obstruct constructive progress of this bill. That's why we have brought forward this time allocation motion.

I think members across the way in the Progressive Conservative Party will be very familiar with time allocation. When they were last in government, they time-allocated about 60% of their legislation. In fact, Madam Speaker, I remember I had the pleasure—I have great respect for, Mr. John Baird, who was a member of this Legislature and a former House leader when the Conservatives were in government. I remember once, in a

casual conversation, he bragged to me that the standard operating procedure of the Mike Harris-Ernie Eves government was to time-allocate legislation. So it's something they're very familiar with.

This is a very straightforward item that we're putting forward here today. We look forward to the debate and discussion, but let's get on with some consideration of Bill 122 in a meaningful way.

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

Mr. Rob Leone: Madam Speaker, everything the House leader just said was complete nonsense. We have been debating this very important piece of legislation, Bill 122—let me just remind the House leader that, in the course of second reading debate, a time allocation motion was put forth, silencing the opposition. He is now choosing to invoke the same clause in a similar tactic by limiting debate in committee. We in the committee sought to expand public hearings to listen to more stakeholders.

The funny thing is that the government likes to talk about partners in education. They like to talk about the teaching federations and the school boards. But they always, always, always neglect one very important partner in our education system, and that is our parents and their kids. The woeful neglect of simply trying to understand some of the concerns that they have with collective bargaining has certainly been the result of what the government House leader suggests are stall tactics, when really all we're trying to do is to listen to the people who sent us here. The government simply doesn't want to do that.

So now they're going to time-allocate us in committee, and not only are they going to time-allocate us in committee, but they're going to allow third reading debate to last for no more than one hour. That means every caucus only has, on one of the most vital pieces of legislation in education that we've seen in the province of Ontario in years—one hour of debate at third reading, 20 minutes per party.

I'm not sure if the government has been reading the newspapers lately. The very fact that it seeks to go to extraordinary lengths to silence the opposition has certainly called their ability to govern into question. They're doing it here on important pieces of legislation. They're trying to silence the opposition when it comes to asking some very important questions about politically motivated decisions to cancel power plants. At every turn, the government seeks to silence the opposition, silence the critics. They don't even want to hear from us.

Madam Speaker, I am very disheartened that on this particular piece of legislation we aren't able to solicit ideas from the very people who elected us. As the official opposition, we have an obligation to represent their concerns.

0910

I've written a couple of letters to the Minister of Education outlining specifically what we were looking for with this particular piece of legislation.

We started that process by looking at, examining and exploring whether we can modify or even repeal regula-

tion 274, which talks about the hiring process of our teachers when there are vacancies in our schools.

Parents right across the province of Ontario have expressed concern about the hiring practices in our schools. They've told us that this process takes too long to actually complete and find a teacher. They have become upset when there has been a teacher who might have been on a temporary assignment, who the students love, who participates in a vibrant school environment, and that person, because of their lack of seniority, isn't able to fill that position.

Parents are talking to us about that, and they wanted us to raise that concern, so we took the opportunity to invite the government to see if we can come to some agreement. It didn't necessarily need to be in this particular piece of legislation. It could have been an agreement where we incorporated another item, so that we could ensure that the best teachers are in front of our classrooms. That's one thing that we had spent a lot of time talking about on this side of the House. We put a private member's bill forward, and that wasn't acceptable to the government, so we invited the government to come up with something else. We have our own ideas. They have their ideas as well.

There is wide recognition that there is a problem with the hiring process in our schools and with regulation 274, not just from parents but even from teachers and especially principals. I might add that principals are obviously a partner in our education system, and their number one priority is to get rid of or modify regulation 274.

Yet we didn't hear anything. The government didn't invite us to negotiate. It's a very funny thing that on a bill, on a piece of legislation that is supposed to outline how negotiation is to take place in the province of Ontario, we actually had no negotiation whatsoever. Given that, we wrote another letter, acknowledging that the government did not want to move on regulation 274.

But through the course of public hearings, we did hear from one deputant, the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association, that there was a modification that they sought, to incorporate the withdrawal of co-instructional activities into the definition of a strike, which exists in this piece of legislation. That is exactly what they have looked at; that's what they came to the table to talk about.

Listening to that concern, we wrote another letter to the Minister of Education, stating that we will take off the table our request for modification of regulation 274 and put on the table the protection of extracurricular activities in our schools.

Throughout the course of the government's last round of negotiations, which took place last spring, about a year ago—and certainly people will question whether negotiations actually did take place, but we'll leave it at that—there was a withdrawal of extracurricular activities in some of our schools in the province of Ontario. Some of our schools participated in extracurricular activities; some of our schools did not.

There was a request from two teaching federations to withdraw the services and voluntary services of co-

instructional activities in our schools. It meant the cancellation of football, basketball, volleyball, soccer, curling and other sports. It meant the withdrawal of activities that involved debate clubs, drama clubs, music, choir—these kinds of things that enrich the educational experience of our students.

Parents are rightfully concerned that whenever we talk about another round of negotiation—we are about to enter a negotiation season—once again we'll be faced in the fall with the prospect of losing out on the very activities many students love.

A lot of parents have come to me to talk about the fact that come September, when their child is in their last year—a year that's so critical for the prospect of getting athletic scholarships in schools across North America—they're worried about losing that one season that's going to make the difference between getting into a school they want or not.

Nobody other than the PC caucus is standing up for those parents, is standing up for those kids. It's our obligation as legislators to effectively represent their concerns. Yet we put that on the table, Madam Speaker, and what we heard back was silence, no interest, that the only people worthy of talking to in this process of teacher negotiation and Bill 122 were the teacher federations and the school boards. The concerns of parents right across this province were simply neglected to be heard.

I vowed to those very parents that I would use every means possible to raise their issues, to talk about the things that matter to their kids. I vowed to those students, who care so much about those experiences—often those kinds of experiences that we remember far beyond our time in our schools—that I would use every tool necessary to raise their concerns. Because that's my job; I'm a member of this Legislature who represents constituents in my riding. I'm also the official opposition critic for education. Parents across this province would come to us and say, "Keep up the fight. Do this because our kids need to have some certainty about whether those activities are going to continue." I would suggest that in this process, where we've actually heard complete silence on this very issue, it is so disheartening to me as a legislator, but also to parents and families right across this province.

We asked for something on behalf of one of the people who came to us through the course of public hearings, the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association. We listened to stakeholders who wanted to talk about how we can maintain an enriched educational experience for our students. Most of those stakeholders weren't even allowed to participate in the public hearing process. The reason for that was because we were only allowed to have 12 depositions, for three hours, on a bill that is so fundamental to the process that we have. So I would suggest, Madam Speaker, that we are looking for some assurance from the government that simply is not available to us. I want to say, on behalf of those parents, on behalf of those students, that we will do whatever we can to bring this issue forward.

Twelve deputants and three hours of debate on a very important piece of legislation is an insult to this Legisla-

ture and it's an insult to the families who care about education. We should have opened this up far more than what has happened. The fact that we've been constrained in our ability to examine this legislation is the very reason why we oppose this time allocation motion. Twelve deputants got an opportunity to speak for five minutes, and most of those deputants didn't even have enough time to complete the presentation that they came to committee armed with. On the flip side, we were able to have a rotation of questions that lasted, per caucus, three minutes each. I know through the course of question period, we get four minutes to pose two questions to the government and have that response. On this very thoughtful piece of legislation that has so many implications for collective bargaining in the province of Ontario, the deputants had five minutes, and each party had three minutes to ask questions—not enough.

0920

I noticed the government House leader talked about how the Mike Harris years implemented these sorts of things. Let me tell you that on certain pieces of legislation, when we talked about education and we had depositions, we actually allocated 30 minutes per deposition in committee: 30 minutes, double what this government has suggested. You know what? Gerard Kennedy—

Interjection.

Mr. Rob Leone: — was in that committee suggesting that those committee hearings were a sham, that not enough public hearings were actually incorporated in the process of listening to people's concerns, that it was a sham.

I notice the Minister of Education was heckling me there. She had an opportunity to actually participate in some of those depositions where, as the president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, she was allowed to stake 30 minutes to make a deposition on Bill 74, way back in the day of our government.

The time allocation motion that is brought forward has completely shut down debate on a very important piece of legislation. This is something that I would suggest: that we actually have to encourage more discussion rather than less. I know they are going to heckle me, because all I'm asking for is some more time to talk about this. But they don't want to hear that, because they want to ram through this piece of legislation.

I want to raise the issue about what exactly we are talking about, because it's very important to have the government really understand that there was an easier way to do this. There was an easier way to actually get this bill past committee in a fashion that would have produced a win-win for us. It would have produced a win for the government, because they got a bill they would have been able to present to their partners, and I would have been able to include, in those partners, parents and students who would have been guaranteed—or at least had more guarantees—that extracurricular activities would have been present in their schools come the fall. We could have come to an agreement.

What we were asking for wasn't radical; it wasn't over the top. What we were asking for is to simply put in

writing a guarantee for parents that appears in a ruling by the Ontario Labour Relations Board from the Trillium Lakelands District School Board and Upper Canada District School Board v. the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario. This labour relations board ruling came to us last year. I read that labour relations board ruling, and it's a very interesting ruling. All that we are simply doing is making clear in legislation what that ruling actually states. So what we are asking for wasn't a radical deviation from what was already decided by the Ontario Labour Relations Board. This ruling came out on April 11, 2013.

What are some of the concerns that this relates to? The minister wants to be reminded of this. Two school boards took the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario to the Ontario Labour Relations Board to talk about the removal of what the teachers' federation calls voluntary services in our schools. That's what they were seeking to do. The position of the school boards was that this was an illegal withdrawal of services. So they brought the matter to the Ontario Labour Relations Board. It was very interesting, throughout the course of reading the decision, all the manoeuvres that were put in place to try and avoid an actual ruling on certain matters. And, indeed, this is now an interim decision because there is a charter challenge of whether engaging in these discussions is actually part of a free assembly and the right to political protest. I'll leave, obviously, that matter for a future decision to be rendered.

But what's interesting is some of the things that were said in the course of this ruling. It's extremely difficult, as the Ontario Labour Relations Board suggested, to determine what exactly constitutes a voluntary activity, because that is always a concern. Every time we raise it, they say, "You know you're trying to make mandatory what's voluntary." That's not the case. We're just simply following what we've studied and read, and I hope the government has done the same thing, with the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

"[O]n a principled or logical basis," the decision reads, "I see no difference for 'a voluntary activities' exception per se from the definition of strike—and in particular in the education sector. The line between mandatory and voluntary duties would not be a bright line test...." It's too difficult to distinguish between what is a mandatory and what is a voluntary activity and whether that constitutes an ability to withdraw such services.

"ETFO argues that the applicants' collective agreements here explicitly make these duties (or some of them) voluntary—so these cases do not apply." Again, we have to understand that the Ontario Labour Relations Board says that it's too difficult to define what is voluntary and what is mandatory, and you can't simply withdraw what you think are voluntary services. You just can't do that. So our amendment that we proposed in this piece of legislation simply reflects what the Ontario Labour Relations Board was suggesting.

Some reasons why the defining of a "voluntary activity" would be problematic if these "voluntary activities"

were not included in the definition of a strike: Trying to define the line would end up being left "frequently to be determined in always expedited unlawful strike applications with their concomitant pressures and urgency, which is not the best context for any thoughtful or deliberate analysis of the difference...."

"The point is that ..." it goes on to say, "interpreting the definition of strike not to cover voluntary activities invites (if not virtually guarantees) future disputes and future uncertainty, as parties for their own tactical advantage at the relevant time attempt to characterize duties as voluntary or mandatory." Again, "as parties for their own tactical advantage at the relevant time attempt to characterize duties as voluntary or mandatory," was part of this decision.

The ETFO goes on to suggest that "there is no evidence of any quagmire of litigation—there have only been a handful of cases...." But, "it is less clear," it goes on to say, "what one should make of that fact for present purposes, because it is reasonable to infer that one of the reasons why such work stoppages have been uncommon is that, by and large they are apt to be, and are known to be, illegal."

Finally, even if voluntary activities were easy to define, they should still be included in the definition of a strike, and there are some reasons this Ontario Labour Relations Board ruling had stated: "Almost any contract of service or collective agreement which envisages service, especially in a professional enterprise, can be frustrated by insistence on 'work to rule' if it be the case that nothing that has not been expressed can be asked of the employee." The focus is "solely on the impact of the activities in combination or in concert—and here no one disputed the impact or that the withdrawal was intended to have an impact...."

"[C]ertainly some teacher functions will surely be done outside of school hours...." So "to conclude that a refusal in concert to perform voluntary activities is not a strike simply because they are unpaid, seems to me to achieve indirectly what cannot be achieved directly—i.e. strike action."

0930

So, Madam Speaker, what we have suggested in our deliberation of Bill 122 was simply codifying in legislation some of the elements that were actually present in the Ontario Labour Relations Board ruling, and the rationale provided for doing so is simply to provide some greater clarity. It provides greater clarity for us when we're deliberating over a particular piece of legislation; it provides greater clarity for parents, who are obviously concerned about the withdrawal of extracurricular activities as a voluntary activity in our schools; and it provides some greater clarity to teachers on whether or not these constitute a strike action if you're withdrawing, en masse, co-instructional activities.

I do want to state with a degree of force that "co-instructional activities" is a broad definition. In our amendment that we've put forth on this particular piece of legislation, we stated what those items include. People

want assurance that their sports are going to take place. People want assurance that their music programs are going to be enriched. People want assurance that their creative activities are going to find a place in our schools. People want assurance that groups and clubs of activities, whether it's for anti-bullying or for another matter, have a person in charge, responsible for putting those ideas and putting those clubs into action. They don't exist without presence of a teacher. So even on things as important as anti-bullying, we are potentially facing the lack of supervision by a teacher because a teacher federation determines that these are voluntary, when they are a part of the educational experience of students. We're concerned about that.

We have great teachers in the province of Ontario, and a lot of the teachers in the province of Ontario provide extra instruction beyond what takes place in an instructional day. They have math clubs and reading clubs that are a part of helping students achieve better. We're now in the process of potentially leaving in limbo those very activities because the government chose not to act. It chose not to follow the interpretation of the Ontario Labour Relations Board ruling I have just cited that clearly states—clearly states—that the voluntary withdrawal of services of what constitute voluntary activities is synonymous with withdrawing mandatory activities, because you can't distinguish between what a voluntary activity is and what a mandatory activity is.

Imagine if we were to do that in the course of our work as MPPs—to try and determine what is, in fact, a mandatory function and what might be a voluntary function. Is going to Legion halls on Friday nights a voluntary activity, responding to e-mails from our constituents, making those phone calls, or attending events at all times of the day? They might be considered voluntary activities, but you know what, Madam Speaker? It's part of our job; it is what we do.

Every job has, of course, activities that they do on an ongoing basis. When I was a professor prior to coming into politics, around January and February was reference letter season. I never got paid for writing reference letters for my students, but I wanted them to get the education that they wanted. I helped them as much as I could, like our educators do in our schools each and every day.

So what we're suggesting here is simply following the guidance that was provided by a labour relations board ruling that has listed and provided some detail about how we govern future labour relations when it comes to the withdrawal of voluntary activities—what constitutes “voluntary activities”—from our schools.

What I'm trying to suggest here, and I've gone on about this at some length, is that there could have been a far easier solution to getting Bill 122 to the place I know the minister wants to have it. Frankly, I want to have it there, too. The easy way would have been to say, “What you're saying, Progressive Conservatives, is simply putting and clarifying in legislation what already has been ruled upon by the Ontario Labour Relations Board.” But instead of doing that, they're going through and taking

and utilizing draconian measures to silence the opposition, who are raising an extremely valid point when it comes to the provision of our extracurricular activities.

The simple way would have been to pick up the phone, would have been to talk to the opposition, would have been to negotiate. I've said this time and again: If you didn't like the amendment that I was putting forward, but you had a different amendment that would have achieved a similar goal, hey, put that on the table. I'm happy to listen to those kinds of arguments. But to ignore, to ridicule, to shut down debate on this particular piece of legislation, I think, does a disservice to parents and students right across this province.

I think we are at a very interesting point in our deliberations, that the lack of interest by the government to even entertain and codify something that already exists in the Ontario Labour Relations Board says more about the government than anything else. It says that they are willing to do whatever it takes, perhaps, to not give the opposition any credit when it comes to education, when it comes to something so vital to the way in which our children learn in our schools.

What possible reason could there be for just simply ignoring and flat out rejecting a simple request to add to the definition of “strike” co-instructional activities? What possible reason could there be to do that? Time and again, I'm asking that question, and I know some teachers have been engaged in discussions with me on this, too. Once presented with the facts, they come to understand that, really, what we're doing in the opposition is not to ask for anything radical but to simply codify what exactly exists in this labour relations board ruling. So what possible reason could there be for an outright ignorance of our perspective?

Could it possibly be that they want to retain the political support of teacher federations? I know the Minister of Education and the Premier were at OEETA; they were at their conference a couple of weeks ago. I want to state that something really interesting happened at that conference. They debated whether or not they should use their reserve fund of \$2.8 million to campaign against the Ontario PCs in the next election. Something very interesting happened. In the course of the initial debate, teachers actually rejected that idea. They don't want to use their \$2.8-million fund to campaign against the Tories, except there was one teacher who actually got up and said, “You know, I think we've got this wrong. We're going to have to use this fund against them, or else we're going to go on strike.” So what happens in the presence of the minister and the Premier is that they reverse that decision. Now \$2.8 million of reserve fund is going to be used against the Tories in the next election by the Ontario Catholic teachers.

0940

I'm wondering whether the simple refusal to incorporate a simple request of putting co-instructional activities into the definition of “strike,” their refusal to do that, wasn't somewhat related to the fact that they didn't want to upset the wealth of funds that might be used against

their chief rivals when it comes to the next election. Of course, we're not going to be able to match \$2.8 million in third party advertising. We're not even talking about the Working Families Coalition budget, which is likely going to be three or four times more than that.

The calculus of this government isn't to help parents; it's to stay in power. That's what they do. That's what they are known to do. Their simple refusal, their outright rejection of a simple request to legislate what we already see in this Ontario Labour Relations Board ruling—we have to ask some serious questions as to why. Because it's written out there. The reasons aren't my reasons. This isn't my decision; this is a decision that was rendered by the Ontario Labour Relations Board. So I think it's very important to see what we see in the context of that.

So here we are. The bill that we have in front of us, Bill 122, has about 100 amendments that are before the committee. We were told that through the course of creating this bill, months and months of negotiation were put in place. We were told that this bill was going to come to this Legislature in early September. Well, it didn't come in early September. They were late. Their legislation wasn't tabled until the end of October. We were debating it into November. They time-allocated that, and we're in committee. But months and months of negotiation with all these "partners of education"—it was so badly written that it required nearly 100 amendments to fix. And then what happened, which was more interesting than that, was that after the bill was tabled in late October, the government was in negotiation with the partners to see what kind of modifications were necessary. So they had their talks, they had their negotiation to find some acceptable path forward. Well, you know what? The rest of us in the opposition, whether it's New Democrats or Conservatives, and probably the vast majority of MPPs who are on the government side, have absolutely no idea what was discussed in those closed-door meetings.

So first of all, we were time-allocated in second reading debate. Secondly, we were restricted to three hours of public hearings on a very important and vital piece of legislation, one that ignored the vital partner in our education system, which is our parents and our students. We decided to look at clause-by-clause, and to speed the process of clause-by-clause we suggested that we incorporate for parents and students, who they neglected to talk to, some protection of co-instructional activities in the bill. They took the "strike" definition from the Education Act and put it in the bill. They did that; I didn't do that. So they did that. We raised the issue. They could have negotiated, but rather than negotiation they engaged in a protracted process where this bill stalled in committee for weeks.

Now we're at a point in time where we're sitting here, on April 1—I thought this was an April fool's joke, actually—talking about whether members of this Legislature should further limit debate on a bill they already were limited in debating, Madam Speaker.

And this time allocation motion doesn't just limit the debate in committee for a number of hours, but what I

think is far more discouraging is the fact that when this bill comes to third reading, 107 members of this Legislature—106 minus the Speaker—have to fight for 20 minutes per party to actually put in their two cents on this particular piece of legislation. I'm not quite sure what that works out to and how many seconds are allotted to each legislator on that debate.

This is a very serious bill, the implications of which are going to be far-reaching. I think one aspect in this bill that we should consider is actually introducing a clause that has a review period, that after this process of collective bargaining goes through, we come back after that process to see if the system worked or it didn't.

But you know what, Madam Speaker? Some of those great ideas that we might enlist in improving this legislation will not be debated in clause-by-clause if they had not been put in place as of March 24, which was last week, some very important ideas that could improve and strengthen this bill. I made it clear we were putting the amendments that we were putting forward very simply because that's what we wanted to talk about, but there are other ideas that could have strengthened this bill that the members of the opposition are simply going to have no opportunity to bring forward.

I think what this is going to show is that we're going to have a process that this Legislature may agree upon that may be flawed and that we can do very little about. I think that is the most disheartening process of why this time allocation motion should be defeated.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Toronto—Danforth.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, provincial funding for education has changed in a very fundamental way. Negotiations in that sector will have to change as well to reflect those new realities. The bill before us is meant to do that, because these are very important matters for this province.

The existing bill contains some substantial flaws. We in the NDP have proposed amendments to the bill, as has the government, at the request of stakeholders, and in our opinion this bill is only acceptable if it is amended for greater fairness and balance.

It has been claimed that the government is putting forward this bill as a way of preventing a repeat of the experience with Bill 115, and as I have said before, if a government is prepared to ignore the Constitution, no bill is going to prevent it from acting in an arbitrary way in the future. This bill may be many things, but it is not something that will prevent Bill 115 type experiences in the future.

Major stakeholders—boards, teachers, education workers—want a more predictable environment for bargaining. Families and students want more stability in the system. We want to amend this bill. We want to get back to clause-by-clause in order to try and meet the legitimate needs of all those who have a deep interest in the success of our schools.

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

Mr. Milloy has moved government notice of motion number 43. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This will be deferred until after question period.

Vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Orders of the day.

Hon. John Milloy: No further business, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Seeing no further business, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 0950 to 1030.

WEARING OF PINS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Labour on a point of order.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent that all members of this Legislature be permitted to wear pins in recognition of Parkinson's Awareness Month.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Labour is seeking unanimous consent to wear ribbons. Do we agree? Agreed. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Michael Harris: I'd like to welcome the mother of the page captain today, Nick Lacoste, from the riding of Kitchener-Conestoga—Debra—as well as her friend Wanda Woods. They'll be in the members' gallery. Welcome to question period. Good luck today, Nick.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'd like to welcome page Jane Oleksiw's aunt. Ola Bodnar is here today, so I'd like to welcome her.

Mr. Mike Colle: I'd like to welcome, from the riding of Eglinton—Lawrence, the parents of page captain Jonah Opler. We have here with Jonah his mother, Cindy Opler, and his father, Michael Opler. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome students from my riding of Whitby—Oshawa, from École secondaire Saint-Charles-Garnier. They'll be joining us shortly in the gallery.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: It's an honour for me to have my daughter, Annie, joining us later. My wife, Kate Bartz, will be coming here at some point.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I just want to say—I don't know if we should touch on the topic, though—that it is April Fool's Day. I'm just throwing it out there now, if anybody wants to jump in. I just won't mention—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That is well received.

Further introductions?

Mrs. Gila Martow: Thornhill resident Kevin Hanit is here; you can give us a wave. Kevin took public transit to come down and visit us today. Good for you, Kevin.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'd like to welcome Karen Laffrenier. She's Callista Laffrenier's mom. I don't see her yet, but I saw her this morning. She's proud to be here, and she's a good neighbour of mine.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): In the Speaker's gallery, we have my other brother; Joe Peters is here joining us. For those not quite baptized in that manner, he's the brother of the former Speaker, Steve Peters.

Also in the gallery are my guests, retired Justice Ken Lenz and his wife, Pat Lenz. With them as well is a long-time friend of mine, the chair of Brantford International Villages and one of the originators, Pat Eyzenga. Welcome to Queen's Park. We're glad you're here, all three.

It is now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, can you tell us exactly what the budget-leaking team is?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know that the Minister of Finance is going to want to speak to the budget. What I will say is that, as in previous years under many governments, there is always a plan to foreshadow the budget. We will be bringing forward a budget. We will be bringing forward a budget that will invest in people, it will invest in infrastructure and it will invest in supports for businesses in this province.

We've been clear about that all along. We remain committed to making those investments. I'm not surprised that the Leader of the Opposition might take issue with that strategy, because he actually does not want to invest in the province. He thinks that cutting programs and undercutting business and individuals is the way to go. We don't believe that. We believe that investing in people is the way to go.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: I don't think I got an answer from the Premier on a very simple question. There's no listing in the Ontario civil service for something called the budget-leaking team. I understand this is a secret team that you've put together. So I'll ask you again if you could answer a very simple question on behalf of taxpayers: Can you describe exactly what the budget-leaking team is, who sits on it and what their purpose is?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: What I will say to the Leader of the Opposition and to the people of Ontario is that we are preparing a budget. We will be making announcements in advance of the budget, as is the practice of government after government.

We will be making investments in the people of Ontario, we will be making investments in infrastructure and we will be making investments in a business environment—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —that will allow the economy to thrive.

That is what I have said all along. That is what I have said about our budget. That is what will be in our budget. Do we have a communications plan, Mr. Speaker?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I've asked for order. Now I'll ask individuals. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will come to order. The member from Dufferin–Caledon will come to order.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Do we have a communications plan? Absolutely, and I'm sure that the Conservatives and NDP have communications plans. It's unfortunate—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Rural Affairs will come to order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —that those confidential plans may have been released, but the substance is exactly what I have said we are going to do.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Again, I asked a very simple question. The Premier, for some reason, is not telling us exactly if the budget-leaking team exists or not. Until now, it had been kept secret. We did hear from whistleblowers within the civil service who are very concerned that you are now drafting Ontario public servants to do the work of the Ontario Liberal Party. It's not their job. They have a job to do, but it's not to be Liberal Party staffers.

Premier, let's be clear about this. I fully expect that you are aware of what's happening in your own office. You would have been briefed on this, if not come up with the idea yourself. Can you please tell me if the budget-leaking team, secret until today, is staffed by political staff or staffed by bureaucrats?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We are putting together a budget. We are putting together and have a communications plan. We are going to be investing in people in this province, we are going to be investing in infrastructure and we are going to be working to partner with business to make sure that they can create jobs.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, come to order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I was at a business this morning in north Etobicoke with MPP Shafiq Qadri and we made an announcement about investing in Club Coffee. We're putting \$5 million into that company so that they can expand, so that they can create more jobs and export around North America and around the world.

Interjection.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It has everything to do with the budget because the budget is about investing in the economy of the province. That's what we're doing.

Interjections.

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

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'll try again. The Premier seems to be avoiding answering my very direct and simple questions. I'm confused as to why she won't confirm or deny that this secret budget-leaking team exists, nor will she confirm or deny that she has drafted civil servants to do the work of the Ontario Liberal Party.

We fully expect Liberal Party staffers to figure out communications, but we do not expect you to draft public servants to do the work—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Energy, come to order.

Mr. Tim Hudak: That's not what they are there for. This shows me further a Premier who is more concerned about protecting her own job than creating jobs for—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, come to order.

1040

Mr. Tim Hudak: You seem to be oblivious, or you claim to be oblivious, to what's happening within your own government, your own office, from the OPP investigation of potential criminal activity and the destruction of documents, now to this budget-leaking team. I'll ask one more time. This is try number four. Can you confirm that the secret budget-leaking team exists, and if so, is it staffed by bureaucrats or Liberal Party staff?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would just say to the leader of the third party, the jobs that I'm protecting and the jobs that we're working to create are jobs for the people of Ontario. We're making investments in order that we can have an economy that's thriving.

So are we preparing a budget? Absolutely. Are finance officials engaged in preparing that budget? Absolutely. I think the people of Ontario would be shocked if I said, "No, the Ministry of Finance officials are not involved in preparing a budget." Do we have a communications plan? Absolutely.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean–Carleton will come to order and the member from Prince Edward–Hastings will come to order.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

We will deliver on that commitment to bring forward a budget that will invest in the people of this province, that will invest in infrastructure and that will support a business climate that will attract jobs to the province. That is what the substance of our budget will be.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'm going to send over to the Premier a list of people on the budget-leaking team. This information was given to us by civil servants, whistleblowers, who are concerned that you're abusing your

power as Premier to put Liberal Party interests ahead of the interests of taxpayers or the civil service.

I asked you four times, Premier, if this group existed. You refused to answer. I don't know why you're being so extraordinarily evasive when it comes to very basic questions here today. What are you trying to hide?

I'll ask one of the pages to bring this over to the Premier. Can the Premier confirm that Matthew Sylvain, Kyle MacIntyre, Stephen Donnelly and others on this list are paid Liberal staff? Or is it, as we fear from the whistle-blowers, civil servants you're drafting to do the work of the Liberal Party?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I will say again to the Leader of the Opposition, yes, we are preparing a budget. I believe that that is absolutely our responsibility, to prepare a budget, to work with the officials in finance. Of course, they are working to prepare that budget. Do we have a communications plan? Absolutely, we have a communications plan.

I think what the Leader of the Opposition is really concerned about is that he doesn't support the investments that we're putting forward. He—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Community and Social Services, come to order, and for the third time, the member from Renfrew—sorry, second time. Because you're counting, you only have one left.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It is not surprising to me that the leader of the third party would be somewhat exercised about investments in the province, because it's not what he supports. He opposes making investments. He opposes supporting business. He opposes supporting the talent and skills of this province. So I don't expect him to agree with us, but I do expect him to understand that we're going to bring that budget forward.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: We on this side certainly appreciate that the Premier showed up for question period today. I just wish we had some answers to, honestly, very basic questions.

You've had the list to study. This looks to me like the Liberal Party that, once again, is more concerned about keeping their government limousines, their cabinet minister titles, and spending whatever it takes to keep their jobs. I'm more concerned about creating good jobs with better take-home pay for all Ontarians. That's what my plan is.

I guess it's my last chance. We'll continue to ask this, Premier. Can you confirm or deny the existence of the hitherto secret budget-leaking team, and can you tell me also that your plan is to make 39 different spending announcements totalling \$5.7 billion in the next 21 days? That's the information we've had from the whistle-blowers. And if that's the case, where are you going to find the money?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): First of all, I know how to do that, and you're wasting your own time. I called for you to do it—and I don't want the responses either.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I'm just adding impact, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted them to listen very carefully.

This is what is happening, and this is what I can confirm: We on this side of the House are preparing a budget, a very forward-thinking plan, one that will be released in the coming weeks here in this very House, one that is being used and worked on with a number of officials from the ministry, including members of our political staff, and one that includes a rollout of a coms team that I am very proud of. The people of Ontario will be very proud of this budget as well, because it speaks to the needs of that community, it talks about investing in our people, it talks about being very strategic in our investments in infrastructure and creating jobs, and it talks about maintaining a very dynamic business climate.

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You'll not know when I decide to stop the last people.

Leader of the third party.

POWER PLANTS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Thanks, Speaker. It's nice to be missed. I want to thank the Premier for showing up to Queen's Park today, as well, to question period. There are some important questions that the people of this province deserve answers to, and the buck stops with the Premier when it comes to answering them.

What services was Peter Faist supplying to the Liberal Party in the last week?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me first say that I know that the leader of the third party, who puts herself forward as a champion of the north, will understand that it was very important that I meet with the businesses that I met with yesterday in Sault Ste. Marie—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward-Hastings, come to order. Second time.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: She will know that it was very important for me to meet with the folks at Algoma University to talk about the expansion to their athletic complex. She will know that it was very important for me to visit with the students at Francis Clergue school. She would know, because she does put herself forward as a champion of the north, that it is not appropriate to make plans weeks in advance and then cancel them. So I was very pleased to have been able to be in Sault Ste. Marie, and I'm happy to answer her other questions in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: A Premier who preaches accountability should know that that takes showing up in the Legislature to answer questions of the opposition.

Mr. Faist's services were abruptly terminated over the weekend. If he was merely providing routine services, as the Liberals insist, why was his contract terminated?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I worked all day yesterday, until midnight, and I have never walked out of this Legislature. Never have, never will.

Let me just say that we learned on Thursday of the allegations about the former chief of staff in the former Premier's office. Following these revelations, we put in place an internal investigation, we conducted that, and it was determined that the company previously did occasional IT services in the caucus office under the former Premier, and in the party office—and that was until January 2013. Those IT services only continued with the party until we discovered—and on Sunday those services were terminated.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, Mr. Faist has worked closely with the Liberal Party and the Liberal caucus for some time, as the Premier has indicated, yet this internal Liberal Party investigation of his services brought about his immediate termination. What exactly was found in that investigation is what I would like to know from the Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: What I said was that this IT company did some work with the caucus services before I was in this office, until January 2013. I was not in this office until February 11. There was a continuation, there was some work that was done for the Liberal Party until we did our internal investigation after the allegations came forward on Thursday. As of Sunday, those services were terminated. That is a decision that we made on Sunday.

1050

POWER PLANTS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. For more than a year, people in the Premier's office have known that the partner of a Liberal staffer came into their office to wipe their computers. At least, that's what they told OPP investigators. But for a year, the Premier and her staff never came forward, never shared these facts with the public. Now we learn the same individual was working for the Liberal Party even while this Premier insisted she didn't know him. Yet they expect us to take the Liberal Party at their word when they say there's nothing more to see.

Does the Premier think that saying "I know nothing about this" is good enough?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let's just be clear: I learned of the allegations on Thursday, and the allegations are against the former chief of staff of the former

Premier. It has nothing to do with the staff member who has been mentioned by the leader of the third party.

Nonetheless, we are in this process; there is a police investigation going on. They are doing their work. We need to let that work unfold.

I have said quite clearly, I am happy to debate—and I have been answering questions about the relocation of the gas plants for the last year. I have appeared before committee. We have opened up the process, and that is appropriate debate.

The allegations that the leader of the third party is commenting on are part of a process that the police are undertaking right now.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, on Friday I wrote to the Premier, making it plain that it's time for a public inquiry into the gas plant scandal and the cover-up. I have yet to receive a response from this Premier. Will the Premier finally call the public inquiry?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to ask the leader of the third party to withdraw.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We actually had this conversation a year ago, Mr. Speaker. I said that we were going to open up the process. We have done exactly that. The committee has seen tens of thousands of documents—I think hundreds of thousands of documents—and has had witnesses. I have appeared before the committee twice, and my understanding is that the committee is still calling witnesses. The fact is, there's an investigation that's ongoing. We need to let that unfold.

The reality is, the only reason we're having this discussion is because we did open up the process. We opened up the process. We made it clear that we were going to provide any of the information that was relevant. We have done that. We will continue to do that.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The only reason we are where we are now is because we have a minority Parliament and this government has been forced to answer the questions of the opposition.

For the families that are stuck paying the bills, the Premier's story is pretty hard to believe. The Liberals keep insisting that there is nothing more to see here, folks. That's just not good enough.

The Premier leads a Liberal Party that wasted over \$1 billion and now has key political staff under criminal investigation by the OPP anti-rackets squad. If the Premier is actually interested in getting the facts out, why won't she allow for a completely independent, truly unbiased public inquiry?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would put the OPP in the "unbiased" category, and they are doing their work.

Mr. Speaker, I have said repeatedly—and I have taken responsibility—that there were mistakes made, that there were things done that should not have been done and that there were decisions made that should not have been

made. I have said that we need new rules. We're putting those new rules in place. We have new rules about document retention. We have training that has taken place with all staff. The Minister of Energy is putting new rules in place in terms of siting energy infrastructure. We have made changes over the last year as a result of this discussion.

That has nothing to do with being in a minority Parliament. That has to do with the integrity of this government and our understanding of what needs to happen in order to make decisions properly in the future.

Interjections.

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

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Premier. Premier, our leader, Tim Hudak, has presented you with evidence of your secret budget-leaking team, code-named BLT. It is reminiscent of the existence of code names during the gas plant scandal, with titles Project Vapour and Project Apple.

The BLT's purpose is to leverage the size and scope of the Ontario civil service towards the goal of doing the pre-election campaign work of the Liberal Party. The plan is to have taxpayer-paid employees leak out 39 budget plan details over the next month. This is the same self-interested behaviour we saw when the Liberals blew \$1 billion to cancel two gas plants to save five seats, against the advice of their own advisers in the civil service. When will you end the practice of putting the Liberal Party ahead of the people of Ontario?

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, let's be clear to all those that are listening and watching. Let's be clear to all Ontarians. This is not about the fortunes of any political party who are doing political gimmicks and playing cheap tricks to try to get and play at the lowest level of politics. It is untoward what they are doing. This is not about the fortunes of that political party there, or any; it's about the fortunes of Ontarians. We're going to deliver a budget. It's in progress—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Now that you've finished, the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex will come to order—second time.

Carry on.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, the budget is in progress. Nothing has yet been finalized. We want everyone to know that the budget will be presented right here in this very House, for the people of Ontario, and we have asked the people of Ontario for their submissions. All of us have been working on this together. The opposition have decided not to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I must say, Premier, I think the lowest level is co-opting tax-paid employees to disclose your secret BLT. That's the lowest level. This BLT confirms the fact that the Liberals are withholding the 2014 budget from the public and from the credit rating agencies to use it as a political tool to help in their re-election bid. Even more damning, the Liberals' budget-leaking team also oversees the use of taxpayer dollars to advertise and promote these new Liberal initiatives. Basically, the Liberal Party has co-opted tax-paid Ontario government employees to run its election campaign for the next month.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Rural Affairs, come to order.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Premier, those safe hands you keep talking about are found to be digging into taxpayers' pockets yet again to get you re-elected. What's so safe about that?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: The member opposite repeatedly asks for transparency and more information. The member opposite wants us to come forward with our long-term plan, which is coming in the coming week. The member opposite wants that budget presented in this House. The member opposite wants it to be audited and wants the integrity of those numbers to be confirmed, which they are. In fact, the government of Ontario was rated the top in the nation for integrity of our numbers and the disclosure of what we are doing. We'll continue to do that. We'll continue to work with all of our stakeholders. I am very proud of the staff at the Ministry of Finance and the work that that team has done alongside myself and others to present a budget that is wholesome and, yes, very aspirational because it's long-term in its view. They choose not to do that, Mr. Speaker. They choose gutter politics. They choose to smear the very individuals that are working on behalf of the public service for the benefit of others.

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier say right now that she thinks Peter Faist should come to the justice committee and answer questions?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: I think all members realize this is a very serious situation. The justice committee is looking into the matter. There's a process in place in which they can come forward with witness lists and call those witnesses forward. I think we should allow the committee to undertake the work that's set out and to determine which witnesses it wishes to call and undertake that process.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Well, I didn't see that coming. Again to the Premier: As we heard in committee this morning, we're having a hard time reaching Mr. Faist. Are the Liberals prepared to use the information they have to help us locate him? Or better yet, does the Premier know where he is?

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I would point out that when it comes to members of the government, including the Premier, including the Minister of Energy, including myself, we have made ourselves available to the committee. In terms of other witnesses, it's up to the committee to decide what that list is and to pursue the matter as it sees fit. There are processes that are in place.

1100

I know, speaking on our side of the Legislature, we were very, very disappointed. We wanted the Conservative candidates from the election—the same ones who made claims that the only way to have these gas plants cancelled was to elect them—to come before the committee and talk about their financial analysis, about the policy work that was done, and they in fact didn't appear in front of the committee.

As far as this government is concerned, we have cooperated fully with the committee in terms of the witnesses and the documents that have been requested.

MINING INDUSTRY

Ms. Dipika Damerla: My question is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. As the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville, I cannot forget, and my constituents cannot forget, that our community is on the traditional lands of the Mississauga First Nations, and that is why I'm proud of our government's strong record and our Premier's strong record on consulting and working with numerous aboriginal communities across Ontario. By creating the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs in 2007, we are continually strengthening these important partnerships.

I hear the minister say in the House that Ontario is taking action to drive smart, sustainable and collaborative development in the Ring of Fire. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Northern Development and Mines please educate the House on how Ontario is ensuring a collaborative approach to Ring of Fire development with our aboriginal partners?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thanks to the member for asking that question. The timing, may I say, is impeccable. Our commitment to a collaborative approach was demonstrated very clearly just this past Wednesday when I had the privilege of signing, on behalf of the province, a landmark agreement with the nine Matawa First Nations chiefs. What is so important is that will ensure that the Matawa First Nations truly benefit from the Ring of Fire development.

This regional framework agreement is an absolutely vital step in a historic community-based negotiation process. It really does ensure that First Nations and Ontario

will work together to advance the Ring of Fire opportunities. The agreement lays out the framework for regional, long-term environmental, enhanced participation in the environmental assessment process, resource revenue-sharing—a number of important factors.

A tremendous day, a great opportunity—we are looking forward to moving forward with the Ring of Fire.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Thank you to the minister for the update. This collaborative approach is truly impressive, and it is this type of collaborative approach that makes our mining sector a Canadian leader in exploration and development—responsible and sustainable exploration. The minister stated that this framework agreement was just one of many ways we are moving forward on the Ring of Fire.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, how is our government moving forward on this nationally significant project?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thank you again for the question. I very much appreciate the description that this is a nationally significant project, because that's exactly what this multi-generational project is. To make sure that everybody in the House knows and everyone else knows: We are leading the creation of a development corporation to move the infrastructure process forward.

We have often said—the Premier has said—we're moving on a parallel path. The First Nations negotiation process was absolutely vital, and we made a great step forward last week, but certainly we've begun real discussions with several of the key partners as we move forward with this important process. We have retained Deloitte, an experienced company related to governance issues, and we are very keen to continue to move forward on that aspect of the project as well.

What I want to do today, though, is once again call on the federal government to partner with us, with our development corporation, to develop vital infrastructure for this region. They've invested in many other nationally significant projects in Newfoundland, British Columbia and Alberta—

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

POWER PLANTS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, the government House leader admitted that Peter Faist worked for the Ontario Liberal caucus at one point and for the Ontario Liberal Party, under your leadership, until Sunday.

Given the severity of the OPP allegations involving Mr. Faist during the time he worked for her party and surrounding the deletion of emails and wiping hard drives in the Premier's office, can the Premier, as Liberal leader, tell this House if Mr. Faist had undergone a security clearance before he accessed sensitive files either for her party or for the Premier's office?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I just want to repeat for the member opposite that we learned about the allega-

tions on Thursday about the former chief of staff of the former Premier. The individual about whom she is speaking was not the subject of these allegations. Following the revelations about the connections, an internal investigation was conducted, and it was determined, as I have said, that this particular company did some work previously for the caucus office under the former Premier. That ended in January 2013.

There was some service provided by the company to the party office until Sunday. Having determined that this person still was doing some work, we terminated that service on Sunday. As I said, we made that decision as soon as we determined that he was providing services.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: This is a reasonable question that Ontarians and Liberal Party members would want to know. We know that Mr. Faist has refused to speak with the OPP over the \$1.1-billion gas plant scandal; we know we're having a very difficult time reaching him to come into the justice committee. We'll deal with a Speaker's warrant if the time comes.

Given the nature of this scandal and the OPP revelations and given Mr. Faist's alleged role as an employee of the Liberal Party of Ontario, I ask you again: As leader of the Liberal Party who had this individual under your employment up until Sunday, did he or did he not undergo a security clearance to deal with these sensitive files either through the Legislative Assembly or through your party?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, Mr. Speaker, as I have said, this was work that was done for the caucus office under the former Premier. The allegations that came to light on Thursday were allegations against the former Premier's former chief of staff.

I would say this to the member opposite: The committee, whose scope we opened up—the process that we initiated in order to get information into the public realm—will continue to do its work. I know that the committee will continue to call people to speak to it, and that is as it should be. When I came into this office, that is exactly what I said should happen. So we're going to let that process unfold, and we'll leave it to the committee to call the people whom they choose to call.

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again to the Premier: Can the Premier tell Ontarians if she discussed the gas plant cover-up with her cabinet secretary and what the secretary told her?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would want the member to withdraw that comment.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I will withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Carry on.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Can the Premier tell Ontarians if she discussed the gas plant matter and records with her cabinet secretary and what the secretary told her?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The member opposite knows full well that I have been before the committee

twice. I have answered all the questions about what I know about this matter. I have repeated it over and over again. He can check Hansard; he can look at the records from the committee. I have been very clear about my involvement, which really was very limited.

What is critical is that he understand and that the people of Ontario understand that I have taken responsibility. I have said that there were decisions made that should have been different. I have said that there were processes that needed to be changed, and we have changed those processes. We have put new rules in place about document retention. We have trained all of our staff. We have, working with the Minister of Energy, put new rules in place about siting energy infrastructure. Those are the actions that we have taken in addition to opening up the process around these questions.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: There are a lot of words there, but no answer.

Does the Premier expect Ontarians to believe that the head of the Ontario public service, a gentleman who told police that he was uncomfortable with the goings-on in the Liberal Premier's office, never once talked to the Premier about the destruction of emails that happened during February and March 2013?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, the member opposite is talking about actions that took place before I was the Premier. As soon as I became the Premier, we worked to open up the process and change the rules. The fact is that the allegations that have come forward in the last few days have been about the former Premier's office and the former Premier's chief of staff.

1110

Indeed, I have had many conversations with the secretary of cabinet about how to change the rules and make sure that the document retention rules and the training were put in place. We have had conversations with the privacy commissioner in order to put the right framework in place. That's what we have done, and we will continue to co-operate with whoever has more questions of us, Mr. Speaker.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Ma question est pour le ministre du Travail, l'honorable Kevin Flynn. Before posing the question, I'd also just like to thank the Premier for the advanced manufacturing announced in my own riding of Etobicoke North just an hour ago.

Speaker, the inaugural question to our new Minister of Labour: It has been said that how a society deals with its youth will determine its prosperity. Of course, our investments include things like full-day kindergarten all the way up to world-class schooling, something that's valued by my own residents in Etobicoke North.

But for many young folks, it's still a difficult challenge for them to acquire positions and placements in internships. Our Youth Employment Fund has, in fact, helped 9,800 young people find meaningful employment,

which is, of course, commendable. Internships: There are still a lot of issues associated with that.

My question is, what are we doing to ensure that young people in my community who start a new job will be paid for the work they do?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the fine member from Etobicoke North for that very timely question. We all know that building a strong workforce is also about building safe workplaces and fair workplaces.

In Ontario, the rules on internships are very, very clear. It doesn't matter what your job title is or what your position is; if you perform work for someone, you're covered by the Employment Standards Act, and you deserve to be paid the minimum wage. There's a narrow exemption for co-op students, for trainees and for the self-employed.

The ministry has been extremely active on this issue to try to get the word out to others. We have reached out to post-secondary institutions, employers and job sites to make sure there is no confusion. We've also updated our Web page and done a lot of work on social media to make sure that everybody in Ontario understands the rules on internships.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Minister Flynn, for your first answer as our newly minted Minister of Labour. I know that the labour ministry will be under good stewardship under your watch.

I appreciate, first of all, your outlining the strong rules for internships here in Ontario. My own constituents value this, as we're reaching out to young people, businesses and institutions. But I still hear from folks in my own riding that although the Ministry of Labour is there to help them, sometimes they have a challenge to reach out to them.

We've also seen, as you know very well, issues within the publication industry and the press with regard to unpaid internships.

So my question is, Minister, how is the ministry exercising oversight and making sure that these youth are protected?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Once again, I'd like to thank the fine member from Etobicoke North for the thoughtful question. I can assure the member that the government is working very hard to ensure that our youths' rights are protected.

We are the very first government to conduct proactive inspections, and while they're out in the field, the enforcement officers specifically ask about internships.

We have invested an additional \$3 million per year for this proactive enforcement. We're making sure that more businesses are inspected and more workers' rights are protected.

This spring, we'll be conducting a blitz that's going to look directly at this issue. Any concerns regarding arrangements can be referred to the Ministry of Labour's hotline: 1-800-531-5551. Confidential help is available in 23 languages. We will review any and all complaints to enforce these rules.

Speaker, we are working very hard to ensure that Ontario's youth have a solid and a very safe start to their work life.

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Rob Leone: My question is for the Premier. Premier, you seem to have your dates a little crossed up, so I want to lay this out for you. You met with the leader of the official opposition on January 28, 2013, and asked him to stop pursuing the truth about the \$1.1-billion gas plant scandal. Then, on February 7, you wrote to the Auditor General to ask him to expand the probe on the gas plant scandal to include the Oakville power plant. But between those times, the OPP says Peter Faist was in the Premier's office, purging documents off computers.

How can you be responsible for taking meetings on the gas plant scandal and asking the Auditor General to further probe the gas plant scandal but be completely removed from the deputy chief of staff's IT-savvy boyfriend destroying files on the gas plant scandal? Premier, you're ministerially responsible for that office. Why don't you explain yourself?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just say this: I came into this office knowing that there was a need for an opening up of the process around the relocation of the gas plants. I knew that. It was discussed during the leadership race. We talked about it, and we knew there was going to need to be a different process whereby information could be brought to the public.

I absolutely came into this office and wanted to do everything that I could to make sure there was the opportunity for the members of the opposition, but for the public also, more importantly, to have the information that was needed.

We opened up the process. I said I was going to do that, and that's what we have done.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rob Leone: Premier, the best defence is a good offence, but your house of cards falls to pieces when you can no longer muzzle the people around you. You tried to muzzle the member for Nipissing after you redacted the wrong documents in the estimates committee. You're trying to muzzle the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Nepean-Carleton, to change the channel on your \$1.1-billion gas plant scandal.

The problem is, Premier, that no one takes you seriously. You can't even muzzle your own government bureaucrats and prevent them from leaking out your crass political spending plans.

How can you call yourself an open, honest and transparent government when you refuse to answer questions and can't go a day without dragging honourable members of this Legislature through the mud? Premier, it doesn't get much lower than that. You should apologize to the people of Ontario for your smear campaign.

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I will debate issues that have a basis in truth, that are honest and that have evidence to support them. I will debate those any day, which is why I said, when I came into this office, that it was very important to me that we open up the process and we provide any answers to questions that were put forward, and that we broaden the scope of the committee so that those answers could be brought forward.

In terms of our budget, I'm happy to talk with the member opposite about our plan for the budget. I'm happy to talk about how important I believe it is that we invest in the people of this province and not cut their programs, not cut their health care, not cut their education and not undermine labour in this province. I'll debate that with you any day.

Interjections.

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

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Premier. People throughout the OPS and senior Liberal ranks told the police that they knew that computers in the Premier's office had been tampered with, but the Premier claims that she had no idea. When did she first learn that computers in the Premier's office had been wiped and emails deleted?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: There were allegations that came forward on Thursday about the former Premier's chief of staff—the former Premier's chief of staff, Mr. Speaker. The former Premier's chief of staff never worked for me. He was never in my office. He was never part of my staff.

Let me just repeat: The allegations that came forward on Thursday were about the former Premier's chief of staff. That person has never worked for me and was never in my office.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Let me clarify some dates. The OPP court document says that they “believe David Livingston committed the offence of breach of trust by allowing ... Peter Faist to ... access 24 computers in the Premier's office between the 6th of February and the 20th of March, 2013.”

Did Peter Faist erase computers while the Premier was in office?

1120

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, let me just be clear: The allegations are about the former Premier's chief of staff. The other individual who the member opposite has named is someone who did provide service to the Liberal caucus office up until January 2013. I became the Premier in this office on February 11. He no longer was providing services to the Liberal caucus.

That individual was providing some services to the Liberal Party when these allegations against the former Premier's chief of staff came to light. We did an internal investigation, determined that this person was still

providing some services to the Liberal Party—not in my office, but to the Liberal Party—and we terminated those services.

TOURISM

Mr. Steven Del Duca: My question today is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. According to Tourism Toronto, last year we welcomed the largest number of overseas visitors on record. This is great news for Toronto, and I can certainly see why tourists would want to visit the entire region. There are many attractions to enjoy, including the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Royal Ontario Museum, and Ripley's brand new aquarium, which opened this fall with tremendous success.

As the member from Vaughan, I'm also very proud to have wonderful attractions in my community, like Legoland, the McMichael art gallery and Canada's Wonderland, right within driving distance of Toronto.

Speaker, can the minister please inform the House regarding how we are working as a government to stimulate even more investment for Ontario's tourism industry?

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you for the question. The weather is warmer; the daylight is longer. I'm very pleased to rise today to talk about tourism.

Our government understands the important role that the tourism sector plays in building a strong economy and creating jobs. As a matter of fact, it creates hundreds of thousands of jobs and generates billions of dollars for our economy. Our tourism attractions stimulate local economies and help make Ontario a premier tourism destination.

This is why my ministry supports investment projects by the private sector throughout the planning and development phases. The member is right: We invested in the new Ripley's Aquarium of Canada in Toronto, which will attract an estimated two million visitors in its first year of operations. That's great for Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Steven Del Duca: I thank the minister for his response and for the outstanding response that he's doing for the people of Ontario.

As he mentioned, the tourism sector is a key component of Toronto's cultural and recreational fabric, but it's also responsible for generating jobs and revenue for the province. The tourism sector generates billions of dollars for Ontario's economy and supports over 300,000 jobs. It was also, and importantly, the single largest employer of young people in the province. Supporting tourism has truly helped to raise the profile of Ontario as a world-class destination, making it a great place for international visitors to invest.

Speaker, can the minister please update the House regarding what actions are being taken to ensure that tourism remains an essential part of Ontario's economy?

Hon. Michael Chan: Definitely, tourism is an essential part of the province's economic development and investment attraction strategy. My ministry continues to

implement our tourism investment strategy, launched in November 2012, which aims to raise the profile of Ontario as a place to invest.

Here are some examples of the projects that we are working to support: the Fort Erie Canadian Motor Speedway, which recently broke ground; Skyline Developments' Georgian Valley project; and Triple Properties' proposed Durham Live! project in Pickering.

In addition to our own investment attraction efforts, my ministry is also working closely with the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment to leverage their significant investment attraction efforts as well.

POWER PLANTS

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is also for the Premier. Premier, when the province's top bureaucrat, Peter Wallace, was before the justice committee last June, he gave testimony that, in hindsight, is quite shocking.

To paraphrase Mr. Wallace, he said that in the midst of a scandal that paralyzed your government—with the Minister of Energy facing contempt charges, with the former Premier having been chased from office and after years of questions about missing emails from the Office of the Premier—then, as the incoming Premier, you apparently asked no questions about the retention of email records, and neither did any of your staff. Mr. Wallace testified that conversations about document destruction in the Premier's office would take place on a political to political level. So tell us, Premier, why did you and your staff fail to ask routine questions of the outgoing staff? Is it because you already knew the answer and you just wanted to appear to be ignorant when the police came knocking?

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I have said, I knew when I came into this office that we needed to change the process around the relocation of the gas plants. I was aware of that. It was part of my platform when I came in as the Premier, Mr. Speaker. And so in those early days what I was working on was how we were going to open up the process, how we were going to make sure that all of the questions that the opposition and that the public wanted answers to would be answered. That's the work that we did in those early days. That's why the process got opened up. That's why there's as much information as there is in the public realm. I am glad that we have had the opportunity to provide the opportunity for the committee to do its work. It continues to do its work, and that's as it should be.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Back to the Premier: Premier, this comes down to your credibility, and your claims of ignorance are not believable. We know from sworn

testimony from the head of the public service that your staff made no inquiries about email records that were the subject of substantial interest in this Legislature and elsewhere. What we don't know is what conversations took place between political staff in the outgoing Premier's office and your office about the work Peter Faist performed on behalf of the Ontario Liberal Party. You're implying here today that your staff is fundamentally incompetent and that some conspiracy of silence exists in your office, where no one asks the inconvenient question. What is your defence? Enough is enough. Is it not finally time to let the people of Ontario pass judgment on your sorry record?

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, it seems to me that for the last year there have been many difficult questions that have been asked and answered. We have shied away from none of those. We have answered the questions, we have provided documentation and, most importantly, we have acknowledged that there needed to be changes. We have changed the rules and the protocols around retention of information. We have changed the rules and the structures around locating gas plants and energy infrastructure. We have acknowledged that communities need to be more involved and they need to have more buy-in, and that is what is happening. I came into this office understanding that there needed to be changes. We have moved ahead and we have made those changes.

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Premier. Has the Premier or any member of her caucus or staff been investigated by the OPP?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know that the member opposite understands that there's an OPP investigation going on. We need to let that unfold. I think what is really critical is that we talk about how we make sure that we have the right rules in place, that we have had the right process. I would suggest that I came into this office and I knew that we needed to open up the committee process so that there could be a more complete discussion of the issues, which is why there have been hundreds of thousands of documents. Dozens of people have come forward to the committee and answered questions, including myself and the former Premier. The committee continues to do its work. The OPP is doing its investigation, and the committee is continuing to ask questions and to provide information for the public. That's as it should be.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Well, Mr. Speaker, my question was whether anyone has been investigated, has anyone been interviewed. I didn't really hear an answer to that. I heard a lot of spinning. We are learning from former staff that they're refusing to be interviewed by the OPP.

1130

Will the Premier state now that she believes that the Liberals, both past staff and present staff, should be offering their full co-operation to the OPP as they conduct their investigation?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, why will the opposition not deal with facts? The facts were outlined in a voluminous document that was released by the courts last week. If he wants to know the names of some of the individuals that were interviewed in there, I believe the member from Nipissing was interviewed by the police and the member from Cambridge was interviewed by the police.

The fact of the matter is, what this document concluded is that there were serious allegations against one individual: the former chief of staff of the Premier. This document asks for permission to get a warrant to continue the investigation to see if there is any basis for those allegations. I would think it would be prudent for all members of this Legislature to allow the OPP to do their work and to deal with the facts as outlined in this court document.

ÉDUCATION POSTSECONDAIRE

M. Bob Delaney: Ma question est pour la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones. Cela fait déjà quelques semaines que l'Université de Guelph a annoncé la fermeture de son Campus d'Alfred. Le ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités nous a informé ensuite que le Collège Boréal et La Cité ont signé une entente de principe pour collaborer ensemble afin de maintenir l'enseignement agricole en français dans la région.

Nous sommes fiers que notre gouvernement a réussi à trouver une solution aussi rapidement. La ministre peut-elle éclairer la Chambre sur ce que signifie cette entente de principe pour la communauté francophone?

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Samedi dernier, j'étais à Rockland pour le gala de la francophonie de Prescott-Russell, et tous les gens là-bas voulaient venir me parler pour remercier notre gouvernement, et surtout remercier le député de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell pour le travail extraordinaire qu'il a fait pour garder l'institution francophone d'Alfred ouverte.

Alfred c'est le premier collège d'expression française en Ontario, et les participants à cet événement voulaient nous dire merci que maintenant le collège d'Alfred va demeurer un collège francophone géré par des francophones.

Présentement, il y a un comité qui se penche sur—un comité de transition, qui est formé du Collège Boréal, de La Cité, du ministère et de l'Union des cultivateurs, qui va mettre en place un processus pour justement assurer la pérennité du collège.

Le Président (L'hon. Dave Levac): Question supplémentaire?

M. Bob Delaney: Merci madame la Ministre. Je vois l'importance de l'éducation postsecondaire dans la création d'une identité forte pour la communauté franco-

phone de l'Ontario. Je rencontre moi-même tant de jeunes dans ma circonscription qui désirent continuer leur éducation en français, et je suis fier de leur parler de notre plan d'action pour améliorer l'accès à l'éducation en français dans le Centre-Sud-Ouest.

De plus, je sais que plusieurs de nos institutions postsecondaires franco-ontariennes ont un autre outil à leur disposition en demandant une désignation sous la Loi sur les services en français pour assurer une pérennité des cours offerts en langue française.

La ministre peut-elle informer la Chambre sur le statut des demandes de désignation des institutions postsecondaires?

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Merci pour cette question importante. Oui, on est toujours fier de dire que nos jeunes francophones peuvent étudier à partir du jardin et aller jusqu'à la fin de l'université en français. Alors, il y a des demandes de désignation. On sait que La Cité collégiale, le Collège Boréal et l'Université de Hearst sont toutes des institutions francophones désignées, et on est en train d'étudier les demandes pour l'Université d'Ottawa et l'Université Laurentienne. Mais le collège d'Alfred veut aussi avoir la désignation pour assurer sa pérennité, parce qu'on sait que sous les deux gouvernements précédents, néo-démocrate et conservateur, le collège d'Alfred a été menacé à plusieurs reprises de fermer. Alors ils veulent, avec la désignation, assurer leur pérennité. Encore une fois, merci à mon collègue, Grant Crack, pour le travail extraordinaire qu'il a fait dans ce dossier.

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Premier. Premier, once again you've been caught telling a story that just doesn't add up, and Ontarians are seeing right through it. You told us Peter Faist wasn't in your office, but you and your Liberal Party had a contract with him until he became politically inconvenient.

More than 80 witnesses, many of them Liberals, including you, have come before the gas plant hearings, but it took the threat of jail doors slamming for Lauren Ramey to cop to what was really going on in the Premier's office. Now you're using a lawyer to make arguments that you can't make for yourself because you've lost the moral authority to lead, and no one believes you.

Premier, you continue to talk about these safe hands, but according to the OPP, the only Liberal safe hands are those in handcuffs.

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I will just repeat what I have already said a couple of times today. The individual that the member opposite is talking about is someone who worked and did some work for the caucus office before I was the Premier, up until January 2013, and continued to do some work with the Liberal Party. That work was terminated on Sunday. That's the reality.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on the motion for allocation of time on Bill 122, An Act respecting collective bargaining in Ontario's school system.

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

The division bells rang from 1137 to 1142.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Would all members take their seats, please. Thank you.

Mr. Milloy has moved government notice of motion number 43. All those in favour, rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milloy, John
Balkissoon, Bas	Gerretsen, John	Moridi, Reza
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gravelle, Michael	Murray, Glen R.
Bradley, James J.	Hoskins, Eric	Naqvi, Yasir
Cansfield, Donna H.	Hunter, Mitzie	Piruzza, Teresa
Chan, Michael	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Chiarelli, Bob	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Colle, Mike	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy	Sousa, Charles
Damerla, Dipika	Mangat, Amrit	Takhar, Harinder S.
Del Duca, Steven	Matthews, Deborah	Wong, Soo
Delaney, Bob	Mauro, Bill	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dhillon, Vic	McMeekin, Ted	Zimmer, David
Dickson, Joe	McNeely, Phil	
Duguid, Brad	Meilleur, Madeleine	

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hudak, Tim	Munro, Julia
Bailey, Robert	Jackson, Rod	Nicholls, Rick
Barrett, Toby	Jones, Sylvia	O'Toole, John
Chudleigh, Ted	Leone, Rob	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Clark, Steve	MacLaren, Jack	Pettapiece, Randy
Dunlop, Garfield	MacLeod, Lisa	Scott, Laurie
Elliott, Christine	Martow, Gila	Smith, Todd
Fedeli, Victor	McDonell, Jim	Thompson, Lisa M.
Hardeman, Ernie	McKenna, Jane	Walker, Bill
Harris, Michael	McNaughton, Monte	Wilson, Jim
Hillier, Randy	Miller, Norm	Yakabuski, John
Holyday, Douglas C.	Milligan, Rob E.	Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 43; the nays are 36.

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

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Finance on a point of order.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Yes, Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. On April Fool's Day, I'm hoping the opposition will accept a pay freeze by the following:

I seek unanimous consent that the question on the motion of second reading of Bill 177, An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly Act, be immediately put without further debate or amendment; and

That the bill be ordered for third reading; and

That the order for third reading of Bill 177 be immediately called; and

That the question on the motion for third reading of the bill be put without debate or amendment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Finance is seeking unanimous consent that the question on the motion—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm getting through this before you say that.

The Minister of Finance is seeking unanimous consent that the question on the motion of second reading of Bill 177, An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly Act, be immediately put without further debate or amendment; and

That the bill be ordered for third reading; and

That the order for third reading of Bill 177 be immediately called; and

That the question on the motion for third reading of the bill be put without debate or amendment.

Do we agree? I heard a no.

The member for Simcoe–Grey on a point of order.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I seek unanimous consent that the sponsorship of Bill 5, An Act to freeze compensation for two years in the public sector, be transferred to the member for Nipissing, so that we all freeze our pay across the public sector.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Simcoe–Grey is seeking unanimous consent that the sponsorship of Bill 5, An Act to freeze compensation for two years—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is now warned.

The member from Simcoe–Grey is seeking unanimous consent for the sponsorship of Bill 5, An Act to freeze compensation for two years in the public sector, be transferred to the member for Nipissing.

Do we agree? I heard a no.

There are no deferred votes.

This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1148 to 1500.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Introduction of guests? Introduction of guests?

I'm going to be patient here, because I think I see a dialogue going on for the introduction of guests who have not arrived yet.

I'll leave introduction of guests for a point of order from the member for Prince Edward–Hastings.

Mr. Todd Smith: Tonight, there's a very important hockey game here in the city of Toronto. The Toronto Maple Leafs are up against the Calgary Flames, their playoff hopes hanging by a thread. I would just like all of us here in the Legislature to wish them the best of luck tonight against the Flames.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's not a point of order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): To avoid any kind of escalation of high emotions, as there are maybe different types of fans here in the building, I'll just indicate to the member that it's not a statement either.

The Minister of the Environment on a point of order.

Hon. James J. Bradley: The member for Nipissing and I will be watching very carefully this evening, Mr. Speaker, as the Niagara IceDogs face the North Bay Battalion. I would like to make a prediction that the Niagara IceDogs will be winning, and I certainly wish them the very best.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I wonder if the member for Nipissing wants some water.

Before I finish, I would like to tell the member that it's not a statement, and it's also not a point of order.

I understand that the member from Nipissing has a point of order as well.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Trust me, Speaker, when I say this is a point of order: I'm still choking over the minister's statement about the Niagara something-or-other dogs down there.

North Bay has come from behind. It's a 3-3 tie. We're going to clean those dogs tonight.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You know what? I blame myself for this. The only reason I was delaying a little bit was that I got the impression there was somebody coming into the place who was going to be introduced. I don't think I see that.

Hon. John Gerretsen: Point of order, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm still standing. I just thought I'd let the minister without portfolio know that.

We are almost prepared to move into members' statements, and I will be as generous as I possibly can with the minister without portfolio on a point of order.

Hon. John Gerretsen: We have heard a lot about the other junior A teams, but actually the game of the night will take place in Kingston at the K-Rock Centre, when the Kingston Frontenacs will be meeting the Peterborough Petes. We in Kingston know that Kingston will be successful in the seventh game tonight.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thought you were going to say something about the Jerseyville Sweethearts or something that effect—the little five-year-olds are playing.

It's time for members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CURLING

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm pleased to have the opportunity today to congratulate four guys from Central Huron Secondary School in my riding on their victory in

the OFSAA, Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations, boys' curling gold medal game a couple of weeks ago.

Sault Ste. Marie has Team Jacobs, Winnipeg has Team Jones, and now Clinton celebrates Team Doig. Skip Ethan Doig, vice Adam Vincent, second Sam Steep and lead Alex Vincent were victorious in a close and exciting game against Kemptville's St. Michael Catholic high school. The game was very tight, and Team Doig was able to pull off a dramatic come-from-behind victory.

I also want to congratulate all the teams from the secondary schools across the province that won the opportunity to participate in OFSAA this year. No matter what your season turned out to be, you have found a sport that will continue to enrich your lives for years to come.

Curling is how many people in my riding pass the winter months, but it's so much more than that. It shows us the fun of friendly competition, but it also teaches teamwork, sportsmanship and good, old-fashioned community spirit.

I would be remiss if I didn't share with this assembly that the cost of electricity has gotten out of control at the hands of this Liberal government. It threatens the very rinks that are homes to champions. They deserve better, as does all of Ontario.

SIKH HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: It's with great pride that I rise to announce today being the first day of Sikh Heritage Month in Ontario. It's the first legislation of its kind across Canada. It's a very happy day for Sikhs across the province, as April is already a month where Sikhs celebrate Khalsa Day and the formalization of the Sikh faith. Sikhs have been in Canada for hundreds and hundreds of years. In fact, as early as the late 1800s, a Sikh regiment paraded in the CNE, one of the first exhibitions held in Toronto. In addition, there are Toronto Star articles indicating a Dr. Sundar Singh, who lived in Toronto and was an advocate for social rights as early as 1911.

Sikhs have been a fabric of this community, of this province, contributing in economics, in science, in the medical field, in the business field as well as the political arena, and will continue to do so. One of our hopes is that, through information and awareness, we can replace some of the fear and ignorance of all faiths with understanding and acceptance, creating a climate where people can feel free to express themselves, express their spirituality and their diversity, and create a society here in Toronto and Ontario where all faiths are accepted, people are accepted for who they are, and diversity is something that we celebrate.

I'm very proud that Ontario is the first province in Canada to have created and enacted Sikh Heritage Month.

SIKH HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Bob Delaney: The Sikh Heritage Month Act, 2013, declared April as Sikh Heritage Month in Ontario.

It's an opportunity to remember, celebrate and to educate future generations about Sikh Canadians and the important role that they play in all of our communities across the province of Ontario.

April is important to the Sikh community. Sikh Canadians across Ontario prepare to celebrate Vaisakhi, marking the creation of Khalsa and the Sikh articles of faith. Vaisakhi is also known as Khalsa Day. Everyone can participate in Khalsa Day celebrations by walking alongside the many thousands of members of the Sikh community in the procession route.

One of the main principles of Sikhism is the value of volunteering, charity work and giving back to the community. One sees the generosity of the Sikh community all over Mississauga, from hospital fundraisers to food bank support to blood donor clinics. The Sikh community has been prominent in supporting our local needs in our community and in community initiatives. An emphasis on education and awareness ensures that Sikhs work to enhance our vibrant, diverse and multicultural Ontario.

I am looking forward to continuing to participate in the many events surrounding Sikh Heritage Month in this, the year 2014.

NUISANCE BEARS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: The municipality of Callander is concerned about the arbitrary limits that the Minister of Natural Resources placed on his spring bear hunt pilot project, announced last fall. The nuisance bear problem is well known across northern Ontario and rural Ontario and has been an issue for years as the government sat idly by, failing to act.

Now the government has adopted the stance that nuisance bears only affect the five major urban centres in the north, thus allowing spring bear hunt privileges to residents in the wildlife management units surrounding those centres. The aim, it would appear, is to allow the minister to say one thing about the bear hunt to northerners while saying another to those in the south.

The municipality of Callander is excluded from the spring bear hunt area, and I can tell you, as I live in Corbeil next door, that nuisance bears are an issue there too. Council adopted a motion that "requests that the Ministry of Natural Resources include wildlife management unit 47" in the minister's spring bear hunt experiment. I concur with this, Speaker. Those of us who live in the north and who have had bears in their own backyard in Corbeil know what the solution to the nuisance bear issue is. We just need a government that will do the right thing.

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PARKDALE ACTIVITY-RECREATION CENTRE

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a pleasure to rise today to speak about a wonderful organization in Parkdale—High Park called Parkdale Activity-Recreation Centre. They

started as an idea in 1977 but just celebrated their 35th anniversary of actual incorporation. They are a community hub, a community living room, for those with mental health and addiction issues.

This incredible organization has many, many workers under the able direction of their executive director, Victor Willis, who does exemplary work in the community.

Toby Dancer, who Toby's Law is named after—it had all-party support in this Legislature and has become law—was actually their music director, as well as the music director at our church when I was still in active ministry there, at Emanuel Howard Park. We actually shared some of the clients from PARC, who on Sunday evenings, when PARC would close, would come to our evening service and dinner as well.

It's an amazing organization. I went to their celebration and they had a cake walk where all the members baked cakes and paraded them around PARC, this community hub and living room. There was even a dragon.

It's also, I should say, a place where those with mental health and addiction issues can find work. Many of the PARC members have found work through them, employment through them, and I just want to give a shout out to the phenomenal social workers and others who work throughout PARC, and to their membership as well who work throughout our community.

ISABELLA LEONE

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I rise today to recognize an outstanding, courageous young girl who lives in my constituency of York South—Weston. Isabella Leone is just 5 years old, but has been battling leukemia since 2010. Thankfully, her leukemia has been in remission for over a year, but since being diagnosed, her family, and now her school, have undertaken incredible fundraising and awareness efforts.

Isabella was recognized by the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society as an honoured hero for the 2012 Light the Night event fundraising initiative. As well, Isabella's dad, Scott Leone, has helped fundraise close to \$45,000 for the same organization, with a portion of the transactions from his real estate sales going towards the organization in care of Team Isabella.

This year Immaculate Conception Catholic Elementary School, which Isabella attends in York South—Weston, has kicked off the school's Loonies for Lent fundraiser in support of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, with each student encouraged to donate at least a dollar—a loonie. Immaculate Conception's fundraising drive intends to honour Isabella and another student who battled cancer last year.

The courage of Isabella herself in facing leukemia, and the wonderful leadership and support of her school and family in helping fundraise for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Canada, are to be applauded.

I want to thank Isabella for being a great example to all of us. I want to thank her, her family, her school, everyone involved, everyone who has donated, for helping them build hope in our community.

SERENA RYDER

Ms. Laurie Scott: I rise today to congratulate Serena Ryder on winning two 2014 Juno awards: artist of the year and songwriter of the year.

Raised in the small town of Millbrook, of course in the riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, Serena Ryder's love for music began at an early age. She started singing publicly as a young child and, having received a guitar from her father, began playing the instrument at the age of 13. After attending Peterborough Collegiate and Vocational Institute, Serena went on to record a demo at the age of 18, which helped launch her career. Serena Ryder won her first Juno for best new artist in 2008. Since then, her music has been celebrated from coast to coast.

This weekend, Serena Ryder had a very big presence at the 43rd Annual Juno Awards ceremony in Winnipeg, not only co-hosting and performing, but winning the two awards.

Even though Serena is on the big stage now, clearly her hometown remains close to her heart, mentioning Millbrook during her acceptance speech on Sunday.

Congratulations to Serena Ryder on this achievement. The town of Millbrook could not be more proud of her, and we continue to wish her success with her fantastic career.

HEALING HOPE
FUNDRAISING BRUNCH

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: It is my pleasure to rise and speak in the House today. I had the opportunity to attend a wonderful event in Scarborough this past weekend: the second Healing Hope brunch to raise funds for the Rouge Valley Centenary hospital, a hospital in my riding which serves the majority of the people of Scarborough–Guildwood.

The fundraiser was hosted by Ms. Letna Allen-Rowe, who was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2011. Rouge Valley Centenary provided her with the life-saving treatment she required. In 2013, she launched the Healing Hope brunch and raised \$5,500.

Dr. Naresh Mohan, chief of staff with the Rouge Valley Health System, and Dr. Marietta Zorn, a plastic and reconstructive surgeon with Rouge Valley, addressed a crowd of more than 200 people this past weekend, all of whom were there in support of Ms. Letna, a cancer survivor, and in support of finding more effective cancer treatment methods.

Here in Ontario, diversity is our strength. Ms. Letna is a perfect example of the strong, vibrant, hard-working people in my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood and one of the many people in Ontario who work together to strengthen our province and our communities socially, culturally and economically. Thank you, Ms. Letna, for spreading joy. It is a gift that strengthens us all.

NEWCASTLE FIRE HALL

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm very pleased to have a statement on my riding of Durham today. Just this past week,

they opened a brand new fire hall in the village of Newcastle. The fire hall is a state-of-the-art facility.

The municipality has been wrestling with the whole issue of whether or not to staff it with full-time firefighters or with volunteer firefighters. For over 40 years, the hall has been staffed by volunteers. It's quite controversial, because the discussion in the paper has been that the council had approved about \$400,000 to staff one shift and one truck. But if you went for seven days a week, 24 hours a day, it would be an expensive addition to the budget over a one-year period, so I wish them well.

Gord Weir is the fire chief of the new fire hall in Newcastle. It's going to be called the Alfred Allread Newcastle Fire Station. The opening was on Saturday. It's interesting to note that the acting chief and one of the sergeants made a very good historic recount of the fire hall and its operation over the last 40 years out of a garage that had been modified to suit the purpose.

I want to commend the firefighters, especially the volunteer firefighters, and wish them well. I hope that some of them might be considered for full-time jobs in the future if and when they fund a full-time operation. That's good news from my village of Newcastle.

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

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received a report on intended appointments dated April 1, 2014, from 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.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
SOCIAL POLICY

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to present a report on diluted chemotherapy drugs from the Standing Committee on Social Policy and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Hardeman presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of the recommendations.

Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, this report is the culmination of weeks of hearings and deliberations beginning in April of 2013, after the discovery that 1,212 patients in Ontario and New Brunswick had received diluted doses of two chemotherapy drugs. Key participants in the discovery and subsequent response appeared before the committees in April, May, June, September

and October of 2013. The report contains the committee's finding and makes recommendations to help ensure that this does not happen again.

I want to thank everyone who appeared before the committee for their contributions and commend the members of the committee for their diligence. I ask the assembly to give it full consideration.

With that, I move adjournment of the debate.

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

Debate adjourned.

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MOTIONS

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Hon. James J. Bradley: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the membership composition of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of the Environment is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move that the following change be made to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs: Mrs. Albanese replaces Mr. Flynn; and

That the following change be made to the membership of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts: Ms. Wong replaces Mr. Mauro.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we agree? Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

PARKINSON'S DISEASE

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I rise today to speak to the important contributions of the Parkinson Society Ontario. I'm pleased to be joined by some wonderful members of the Parkinson Society today at Queen's Park. They are all with us here in the east members' gallery.

Degenerative diseases affect tens of thousands of individuals across this country. Families are left struggling to deal with an illness which is neither preventable nor treatable. Without prevention or a cure, Parkinson's robs an individual's freedom of mobility. However, in light of this hardship, we bear witness to incredible fortitude.

Mr. Speaker, 40,000 Ontarians live with this condition every day. They epitomize strength in very difficult times. The government can help to provide the best care

that it can to all of its citizens, but at times we must rely on community groups to bridge that gap. We have a societal duty to ensure that these individuals have the real supports that they need.

One way that the Ministry of Labour, as part of government, is working to bridge that gap is with Bill 21, Leaves to Help Families. This bill is all about compassion and would, if passed, ensure that Ontarians have the one thing they need most when a loved one is seriously ill: time to be there to support them. We hope that this bill, which is in third reading and has been for at least six hours, can come to the House for a vote very soon, so that hard-working families have more options to help and to be there for their loved ones.

In the meantime, I'd like to thank the Parkinson Society Ontario for all that they do to provide support to those who need it most in our communities. They offer 100 support groups, dealing with 8,000 cases a year, to the nearly 40,000 individuals affected by Parkinson's from across this province. Parkinson Society Ontario is the backbone of Parkinson's support in the province, and they are helping to ensure that those individuals need not face the challenges of their condition alone.

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

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'm very pleased to respond to the minister's statement, and would also like to take this opportunity to welcome our guests in the gallery as well today.

This month is Parkinson's Awareness Month, a month when organizations from all around the world draw attention to Parkinson's disease. Parkinson's is a progressive brain disease for which there is no known cure, and it affects over 40,000 Ontarians.

The Parkinson Society seeks to ease the burden of people living with Parkinson's disease. In partnership with their three regional offices in Ontario and almost 100 chapters and support groups across the province, they are dedicated to providing support, education, research and advocacy on behalf of Canadians with Parkinson's.

Their chapters provide information to people with Parkinson's, their family members and their caregivers, as well as health professionals. They provide educational workshops, conferences, seminars, a toll-free national information and referral line, printed resources and supportive services. Across the province, events ranging from Parkinson's tulip sales and breakfasts to educational presentations and conferences are being held to raise awareness about Parkinson's disease.

Part of this awareness campaign involves the recognition that every Parkinson's experience is unique. The symptoms and progression vary from person to person, and living with Parkinson's requires a personal approach, which includes support for all aspects of a person's life. People living with Parkinson's and their caregivers and family members know that when your brain doesn't work properly, every part of your life is impacted. Living with Parkinson's also involves navigating complex health and

community service systems, engaging in difficult negotiations with employers and government agencies to meet financial needs, all the while dealing with a decline in self-sufficiency and adapting to a more prominent role for supportive care.

Parkinson's Awareness Month gives us the chance to look critically at how our current health care system in Ontario treats and supports Ontarians living with Parkinson's. Our current model of health, which is reactive and based on acute episodes of illness and treats each person with multiple health challenges as many different patients, is simply not adequate for the treatment of chronic diseases like Parkinson's. The shortcomings of this model of care will only be exacerbated as our baby boom population ages. Parkinson's is not a standard part of aging, but we know that the incidence does increase with age. More specifically, 85% of people diagnosed with Parkinson's are over 65. That age group will rise dramatically over the next 30 years, from around 11% to over 23%, meaning that we are going to face a significant increase in the number of people living with Parkinson's in the near future.

Given the complexity of this disease and the projected increase in prevalence, it's so important that we shift to a model of health care that is proactive and based on chronic disease management, health promotion and prevention, and recognizes the uniqueness of each patient's needs. This would involve having more personal choice and greater options for home care and community-based care, which would benefit people living with Parkinson's.

Part of this more patient-centred model of care should involve funding for places like, for example, the former Centre for Movement Disorders in Markham, Ontario, which used to provide multidisciplinary support for Parkinson's patients but was forced to close down last August when their funding from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care was cut off. This funding was cut despite strong evidence of the success of the clinic. Patients being treated by the clinic had, on average, their hospital stays reduced by three days, and a 10% reduction in long-term-care admissions compared to other patients in Ontario.

At the moment, Parkinson's wait times to see a neurologist range from one to three years. This is simply unacceptable, as patients need access to treatment and care immediately.

In honour of Parkinson's Awareness Month, I hope that the Minister of Health can take this opportunity to critically evaluate how care and support for Parkinson's patients is currently being delivered and, more importantly, look for ways that it can be improved and how wait times can be reduced.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I, too, would like to welcome all of our guests who have come here in support of Parkinson's Awareness Month.

A few of us have talked about the topic, that Parkinson's is a neurodegenerative disease. Movements that are usually controlled by dopamine, a chemical that carries signals between the nerves and the brain—when those

cells that normally produce dopamine die, the symptoms of Parkinson's appear. The most common symptoms are tremors—people say “shaking”—slowness and stiffness, impaired balance and rigidity of their muscles. Other symptoms can include fatigue, soft speech, problems with handwriting, stooped posture, constipation and sleep disturbances.

A diagnosis of Parkinson's can be very time-consuming. Usually, the patient will start to see a few tremors. They reach out to their family physician. The family physician will eventually transfer them to a neurologist, who will bring the diagnosis through a thorough physical examination and a lot of testing, basically, to make sure that the symptoms that the patient is showing are not due to something else.

Currently, there is no cure for Parkinson's. Once you have the disease—it is a chronic disease that people have to learn to manage, hopefully with help. But the good news is that people can live with the disease for many, many years. Most of the symptoms will be treated with medication. More recently, some people can benefit from some specific surgeries. A lot of therapies can also help manage the symptoms. Physical therapy helps with mobility, flexibility and balance. Occupational therapy will help with the activities of daily living. Speech therapy will help with voice control so that they can speak loud enough to be heard. Exercise helps the muscles and joints and improves the overall health and well-being of people who have Parkinson's disease.

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As has been said, Parkinson's progresses differently in everyone. There are no two the same.

The advocacy priorities for the Parkinson Society Canada are as follows. They want us to ask ourselves: Are we doing enough? What else could we do as MPPs, as members of this Legislature, to help people who have a diagnosis of Parkinson's?

The first thing we could do is to ensure timely access to affordable and effective therapy and diagnosis and help them access the health care system.

As Parkinson's disease progresses, they often will depend on caregivers. Here again, this Legislature could do a whole lot more to make sure that we support the caregivers who are supporting the people with Parkinson's.

Then they ask for genetic fairness protection to protect Canadians affected by the genetic condition including Parkinson's disease from the genetic discrimination that employers and certainly the insurance industry tends to do.

They also want us to support neurodegenerative research so that, by targeted investment, we can make sure that neuroscience continues to improve so that we will find a cure for Parkinson's.

Then, as with any other chronic disease, there's the issue of income. If it's a young person, and it's happening more and more that younger people get Parkinson's, they're often not able to carry on with work—no

work, no income. That becomes a huge barrier to the rest of their health and well-being.

They want neurological diseases to be recognized and addressed.

There is a number of good programs that have been funded by the Parkinson Society. They are advocating right now on behalf of 100,000 Canadians who live with Parkinson's. About half of them live in our province. They have been funding studies that have brought forward some very good ideas for us to move forward with and make the lives of people living with Parkinson's a bit easier, as well as keeping our eyes on the prize, the prize being finding a cure for this disease—the sooner, the better.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): As a strong supporter of the Parkinson Society, I thank all members for their comments. My brother has been diagnosed. I can only tell you that the caregivers and the families deserve a tremendous amount of our respect and love and thanks.

PETITIONS

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

Mr. John O'Toole: This petition is prepared for stroke victims, from Jim McEwen, who is a member of my constituency. It's about post-stroke physiotherapy eligibility.

"Whereas current OHIP legislation and policies prevent Ontario post-stroke patients between the ages of 20 and 64 from receiving additional one-on-one OHIP-funded physiotherapy; and

"Whereas these post-stroke patients deserve to be rehabilitated to their greatest ability possible to maybe return to work and become provincial income taxpayers again and productive citizens; and

"Whereas current OHIP policies prevent Ontarians under age 65 and over the age of 20 from receiving additional OHIP-funded physiotherapy and rehabilitation after their initial stroke treatment; and

"Whereas these OHIP policies are discriminatory in nature, forcing university/college students and other Ontarians to wait until age 65 to receive more OHIP-funded physiotherapy;

"Whereas the lack of post-stroke physiotherapy offered to Ontarians between the ages of 20 and 64 is forcing these people to prematurely cash in their RRSPs and/or sell their houses to raise funds" to pay for their treatment;

"Now therefore we, the undersigned, hereby respectfully petition the Ontario Legislature to introduce and pass amending legislation and new regulations to provide OHIP-funded post-stroke physiotherapy and treatment for all qualified post-stroke patients, thereby eliminating the discriminatory nature of current treatment practices."

I'm pleased to sign this on behalf of Jim McEwen and Joy Smith and others and present it to page Urooj.

RANKED BALLOTING

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas, on June 11, 2013 Toronto city council passed a motion requesting a ranked ballot for municipal elections; and

"Whereas Bill 166 will strengthen local democracy within the city of Toronto;

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

"That members of the Legislative Assembly pass Bill 166, the Toronto Ranked Ballot Elections Act, 2014 which was introduced by Mitzie Hunter, MPP (Scarborough-Guildwood) and passed second reading on March 6, 2014."

I will sign this petition and give it to page Calvin.

AIR QUALITY

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

"Whereas Ontario's Drive Clean Program was implemented only as a temporary measure to reduce high levels of vehicle emissions and smog; and

"Whereas vehicle emissions have declined so significantly from 1998 to 2010 that they are no longer among the major domestic contributors of smog in Ontario; and

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

"Whereas the current government has ignored advances in technology and introduced a new, computerized emissions test that is less reliable, and prone to error; and

"Whereas the Auditor General identified that Drive Clean has had little to no impact on the reduction of emissions in Ontario and that the program's pass rate has exceeded 90% every year since 2004; and

"Whereas the Auditor General's No. 1 recommendation is for the government to 'formally evaluate the extent to which the Drive Clean program continues to be an effective initiative';

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take immediate steps to begin phasing out the Drive Clean program."

I affix my signature in support.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Grant Crack: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas quality care for the 77,000 residents of long-term-care (LTC) homes is a priority for many Ontario families;

"Whereas over the last 10 years 50% of Ontario's hospital-based complex continuing care beds have been closed by the provincial government; and, there has been

a 29.7% increase in the acuity level of LTC residents and 73% of LTC residents in Ontario suffer from some form of Alzheimer's or dementia;

"Whereas the provincial government does not provide adequate funding to ensure care and staffing levels in long-term-care homes keeps pace with residents' increasing acuity and a growing number of residents with complex behaviours such as dementia and Alzheimer's;

"Whereas there is extensive evidence that a care standard can result in increased staff levels, which translates into improved quality of care for residents;

"Whereas for over a decade several Ontario coroner's inquests into nursing deaths have recommended an increase in direct hands-on care for residents and increase in staffing levels;

"Whereas the Ontario Liberal government first promised a legislated care standard for residents in the province's long-term-care homes in 2003 but in 2013 they have yet to make good on their promise;

"Whereas the Long-Term Care Homes Act (2007) empowers the provincial government to create a minimum standard—but falls short of actually creating one;

"Whereas the most detailed and reputable study of minimum care standards recommends 4.1 hours of direct care per day; and

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

"(1) An amendment must be made to the Long-Term Care Homes Act (2007) for a legislated care standard of a minimum four hours per resident each day adjusted for acuity level and case mix;

"(2) The province must increase funding in order for long-term-care homes to achieve a staffing and care standard and tie public funding for homes to the provision of quality care and staffing levels that meet the legislated minimum care standard of four hours;

"(3) To ensure accountability the province must make public reporting of staffing levels at each Ontario LTC home mandatory;

"(4) The province must immediately provide funding for specialized facilities for persons with cognitive impairment who have been assessed as potentially aggressive, and staff them with sufficient numbers of appropriately trained workers;

"(5) The province must stop closing complex continuing care beds and alternative-level-of-care beds to end the downloading of hospital patients with complex medical conditions to long-term-care homes."

I sign this petition and give it to Simon.

CYSTIC FIBROSIS

Mr. Jim Wilson: Madam Speaker, I know this is an issue dear to your heart, as Madi Vanstone goes to school in your riding and lives in my riding.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas cystic fibrosis is a multi-system genetic disease primarily affecting the lungs and digestive system;

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"Whereas one in every 3,600 children born in Canada has cystic fibrosis, making it the most common fatal genetic disease affecting Canadian children and young adults;

"Whereas there is no cure for cystic fibrosis, but the drug Kalydeco is the first medication that has shown success in targeting the underlying genetic cause of cystic fibrosis for patients with the specific G551D mutation;

"Whereas this drug helps improve the function of the defective protein, leading to better lung function, weight gain, and lower sweat chloride levels and access to Kalydeco could lead to a healthier, longer life;

"Whereas Kalydeco has been approved by Health Canada, but the approximately \$300,000 annual cost makes it an unaffordable treatment option for the overwhelming majority of Ontario families;

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

"That the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care take immediate action to expedite listing Kalydeco on the province's drug formulary so this treatment is available to Ontario families."

I want to thank the good folks at the Streetsville Medical Centre for sending this to me.

MINIMUM WAGE

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

"Whereas the Ontario government has raised minimum wage by 50% since 2003 and will increase it to \$11, the highest provincial minimum wage in Canada, on June 1;

"Whereas both families and businesses in Ontario deserve a fair and predictable approach to setting the minimum wage;

"Whereas indexing minimum wage to CPI is supported by business, labour and anti-poverty groups from across Ontario as the best way to achieve that;

"Whereas indexing ensures minimum wage keeps pace with the cost of living, providing fairness for workers and their families and predictability for businesses to plan and stay competitive;

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

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario pass and enact, as soon as possible, Bill 165, Fair Minimum Wage Act, 2014."

I fully support the petition and I will give my petition to Zohaib.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY OFFICE

Mr. Jeff Yurek: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Family Responsibility Office (FRO) is outdated, ineffective and the provincial government needs to conduct a review of the entire system;

“Whereas many families are either paying too much in child support or receiving too little, due to the ineffectiveness of the system;

“Whereas families are forced to become their own caseworkers to investigate information that is required by the Family Responsibility Office before they can enforce action;

“Whereas many of the federal and provincial databases do not link up, causing misinformation which affects the money paid or owed in child support for many families;

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

“We call on the provincial government to strike an all-party supported select committee to conduct a review of the practices of the Family Responsibility Office to improve and streamline the collection of child support in the province of Ontario.”

I support this petition and affix my signature to it.

CYSTIC FIBROSIS

Mr. Todd Smith: It’s a pleasure to be able to present this petition on behalf of many, many residents in Prince Edward–Hastings.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas cystic fibrosis is a multi-system genetic disease primarily affecting the lungs and digestive system;

“Whereas one in every 3,600 children born in Canada has cystic fibrosis, making it the most common fatal genetic disease affecting Canadian children and young adults;

“Whereas there is no cure for cystic fibrosis, but the drug Kalydeco is the first medication that has shown success in targeting the underlying genetic cause of cystic fibrosis;

“Whereas this drug helps improve the function of the defective protein, leading to better lung function, weight gain, and lower sweat chloride levels. For a CF patient with the specific G551D mutation, access to Kalydeco could lead to a healthier, longer life; and

“Whereas Kalydeco has been approved by Health Canada, but the approximately \$300,000 annual cost makes it an unaffordable treatment option for the overwhelming majority of Ontario families;

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

“That the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care take immediate action to expedite listing Kalydeco on the province’s drug formulary so this treatment is available to Ontario families as it is to those in several countries including the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom.”

I agree with this and will send it to the table with page Megan.

AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the University of Guelph’s Kemptville and Alfred campuses are two of Ontario’s outstanding post-secondary agricultural schools; and

“Whereas these campuses have delivered specialized and high-quality programs to generations of students from agricultural communities across eastern Ontario and the future success of the region’s agri-food industry depends on continuing this strong partnership; and

“Whereas regional campuses like those in Kemptville and Alfred ensure the agri-food industry has access to the knowledge, research and innovation that are critical for Ontario to remain competitive in this rapidly changing sector;

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

“That Premier Wynne in her dual capacity as Minister of Agriculture and Food act immediately to reverse the University of Guelph’s short-sighted and unacceptable decision to close its Kemptville and Alfred campuses.”

Thank you. I will be signing this—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Ajax–Pickering.

LCBO OUTLET

Mr. Joe Dickson: I offer this petition in concert with my colleague from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. It is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the LCBO is opening a new location in Lindsay at Kent Street and requesting closure of the town’s original location at Russell Street; and

“Whereas we the residents, with the support of current and past MPPs, councillors, BIA and other local businesses and we, the undersigned, request the province of Ontario to encourage the LCBO to leave our downtown LCBO in place for our residents and a large number of tourists;

“Therefore, we recommend the LCBO reconsider and leave our Russell store open as a pilot project to assist the business areas and maintain jobs in Lindsay.”

I agree with that, Madam Speaker, and I will so sign it and present it to Mira.

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 agree with this petition, affix my name to it and give it to page Calvin.

LCBO OUTLET

Ms. Laurie Scott: I want to thank the member from Ajax–Pickering to read this petition for me, brought by many businesses in Lindsay.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the LCBO is opening a new location in Lindsay at Kent Street and requesting closure of the town’s original location at Russell Street; and

“Whereas we the residents, with the support of current and past MPPs, councillors, BIA and other local businesses and we, the undersigned, request the province of Ontario to encourage the LCBO to leave our downtown LCBO in place for our residents and a large number of tourists;

“Therefore, we recommend the LCBO reconsider and leave our Russell store open as a pilot project to assist the business areas and maintain jobs in Lindsay.”

I’ll hand this over to page Anthony.

DIABETES

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Liberal government implemented cuts to the Ontario health insurance program such that Ontario residents suffering from diabetes saw their annual eligibility for blood sugar test strips reduced to 200 per year, less than one a day; and

“Whereas a blood sugar test strip costs approximately 70 cents; and

“Whereas this latest cut to services to Ontario patients is just another misguided measure to nickel-and-dime Ontarians; and

“Whereas a focus on preventing disease and hospitalization is in the long-term interest of patients, their families and the province;

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

“To immediately reinstate full and unlimited eligibility for blood sugar test strips covered by OHIP for all Ontario residents suffering from diabetes.”

I agree with this and will be passing it off to page Calvin.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The time for petitions has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ENHANCING PATIENT CARE AND PHARMACY SAFETY (STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT) ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT DES LOIS AFIN D’AMÉLIORER LES SOINS AUX MALADES ET LA SÉCURITÉ DES PHARMACIES

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 6, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 117, An Act to amend certain statutes with respect to the regulation of pharmacies and other matters concerning regulated health professions / Projet de loi 117, Loi visant à modifier certaines lois en ce qui concerne la réglementation des pharmacies et d’autres questions relatives aux professions de la santé réglementées.

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

Mrs. Jane McKenna: I’m pleased to return to remark on Bill 117, the Enhancing Patient Care and Pharmacy Safety Act.

As I indicated on March 6, and this is really the fundamental flaw in this proposed legislation, Bill 117 changes some things with the process, but it does not alter what most people would agree is the most important thing. That is creating guidelines around the group purchasing organizations, or GPOs, that gave rise to chemotherapy underdosing incidents. The Minister of Health has endorsed all 12 of the recommendations contained within Dr. Thiessen’s report, but this bill only directly addresses the last of his recommendations.

1550

In that report, Dr. Thiessen pointed out, “It is clear that the contractual elements and specifications surrounding the agreement between the GPO (Medbuy Corp.) and vendor are pivotal to the underdosing incident.” The problem is not public-private arrangements as a mechanism and is more about the shoddy way in which the government has chosen to implement and oversee them. Even many Liberal supporters have to concede that the Ministry of Health has been sorely mismanaged and wounded by terrible PR under the Liberal government. This government outsources without oversight. When things go wrong, as is inevitably the case, they use the independence of the private sector partner to insulate themselves and sidestep responsibility. Then they bring forward a half-measure bill that doesn’t really tackle the thorny issue that was at the heart of the crisis. They need to do better.

In his report, Dr. Thiessen also stated that “the mandate should address similar potential outcomes that might arise more broadly from non-sterile and sterile preparation practices, at any location.” Again, in spite of supporting the findings contained within this report, and despite having expressed high regard for Dr. Thiessen’s professional analysis, the minister has crafted legislation of narrow scope. The legislation in front of us today really only focuses on pharmacies. It addresses the need of standardizing the pharmacy operations, which in practice brings the greatest potential patient benefits and reduces some of the identified medication management risks. These details matter, and they matter a great deal.

Time and again throughout this story and throughout committee hearings, we came to understand and appreciate that failed communications were at the root of most of these problems. They can obviously have very serious side effects, especially when you are dealing in matters of life and death, as was the case here. This is why we entered the debate the way we do: broadly supportive of measures to make the system better but very disappointed in the limited scope of the bill. You don’t need to think too long or too hard to come up with examples of the negative impact that botched communications can have on those who rely on a service or the front-line workers who do their best day in and day out to serve the public.

The government insists that the ballooning health care bureaucracy is necessary, but the public and even many health care workers are unconvinced. Of course, the Ombudsman has had tough and critical words for the non-transparent process that gave rise to the province’s LHINs. That was part of the Liberals’ massive rebranding of every corner of the public service, an exercise that resulted in organizations like eHealth and Ornge—at one time shiny new Liberal brands, since then tarred by waste and scandal. But despite overhauling the province’s health care system stem to stern, despite all those bureaucrats and all those supposedly harmonized operations, some basic details escaped the government’s attention. Bill 117 is an opportunity to correct the government’s lack of oversight.

In view of this, and in view of this bill’s short title, the Enhancing Patient Care and Pharmacy Safety Act, it is regrettable that the government has not included in this bill a measure that would expand the scope of the Ombudsman’s powers of investigation so that he is able to look into complaints around our health care system when appropriate. The recently proposed Accountability Act suggests why this is the case. That bill would expand the Ombudsman’s jurisdiction to include most of the so-called MUSH sector, after years of denying opposition attempts to do the same. But significantly, the one area left out of the equation appears to be health care. That bill proposes a half-measure for the health care sector, some sort of ombudsman mechanism that comes across as a kind of Ombudsman lite; in other words, a PR tool that allows the government to talk about independent oversight, transparency and accountability without having the bother of fully committing to those things.

As we know, the health care sector deals in matters of life and death. It is central to our quality of life and our trust in government. It commands vast sums of money, over 40% of the budget. In light of all of this, I cannot fathom why this government continues to resist true transparency and accountability. These things are not contrary to the goals of our health care system; they are complementary.

I would urge the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to revisit this bill at committee and strengthen it, not only with the fullness of Dr. Thiessen’s recommendations and not only with the perspective and conclusions of the Standing Committee on Social Policy with regard to oversight of pharmaceutical companies, but also to correct an omission and to grant the Ontario Ombudsman the power to make our health care system fully accountable.

Again, in light of how fundamental trust is to the entire health care sector, I’m not sure why the government continues to try and control the flow of information. This is why you hear a strong note of disappointment from speakers on this side of the House when it comes to debating a bill such as this. With all the vast resources and expertise at her disposal, you would hope that the minister would be bringing forward solid, substantial legislation that was a little more ambitious. It is not enough to suggest that the critical details will be dealt with later through regulation—not nearly enough. A major part of aspiring to have the best health care in the world is setting higher standards for transparency and accountability and holding to those standards.

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

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I had a chance to listen to the comments of the member for Burlington. I just want to put on the record that I listened carefully to her speech.

I think with the act in front of us, we are enhancing patient care and pharmacy safety. We’ve adopted 11 of the 12 recommendations put forward by Dr. Thiessen. This bill in front of us today addresses the 12th recommendation. So we’re responding directly to the third party, Dr. Thiessen, who was put forward to review what had happened with regard to the diluted treatment for chemotherapy. It’s pretty straightforward. The bill is a very small bill. We’re trying to implement all the recommendations of Dr. Thiessen.

I’m happy to hear and be able to comment briefly on the comments from the member from Burlington.

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

Mr. John O’Toole: I did listen to the truncated speech by the member from Burlington. It was started on March 6 and just ended today.

A little history on this bill: It’s an eight-page bill. It’s a bill that we support going to committee, as has been mentioned by the member from Burlington, and is in response to a special report issued by Dr. Thiessen with 12 recommendations in it.

I thought one of the most powerful statements she made was that they fail to manage anything they out-

source. She suggested that the failing-to-manage part of it was unintentional, but I believe it's intentional. They just throw it out there like they have with the LHINs and the CCACs and other groups. Today in the House, the social policy committee, under the capable stewardship of the member from Oxford, filed a report dealing with the mess-up with the chemotherapy medication being under-dosed. It's another example of a government that fails to manage. We're seeing that in the House daily here—more recently under the gas plant scandal becoming—it's almost a cover-up, really. But the OPP are investigating it, so I'll let that be as it is.

1600

I commend the member for bringing it to the attention, and some of the points that she made with reference to the underdosing but also to the Thiessen report, which I think members, if they're listening to the debate this afternoon—again, it's not too much. When I look at the final part of the bill, it says that the person who “resigns, or voluntarily relinquishes or restricts his or her privileges”—there's a duty on the hospital—in these cases, mostly it's a hospital—to notify the college of that profession, given that it potentially could be a pharmacist.

I know that our member Mr. Yurek, who is a pharmacist, spoke on this bill back in, I think, October or November 2013.

There's a lot more to be done on this bill, and the comments from the member from Burlington were very appropriate.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments or questions? The member for Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thanks very much for giving me an opportunity to talk on this important bill.

It's really sad when you see the number of people who died here, 1,202, and 40 of them were children. We don't know how many others would have died if it wasn't for the Peterborough hospital's cancer treatment centre. The person who found it—he might have been very timid, but I would say he was diligent. A pharmacy technician picked up on the fact that the bag that he had in front of him was not concentration-specific. The task he had to do that day was prepare medication for a client. He ended up finding out that it was a woman of a certain-sized body. In order to do this, he needed this bag to be concentration-specific. Unfortunately, it was not. Then the whole thing unravelled. We owe this very timid and diligent pharmacy technician in Peterborough a great deal of respect for what he has done. Then he brought it up to the chain of command, and we were able to trace it back.

So here we are again today, talking about Bill 117 that the minister put forward to reassure Ontarians that what happened would never and should never happen again. But there's nothing in this bill that talks about group purchasing organizations. The bill in itself is pretty sound. What we're trying to do is legislate a change in the oversight of the hospital purchasing policy and give some regulatory college—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. The time for comment has ended.

Comments or questions?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'm proud to stand up and add some more comments to the member from Burlington's comments earlier, which were highly intelligent and very straightforward.

Bill 117, the Enhancing Patient Care and Pharmacy Safety Act: I think we really and truly have to look at what's missing in this bill, and that is how GPOs in this province are regulated and controlled—or, should I say, the lack thereof. For instance, GPOs are consistently achieving savings for the hospitals by receiving rebates from companies wanting to sell to hospitals. However, when you look at the financial data that we are able to get from the GPOs, a lot of that money that they say they've saved Ontarians is not in the financial structure of their statements. So we're talking about hundreds of millions of dollars that are unaccounted for. Maybe they are going to the right thing. Maybe they are going to patient education. Maybe they're going to ensure that we can hire the extra nurse. Maybe it's going to ensure that some capital costs are taken care of. However, the people of Ontario don't know exactly where this money is going, how it's collected and who is benefiting from these alleged savings.

I think where the minister missed the mark on this—there are quite a few, which I did talk about in my leadoff speech. However, I do want to take concern that more information has to be researched into where this money from the GPOs is coming from, where it's going and how it's accounted for. People of this province need transparency. We know that this government has failed on transparency. We've seen it day in and day out—especially with the recent gas plant erased email statements from the OPP—that things aren't getting better in this province; they're getting worse. The government has missed the mark on another accountability and transparency part of legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): We'll return to the member for Burlington for two minutes.

Mrs. Jane McKenna: Thank you to the member from Scarborough Southwest, the member from Durham, the member from Niagara Falls and the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London. Again, Speaker, I have been pleased to take part in this debate, and for my two-minute roundup.

As I mentioned at the outset of my remarks, nearly a month ago, last spring I served as part of the Standing Committee on Social Policy, which was given the responsibility of looking into oversight of pharmaceutical companies. As I said then, and again earlier this afternoon, the concern that we spent so much time trying to unravel at the heart of those hearings was something that, sadly, we do not see in Bill 117. This omission is critically important.

I am prepared to support this bill as a piece of generic legislation that strengthens our health care system, but I am disappointed that Bill 117 fails to act where action is needed most urgently, specifically with regard to creating guidelines around group purchasing organizations that were pivotal to the underdosing incident. If Bill 117 was

enacted as it stands today, it would not stop underdosing incidents.

If there is anything that will improve and enhance Ontario's hospital drug supply system and enhance patient safety, as legislators, we should be working tirelessly towards that goal.

The Minister of Health says she is aware of the gravity of this situation, but Bill 117 offers thin proof of that. This government has the benefit of hindsight, and that only heightens its responsibility to act responsibly and to do everything it can to make sure that history does not repeat itself.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Just on a point of privilege.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'd like to clarify my comment in my two-minute—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): It's actually a point of order.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I said that 1,202, including 40 children, died from this. It was that they received a dosage. I apologize for that. Thank you.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It is an honour for me to rise today to speak on behalf of the people I represent in London West. But it is also with sadness, and, yes, anger, that I join this debate on Bill 117, the Enhancing Patient Care and Pharmacy Safety Act, because, as members of this assembly may already be aware, no other community in this province was as directly affected by chemotherapy underdosing as was my community of London, Ontario. No other community in this province has such a personal stake in ensuring that the mistakes that were made never happen again.

Of the 1,200 Ontarians who were treated with diluted chemotherapy drugs, more than half—almost 700 men, women and children—were patients at the London Health Sciences Centre. Tragically, 117 of those London cancer patients died, and the families from my community who lost their loved ones can't help but wonder if lives could have been prolonged if only they had received the right doses of their chemotherapy drugs. That hits home, and it speaks to the very heart of why we need to do everything we can, as legislators, to make sure that the mistakes that happened between February 2012 and March 2013 are never repeated.

Bill 117 is a start to putting the necessary regulatory and legislative protections in place to prevent another chemotherapy drug tragedy. I want to say, on behalf of my caucus, that we support this bill and will be voting to move the legislation through second reading and on to committee.

1610

Essentially, Bill 117 consists of two parts. The first part of the bill expands the authority of the Ontario College of Pharmacists to cover hospital pharmacies and

institutional pharmacies such as in correctional facilities and long-term-care homes—

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Point of order, Speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): A point of order.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm sorry to interrupt, but I do not believe we have a quorum.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Would you check for a quorum, please?

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Trevor Day): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Call in the members.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Trevor Day): A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I go back to the member for London West.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for London West, you have the floor.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Bill 117 is a start to putting the necessary regulatory and legislative protections in place to prevent another chemotherapy drug tragedy. I want to say on behalf of my caucus that we support the bill and will be voting to move the legislation through second reading and on to committee.

Essentially, Bill 117 consists of two parts. The first part of the bill expands the authority of the Ontario College of Pharmacists to cover hospital pharmacies and institutional pharmacies such as in correctional facilities and long-term-care homes, as well as the community pharmacies they currently regulate. The second part of the bill amends the roles and responsibilities of the 27 regulatory bodies established under the Regulated Health Professions Act that govern the practices and professionalism of a broad range of health care providers.

It is the first part of the legislation—the part dealing with the Ontario College of Pharmacists—that offers a legislative response to the chemotherapy drug tragedy. The second part of Bill 117 has nothing to do with chemotherapy drugs. Instead, it makes changes to enable the regulatory health colleges to do a better job of protecting the public from incompetent or unqualified health care providers. While we don't have any problem with these provisions of the bill—better protection for the public is always a good thing—it's clear that the government's decision to introduce this legislation was largely in response to the chemotherapy drug scandal.

It was just about a year ago that Ontarians learned that 1,200 cancer patients at four Ontario hospitals, including the London Health Sciences Centre in my community, had been receiving diluted chemotherapy drugs over a period of about 13 months. Each of these patients received a lower dosage of chemotherapy than their doctors had prescribed, anywhere from 3% to 20% less.

It is due to the diligence and quick action of a couple of pharmacy assistants at Peterborough Regional Health Centre that this underdosing was discovered. These

observant and quick-witted health professionals noticed that something was incorrect with the chemotherapy drugs that they were preparing to use. We have these individuals, who were just doing their jobs when they realized that something wasn't making sense, to thank for putting an end to the chemotherapy underdosing that had been going on for months without anyone noticing.

Ontarians across the province were left to face the devastating consequences of this chemotherapy treatment mistake. In my community, the cancer patients who were affected included 651 adults and 40 children.

A family member of one of those cancer patients, London resident Kristine Allison, contacted my colleague the MPP for London–Fanshawe last April. Kristine's fiancé passed away after receiving diluted chemotherapy drugs at London Health Sciences Centre. As you can imagine, Kristine was shocked and distressed when she learned about the lack of oversight and the absence of any quality assurance for the drugs that patients were receiving.

During the summer before I was elected, I also met with Kristine, along with the MPP from London–Fanshawe and the NDP leader, Andrea Horwath. We assured her that we would do everything possible to prevent another family from going through the situation she was going through. Kristine's story, like many others, is a tragic reminder of the need for greater oversight over our health care sector.

Another London Health Sciences Centre patient, Virginia Offen, has been battling cancer since her diagnosis in 2000. Virginia also received diluted chemotherapy treatments at the London Health Sciences Centre and spoke publicly in the media about the devastation and betrayal she feels because of the government's failure to oversee dosages of chemotherapy drugs. It has made her lose faith in our health care system. I speak for all members of our caucus and, I think, all members of this Legislature in recognizing our collective responsibility to Kristine and to Virginia and to all the others who were affected. That is why, as I have already stated, our caucus will be supporting this bill. We need to put strong measures in place, strong systems oversight, to prevent similar tragedies from occurring in the future.

That being said, however, my New Democrat colleagues and I have some concerns about this bill, which I will speak to in more detail during my comments today.

First of all, the fact that this bill is being introduced at this time is, quite frankly, perplexing. MPPs empowered a committee of the Legislature, the Standing Committee on Social Policy, to conduct an exhaustive, detailed investigation into the diluted chemotherapy drug scandal. The committee met many times, and has heard from dozens of witnesses. It has spent countless hours listening to witnesses and asking pointed questions. The committee researcher worked hard to synthesize the information and prepare a comprehensive report so that members of the committee could develop the most informed and educated recommendations possible.

But we are only learning today what those final recommendations include, because the committee only

just this afternoon released its report and tabled it with MPPs. So the timing of this bill is somewhat puzzling. Waiting until the committee's report was made public before introducing the bill would have ensured that the legislation was informed by as much information as possible. So I'm glad that we will have the committee's recommendations before us when this bill is referred to the next step of the legislative process, but it would have been helpful to have those vital recommendations available from the beginning.

I would also like to draw MPPs' attention to an issue that was highlighted by my colleague the member for Nickel Belt when she spoke to the bill during her leadoff speech. This is the critical fact that the bill does not deal with the structure of group purchasing organizations, or GPOs.

It is the structure of and lack of oversight over GPOs that led to the diluted chemotherapy drugs in the first place. This was pointed out during the presentation to the standing committee by Dr. Jake Thiessen, the highly respected expert who is a University of Waterloo faculty member and was appointed by the government to conduct an independent review of quality assurance within Ontario's cancer drug supply chain. Although Dr. Thiessen's mandate did not include making recommendations about the safe supply of drugs in general, he did include a number of recommendations about group purchasing organizations. As we now know, thanks to the work of Dr. Thiessen, this tragic mistake that affected so many people in this province was not because of mistakes made at Ontario hospitals or cancer treatment centres; it was because of mistakes made during the tendering process by the group purchasing organization.

For clarification purposes: Hospitals often contract out purchasing to GPOs, who put out a tender to get the best price possible for supplies; in this case, chemotherapy drugs. What happened over those months from February 2012 to March 2013 was that the GPO, Medbuy, selected Marchese Hospital Solutions as the supplier of two specific cancer drugs. While the hospital's instructions clearly stated that they wanted to purchase concentration-specific chemotherapy drugs, none of the 11 pharmacists at Medbuy picked up on this fact, with the result that the diluted chemotherapy drugs were given to 1,200 patients across the province, with tragic consequences.

The problem is that Medbuy and other GPOs operate in a grey area and, as such, are not subject to government regulation. If GPOs are making important decisions such as deciding which companies, like Marchese, receive government contracts, New Democrats believe that they must be regulated. In fact, Dr. Thiessen, one of the leading experts in his field, agreed with my colleague the MPP for Nickel Belt that some kind of infrastructure to provide oversight of GPOs was worth considering.

Unfortunately, however, Bill 117 does nothing to deal with the huge gap in regulation related to GPOs. It leaves me and my colleagues in the NDP wondering if this bill is really intended to deal with the most important issue at hand. The fact that this bill introduces more regulation

into an already highly regulated environment but does not look into the structure of a private organization that is tasked with something as fundamental as chemotherapy drug supply is deeply troubling.

1620

While regulating hospital pharmacies and institutional pharmacies is welcome and is something that is already being done in other jurisdictions, I am concerned that the bill is not doing enough to make sure that nothing like this ever happens again. It is our duty to make sure that we are doing everything in our power to protect patients in Ontario from such mistakes in the future.

There is clearly a need for oversight over GPOs, and it is unfortunate that this bill does not take steps to put an oversight mechanism in place. As my colleague the MPP for Nickel Belt previously mentioned, more oversight is always welcome. However, this bill does not address the question of what is needed to prevent a similar fiasco from happening in the future. The lack of a plan for oversight over GPOs may reflect the rushed nature of the introduction of the bill, before the social policy committee had released its final report with recommendations that are grounded in the evidence heard by the committee.

Another concern that I would like to raise during my time today deals with the unclear timeline of implementation of different aspects of this bill. We know that regulation by the Ontario College of Pharmacists will require many hospitals to implement significant changes and upgrades, since hospital pharmacies have never had that level of oversight before. There is no doubt that this will be a lengthy and potentially costly process. These impacts will be felt more significantly by smaller hospitals, which face significant budget constraints. It is important that we have a clear timeline on the process and costs of the accreditation process for hospital pharmacies.

Before closing, I want to briefly address the second part of this bill, which, as I indicated earlier, has very little to do with diluted chemotherapy drugs. The second part of Bill 117 deals with the 27 colleges that regulate health professionals, and it proposes amendments to strengthen the ability of these colleges to protect the public. Although the addition of these amendments has nothing to do with the major issue at hand, my colleagues and I are committed to supporting this legislation, and I welcome the new protections included under Bill 117.

The bill will enhance mandatory reporting from hospitals to colleges about professional misconduct or potential incompetence. I know that this is something that people have been concerned about for some time. Mandatory reporting will help ensure that any changes to privileges made by hospital boards because of concerns about competence or quality of care will be reported back to the college. This obviously will further help to ensure that patients are receiving the best and safest treatment possible.

Another important aspect of the proposed amendments is that the regulatory colleges will be able to share

information with hospitals about any disciplinary actions that they choose to take against a member. My colleagues and I believe that this change is beneficial to patients and will help ensure that the people of Ontario are protected. These changes have been a long time coming and have the full support of our caucus.

In closing, I'm happy to say that my New Democrat colleagues and I will be supporting this bill, as it is an important first step. However, the lack of oversight of group purchasing organizations remains a significant problem, a problem that this bill does not address in any capacity. In fact, the lack of oversight of GPOs is essentially what led to the mistake of diluted chemotherapy drugs being given to cancer patients in this province. I am not confident that this bill will stop a similar fiasco from happening again. It is deeply troubling that people in my community of London and those across the province continue to face similar risks due to lack of oversight. Simply put, it is obvious that more work needs to be done—much more work. I welcome the input that will be provided as this legislation moves forward through the committee process.

It would also have been beneficial if the minister had waited until the social policy committee had finalized its comprehensive report on the diluted chemotherapy drugs before bringing this bill forward. Waiting for the report to be released would have ensured that any legislation brought forward would have been evidence-based and fact-driven.

I look forward to further debate on this bill and hope that the minister will address some of the concerns that I have identified here today.

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

Mr. Grant Crack: I'd like to thank the member from London West for all her comments.

Bill 117 is a result of extensive consultations after what was experienced last year, and we'd like to thank Dr. Thiessen for his recommendations. This piece of legislation directly responds to one of his recommendations, actually: the 12th one.

Part of this legislation is to strengthen patient care and ensure patient safety. What we're going to be doing with this piece of legislation is to give the College of Pharmacists oversight of drug compounding facilities. It will require hospitals to purchase drugs from these accredited facilities.

The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care took swift action when we first discovered what was taking place. I'd like to also, on behalf of government, thank hospital staff and everyone who was involved, for removing the drugs from the shelves. They worked around the clock. They identified and contacted and made arrangements with oncologists to make sure that all the affected patients had been made aware and appropriate action was taken.

The minister, as I said, took swift action, but also responsible action. She also convened a working group with all the organizations who share responsibility on this

issue, and to coordinate a response. This is something that happened that is something that we have to ensure never happens again. That's why, as I mentioned earlier, this piece of legislation is before us. I think it's important that we continue to debate it and, more importantly, get it into committee so that we can improve upon it and take some of the suggestions that have been made and bring it back for third reading to ensure that this never happens again, as I said. But rest assured that we, as a government, will continue to be a leader in cancer care across this country.

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

Mr. Todd Smith: It's a pleasure to join the debate on Bill 117, An Act to amend certain statutes with respect to the regulation of pharmacies and other matters concerning regulated health professions.

I rise to add some comments to the presentation made by the member from London West, who obviously felt the impact of this in her home community. I thought her comments were very well thought out. She actually had a number of questions, during her presentation, of the minister and this government on why the legislation was brought forward, perhaps a little bit too swiftly, before the committee had actually made its recommendations. There are some recommendations in there from Dr. Thiessen's report, and those are good. I would like to point out that the PC caucus is also in support of this legislation going forward to committee and making some changes.

There are many questions about the group purchasing organization. It's interesting how the Minister of Health likes to use this GPO to not fund certain drugs at certain times, and she'll hide behind waiting for this. I believe that the answer to the question that the member from London West asked, and that is, "I don't know why the minister would have brought out this piece of legislation prematurely, when the committee was waiting"—I would assume it probably was to divert attention away from one of the many scandals that this government has been embroiled in, and there are so many. But I believe that's probably one of the reasons why this legislation was brought out maybe a little bit prematurely.

This was a serious issue affecting 1,200 patients at four different hospitals. Thank God for the people in Peterborough who uncovered this, and the good work that they did in Peterborough to bring this to light. There are still many questions that have to be answered, and the member from London West raised a number of them in her presentation, which I thought was very good.

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

Mr. Paul Miller: Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to thank the member from London West for her research and good comments that she brought forward today.

Certainly there are some weak areas of this bill. I've seen a lot over a few years. I've seen bills brought forward when it's johnny-come-lately—they always bring forward after some incident or something happens.

You've got Ornge, you've got eHealth, you've got all these things, but it all points back to the same ministry and the same leadership, which is non-existent, because every time we have a problem in here, it's later than it should have been.

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These people who are affected by this—this is outrageous. Where is the inspection? Where is the ongoing accountability? Where was it? Sure, they can bring this bill forward, but it all boils down to things I've seen in here over the years and in my former municipal life. I have seen bills brought forward on the environment, and what happens? The government never backs it up. The government never enforces it. The government never fines anyone. The government just makes it nice and puts out a nice little package, but they don't follow it up. If you don't enforce your own laws, if you don't go after the people who are committing these mistakes, then they're going to continue to happen.

Every week, it's something new. What's wrong with this picture? The picture is, there is not enough involvement by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. There's not enough of this ministry involved in the local hospitals. They created the LHINs to deflect the trouble from this building onto the municipalities. That's why they did it. Now I've got one that's the head of 221 agencies in my area—one LHIN. It's not doing the job. It's not working. There's no appeal body. There's no one to bring your grievances forward to.

It's absolutely disorganized and, once again, johnny-come-lately.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I will do my best to respond to some of the remarks that have been made. It's interesting, often we're criticized for not moving early enough; now we're criticized for moving too early. I can tell you that this legislation was introduced last October based on the advice of Dr. Thiessen. This was an incident that everyone agrees—everyone agrees—should never have happened. But it did happen, and because we pulled together the right people to understand why it happened, we want to ensure it will never happen again.

So we asked Dr. Thiessen to really give us insight into what needed to be done to ensure that this doesn't happen again. We accept and endorse all of those recommendations, and we're implementing 11 of the 12 recommendations. This legislation responds to the 12th recommendation. So we are in complete alignment with what Dr. Thiessen revealed to us that needed to change.

I can assure the members of this House that we need to get this passed. Let's get it past second reading. Let's get it into committee. I know there are things that some members may want to include in this legislation. That's the work of government. This is not a partisan effort. All of us agree that what happened should not have happened, and we have a duty, collectively, to ensure that it does not happen again. That's exactly what this is.

Let's bring this to committee. Let's roll up our sleeves. Let's get it done. The patients of this province are counting on us to pass this legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for London West has two minutes to respond.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I would like to thank the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, the member from Prince Edward–Hastings, the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek and the Minister of Health for their comments on my remarks.

There were a couple of things said that I think are important and worth repeating. Certainly, the bill does include the recommendations from Dr. Thiessen's report. This is important. We're leveraging the expertise that we engaged to conduct that independent review.

We don't know how the legislation stands in terms of the recommendations from the social policy committee's work, because that report was only tabled less than an hour ago in this Legislature. We haven't had an opportunity to look at those recommendations and see how those recommendations align with the bill and how those recommendations could inform the bill going forward.

Another point I wanted to make—I wanted to thank the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell for acknowledging the work that was done by the hospital staff to immediately remove those drugs and take swift action. As we know from the investigation, the mistakes that occurred were not mistakes of hospital professionals. The mistakes were made in the supply chain process, and the mistakes were made by the GPOs.

But ultimately that is what is our major concern about the legislation: that the bill may only offer half measures in terms of preventing a similar tragedy because it does not address the need for oversight over GPOs. So we look forward to seeing it move to committee so it can be strengthened and improved.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was just giving time, if there was anyone on the government side who might stand to debate, but I guess not.

Bill 117 is what we're debating here this afternoon, which is the Enhancing Patient Care and Pharmacy Safety Act. I'd like to commend my colleagues who have spoken before on this bill, certainly from the Progressive Conservative side: our health critic, Christine Elliott, from Whitby–Oshawa, and also the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London, who is my seatmate here and is actually a pharmacist. It's always kind of handy to have the drug person around to explain the technical aspects of what we're discussing today.

I have a little bit of familiarity with this, being a nurse. I have certainly seen the process of administering drugs and mixing a lot. I can't say that I have been involved in mixing any of the cancer care drugs to a great extent. But you have to be very careful, and I think that's what we're talking about today: taking appropriate measures to strengthen the safety of the province's hospital drug

supply system, thus further enhancing patient care and also patient safety.

The case example used by many of the speakers refers to the front-line workers at the Peterborough Regional Health Centre. They were the ones who discovered the occurrence of underdosing. Peterborough Regional Health Centre is close to Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock—I take in pieces of Peterborough county—and that is one of our regional referral centres for the area. So we're quite proud of the fact that they were quite detailed in understanding where the mixture had come from—a different supplier—and understanding the volumes. I'll get into that a little bit later. I just want to commend those people. It was March 2013 when they discovered this case that came before us where the chemo drugs were not being appropriately given, in the right dilution. It has uncovered all these problems, which is why this bill is before us today.

More than 1,000 cancer patients across the province were receiving the watered-down chemo drugs. They had noticed at the Peterborough Regional Health Centre that the label on the new IV bag from Marchese, the one supplier, wasn't labelled in the same way that the previous solutions had been after they had recently run out of their supply of bags from the previous vendor, supplier, and were switching bags. The difference in labelling caused concern about how they should be administering this drug, since the dosage instructions were unclear on the new bags, and they were now required to refrigerate this drug, when they hadn't had to do that for the previous batch from another supplier. You've always got to keep your thoughts going and say, "Why is this different? Why am I doing this differently now?" Again, I praise those front-line health care workers who discovered this.

The new bags' label did not contain enough information for the pharmacy assistant to actually mix the patient's dose. After calling colleagues and the company for answers, doing her due diligence, they discovered that the drug was diluted and immediately brought it to the attention of authorities.

Most people have been in a hospital before. You see the big bags which are one-litre bags, and you see small medication bags, which we call the 100-millilitre bags. The problem occurs, and we have to watch that, in that the bags are usually a little overfilled. The different manufacturers have different reasons, but that's just what occurs in the industry. We all kind of know it's maybe 107 millilitres, not 100 millilitres, or it might be 110 millilitres. A 250-millilitre bag might be 260 millilitres, or cc's, for those who know that measurement.

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The two drugs that were involved were—I'll try to pronounce this correctly from my nursing days—gemcitabine was, on average, diluted about 7%, and the cyclophosphamide about 10%. That is the difference in the dosage that occurred that was brought to light in 2013—thus, the rollout of what we should do. Again, that's why we need more controls. Unfortunately, these things do have to happen.

My pharmacist friend is beside me now, so he'll correct anything that I may be saying that's incorrect with these details.

It was discovered that the drugs, as I said, were watered down by 10% or 7% respectively. The excess amount of saline solution was not accounted for by the hospitals because the bag labels did not indicate an overflow.

The report that was released did not fault Marchese, because it said that the company's contract with Medbuy—again, these are manufacturers' names—only required the bags to be labelled with the amount of active drugs inside rather than their concentration.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: GPOs.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Which is the GPO, as my friend has said beside me. It has been brought up a lot within this debate.

The chemotherapy drugs used to be mixed right in the hospital—it was patient-specific—but many have now been outsourced. Two entities known as GPOs, which are the group purchasing organizations like Medbuy that I just mentioned, then contract with drug-mixing companies.

Now that drugs are supplied by a bulk purchasing agent for the hospital, Peterborough hospital CEO Ken Tremblay acknowledged that they have no say in how the drugs are procured for its patients. Supplying chemotherapy drugs from an outside source means that there needs to be more oversight and regulation in order to ensure that this mistake does not happen again.

Again, a lot of this boils down to communications. Isn't that true in life? People and communication: You have to talk with each other. When people enter the hospital, or our health care system in general, they put their lives in the hands of our system and our health care professionals. We need to provide the proper standards and regulations in place to ensure that the patients get the care they need and deserve.

In good news, only one patient in the Peterborough area was exposed to the diluted chemo drugs.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: One too many.

Ms. Laurie Scott: For sure. One is one too many; there's no question. That was my next line. Thank you. But over 1,200 people received underdosed chemotherapy. Lakeridge Health, another referral centre for us up in Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, had 37 incidents. London Health Sciences Centre had 691, Windsor Regional Hospital had 290, and here was another province involved with this, which is New Brunswick.

Dr. Thiessen—Thiessen?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Thiessen.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I pronounced it right?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Excellent.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Dr. Thiessen, who the minister had mentioned, was brought in, and certainly commended the health care workers for their alertness with that. If I can quote him, his report points out “that the entire health care community needs to work together to ensure that no patients ever endure such an experience again. We are

pleased that the report validated our past statements and testimony, and we look forward to implementing the recommendations that relate to Marchese”—that was from Marchese Health Solutions. Again, it's communications. It's working together. In health care, of course, it's very critical that that happens.

Currently, hospital pharmacies are the responsibility of individual hospital corporations. The Ontario College of Pharmacists currently oversees and inspects community pharmacies. Expanding the Ontario College of Pharmacists' authority to oversee hospital pharmacies will ensure that the community and hospital pharmacies meet consistent standards and, again, work together.

Early in 2013, Dr. Thiessen conducted the detailed investigation into the discovery of the underdosed chemotherapy drugs at the four Ontario hospitals I mentioned, and the one in New Brunswick. He provided a list of 12 recommendations. I say that again; it has been brought up a lot in this debate: 12 recommendations.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Twelve.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Yes. But our main concern is that it only addresses one of these recommendations. This bill before us today only addresses one.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Are we going to get 12 bills on this?

Ms. Laurie Scott: Yes, it would be nice if the government could streamline some action-packed bills that actually take a large chunk of the problems and solve them, not just one.

Anyway, his report is entitled A Review of the Oncology Under-Dosing Incident, for those at home who would like to go and see the other recommendations. The release of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care then states, despite its only one recommendation, that the “government is following through on its commitment to implement the recommendations”—really, it isn't. It's only one recommendation of 12. It says, “The OCP shall license all pharmacies operating within Ontario's clinics or hospitals.”

It would provide the Ontario College of Pharmacists with the authority to accredit and inspect pharmacies within public and private hospitals in the same manner it currently accredits and inspects community pharmacies. This is important as it brings a level of inspection and regulation under the same umbrella and ensures that all pharmacies, whether public or private, are held to the same standards.

This change does not fully accept the recommendation made by Dr. Thiessen since he stated in his report that “the mandate should address similar potential outcomes that might arise more broadly from non-sterile and sterile preparation practices, at any location.” This legislation, again, only focuses on pharmacies, which excludes a number of other practices that should also fall under the mandate, according to this recommendation.

This act would give the Ontario College of Pharmacists the ability to enforce accreditation requirements, as well as making regulations and bylaws to establish the requirements and standards for accreditation. Considering the importance of pharmacists within the province of

Ontario and its health care system, it's imperative that they are properly accredited since residents trust these individuals to be properly trained and experienced in their position. I know that pharmacists in my riding are many times the front line, first access to health care that we have.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: They still are.

Ms. Laurie Scott: And they still are, no question about it. They play a huge role that I don't think was widely known until recently, or widely appreciated.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I knew.

Ms. Laurie Scott: And of course my pharmacist seatmate here from Elgin–Middlesex–London knew, that's why he got into politics, I think, Madam Speaker. As a pharmacist, all the legislation that he didn't think was very correct from the current government—so he did a great thing. He said, "Let me put my name on the ballot and let me get in and be a pharmacist," which is good. We value that the Minister of Health is not in your head. It's a good resource to have a pharmacist in the chamber.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Couldn't agree more.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Yes, couldn't agree more.

Interjection: How about a doctor?

Ms. Laurie Scott: Just like it's kind of handy to have a nurse around sometimes or a doctor around sometimes. So it's good to have a nurse around—

Interjection.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Yes.

In this situation, when this terrible incident did occur—in all the papers, front-page news—we went directly to our member from Elgin–Middlesex–London, Jeff Yurek, to say, "Wow. Interpret a little bit here what happened for us," and he ended up interpreting quite a lot. In fact, the report was submitted from committee today, of which he was a part, that delved into this incident specifically—that report was just presented less than an hour ago. We appreciate his professional input on that, and all committee members, if I can say that, from all sides did appreciate that—and I believe Dr. Jaczek was on that committee also. It's good when we actually have our backgrounds before we come to this Legislature that we can utilize in some degree.

We're going to be supporting Bill 117. It does not mean that we do not have concerns, because it's good to have questions—you know, even kids say, "Why? Why? Why?" We do that in opposition; that's our role—why, why and why? And we've got to make sure we get it right. It's important that we continue to have questions. We support this bill. But, as I said, that's one of 12 recommendations.

On this side of the House, the Progressive Conservatives have developed many white papers which outline paths to prosperity for the citizens of Ontario, and in one of our white papers called, "A Healthier Ontario," we provide many recommendations for improving care in Ontario—in detail again, but if anyone cares to go on the website and look that up, path 13 actually outlines a similar model to the one recommended by Dr. Thiessen that is not covered by the bill.

Interjection.

Ms. Laurie Scott: We were ahead of the curve. What can I say?

Recommendation 12 calls for "specialized electronic records and label requirements for non-sterile product preparation within a hospital pharmacy." In addition, all hospital pharmacy labels would have to comply with a comprehensive bar-coded identification for all products in all patients.

It's time to modernize the system. They have tried many times with eHealth—I think we're up to \$2 billion. I don't know how far ahead we are in our electronic health system, but it's incredibly valuable. I think most people who are listening or are in the chamber know what bar codes are now. We have to move into that century with our patient care.

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Another topic, in path 13 in the white paper, suggests we should deliver the electronic records that are mission-critical for better-quality health care. That's what we've been saying. We say that the government spent almost \$2 billion in not getting eHealth records right. We say that the eHealth initiative should be in the hands of the hospitals and doctors who actually use the health records.

You say "health records," and eyes glaze over and stuff. I'm telling you: Proper information saves lives. My pharmacist friends know that. I know that. You have to have a better system. I think we're probably the only province that doesn't have an adequate eHealth recording system.

This part of electronic labelling in health records would allow easier access by doctors and pharmacists and ensure—no question—better quality of service and health for individuals and, for sure, save lives. It's the information. It's simple math that we spoke about before. Dilutions—it's all things that need to be co-ordinated.

We're saying that all of our steps or our paths that we've laid out—the government always wants ideas, and we have so many ideas for them. I don't know if they've stopped listening or they never really were listening, but anyway, those are two ideas that we've put forward as a party that will ensure that all records in Ontario are easily accessible for all different parts of the health system, including family doctors, hospitals, pharmacists and specialists.

It's all communications, but it saves lives. So let's get it right. Some \$2 billion was wasted on an eHealth records system that I don't have any proof is actually working.

While we still do have concerns, as I said, about the bill, it's good to know that the Liberal government—

Interjection: Will soon be defeated?

Ms. Laurie Scott: Well, it could change. We might actually be able to implement the 12 recommendations instead of one of Dr. Thiessen's, as promised. I guess in the slow, snail pace of the government, this is as far as we're getting for the moment. He had other recommendations, and I have a few minutes and I'll touch on a couple of them.

The second recommendation has been discussed a lot here. That was that, "Every GPO"—that's the group

purchasing organization—“shall review its procurement process to ensure that risk for patients is considered an essential evaluation and adjudication criterion when considering proposals.” That’s a good idea.

We’ve had discussion here today. My colleague is more of an authority on it, but group purchasing organizations actually save hospitals money. They have bigger buying power. It makes sense. They create the bags of chemotherapy drugs in this situation, and they buy them, because when you’re in a hospital setting and if you have to mix these chemo drugs—and I have done a few, but it has been a long time—you have to wait for dilution. It’s no question that it takes a lot of time from a busy nurse’s schedule or pharmacist’s schedule, so it makes sense that there’s a private partnership. There are companies that go out there that pre-mix these bags, and the big buying organizations for the hospitals get a better deal. It saves money. We all like to see that.

What we’re concerned about and what my colleague has brought up many times is: Where are the savings going? I guess I can call them kickbacks; other people have today.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Rebates.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Rebates is what they’re called. We’re missing—I think there was about \$250 million in rebates that we think—

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Just a roundabout figure.

Ms. Laurie Scott: A roundabout figure; we haven’t figured it out yet, and only about \$60 million really accounted for. We’re looking at hospitals. Budgets have been frozen. We know we have to change the approach to health care, but we’re saying, “Okay, so they’ve all gone out and they’ve decided to buy in bulk, which saves money for whatever it is.” In this case, we’re talking chemo drugs. But there’s no actual trail of accountability of where the savings are going back to. Are they going back to the hospital? Where is it in the system? All good questions. As I said, that’s addressed in Dr. Thiessen’s second recommendation: that there has to be more accountability for these transactions that are going on and where the money goes for the savings that apparently are occurring. We have a roundabout figure but are not sure where they’ve done the savings.

His third point was that, “Every GPO shall develop and adopt a standardized product and/or service specification description that outlines the requirements for contracted sterile or non-sterile pharmaceutical preparation services.” I don’t know if what I’ve said before helps explain that, but that’s where he finds, and where we agree, that the system has broken down. That’s an excellent idea. Again, that was just recommendation number 3. The government’s brought in a whole bill, which we’re taking up time debating, only addressing recommendation number 1.

I could go on, but I only have a few more seconds left. I know that health care in Ontario is very important. It’s a very personal service offered by the government. It needs to be properly regulated and accredited, which includes ensuring pharmacy safety. That’s what we’re talking

about in Bill 117. We say we’ll support it, but there were other recommendations that would actually protect patients that the government could have put in a bill and they did not.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: I’d like to thank my colleague for her comments, but I’d like to also address the health minister’s comments as well, that diluted chemo drugs—it should never, ever have happened, but the reality was that it did happen. When I take a look at the riding that I’m from, in Niagara, we had a situation where we had a C. diff crisis where 39 people died. The comment was, that should never happen again. How many times can we keep saying that when it comes to health care in the province of Ontario?

I think we should have a stronger debate around the outsourcing of some of the work, but when you take a look at the bill itself, the problem is that it doesn’t address where the mistake happened. By adding a level of oversight in a hospital, are we doing something good? The answer to that is yes.

I can tell you that New Democrats will be supporting Bill 117, but what it fails to do is assure people that what happened from February 2012 to March 2013, where 1,202 Ontarians received diluted drugs, never happens again.

How do we make sure that it never happens again? Well, you have to pay attention to where the mistake took place, and the mistake didn’t take place in the hospital, it didn’t take place at MHS and it didn’t take place at the cancer treatment centre, although any one of them could have caught it. The mistake took place with a group purchasing organization. The mistake took place at Medbuy, yet there’s nothing in the bill to make sure that it affects Medbuy. There’s nothing in the bill that brings in the oversight of those group purchasing organizations. There’s nothing in the bill that will guarantee Ontarians that the mistake that happened does not get repeated in years to come.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Oak Ridges–Markham.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I’m pleased to make a few comments related to the remarks from the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

Clearly, I think we need to be very careful about some of the numbers that are being bandied around here. I was a member of the committee for the entire year, and I’m intimately familiar with the contents of not only this bill but, of course, the diluted chemotherapy report that was tabled today.

First of all, Dr. Thiessen did make 12 recommendations. The reason that only one of them is part of Bill 117 is, of course, because it’s the only one that actually requires legislation. The other 11 recommendations are being addressed by the task force that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care has established to look at those recommendations. That will take some time to work through, as they involve numerous stakeholders.

Now, as it pertains to the remarks from the member from Niagara Falls, I understand he has corrected his record. This is an incredibly sensitive issue. What I heard at one point was that he said some 1,200 people died. There is absolutely no truth to that whatsoever. I understand he has corrected his record, but this is the type of thing that points to the sensitivity of this kind of material.

Obviously, those 1,202 people did receive an underdosing of between 7% and 10% of their chemotherapeutic agent. That, of course, would be worrying. Those patients were contacted immediately by their oncologists, and all have received the appropriate reassurance and are being followed very, very closely. The recommendations in the diluted chemotherapy report are extremely important. They show the lack of attention of Health Canada to admixing of these particular compounds—clearly a part of manufacturing. We have requested a report back in—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. The member for Durham.

1700

Mr. John O'Toole: I listened very intensely to the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. She brings a very informed perspective to the debate because she did practise as a nurse. I think she still has a very caring nature about everything and wanting to do the right thing.

She said, in her time, that she realizes some of this outsourcing to off-site organizations is probably more efficient. She also indicated that she was, I believe, a member of the committee, as well as the previous speaker from Oak Ridges–Markham, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health. I have high regard for the work she's doing on Ornge ambulance and other things too. But I'm surprised that the member from Oak Ridges–Markham wasn't promoted to cabinet in the last couple of rounds. I'm not trying to change the topic here; I'm just making an observation that I think a lot of the people in the House—because she is a very capable medical doctor. She has every right in her profession to comment on this bill.

The member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock did mention that this group purchasing organization—this is the efficiency of the bill—makes good sense. I support her for saying that.

Our member from Elgin–Middlesex–London, Mr. Yurek, who is a pharmacist—he was coaching to some extent during her remarks, of course—really did recognize that what was missing in this was more accountability. This government talks about it all the time. We heard about it in question period this morning, as we do pretty well every day.

Where is the money going through the savings? When he was a pharmacist, they took away the promotional allowances from the pharmacists, but where is the money? We ask for drugs for people with incurable diseases to get relief. There's a petition almost every day in this House. IPF—in my riding, no money for the drugs. Where's the money? I can't believe it.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I wanted to comment on some of the remarks that were made during the committee hearings by Dr. Thiessen about the lack of oversight for group purchasing organizations. The member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock did point out that only one of the recommendations from Dr. Thiessen's report has been included in this legislation. That is, we understand, because the other recommendations don't require legislation.

However, when Dr. Thiessen was presenting to the standing committee, he said very clearly, "We may need a government program to oversee the GPOs." He was asked by my colleague the member for Nickel Belt, "And why didn't you recommend that?" He responded, "Well, I suppose I should have. It was short-sighted on my part." He later said, "The idea of some kind of an infrastructure—perhaps government infrastructure ... which would lead to some oversight of GPOs is something that is worth considering."

We can't just pass the buck to some minister or ministerial committee to look at what should be done with GPOs. This was our opportunity. This Bill 117 was a legislative initiative that would respond to the tragedy that we saw with the chemotherapy underdosing, and there is currently nothing in that legislation that will prevent a tragedy like that happening again. The bill includes some important measures, some welcome measures, to improve patient safety, to enhance patient care, to provide a little bit of quality assurance, but it will not prevent—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. The member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock has two minutes to respond.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I want to thank the members for Niagara Falls, Oak Ridges–Markham, Durham and London West for their comments on my comments on Bill 117, the Enhancing Patient Care and Pharmacy Safety Act, which was brought in response to the chemotherapy drug miscalculation that led to over 1,000 patients not getting the proper dosage of chemotherapy medication.

The member from Oak Ridges–Markham, as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, did make some points. I mean, there's no question we're a little nervous, can we say, or uncertain that there is actually enough government oversight and responsibility in respect to this. She says that this is only one recommendation and the rest they can do in regulations. I don't know if there's another panel or some system to look at setting up the regulations to cover off the rest of Dr. Thiessen's report.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: A panel to look at a panel.

Ms. Laurie Scott: It's like a panel to look at a panel. Who knows? Maybe even Ornge is overseeing this new set of regulations that are coming up. You have to be a little nervous.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Dr. Mazza.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Dr. Mazza, I think, has a new job in Thunder Bay now, so he won't be overseeing that. But

the member from London West brought up about the oversight that the GPOs need, and I think Dr. Thiessen—I just have a few seconds here—the advantages that can occur from the GPOs. The problem is, this bill does nothing about setting up some sort of infrastructure to watch over these GPOs, and the parliamentary assistant did mention a bit of that.

Again, this started—I think it was February 2012 to March 2013. We're now a year later. They could have done a lot more as a government.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I rise today to speak on the government Bill 117, entitled Enhancing Patient Care and Pharmacy Safety Act, on its second reading.

This is an important bill for me and the people of my riding of London–Fanshawe as we are directly impacted by the underdosing of chemotherapy patients' medication. In fact, out of the more than 1,200 reported cases of underdosing, over 600 happened to Londoners. As you can imagine, folks back in London–Fanshawe are very interested to see exactly what steps are being prepared to put in place to protect their health, to ensure that this error never happens again.

I must admit to feeling as though this Liberal government has forgotten London. That's how I feel, Speaker. There's a lot of things in London that have been happening with regard to jobs, and now the underdosing of chemotherapy drugs that we're talking about. It's becoming a prime example of what not to do in health care management.

In the past year alone, Londoners have watched their health care system be ripped apart in front of them. It began with cuts to services like physiotherapy and hydrotherapy. Then we learned that our hospital CEOs were being paid one of the highest salaries in the province. Then came the underdosing of chemotherapy drugs. Last week, we learned about our young mental health patients being forced to sleep on floors. The hits just keep coming.

In today's London Free Press, we learned that due to cuts in provincial funding, London Health Sciences Centre now plans to eliminate more than 100 positions from nursing and cleaning staff. Apparently officials say that the cuts won't affect patients because that almost never happens. I am curious about one thing, though. Has this government ever acknowledged that cutting front-line care by nurses, who play an integral role in delivering care, will affect patient care?

Do they actually expect people to believe that if you hack away at the health care system that we as Canadians are proud of the world over, none of the hacking erodes patient care? Is our health care system so truly overabundant and inefficient that none of these slashes to front-line workers has any impact? I can hardly imagine that to be true, but yet we're here today.

Quite frankly, I am frustrated that my colleague from London West and I are forced to explain the actions by this health minister to the people of her hometown. In

fact, the health minister was missing in action when the scandal broke and, worse, was unaware that her ministry bore the responsibility for oversight at the hospital pharmacies. At that time, she claimed that the responsibility for oversight of the drugs belonged to the federal government. It sounded much like the answer we received from her during the Ornge air ambulance scandals. Ontarians are tired of the health minister claiming to be unaware of her duties and hearing, "I will look into it and get back to you." It's a toothless defence, and we have heard it one too many times.

1710

Now here we are, being asked to help pass a bill that is prematurely attempting to correct the mistakes of the underdosing, before the committee tasked with the studying of this incident has even shared their final report, which I understand is set to be released this afternoon. Speaker, I actually went back to the members' lounge here and tried to find a copy of that report, because I understand that there are six recommendations in that report that talk about the GPOs and what oversight is needed. But when I went back there, I was truly disappointed; I didn't see a copy of the report. Perhaps when I get back at 6 o'clock—if the House rises at 6 as it usually does—I'll be able to find and read that report, which I look forward to.

The final report of the committee was set to be published today and finalized today. However, that report was not limited to the same scope that the Thiessen report was, and it should not have been excluded from our deliberations on the bill that we have before us. Knowing that the work of the committee goes beyond the scope of the Thiessen report, why would the government go through the motions of putting forth a bill without waiting to receive the report back from the committee? These are important issues and questions that deserve answers, just like the patients who were underdosed with the chemotherapy drugs for more a year and their families deserve answers.

Sadly, there is no reason for this kind of behaviour, because at the end of the day we should all share the same priority with this bill: ensuring that no person facing cancer will deal with this type of health scare ever again.

Few people in this Legislature would oppose greater oversight and transparency of the health care system, as the mis-dosing scandal highlighted a gaping hole in how we deliver health care medications. This bill—or whatever this bill could be, with the work of the committee completed and included—could generally offer greater accountability and transparency measures.

Speaker, let's unpack this bill as it reads, and get to the heart of the matter.

Under Bill 117, the Ontario College of Pharmacists is given the authority to regulate hospital and institutional pharmacies, whether these institutional pharmacies are located in hospitals, long-term-care homes or prisons, by providing the Ontario College of Pharmacists with the ability to accredit and inspect hospital pharmacies, as they currently do with community pharmacies.

The bill also brings forward a number of amendments that are intended to improve the health regulatory system's ability to prevent or respond to issues that could affect patient care and safety.

I was pleased to learn that the Thiessen report sought input from key professional, structural, regulatory and oversight stakeholders, including Health Canada, Cancer Care Ontario, the Ontario College of Pharmacists and the Ontario Hospital Association, along with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Having input from these groups is important in putting forward solutions that will ensure the kind of oversight that Ontario expects from all of us here in the Legislature.

By providing OCP with authority to create regulations, with the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, to establish classes of certificates of accreditation with respect to the three kinds of pharmacies, we can help ensure all types of institutional pharmacies face increased scrutiny and oversight.

Further, this bill allows for the OCP to be empowered to accredit, inspect and enforce various measures of the Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act. However, it should be noted that before the OCP can take any action that would affect the certification of accreditation of a hospital or institutional pharmacy, the OCP will be required to notify the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and provide the minister with any information they may request.

This bill also proposes to amend the Public Hospitals Act to require mandatory reporting to the regulatory college in the instance where a member may resign and a person—for example, a hospital administrator—who employs the member has reasonable grounds to believe that the resignation is related to a member's professional misconduct, incompetence or incapacity.

Bill 117 also proposes to amend the Regulated Health Professions Act in four important areas.

It allows health colleges to share information with public health authorities where public health implications are suspected.

It allows health colleges to share information with a public hospital where patient safety and care could be affected.

It streamlines the appointment of a health college supervisor by removing the requirement that the council of a college has not complied with a minister's requirement. This aligns the supervisor appointment provisions of the RHPA with the Public Hospitals Act, clarifying that a supervisor may be appointed when it is in the public interest.

Lastly, it removes the obligation of a health college to investigate every complaint where it is believed by the registrar of the college that, if the allegation contained in the complaint were established, it would not constitute misconduct.

Essentially, these changes proposed by Bill 117 are steps in the right direction and, it should be noted, are supported by key health care stakeholders.

Now I would like to spend some time talking about the background of this bill. The government offers this bill in

response to the underdosing of chemotherapy. I'd like to examine—and it's very important—the chronology of the underdosing more closely, because I think it happened a year ago, and maybe people forgot how we got to this stage.

On March 20, 2013, pharmacy assistants at Peterborough Regional Health Centre noticed that something wasn't quite right in the chemotherapy drug they were preparing for patients' usage. They were still using a previously prepared drug by one pharmaceutical company vendor, Baxter, and they were about to begin using the same drug but prepared by another vendor, Marchese.

However, they noticed that there was a difference. Unlike the Baxter-prepared drug, which read—and I'll read the technicality—four grams per millilitre; total volume of 105.26 millilitres; gemcitabine, 38 milligrams per millilitre, the bag from vendor Marchese was labelled as four grams in 100 millilitres.

Thankfully, the pharmacy assistants out in the Peterborough hospital felt a certain amount of doubt about the quantity of the drug, and because of their uncertainty and their resulting actions, Ontarians—indeed, all of us—learned about the misdosing of patients for almost a year. Speaker, that is truly incredible, and I commend those pharmacy assistants for taking the time to question the work that they did. That's truly what we should be aspiring to: quality assurance in every level of government and everything that we do in our daily lives. We can't take things for granted.

This action taken by the Peterborough pharmacy assistant led to the discovery, of course, of the 1,202 patients at four hospitals in Ontario—Peterborough, Lakeridge Health, Windsor Regional and London Health Sciences Centre—and one hospital in New Brunswick who received lower-than-intended doses of the two cancer drugs, gemcitabine and cyclophosphamide.

We also learned that Marchese Hospital Solutions, who prepared the drug, did not have any kind of oversight. Loosely translated, this means they believed they were operating in a grey area.

I'm still kind of dumbfounded by that, Speaker. When anybody is producing any medical equipment, medical products, I would think that there should be the utmost care in producing that, because you're affecting people's health, whether it's equipment that they need to use or whether it's treatment or drugs. But that's what they said; they thought they were operating in a grey area.

They stated that the IV bags they received were overfilled and causing the dosage to be altered.

We also learned that the hospitals acquire these drugs through a group purchasing organization, or GPO; it has been talked about today. In this case, the GPO was a company named Medbuy, and they were not directly involved in this contract. Medbuy's contract with Marchese started in February 2012. However, according to the Toronto Star reports at the time, Medbuy arranged the contract between the hospitals and Marchese Hospital Solutions, the facility that prepared the IV bags with the medication.

This is a quote from Dr. Thiessen. He's saying that problems began when Medbuy provided Marchese with "only a simple statement of specifications." That's the quote.

1720

While Marchese used the correct medication dosage, it failed to account for the fact that the IV bags it was using were overfilled with saline. Again, I'm going to quote Dr. Thiessen: "The simple statement of specifications led Marchese to use a process that failed to adjust for the overflow volumes." The hospitals didn't correct the overflow because they were unaware of the lower concentrations, and there were no clarifying instructions from Marchese on the bags as well.

In their deposition before the committee, Medbuy told members that one of the reasons that Marchese was awarded the contract was because of their superior labeling practices. Somehow, this did not translate into the actual product.

The fact that a chemotherapy drug was not labeled in a way that it could be given easily to patients is highly concerning. Added to this is the fact that Medbuy did not seek to have this clarified—even more troubling.

Over the course of the committee hearings, we discovered that it was this issue of labeling that became fundamental to figuring out what went wrong. At this point in the process, we saw the beginning of an investigation, and on April 9, 2013, Dr. Thiessen was appointed to lead an independent review of quality assurance within Ontario's cancer drug supply chain. But the mandate and scope that he was given was fairly constricted. He wasn't asked to look at the safe supply of drugs overall or the necessity of the GPOs in the contracting out of pharmaceuticals.

Dr. Thiessen did awesome work. It's really appreciated, what he did. He is an expert in his own right in that field. But again, I think this government failed to look beyond and go one step further in that oversight and really try to pinpoint where the problem went wrong.

I ask myself: Did the government really know the bigger scope of what the problem was when they asked Dr. Thiessen to study the issue and only give him a restricted mandate? I wish I could have an answer to that, because this bill doesn't address the oversight that's the real concern under the GPOs.

The social policy committee met numerous times, over and over again—I know they did—and also heard dozens of witnesses. MPPs spent countless hours poring over documents, recommendations and information, and the committee and legislative research worked really hard to provide this Legislature with an in-depth report.

I mentioned earlier that I believe this report has six new recommendations, which are truly worthy of collective consideration and debate before making a final decision on this bill. I wish they were in here so that we could have a fulsome debate on those findings as well.

As New Democrats, we do support this bill. We definitely think that we need to have the College of Pharmacists overlooking these pharmacies. That's one

step that's needed. But in fact, Ontario is mostly playing catch-up with other provinces like BC that have long had the College of Pharmacists regulate hospital pharmacies. This is not a new type of oversight; BC already has this.

Before I conclude, I read the Thiessen report, and there was a statement there that I found quite compelling. It reads as follows, the statement that he made:

"Notwithstanding the above science or art, there is the very real issue of patient anxiety about cancer therapy. Where does the individual turn for assurance? Commonly, an implicit trust is placed in the doctor or medical team. Emotional stability is greatly influenced by the conviction that the individual is receiving the best treatment plan; that is, given all the variables, the plan is carefully tailored for optimal results. News that a dilution of chemotherapy has led to underdosing is understandably upsetting and clearly a violation of the expectation for an optimized plan and the aforementioned trust. The emotional trauma experienced by the patient and caregiver(s) can be overwhelming."

That summarizes the kind of trust that Canadians, Ontarians, have in their health system. It does shake the ground that people walk on when they hear about the underdosing. I had heard from constituents about that, and their concerns.

In particular, I was in contact with two constituents who live in London–Fanshawe and had experienced this underdosing. One particular gentleman had had treatment; he was a direct patient of the underdosing. He was worried. But I really commend him because of his outlook. He said, "I'm going to take it one day at a time, and I'm going to go for the results. I'm going to see my oncologist and make sure that I do all the checking that it hasn't affected me adversely." In the end, he said that the results came out okay for him. But he was one of over 1,200.

I just want to caution, and a word of very strong understanding to this government that we really need to make sure that we get this bill right. If we don't want this to occur again, we have to get this bill right.

When it goes back to committee, I hope the six recommendations that the MPPs gruelled over and the legislative assembly research team gruelled over are going to be implemented in this bill. I know that the MPP from Nickel Belt certainly feels strongly that those recommendations are the right way to make sure this doesn't happen again.

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

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I would certainly like to commend the member from London–Fanshawe on giving a very good summary of the committee's deliberations. As she has said, we spent nearly a year looking at this very, very unfortunate set of circumstances. Really, what we came to learn was that the devil truly was in the details.

We were most impressed by the pharmacy assistants at the Peterborough hospital. In fact, we went to the extent of questioning why the other three Ontario hospitals had not picked up on the issue of the labelling and the lack of specificity as it related to concentration.

But we also have to recognize that clearly human error did take place here. You alluded, to a certain extent, member for London–Fanshawe, to the communication between Marchese Hospital Solutions and Medbuy. As we detailed in our report, there was a fundamental misunderstanding that the actual bag that was going to be produced of this admixed solution of either cyclophosphamide or gemcitabine was to be used for a single patient. Of course, it was not; it was to be used for multiple patients.

There was an email exchange—because the committee spent a great deal of time examining the type of communications that occurred—pharmacist to pharmacist. It was quite clear that neither the pharmacist at Marchese Hospital Solutions nor at Medbuy truly went back to first principles to look at how the drug was to be used.

Human error was a major part of what happened here. To a certain extent, you cannot legislate against this type of mistake. However, you need to put in place all the safeguards that are possible, and that's what Bill 117 is doing.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I listened to the member from London–Fanshawe. As has been said, she gave a very excellent diary of the events. She said it was found in Peterborough, and I'm not just repeating it; this is primarily for my own constituents to realize that I am quite aware of where the discovery was made and that it did affect Lakeridge Health in my own riding, which you mentioned as well.

The social policy committee has done the work. This bill was introduced some time after, in October 2013. There has been a reasonable amount of discussion on it. The report from social policy was filed today. As has been mentioned, Dr. Thiessen's report had 12 recommendations, only one of which has found its way into this bill.

1730

Our speakers today have commented, specifically the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London who is a pharmacist and who knows of what he speaks, and others as well—and I look forward to our next speaker.

I think the key here is, in the context of one of the clippings in the paper today, in the Post. It's called, "30 Years of Health-Care Dysfunction." This is by Brian Day, who is an orthopedic surgeon and former president of the Canadian Medical Association. He says, "On April 1, 1984, the Canada Health Act became law. Patients have been needlessly waiting, sometimes dying, ever since."

"The Canada Health Act," the article states "requires that care must be comprehensive, universal, portable and accessible, as well as being publicly funded and administered." Often, the mix of words around the "medically necessary" definition is becoming more and more complex.

When we look at some of the chronic diseases today, and I think of people siding with—

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

Mr. Paul Miller: I want to thank my two colleagues from London–Fanshawe and London West for their hard work on this file to bring forth the concerns of the people they represent. As they stated, more than half the people that received this underdose were from the London area, and that's pretty scary for one community to deal with.

But the bottom line here is that I would think in today's day and age, after the things I've seen over the years—it wasn't too long ago that we had the tainted blood scandal, and the Canadian Red Cross and a lot of other agencies were shaken to the roots about the possible spread of a blood disorder or disease to healthy patients. That certainly required a lot of insight and a lot of oversight and a lot of changing of the laws to protect the blood-flow system.

Also, why is it every time something like this happens, it's always after somebody is either killed, injured or led down the wrong path? Every time, it's always a knee-jerk reaction by this government after something happens. They don't do any prepping. They don't do any thinking about what could happen with these types of cancer-fighting drugs that require a certain specialty and certain people to deal with this on a regular basis. There are no inspectors, there's no oversight, and this is an ongoing thing. We had Ornge, we had eHealth, now we have got this, and I'm sure there'll be more coming down the road. That all points back to this building, to that minister and that ministry for not following through on the things they should be following through on to protect the people of this province.

The people of this province deserve better, they deserve to know that they've got a solid health care system, that they don't have to worry, when they go to the hospital to receive these injections or these things, that they're going to be safe

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: The speech that was delivered was definitely comprehensive in its assessment of this legislation. What I think we recognize from the speeches that have been delivered already in the House is that there appears to be a good consensus in the Legislature that this legislation should move forward expeditiously so it can be implemented. I have found that, particularly in a minority Parliament, we really have some good committee work that's being done. Not all of the good suggestions come from one of the political parties or from the government side; they come from a variety of different people and from the representations that are made. I think the member has clearly outlined the purpose of the legislation.

I think the legislation will accomplish what it is supposed to. We have accepted and endorsed all of Dr. Thiessen's recommendations. That doesn't always happen. Sometimes governments pick and choose. We have endorsed all of them. We've certainly established a task force to implement 11 of Dr. Thiessen's 12 recommendations. This legislation we're debating, of course, responds directly to the 12th.

We see so many bills which are going through the House extremely slowly. I always believe there should be appropriate debate on bills. But where there is a consensus, particularly, I think it's important to have the bills moved to the committee, to have members of the committee interview people who come to the committee to make representations, to accept and read carefully the written representations which are made, and then to make any amendments or propose any amendments that they feel would strengthen the legislation.

That's what I hope will happen to so many bills in the House that appear to be stalled—not from the third party, I might say, but from the official opposition. I hope we can move expeditiously and concurrently on this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. The member now has two minutes to respond.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I listened to all the comments after I spoke, and the one comment that the member made, Dr. Jaczek, about human error—there's absolutely going to be human error in everything. You know, human error—we're not perfect. We certainly make mistakes. But I think the gravity of this mistake resulted in a very serious situation which affected over 1,200 people. That's why we're taking it, and I know everybody here is taking it, extremely seriously.

The point is that the committee work that was done dug into this issue very thoroughly. They were very in-depth, the questions that were asked. They were very concerned, because of course we're talking about people's lives. So not to have that report as part of our deliberations here today or debate here today is a point that we made as well. To get this bill right, I think that was something that was very important that should have come through.

The minister did file this bill on October 10, 2013. Dr. Thiessen's report was produced, I believe, in July 2013, and the committee took about a year to do all its investigating. So it's a little disappointing that we didn't have those recommendations and really talk about those recommendations that do belong in this bill.

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Thank you, Speaker. It's an honour to rise this afternoon on behalf of the residents of Dufferin-Caledon to discuss Bill 117, the Enhancing Patient Care and Pharmacy Safety Act.

Bill 117 is, in essence, the Ontario government's response to the chemo drug scandal that occurred last year. This was a very, very serious problem and one that I think deserves some revisiting in order to properly analyze Bill 117's merits.

I also want to state that the PC member for Elgin-Middlesex-London gave an excellent one-hour lead on Bill 117. I would encourage anyone who is interested in this bill to review his extensive speech, because he covers the bill and the context surrounding it in great detail. I do not have the time to get into that level of detail here today, but do still want to touch on the context surrounding the bill a little bit.

As I mentioned, Bill 117 is the government's response to last year's chemo drug scandal. Now, for those who maybe aren't familiar with the scandal, what essentially happened was that thousands of chemotherapy patients across the country received diluted chemotherapy drugs. So while doctors were prescribing certain amounts of drugs to be taken by these patients, the patients were in fact receiving less medication because the drugs they were taking were diluted and therefore not as potent as needed. Clearly, this was a grave problem.

We know that a number of patients were impacted by this error. The net result was that, in Ontario, 1,202 people received underdosed chemotherapy. Some examples of where this occurred are the Peterborough Regional Health Centre with one patient, Lakeridge Health Sciences with 37 patients, the London Health Sciences Centre with 691, and the Windsor Regional Hospital with 290 patients. Moreover, Speaker, 40 pediatric patients were impacted by this error.

Here in Ontario, when an individual is fighting cancer and depending on our health care system, it is absolutely inexcusable for them to receive diluted medication. That's not something we expect to see in Ontario, and rightfully so.

In response to the scandal, Dr. Jake Thiessen was tasked with analyzing the situation and presenting a report on how to make sure this doesn't happen again. Thiessen is well respected in the health care industry. He has a PhD and is the founding director of the University of Waterloo's school of pharmacy. He tabled his report last fall, titled *A Review of the Oncology Under-Dosing Incident*, and presented 12 recommendations. His report was well received by many in the industry. For example, the Minister of Health herself said, "Our government fully endorses Dr. Thiessen's recommendations and looks forward to working with Health Canada and our other health sector partners to act on them."

1740

All good; right? That's what the viewers must be thinking. There was a serious problem, an expert in the field was tasked to help come up with a solution, a legislative committee was tasked with thoroughly analyzing the issue, and the government would then heed the advice of the committee and the experts and move to implement solutions.

The problem is, that's not how things have unfolded. Instead, as is so typical with this Liberal government, what we saw was the minister ignore the majority of Dr. Thiessen's recommendations and introduce legislation before the legislative committee even had a chance to finish its report and make its recommendations public. In fact, as I mentioned, Dr. Thiessen's report had 12 recommendations in it, and yet Bill 117 acts on exactly one of these recommendations. So, Speaker, here again we see the Liberal government ignoring other voices, even their own outside expert advisers, and insisting on implementing half measures.

Back in October, I voiced my frustration with this pattern when I responded to one of my colleagues who

was discussing Bill 117. I will say the same thing here today: You can't ask for the expert advice and then not listen to it. On multiple occasions, including when both the minister and the parliamentary assistant spoke on Bill 117, the government has lauded Dr. Thiessen and his notable background—and rightfully so. They spoke about how valuable his recommendations were, which is appreciated; and, as I mentioned, the minister even went so far as to endorse all 12 recommendations. But all that means nothing if we as legislators don't implement them.

I'm reminded of another expert adviser the Liberal government brought in to help them to address a serious issue: Don Drummond. I'd like to remind everyone about Don Drummond because he was brought in to advise the government on how it could tackle the crushing deficit the current government has created. He, too, was largely ignored by this government after he tabled his report.

The reason this is relevant is because the essence of Don Drummond's message was that if we don't act today to control spending, our services will be devastated tomorrow. Now, what I mean by that is that we must get control of runaway deficit spending in this province if things like our cherished health care system are to be protected. Don Drummond had dozens and dozens of recommendations on how to do that. Not only did the current government ignore his advice, they went in a totally different direction.

When we discuss bills like Bill 117 in this chamber, yes, we are discussing proposed legislation, but we are also talking about failures. We're talking about a failure in our health care system that occurred and people's lives were jeopardized. The question I pose to my colleagues here today and to Dufferin–Caledon families following today's debate is, are failures like this more or less likely to happen when in five or 10 years' time we aren't able to borrow \$10 billion or \$15 billion a year to fund our deficits? Because at that time, when the Liberal high-deficit spending spree has collapsed and our credit rating has been lowered even further and interest rates have gone up, we won't be able to afford the services we care about. What we will be facing instead is the grim task of embarking on rigorous spending cuts the likes of which we have never seen here in Ontario. We've seen this situation play out in other heavily indebted jurisdictions, like Greece. I, for one, do not wish to see that situation develop here in Ontario.

So like the Drummond report, here today we see Bill 117 ignoring the majority of Dr. Thiessen's recommendations. Actually, Speaker, upon closer inspection one will find that Bill 117 doesn't even fully implement the one recommendation it acts on. In reality, I suppose, you could say that the minister only implemented one half of the 12 recommendations. The recommendation in question is the 12th one from Dr. Thiessen's report. What Bill 117 seeks to do is to provide the Ontario College of Pharmacists with the authority to accredit and inspect pharmacies within public and private hospitals. Many viewers are probably scratching their heads, wondering why that isn't happening already. The truth is, it's an excellent question. It is easy to see how one would

assume that that is already the case because the college currently accredits and inspects the local community pharmacies—just not the ones in hospitals.

What Bill 117 would also do is give the College of Pharmacists the ability to enforce accreditation requirements. Bill 117 would provide the Lieutenant Governor in Council with regulation-making authority to designate dispensaries and pharmacies and would also require all pharmacists to designate a contact person for the college. As you can see, Bill 117, while incorporating some good changes, is hardly all-encompassing, and really could have been far more effective in dealing with such a serious issue.

The other half of Dr. Thiessen's 12th recommendation that Bill 117 does not address deals with specialized electronic records and labelling requirements for non-sterile products prepared in a hospital pharmacy. Dr. Thiessen additionally stated that all hospital pharmacy labels should comply with comprehensive bar-coding identification for all products and all patients. Unfortunately, Bill 117 fails to establish this aspect of the one recommendation that it addresses.

As we discuss Bill 117, I want to touch on a theme that the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London talked about in his lead on Bill 117; it was a powerful and, I feel, accurate theme that I want to reiterate. What my colleague spoke of was how this government seems to have lost all direction in terms of proactive policy and, instead, is driving almost solely by reaction to the many scandals that have occurred under its watch. We see this in its policies, in its legislation and in its budgets. Everything seems to revolve around its many scandals: eHealth, Ornge, the massive \$1.1-billion gas plant cancellations and subsequent cover-ups—two of those, I might add, having been scandals in the Ministry of Health.

Moreover, when it comes to its budgets, the only thing that we see this government react to is NDP policy advisers' demands. That's how Premier Wynne composes her budgets, I suppose: wait for the NDP to make demands and react to them. I think this is very evident when we find ourselves debating legislation like Bill 117.

But the worst part is that while we see the Liberal government scramble to fix its own messes, what we rarely see is its response to the needs of Ontarians. Here we are debating Bill 117, the Enhancing Patient Care and Pharmacy Safety Act, and what gets to me is that I still get calls regularly in my constituency office from Dufferin–Caledon residents who have been utterly let down by this government when it comes to health care.

This past February, I had a constituent who called my office, extremely upset. Her father is in his 90s, and the CCAC withdrew support for him. My constituent called and emailed the CCAC and never received a call back. No one from the CCAC called. No one checked in. The support was withdrawn, and that was it. What is my constituent supposed to think when their elderly father receives treatment like this, yet they also see the massive pay raises given to the CCAC CEOs across the province?

My constituent is left with this sad conclusion: "Most have no idea on the inefficiency of this unnecessary and

wasteful layer of bureaucracy in health care. The CCAC CEOs have taken care of themselves and their staff as a first priority and enjoy nice offices, generous salaries and benefits.”

Or what about another constituent from Dufferin–Caledon who was released from the hospital and got bounced around between CCACs, both claiming they were not responsible for his care? He went on for a week with no support. He was left to fend for himself.

When I see legislation like this introduced to enhance patient care, it really gets to me because I hear from families who are not getting adequate care, let alone enhanced care. I hear from many constituents who are on wait-lists or whose family members are on wait-lists, yet this government is too busy worrying about addressing its own scandals to do something about it.

1750

The issue that I have with Bill 117 is not that it is a poor piece of legislation. It is a start. It is a beginning: 12 recommendations pulled down into one recommendation in one piece of legislation. I have concerns that the other 11 and a half recommendations that Dr. Thiessen made will be ignored, will be sidelined, will be considered and talked about but never actually implemented. Then we have to get back to those patients in Peterborough, those patients in London, those patients in Windsor who, while they were impacted and while they are rightly very concerned, want first and foremost for this problem not to occur again. I'm not convinced that Bill 117 goes far enough to ensure that that is not the case. If anything, the optimist in me thinks that getting one half of one recommendation is better than none, which is ultimately why we will support this piece of legislation and bring it forward to committee. It's why I support this bill with a small grain of salt: because Bill 117 really could have been so much more.

When you think of all of the recommendations that Dr. Thiessen made and when we realize the social policy committee just today tabled their recommendations after almost a year of researching and listening to experts and finding out exactly what happened in those hospitals, that we couldn't do better than what we have before us is, I think, a real shame. There was an opportunity from when this bill was introduced to today, when we continued to debate it, where we could have brought forward some substantive, proactive improvements to a system that clearly lacked oversight. We now understand where the problem is; we acutely understand where the problem is, because we've had families and individuals impacted by this lack of oversight. Instead of actually solving it, we've got a baby step; we have just begun to scratch the surface on where we can improve the system. I really wish that Bill 117 could have gone further to improve a system that didn't have the oversight that we needed.

The previous speaker, from London West, really brought the impact home when she talked about her community and individuals' families who were served by the London Health Sciences Centre. I'm sure the mem-

bers from Windsor can talk about the impact that their community had to deal with.

Imagine, as a family member or an individual undergoing those chemo treatments, understanding that maybe it would have gone away, maybe we would have improved faster, maybe it would have made a difference if there had been the proper oversight and we hadn't had the errors in the system. I think it's ultimately our responsibility as legislators trying to improve the system, now that we understand where the problem is, to actually try to solve it.

Bill 117 is a baby step towards that solution. I don't want to see a case where, because the other 11 and a half recommendations are sitting on a minister's bookshelf somewhere where they're going to study it or they're going to have a conversation, we never actually get to resolving the entire issue. I think it would be a terrible injustice to the families who had to endure those committee hearings, who had to endure the stories from family members and individuals retelling what happened to them as they went through a system that, quite frankly, let them down. They truly believed that by putting their fate in the hands of their treatment and their specialists and their doctors—we have let them down. I don't want to be here in a year or two years and have to explain to another family member, “Oh, yeah, we didn't implement all the recommendations. We were going to get to that, but we're starting with Bill 117.”

I think family members expect more. I think Ontario individuals who have to rely on our health care system, family members who are dealing with cancer or walking through a system where their loved ones are in the process of cancer treatment, deserve more, and I would hope that through Bill 117 and those other 11 recommendations we actually get to the stage where we never have to explain that we dropped the ball on that; we forgot that part; we got sidetracked with other scandals like Ornge and eHealth in the Ministry of Health. It's a ministry that has had its challenges for numerous years, and I would hate to think that the actual work of the Ministry of Health is being ignored because the minister and previous ministers—and you can list them all—have had to deal with scandals instead of actually dealing with the issues that are at hand. If we're not here to help out families and to set up systems and bring forward legislation and bring forward policy ideas that improve the lives of individuals who are dealing with cancer, I can't imagine a more wasteful time.

I really hope that the additional 11 recommendations are not simply forgotten because other scandals get in their way. As I say, I will leave it to that. I am going to be supporting Bill 117, but we're not done.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): It being close to 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1757.

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

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Bartolucci, Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
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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
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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
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Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
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Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	

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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	
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	
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MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
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, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
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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	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre délégué 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
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Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Orazietti, 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
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
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Vacant	Brampton–Springdale	

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Mike Colle, Joe Dickson
Rob Leone, Amrit Mangat
Taras Natyshak, Jerry J. Ouellette
Michael Prue
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Sarah Campbell, Donna H. Cansfield
Grant Crack, Dipika Damerla
John Fraser, Michael Harris
Peggy Sattler, Laurie Scott
Jeff Yurek
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Vic Dhillon, Garfield Dunlop
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Todd Smith
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France Gélinas, Helena Jaczek
Phil McNeely, Norm Miller
John O'Toole, Jagmeet Singh
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Catherine Fife
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Catherine Fife, John Fraser
Monte Kwinter, Jane McKenna
Rick Nicholls, Peter Tabuns
Bill Walker
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Bas Balkissoon, Ted Chudleigh
Mike Colle, Vic Dhillon
Cheri DiNovo, Ernie Hardeman
Rod Jackson, Helena Jaczek
Paul Miller
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Select Committee on Developmental Services / Comité spécial des services aux personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon
Cheri DiNovo, Christine Elliott
Mitzie Hunter, Rod Jackson
Sylvia Jones, Monique Taylor
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