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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 30 October 2014

Jeudi 30 octobre 2014

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 30 October 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 30 octobre 2014

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

FIGHTING FRAUD
AND REDUCING AUTOMOBILE
INSURANCE RATES ACT, 2014
LOI DE 2014 DE LUTTE CONTRE
LA FRAUDE ET DE RÉDUCTION
DES TAUX D'ASSURANCE-AUTOMOBILE

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 27, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 15, An Act to amend various statutes in the interest of reducing insurance fraud, enhancing tow and storage service and providing for other matters regarding vehicles and highways / Projet de loi 15, Loi visant à modifier diverses lois dans le but de réduire la fraude à l'assurance, d'améliorer les services de remorquage et d'entreposage et de traiter d'autres questions touchant aux véhicules et aux voies publiques.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated October 29, I am now required to put the question: Mr. Bradley has moved second reading of Bill 15, An Act to amend various statutes in the interest of reducing insurance fraud, enhancing tow and storage service and providing for other matters regarding vehicles and highways.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I heard a no. All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote is required, pursuant to standing order 9(c). This vote is deferred until question period this morning.

Second reading vote deferred.

PUBLIC SECTOR
AND MPP ACCOUNTABILITY
AND TRANSPARENCY ACT, 2014
LOI DE 2014 SUR
LA RESPONSABILISATION
ET LA TRANSPARENCE
DU SECTEUR PUBLIC ET DES DÉPUTÉS

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 29, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 8, An Act to promote public sector and MPP accountability and transparency by enacting the Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act, 2014 and amending various Acts / Projet de loi 8, Loi visant à promouvoir la responsabilisation et la transparence du secteur public et des députés par l'édiction de la Loi de 2014 sur la rémunération des cadres du secteur parapublic et la modification de diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): When this item of business was last debated, the member from Nepean–Carleton had the floor. I recognize the member from Nepean–Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Speaker. It's my pleasure to re-engage in this debate on Bill 8, on behalf of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party as well as the official opposition, of which we are both. Again, I would like to say to my colleagues, particularly those who were not part of this debate yesterday, that the official opposition agrees with most of this bill—the premise of this bill. Obviously, we support increased accountability and transparency within the assembly as well as within the broader public service. We do have some concerns, however. I just want to simply reiterate those before I share my time with the member from Perth–Wellington, who is our government services critic and who I know will add a great deal to this debate.

I think we had an experience in the morning yesterday, when we talked about accountability and transparency, and then, later in the afternoon, transparency and accountability were defeated by the Liberal government when we decided, as an assembly, not to allow Peter Faist and Laura Miller to appear before the justice committee in order to allow that committee to complete its work. I know that was a major disappointment, not only for the official opposition but also for the third party, as we did stand up in union trying to increase accountability and transparency with respect to the two cancelled gas plants that cost taxpayers \$1.1 billion, all in the name of winning an election in the 2011 campaign.

I just wanted to point out that there have been a number of different pieces of legislation that have gone forward before in this assembly to bring increased and enhanced accountability and transparency, but they've been ignored. Again, the antidote to a crisis at OLG was a piece of legislation that did not prevent a crisis at eHealth. Then legislation came forward to prevent future eHealth-like scandals, and we got Ornge. Then there was another piece of legislation that was put in place to prevent scandals like Ornge, and we got the \$1.1-billion or \$1.2-billion gas plant scandal.

Again, we look at the fact that there has been legislation put before the House but it has been ignored by the government and various government agencies and departments. That, to me, says we can't legislate ethics; we actually have to set the bar higher. I think we could have set the bar higher yesterday, had we voted in unison to allow Faist and Miller to appear before the committee, but that did not happen. Only the official opposition and the third party supported that. So that's a concern.

I also wanted to point out, as a result of the cancelled gas plants and the alleged destruction of documents, that there had already been legislation in place to protect public archives and public record-keeping and that was ignored. So, simply adding another clause in this legislation isn't going to protect future records, because it was blatantly and flagrantly ignored.

I just have five points I want to raise before I pass on to remarks by my colleague Randy Pettapiece.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Please use the member's riding.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I am concerned about overlap and duplication. You know, nothing here has been costed. I think the government does owe it to the assembly as well as to members of the public to explain if there will be overlap, particularly between and among the officers of this assembly, and they must explain to us what that added cost is; not that anybody would begrudge a cost for increased accountability, but I think it would be the responsible thing to do.

I am concerned that some of the broader public sector services and agencies aren't designated in this legislation. I want to make sure that the LHINs, the CCACs and all of our hydro entities are included. The government has the onus now to do that. As I mentioned, we've had legislation in the past that should have addressed many of these scandals—this mismanagement—and it didn't, and that's a concern for me.

Also—and I raised this on a number of occasions—I actually think that if you're going to extend this piece of legislation, it must be amended to include all offices of the assembly that have staff, and must include the Speaker's office as well as the Clerk's office.

Finally, I think there is no reporting mechanism in place for those assembly members at this point in time. To leave it to regulation or to the Board of Internal Economy is one thing; actually to set it out in legislation and prescribe it, and give our constituents back home the comfort of knowing that this information will be available to them, where it will be available to them and when it will be available to them, is critical.

With that, it was a real pleasure to engage in this debate on behalf of the official opposition. The member from Perth–Wellington will ably and capably complete my hour's leadoff.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Perth–Wellington.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Thank you, Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand in this House and share time with my colleague from Nepean–Carleton.

I've been fortunate, in the short time I've been in the Legislature, to pass a couple of motions with all-party support. The first motion that I passed basically said that before a government introduces legislation or tries to pass legislation, think about it. Think about what the ramifications of that legislation are before you pass it. I can see that there are some flaws in this bill that we would certainly like to address, because I don't think the government completely took that to heart.

I'd like to read you a letter from the municipality I live in, the municipality of North Perth. It was sent to me by the mayor, Julie Behrns. She contacted me on behalf of the municipality of North Perth in regard to the creation of the new accountability measures as proposed by this government earlier this month. She's talking about the previous bill:

"We have read and understand what this new implementation would mean for us as a municipality and agree with what is trying to be achieved, but feel that it is not being approached in the appropriate manner.

"We as a municipality believe that we are already meeting the proposed expectations. North Perth currently has procedures in place that are effective in maintaining an accountable and transparent government. Implementing the proposed changes would be creating duplication of what we already have in place and would create an inefficient process with provincial oversight.

"As with many new initiatives, the financial implications of these new responsibilities are undetermined. Costs associated with the new accountability measures will almost certainly put a continuing strain back upon the municipalities and their citizens for these increasing financial and administrative responsibilities.

"We strongly encourage your government to consider the financial implications and administrative implications that these new accountability measures will have upon municipalities. A thorough review of existing practices within local government will ensure that you are aware of the existing methods municipalities use to ensure accountability and transparency in local government."

0910

Speaker, this is a well-written letter, and it certainly brings to light a couple of the concerns that the mayor of North Perth has with this bill.

After that, I wrote the Premier and asked her to give us a response to the mayor's letter. I haven't received one yet, and I sent this letter back in April. I'm disappointed that I haven't seen that yet.

I think it's rather rich of the government to introduce accountability measures to municipalities and different agencies within the government, especially after what happened yesterday, as my colleague from Nepean–Carleton said. We could have had the last witnesses to the gas plant testimony. However, you were here and you saw how that was voted down. What kind of message does this send to everybody else? "We want you to be accountable but we don't have to be." I think that's a clear message that has been sent to municipalities and people in Ontario after what happened yesterday.

These two witnesses could have, may have, shed some light on what transpired with the alleged cancelling of emails in what we call the gas plant scandal. However, they have been denied that, and the committee has been denied that right to question them, because of the events of yesterday. I think it's short-sighted on the government's part not to do this. I think I can understand why they're doing it: They just don't want to hear the testimony, because it could be more damaging to their reputation. However, for the sake of democracy, we should have had that opportunity.

There's another letter here that I have, Speaker, that I'd like to read into the record. It comes from the Royal Canadian Legion Ontario Provincial Command, veterans services chairman, in response to this bill. Part of it includes a patient ombudsman for hospitals and long-term-care homes.

"This patient ombudsman has been a long time coming, and one which we as a provincial committee have been pushing for. The ombudsman needs to have teeth for any vulnerable Ontarians." This is from Derek Moore, who is district C commander of the Royal Canadian Legion. He says, "We feel that the patient ombudsman is unsatisfactory because the PO reports to the minister, not the Legislature." And they hope the government will make some comments on this the next time we sit in the Legislature. He feels that needs to be corrected.

I think that's a really good point. Certainly, if the ombudsman reported to the Legislature, we'd get access to his comments a lot faster than if it sits on a minister's desk and isn't brought forward.

The duplication of measures in this legislation does nothing but cost money. And this is something that the minister has failed to do: There are no costs involved here, no estimate of costs that are going to be passed on to taxpayers or to municipalities with the implementation of this bill. This is a real concern. Being a municipal councillor in North Perth, I saw many instances of government regulations that came down without any consultations with municipalities, and all of a sudden there's a cost that's involved. The municipality is caught flat-footed, but the province says that you must do these things, and costs are attributed to it with no help from the government that is ordering any of these changes. Again, I get back to my resolution that you should think of the ramifications of anything you do in this place and what effect it's going to have in Ontario. Some of these issues haven't been fully explained: certainly, the one about cost implications and one of the concerns that the mayor of North Perth had, the duplication of services.

In North Perth, if we had any issues with what we could and couldn't do, we would ask the clerk. We had a process in place. The clerk would advise us as to whether we should be talking about something or whether we should go in camera, things like this. It worked very well. I know for a fact that if I had any doubts about whether I should be sitting there debating something in council, if I had any doubts at all, I would either ask her or I would leave the proceedings, because what I used to go by was, "When in doubt, get out." That's what I used to do.

So now this government has decided, with no consultation with many of these agencies and many of these places, that they know best, even though municipalities have taken it upon themselves to put some of these rules in place in order that they may more effectively govern their municipalities.

Costs are a thing that municipalities are having real issues with these days, because they only have one source of money, which is the taxes that they charge their ratepayers, property taxes. So it's difficult. They have very limited ways of raising money. Most of their services that they supply are cost-recovery, such as their sewer systems or lights. It's nice to make a little bit of money on these things, but most of it is more of a cost-recovery thing. So when a government comes with a piece of legislation that can have monetary ramifications to the municipality, where are they supposed to get the extra money? It's always an issue, which I saw many times when I was a councillor with the municipality of North Perth.

You know, I watched the World Series ball game last night. It kind of reminded me of what a government should work like. When you're out playing ball on the field, you're out there in front of everybody; everybody sees what you're doing. You see the strategy. If you don't catch the ball, you're not going to have the chance to make an out. If you don't hit the ball, you're not going to get a chance to get a run. It's just as simple as that. I think legislators should look at this type of thing. We must be open and upfront with those who we represent, certainly from our ridings and those in Ontario. This is what we saw last night. We saw a pitchers' duel. If the pitcher doesn't put that ball where it's going to go, somebody's going to hit it out of the park. It's just an honest way of watching a sport, an honest way of playing a sport.

I think that's something that we need to get back to in this Legislature, in that we need to consult, we need to manage, but with the partnership of those lower-tier governments that we have an effect on. We must get their expertise, their comments, before implementing legislation that does have an effect on them. That not only gives them a chance to further input; it certainly builds up a sense of trust that the upper-tier and lower-tier governments can grow as we move forward.

0920

I also wrote the Premier another letter concerning this very issue back in April, which I haven't received a response to, but it basically says the same thing: that there are some real concerns in Ontario on this bill. They would have loved to have had consultation on it before things were done. We understand that this bill will get to committee. We hope that the committees will listen to our points and take them to heart, because with what has happened here in the last number of years—I've only been here three years, but I've seen a lot of history in this place in those three years. Certainly, a lot of it is not good, having to do with the gas plants and Ornge; and with what happened the other day with not letting these

two witnesses come to testify. That helps breed distrust within the municipalities, and our ratepayers and taxpayers of Ontario, with the provincial government.

So whenever we bring legislation to this House, it's just fair that there should be some consultation to see if the legislation is even needed. I'm certain that you can look through this and see that there are parts of it that aren't needed. There are parts that maybe just go a little too far, as was outlined by the mayor of North Perth.

I was interested in some of the comments that my colleague from Nepean–Carleton had, having to do with the ongoing OPP investigations. As I understand, it's the first time that has happened in this Legislature, that I'm aware of. I stand to be corrected if that's not true. Now there are two investigations and not just one. Unfortunately, the OPP are not able to call the witnesses that we're interested in, and that's really too bad.

This legislation covers an enormous amount of ABCs—agencies, boards and commissions—plus municipal interests. Cancer Care Ontario is one of them; eHealth or whatever has been cited in some of these investigations, that we need to have a harder look. The government is proposing that this legislation would make things more transparent and make these agencies more accountable in their dealings with government and with the public.

I would suggest that this is a piece of legislation that tries to deflect some of the criticism of this government over the past years—starting as far back as 10 years ago, when the eHealth scandal first came out—trying to get people to forget some of these things. The government is trying to put themselves in a better light, in that they want to tell the public or try to convince the public that what they're doing is an act of trying to instill that trust back into their government and into what they do. But when you start deflecting things, there are sometimes things that reflect back on you. For every action, you know, there's an equal and opposite reaction. I think the taxpayers of Ontario can see through this, and will see through some of these things in this legislation and have serious thoughts as to exactly what this government is trying to do in deflecting criticism from them, in that they claim to be more transparent and accountable.

I believe one of the ways to instill that trust and to help create a better partnership between government and lower-tier governments and certainly the people of Ontario is that when you ask questions to find out just exactly what happened, whether it be the dealings of the government or anything else, be fair and stand up and give answers if you can.

I know that the committee, especially on this gas plant thing, has been going on forever—a long, long time. But it's because of a lot of government stalling, delays and getting documents that were asked for. Estimates of the cancellations, the dollar values were certainly way out of line of what actually happened, what it actually cost us. It was a long time before that was brought out. The government was kicking and screaming over releasing those figures, and finally, it was done.

Thousands and thousands of documents were finally released. At times they said they had released all the documents, and then we would find out that they hadn't. Certainly, matters of contempt to Parliament were dealt with. So it has been quite the three years with some of these things.

Now, as I've said before, this process is going to be cut short because the government doesn't feel it needs to hear from any more witnesses although the two that we're interested in should have an opportunity to testify. If they had no dealings with what has been alleged to have happened with the deleted emails, then at least they should have an opportunity to clear their names. That's not going happen now.

It's interesting that whenever this side of the House, our party, says something that rubs a raw bone with the government, they always refer to history that's 20 or 30 years ago and start talking about that. Well, we're not talking about 20 or 30 years ago; we're talking about current history and things that need to be looked at.

It's frustrating for me. I get asked in my riding, when I go to events, about what is going on down there, because people want answers. I just have to say to them that it has been a frustrating process getting answers from this government, especially now, since they want to go to report writing with this committee and not let us complete our work.

I think members of our party have done a fantastic job on these committees, especially this one, to bring out a lot of the truth as to what happened and how much it cost Ontario's taxpayers. Certainly, without the efforts of our party and others, this wouldn't have happened. It would have just gone by the wayside without any sense of accountability from this present government.

I think I'll get back to the bill. The reason I'm talking about these things is because the bill is framed to deflect criticism from this government on some of the things that have happened in recent history. But the issue is, it's putting more impetus on municipalities and other agencies that have been trying to do a good job and have things that they want to accomplish—such as the Legion, when I talked about the ombudsman. The government wants to give a sign that they are trying to do things right, which we know that they've had problems with in the past, to deflect criticism of their government.

0930

I think we've all been brought up to believe, and it's been instilled in us, that maybe telling the truth is the better way of doing things. You probably won't get in as much trouble than if you're caught not telling the truth. I was probably punished worse if I was caught in a lie by my parents, and deservedly so. I think that's something that governments have to understand: Fess up to what you've done and get on with life instead of dragging things out and then coming up with bills like this that try to—"Let's go over here a little bit, and maybe people will forget some of the things that we've done in the past."

Being open and transparent—I keep hearing this all the time from the other side of the House. You see it in

the newspapers. I don't know how many times that has been repeated and repeated and repeated. But I guess the definition of that varies depending on who you are, because we don't see that today in some of the dealings with this government. We've asked for the whole story on the MaRS project that they decided to get involved with. We don't have that story yet. We'd certainly like to see it, because I would suspect that there are some things that have happened there that give us cause for concern.

This bill will go to committee. I would hope that the government listens to all of our concerns on it, and also the concerns that I've read into the record from the mayor of North Perth and the Legion. Listen to it. Let's debate those things, let's talk them over, because with any legislation—certainly with this one, as you can see, there are some things in it that I believe weren't well thought out, that need to be addressed. Address the concerns of those who have taken the time to not only write to me but I'm sure have written to some of our other colleagues about their concerns, too. So I would hope that the government will allow us to bring these to committee, and that we can make the changes that we feel are necessary. I believe when the committee looks at them, all parties would probably agree with a lot of the things that I've spoken about this morning and that my colleagues have spoken about, too.

Speaker, I think I'm going to finish up right now. I thank you for the time.

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: I want to thank the members for Nepean–Carleton and Perth–Wellington for their comments on this bill. I know that our member from Kitchener–Waterloo will be doing the lead for us on this bill and will have some of the same concerns but many more as well. New Democrats certainly have some immediate concerns that jump out in this bill, particularly in the case that it is an omnibus bill. That's a hard word to say.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's ominous.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Yes, it's an ominous bill. That's what I wanted to say.

For me, being a nurse and working in the health care field for almost 40 years, my concern is, why is an important change to health care embedded in this bill, with I don't know how many other schedules?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Eleven.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Eleven other schedules. The government, over the past week and a half, two weeks, has been time-allocating many of the bills that have been before us, some after just very few hours of debate. Here we have a bill with 11 schedules, with some very important issues in it, and I'm hoping that we're not going to hear by the end of today or Monday that they're going to be time-allocating this as well.

I think one of the most important pieces in this bill is around health care. Here we have a government that's talking about being open and transparent. We have an Ombudsman who has oversight for many public agencies in this province. And now they're putting in a patient

ombudsman—when we have somebody with expertise to investigate complaints across this province—with very limited powers and oversight ability.

We're going to want to debate that schedule in particular, as well as the entire bill, for as many hours as we possibly can.

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

Mr. John Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased today to stand in support of Bill 8. It's a comprehensive bill. I'm particularly proud of it because a piece of legislation that I put forward in the last session—transparency in members' expenses—is included in that. I put forward that piece of legislation because I believe that if we're going to ask other people to do things, we should be able to do them ourselves and lead by example.

In researching my bill, I spent some time on the Internet and I found some other bills. One bill that I found was coined the Truth in Government Act, and the member from Nepean–Carleton would be familiar with it because it's her bill. It's a great bill in terms of—it took some work to get into it, to get it done. It's not as comprehensive as this bill, but some of the principles are in there. I was quite excited when I looked at the bill, and I thought, "Here's something I can use, and I'll be able to get some support."

Then, upon reading the bill—you've got to read the bill—what I found was that in the section about expenses, everybody in government was included except for us. So the Truth in Government Act applied to everybody except for the members of this assembly and, in fact, this building. I know that the member—because I heard her this morning and I spoke to her yesterday—is in full support of us doing that now, and I congratulate her for that. I look forward, as we continue to debate this bill—that we support that principle, that anything that we ask other people to do, we do ourselves.

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

Mr. Norm Miller: It's a pleasure to have an opportunity to add some comments on Bill 8 and respond to the leadoff speech from our member from Nepean–Carleton and also the member from Perth–Wellington.

The member from Perth–Wellington was raising some grassroots concerns from his riding, which I think is an important thing to do. He read some letters with very specific concerns from some of the municipalities in his riding that probably had a close look at this bill. I certainly hope that the government listens to those grassroots concerns that have been raised and that they get an opportunity to perhaps make some amendments to the bill at committee.

I also note that in this Bill 8, there's one entire section, schedule 2, which has to do with air ambulance. I suspect that is coming from some of the problems that Ontario has had with its air ambulance system in recent years; as we know, that's known as Ornge.

So I'm pleased to see some changes there and also pleased to learn that the almost-final report of the public

accounts committee is going to be tabled in the Legislature today. I had the pleasure of sitting on public accounts for two years, and I'm really pleased that that report is going to be tabled, apparently later on today, because there was a lot of work from all members on all sides of the Legislature that went into that committee report. I think there's a lot to learn from that.

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

0940

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I'm pleased to stand up this morning and speak to Bill 8 and weigh in on some of the comments that were made by the member from Nepean–Carleton.

I very much agreed with the member when she said that this bill was a response to some of the scandals that we've seen with this government with regard to Ornge, eHealth, gas plants, OPP investigations and the deletion of emails. I very much believe that this bill is an attempt by this government to tilt the public perception away from that which the public presently has of the Wynne government, from the 10-plus years of unaccountable Liberal government that we've seen, whether it was under Wynne or McGuinty.

The NDP does support greater accountability and transparency in government, but after reviewing these many schedules, these 11 schedules that are contained in this bill, it's very clear that these schedules are not effective. They're insufficient, they're entirely misguided and, in some cases, they are just self-serving.

One comment that the member from Nepean–Carleton made that I think bears repeating is that you can't legislate ethics. I know that's a comment that has been made by other members in this House. It's very much the truth; it's very much the case. The fact is that this government stood watch over the numerous scandals, those scandals that I've just mentioned. They were aware, in many cases, that these scandals were happening, and yet they didn't have the will to act. So despite the possibly good intentions of this particular bill, the tools and measures that are contained in this bill will not compensate for the lack of will. That's the real problem here: We can put all the pieces of legislation that we want in place to try to regulate good behaviour and good ethics, but it really takes a will on the part of the government.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I recognize the member for Nepean–Carleton: two minutes for a response.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks to all those who engaged in debate today. I think this has actually been a positive experience for us in this assembly, which is not always the case.

I'd like to say thanks to my colleague from Perth–Wellington for bringing his perspective in our shared leadoff time. I really did appreciate this.

Again, Bill 8 is something that we, in principle, support. We agree with most of the legislation. But again, I just want to reiterate that we are concerned that transparency and accountability have been ignored by this gov-

ernment. It was ignored yesterday with an opposition motion to get Faist and Miller into committee. I also believe they're failing in another bill, Bill 10, with respect to child care workers across the province. Again, if they want to be open and transparent, they should allow that bill to travel across the province.

I thought my colleague from Welland had a great point on health care. I didn't talk a lot about it, but the patient ombudsman is going to be a significant piece of concern. If we're talking about transparency and accountability, sending—a piece of this legislation that has to do solely with our health care system is a very important point. I appreciate her bringing that up, because, yes, this is an omnibus bill. There is an opportunity and a potential that many of the legislative officers of the assembly will overlap, and that may create duplication as well.

Finally, I'm very concerned about the designation. Not all of the broader public service is designated, and I'm concerned that not all of the assembly is going to be included in this bill and there aren't sufficient reporting mechanisms.

I wanted to say thanks to the member from Ottawa South for bringing up the Truth in Government Act that I brought forward, I think it was two Parliaments ago—and understanding that his bill, although I also congratulate him for bringing something forward, also did not go far enough, nor does this bill with respect to that.

Thank you to the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka, talking about the need for amendments.

To the member from Kenora–Rainy River, I really want to say thank you for reiterating the response to my speech. But I also want to say congratulations to you. I haven't had the opportunity to do that. I know you're going into a different phase of your life, and I want to congratulate you on behalf of all members of the assembly.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The member for Kitchener–Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to be the lead on Bill 8, the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014.

This is a really interesting piece of legislation. In many respects it's looking to address some of the long-standing issues that this Liberal government has had. But it also is very crafty, if you will, and the title is somewhat deceptive.

It certainly is challenging because there are some things that are contained within this piece of legislation which New Democrats have been strong supporters of around accountability, and yet it's weighted down by legislation which does not address the key issues that are facing the people of this province. The entire nature of it is very interesting. There are 11 schedules contained within this piece of legislation, many of them disjointed, and many of them when you scratch the surface, you get a little more surface. We have some serious concerns.

I'm going to focus a lot of my comments primarily on what I'm regarding as the imaginary patient ombudsman and the fictional broader public sector executive salary

caps. These are key issues because we have a history as a party, our leader in particular, of bringing these issues to this place. They're embedded in Bill 8 and don't address the key issues that we have found.

Also, this entire piece of legislation is looking to address what is essentially a public relations problem for the Liberal government. As you will know, prior to the election, there were serious trust issues. Those trust issues have continued. So this legislation is an attempt to reshape that party and to reintroduce this party and this government to the people of this province. I will maintain that the people of this province will not be believing that public relations campaign.

It's our job, actually, as the third party, to be very clear with the people of this province why the title of this act is a great title, obviously. Who doesn't care about accountability and transparency? Language is so important when you're crafting legislation. But actions speak louder than words.

A few examples just to bring that point home: The mandate letters have been distributed, and it was a very public process. But mandate letters are only valuable to the public if they're actionable. When you have a Minister of Labour, for instance, who has a mandate letter which does not address working at heights and mandatory training, or does not address the long-standing issue of lack of regulation around swing stages—if you have a mandate letter which actually doesn't address key safety issues in the construction industry, then it's not worth that much.

Certainly, with the Treasury Board, for instance, their mandate letter calls for reviewing IT in the province of Ontario with the Ontario public service. Yet yesterday the minister stood up and said, "You know what? We don't have a problem." Well, how can you do a review of IT when privatization, the private sector, is claiming 63% of the work in this province—and not admit that that's a problem? You're not going to solve a problem if you don't admit that there's a problem. So I found that incredibly interesting.

I think that the theme, if you will, that the government is trying to push forward—push that agenda forward—around openness and transparency is incredibly important; it is. People don't trust politicians. People have seen the track record of this Liberal government. They have outstanding questions, for sure.

Language is really important within this context as well. In the Ed Clark report that came out, he uses language like "unshackling" and "unlocking." I think of "unravelling" when I read that report. Certainly someone has a thesaurus because there's new language that is being introduced by this government to, in our opinion, push this forward and accelerate the privatization agenda, which actually doesn't serve the people of this province.

Again, on openness and transparency, we continue to ask for clarity. That's our job. We are here to represent the people of this province. When there's a lack of clarity on certain issues, we stand in this House, and we ask good questions.

For instance, last week, on the Pan Am Games, we found that the government, in their request for proposals process for security for Pan Am, has embedded an element of sponsorship. They're asking those companies that are bidding for security on the Pan Am Games, which we all want to be successful—those RFPs are calling for and giving weight to sponsorship. So if those companies give cash or gifts in kind or marketing services, they get bumped up the line to win the contract.

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It can't just be me who has a concern about this. If you want quality services, especially around security—what could be more important? The minister has said that you can't put a price tag on security for the Pan Am Games. But you can tie it to an RFP if you want that contract. There's a word for that. The federal Liberals ran into a sponsorship scandal not that long ago; it's in our recent history. If you were enticing a company to give you cash to get a contract, some people might actually call that a kickback. They actually might. We have some outstanding concerns as to how these contracts are being—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would ask you to withdraw.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Withdraw.

Again, on openness and transparency: Every day we come to this House. We ask good questions on how contracts are awarded. We ask good questions on who is lobbying this government. We have outstanding concerns on, certainly, the key issues that this act is supposed to address, and I'll get to those right now.

The issue of broader public sector executives: This is under schedule 1. It looks to, in many forms, try to establish some ceilings on public sector CEO salaries. However, it doesn't actually put a cap. You can't say that this piece of legislation is truly going to be effective. You can't say that it's actually going to get those public sector salaries under control. The bill does not include actual public sector CEO salary caps. There's only info gathering and authority to negotiate a future framework for developing future regulations that might one day include an actual CEO cap—or not.

Now, we as a party and our leader, Andrea Horwath, had brought forward Bill 57 back in 2010. The government at the time opposed this legislation. Bill 57 called for a hard cap of \$418,000. The government at the time said no. They wouldn't support it. They thought that it was unreasonable to put a cap on public sector salaries. Bill 57 should be the starting point for amending this schedule. It should be clear that, obviously, there are some exceptions around this cap, but if you don't set a hard cap, you won't reach that goal.

Certainly, we have seen some examples of outrageous salaries and payouts for certain people in the public sector; the CEO for the Pan/Parapan Am Games, for instance. The salary, as a starting point, was exorbitant. It was shocking for the people of this province to see that salary in print. It was even more shocking to see how much he was awarded after, quite honestly, leaving the job—I think he was asked to leave—because there were

some quality issues. There was a quality service piece. Then, of course, there was a huge payout. I mean, who needs a job when you can get a payout like that, you know?

Ms. Cindy Forster: “The day I won the lottery.”

Ms. Catherine Fife: Yes. You don’t go crying home when you get a payout of almost \$480,000. It was a huge payout. Quite honestly, it was a huge insult to the people of this province, because there are people on the front line in the health care sector, the personal support workers who’ve been promised an increase—it is not flowing to all PSWs—a primarily female-dominated field. The early childhood educators who do amazing work across this province—what is more important than caring for a child and being part of their early learning and care experience? They are some of the lowest-paid people in this province, and the money that was promised in the election is not flowing, either.

The concept that this piece of legislation is going to get those salaries under control, is going to provide any true oversight in the executive form of public sector workers, is just not happening. In fact, even last week—actually, it was just earlier this week; it’s been a long week—we had a day where we had a session, actually, around privatization in the province of Ontario. The government is going through the motions around accountability, yet when we follow the money on the IT file—that’s where we are right now; there’ll be a new file next week and there’ll be another file the next week after that. But when you follow the money, the 63% increase in the private sector being awarded work that public service IT-qualified professionals should be doing, at a huge cost, \$703 million—there’s no excuse for that. There absolutely is no excuse.

We found you \$200 million. You need \$200 million if you want to follow through on some of those promises. The promises that we would prioritize, of course, are the PSWs and ECEs, because those are key jobs in the province of Ontario around caring for people.

The other issue is on schedule 5, and that’s the patient ombudsman, and this is not negotiable. This is a non-negotiable issue, because in health care, there are some serious ethical issues happening in our long-term-care facilities and in an emerging, growing field of private medical clinics. We have long advocated for full oversight of the health sector by an independent provincial Ombudsman, which is already allowed in every other province.

If you pay attention to the health care file, and it’s hard not to—I mean, we just had some folks here yesterday sharing their stories around the emerging and growing field of medical tourism. This is a huge ethical issue for this province. The RNAO was here, the Ontario Midwives, the Canadian doctors, and they raised the flag on 12 hospitals in the city of Toronto that are marketing and soliciting patients from other countries to come here, to bump people down the wait-list for surgery and certain procedures—birth tourism is a growing field; that’s something that we should not be proud of in the province of Ontario—and there’s a cost.

People think that you can generate revenue through medical tourism, but actually what happens, and this was really interesting, is that when you bump less affluent and more sick people down the wait-list, they get sicker, and because they get sicker, those costs rise. While it looks like you get a short-term burst of funding—because we all know that there are some funding issues on the medical front—you actually end up losing money, and the duality of the health care system is, again, privatization by stealth, which seems to be the agenda. That’s not accountable, and that’s not transparent, so we called the government on this.

The medical tourism issue: This patient ombudsman wouldn’t be able to look into this issue. There are so many limitations to this role in the province of Ontario. I think it’s very clear, I just want to say from the outset, that the government oversold this bill, and now they’re trying to push it forward. They oversold it because they have this internal conflict, if you will. Half the time, they are trying to take credit for the things that the government has done since 2003, and then, the rest of the time, they’re trying to distance themselves from the scandals, the mismanagement of the previous government.

There is going to be a day of reckoning. You can’t have it both ways; you were either part of the government that mismanaged Ornge and eHealth and gas plants and now MaRS and soon-to-be Pan Am, coming soon to a scandal-ridden paper near you—you can’t have it both ways, and this piece of legislation is not going to fix it. I know that you want it to fix it, but maybe it can’t be fixed. You could pull some of the schedules out of this huge piece of legislation. You could do that; I doubt that you will, though.

Back to the patient ombudsman: This does amend the Excellent Care for All Act to establish a new patient ombudsman with very limited powers to resolve and investigate complaints from patients and former patients of hospitals, CCACs and long-term-care homes. That should keep a patient ombudsman very busy. It does not, of course, address private clinics and retirement homes.

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The private clinic piece, though, is really concerning for us, because we have seen an emerging and growing trend around privatization on the health care front, and we’re tracking it very carefully. Our health critic is on this file very closely. For instance, just to give you an example, if you were a patient and you were at one of those new private clinics—I call them Scopes “R” Us—and there was a medical mishap, which actually the research and the evidence have shown happens more so in private clinics. As a patient, you could contact the ombudsman. As a former patient, you might be able to go back and contact the ombudsman. However, if something went really wrong and you weren’t able to raise a concern, a family member couldn’t do it, I couldn’t raise the concern with the ombudsman as an MPP—I would be limited based on the scope of this role—and the ombudsman could only investigate actions or inactions, not decisions.

For instance, if I had a parent in a retirement home and something happened, like respite care was denied, they couldn't do anything because it's a retirement home, and we all know that there are serious, serious issues in retirement homes. We go full circle in this world. Just as children are vulnerable, so are senior citizens—incredibly vulnerable.

Say, for instance, the CCAC decided to end respite care for a parent. The ombudsman could not do anything about this until the action was followed through, so until the care was denied, and then the medical issue either worsened or became more serious. There's no prevention here. It's just not smart legislation.

The Premier has said that we need to have a culture of wellness in this province, but the patient ombudsman can only investigate after things go really wrong, and the patient only can institute that. Obviously, if someone is getting respite care and they're elderly, they may not be in a position to reach out to the ombudsman because they've been denied respite care. Their health situation may be so serious that they can't do it.

So it leaves out MPPs and family members as advocates for patients. The patient ombudsman has incredibly constrained oversight. They are not independent. They report to the minister who—in their mandate letter, there's no mention of shifting the focus of health care to prevention, which would save the province a lot of money.

The term of reference for the ombudsman is also in play. What I mean by this is that, for instance, if the ombudsman was incredibly critical of the minister, of health care policy or of the government of the day, regardless of who it is, their term is not set.

Ms. Cindy Forster: It will be like Ian Troop.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Yes, I know. "Out you go. We don't like you. You're too critical." They could very easily lessen the term that the ombudsman was serving.

We need somebody in the province of Ontario who has comprehensive oversight over health care. This is not this person. Even if the ombudsman got a complaint about a hospital or a CCAC's distribution of health care, they would have to call the hospital first and say, "Hey, I've heard some really bad things about the services you're delivering. I'm giving you notice that I'm going to come over there and check it out."

Ms. Cindy Forster: "Is that okay?"

Ms. Catherine Fife: Yes, "Is that okay with you?" Does this sound like something that is effective? It's actually not. It's not effective at all.

A patient ombudsman, the way that it's crafted in Bill 8, is non-negotiable for us. A patient ombudsman—the powers that be that are outlined in this piece of legislation are inadequate. It does not extend the proper oversight to the health care sector.

Obviously, as I've said, we have a long and proud history of supporting the concept of having a provincial Ombudsman who is independent and who has the powers to actually make a difference. Why bring this in if this ombudsman does not have the power to truly protect people in the health care system? If you haven't been paying attention, the issues that are ongoing in our

retirement homes are incredibly concerning. We have parents and their children. The children are trying to be strong advocates for that parent in that retirement home. Particularly in for-profit retirement homes, the retirement homes nickel and dime the services: one bath a week, not adequate hygiene or feeding. So when these children actually advocate for their parents—imagine how hard it is to see your parent be denied quality care, when you have no other options, in a for-profit setting, because profit drives the agenda in a for-profit retirement home.

At the end of the day, the company that is running that retirement home has excluded the child, has prevented and barred the child from entering the retirement home, because they don't like what they are hearing. They don't like that this client has someone who's saying, "You know what? My parent needs proper nutrition. Nutrition is a key part in elder care," or "My parent is not being cared for in the way that you promised." The patient ombudsman would have no rights or powers to intervene in this situation.

So I think it's safe to say it is ineffective. It does not address the key issues that we have brought forward. Quite honestly, you really have to question why you've brought it forward in the first place. And you've embedded it in an omnibus piece of legislation. When I think of omnibus legislation, I have to say that it's not positive. Quite honestly, I associate it with the Prime Minister and the federal Conservatives, because they have become quite adept at ramming pieces of legislation through under the cloak of some progressive ideas. In turn, there's a lot of unintended consequences that happen because of that.

The record that the Liberal government has thus far—I mean, it's a new term. It's early days, but we've already seen excessive use of time allocation, which limits debate, which limits our democracy, which compromises our ability to represent the constituents, which limits our powers as MPPs to bring concerns forward and speak on the part of the people who did elect us. Limiting our voices in a democracy was something on which the Premier said very clearly, "That's not going to happen. We're going to listen. We're going to be respectful." I believe, actually, she said, "It's important for us to appear to care about the other parties." People don't like arrogant politicians. They don't like arrogant governments. They're stuck with us for four years, or stuck with you for four years. If this is the new culture of a majority government, it does not help the lack of confidence and belief that politicians, in particular, are here for the right reasons.

As I pointed out, you have some serious issues that you're facing on transit and gridlock. We have been able to find you some savings through the Treasury Board, and those were clearly communicated in a very public way, and yet those savings were denied. This is really concerning for us, because we see a lack of respect or a lack of willingness to even work with us when we can all be part of the solution, quite honestly.

So this piece of legislation, as it stands—I think I'm going to be running out of time very soon, but I'll be coming back to a couple of other themes when I return.

To be clear, schedule 1 doesn't set caps for executive pay, so it doesn't address a key issue that the people of this province have communicated to us.

The amendments to the Ambulance Act would not have prevented the problems at Ornge. That will be a topic for another day, because it's such a huge issue and outstanding.

The Ombudsman is gaining access to municipalities, universities and school boards, but is not granted comprehensive oversight over the health care sector, which is the largest budgetary item in the finances of this province and so deserves greater attention and greater power. As I've mentioned, the patient ombudsman will have limited powers and is far less effective than extending independent Ombudsman oversight to the entire health care sector.

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I didn't get a chance to address the children's advocate, which is being granted new investigative functions—but these are seriously curtailed by parameters that effectively prevent the practical application of these functions. So when I get a chance to return, I'll be talking at length about the children's advocate. There are long-standing issues in this province. I remember when Judy Rebick, actually, was the child advocate. She was trying to ensure that parents didn't have to give up their children. If their children had developmental issues and the parents were unable to care for them—the government of the day happened to be the PCs—they would have to give their children up to the authorities, to children's aid, because they were in a position to not fulfill their responsibilities for financial reasons, because of a lack of resources. The government of the day limited her powers to access the Queen's Printer here, because they didn't want her to message out how bad the situation was. They didn't want the children's advocate to be critical of the government of the day.

The theme does continue to this government, as well, because we have seen cuts to CAS funding. We have seen a reduction in special education funding across the province—

Hon. James J. Bradley: Not true.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Actually, that is very true. We have seen children in private child care centres—we've seen this government turn a blind eye to the complaints that have come from that sector. Unfortunately, the piece of legislation in play does not really address the serious and outstanding concerns on the child care front as well.

Ms. Cindy Forster: We've seen people drop off their autistic kids because there's no funding.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Yes, I know. The issue that the former child advocate dealt with almost 15 years ago still continues today. We still have parents who are in a position with their adult children, whether it's autism or physical disabilities—they've aged. I can't imagine how hard it is, but they have to give up their rights as parents, in many respects, to ensure that their adult children are properly cared for.

Obviously, we are going to put forward a lot of amendments. It's a huge amount of work to do. It doesn't

need to be this way. It could be more simple and direct. But for some reason, this government has packaged it all up under the guise of openness and transparency. Your actions are speaking louder than this piece of legislation and the title of this legislation.

When I do get a chance to come back and delve a little bit further into the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, I will be addressing the fact that the advocate of the day has long sought the same ability to investigate matters that pertain to their mandate—children and youth receiving services from government—as all of the other provincial child advocate offices currently have. Ontario needs to catch up. It needs to catch up on the patient ombudsman, on the child advocate and, certainly, on accountability.

We have no problems whatsoever exposing our expenses. Our lives are very public as it stands right now. But it makes no sense to embed all of these schedules together when those key issues around accountability and transparency need to be addressed.

Ms. Cindy Forster: How about lobbyists?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I haven't even gotten to the lobbyists because it's a little close to home for me. But I will say, though, that I don't understand why this government thinks it's appropriate to have just one year. In particular, the former Premier: One year out, and he's lobbying for a company in Waterloo. That's just incredible, just one year. The federal government thinks that five years is an acceptable amount of time. I think the optics and the perception are actually very important.

Clearly, as I pointed out, the government is looking at this piece of legislation to change the channel on who they are and what their record is. We do not find several of these schedules contained within Bill 8 to be effective or to be efficient. So we call into question the entire intent of this piece of legislation, and we're calling you out on it because the openness and transparency which you've promised the people, you are not delivering on.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

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

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Michael Coteau: It gives me great pleasure to welcome three members of my constituency staff who are joining us in the Legislature today: John Critsotakis, George Bancroft and Arianne Persaud. Let's welcome them to the Legislature.

Miss Monique Taylor: I am very pleased to welcome two guests from my riding today, Terry and Barbara Parker. Santa—I mean Terry—is here to go over my Christmas wish list today.

Hon. Reza Moridi: Mr. Speaker, please join me in welcoming my colleague from my constituency office, Sharminé Hassani, sitting in the members' gallery,

and also Golbon Moltaji, a PhD student at the University of Ottawa institute for Canadian studies. Please join me in welcoming both of them to the House today.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: We have in the public gallery Jennifer Van Boekel and Mike Van Boekel, the parents of one of the best two pages in the Legislature, Greg Van Boekel.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Please help me in welcoming my constituent sitting in the members' east gallery: Cleve Mortelliti, recently acclaimed as councillor in ward 1, township of King.

Ms. Harinder Malhi: On behalf of Minister Michael Chan, I'd like to welcome page captain Raveen's family here today from Markham—Unionville: his mother, Jasvir Singh; his father, Gurmeet Singh; his sister Rhea Singh; his grandmother Manjit Singh; and his grandfather Surinder Singh. Thank you for visiting.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I wanted to welcome my brother Chris McDonell, mayor of North Glengarry, who's here for question period today.

Mr. Chris Ballard: Sitting beside Cleve Mortelliti from King township is my brother Ed Ballard, his good friend.

I also have another introduction to make today. The parents of our page captain Meher Kapoor from Aurora are here: her mom, Mamta Bali-Kapoor; her father, Rajan Kapoor; and her brother Rohan Kapoor. Welcome.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I would like to introduce Mr. Eduardo Harari, who is here as a guest today. He will be participating in the reception I'll be holding this evening and is here for the second reading of my bill this afternoon. Welcome, Eduardo.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): My friends, we have with us today, in the Speaker's gallery, Nazifa Langaryan, the first-ever female consul general of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Toronto. Welcome.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Acting Premier. Ontario was once a thriving location for investment, attracting companies from across the globe and driving our economy. Specifically, Ontario was proud to be a world leader in the mining industry. Just over a decade ago, under the previous government, we were the top mining jurisdiction in the world: number one. Now we're number 28.

Every year, my colleagues and I meet with the Ontario Mining Association, and every year they have the same issues with your government. Ontario mining companies are faced with some of the highest energy costs in North America, the highest worker safety premiums in Canada, a massive infrastructure deficit and tax instability.

Minister, what are you doing to address the high energy rates that are making it difficult—very difficult—for mining companies to continue to invest in Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: It's unfortunate that the opposition party continues to run down Ontario's economy. In fact, Speaker, we've made some important progress in our recovery from the recession, the global recession.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The comments today prod me to say that I will interject on those who interject while the answer is being given on that side, and I will ensure that we get this done quickly and effectively with your co-operation.

Finish, please.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you, Speaker.

I know that the minister is going to want to respond specifically to mining. I know the opposition will want to celebrate the progress that we've made. We've gone from an all-time high unemployment rate of 9.4% down to 7.1%—still too high, but moving in the right direction. We've added 723,000 more jobs, and last year employment in Ontario increased by 100,000. We're moving in the right direction. The opposition party should stop running down Ontario and celebrate our progress.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I say to the honourable member, it's hard to believe anybody could run the province further into the ground than your government has already done. It's the 93rd consecutive month in a row that this province, which used to be the economic engine of Canada, has had an unemployment rate above the national average. Shame on you—dead last in Canada for jobs.

Talking about the mining industry again, Dalton McGuinty told us that he was going to fix the mining industry with the work around the Ring of Fire. He was going to “garner billions of dollars of new investment and thousands of new jobs.” We know that nothing is happening around the Ring of Fire. The mining industry itself tells us that you've set us a shell economic corporation that doesn't do anything. There's not even anyone there to really talk about the needs of the industry.

In fact, in a Globe and Mail article recently, talking about the Ring of Fire, Cliffs chief executive Lourenco Goncalves said: “I don't believe under my watch, and I plan to stay [alive] for the next 50 years ... that the Ring of Fire will be developed.”

Once again, Minister, I didn't get an answer. What are you doing to bring down these industrial hydro rates that are driving jobs out of this province?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Speaking specifically about energy rates, we certainly recognize what a cost that is to the industry. That's why we put in place a northern industrial energy rate program, which is bringing costs down for major mining companies by 25%, as well as other incentive programs under the Minister of Energy, which have made a real difference. That's what the Ontario Mining Association told us when we met with them the other day: that they were very pleased with that and they want to see that continue.

In terms of the comments made by the CEO of Cliffs, I think what's really important—and the leader should know this—is the way that his comments were responded to by everybody in the industry, which was that, indeed, there is significant interest in the Ring of Fire. There are a number of companies that are interested in moving forward with that, and those comments were put out very publicly yesterday by those who responded to the CEO's comments.

We are going to continue to move forward in a very positive way, making sure that we make progress related to the building of the development—

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

Mr. Jim Wilson: That's a point that the minister raises, and that is, are you going to continue the northern industrial rate program? It's a shame that you've got hydro rates so high in the province that now you have to bring in a subsidy program. I suspect that this winter you're going to have to continue to expand the one for seniors and low-income Ontario families. We're already hearing stories phoned into our riding offices about families being cut off because they can't afford their hydro rates; and the winter is just beginning, I say to the member across the way.

So there's a rumour about you discontinuing the industrial hydro subsidy, and the other rumour that the mining industry is definitely worried about is that you'll do the same thing you did to De Beers, when you suddenly brought in the unexpected diamond tax: that you're going to increase the mining profits tax.

I want to know specifically, are you going to keep the subsidy on hydro for them so they can at least continue here in the province for a bit? And what are you doing about the mining tax?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I think it's really quite irresponsible, the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition, particularly as they did not support the introduction of the northern industrial energy rate program. They voted against it. We've supported this in a strong fashion. It's been extended to the year 2016 and there is a very clear commitment on our part to maintain that rate. We recognize how important that is.

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There is no question: When we met with the Mining Association a couple of days ago, they were talking positive. They were talking about the value and economic impact that a new gold mine can bring to the economy. That was fantastic.

We had another report that made it very, very clear about the huge benefit of the mining supply and services sector being about \$10 billion in—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Michael Gravelle: The fact is, we've got new mines opening. We've got 10 new mines that opened in the last 10 years.

The fact is, the industry is certainly under great challenges, but we are working with them closely, and we'll continue to support them as we will in the Ring of Fire.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Jim Wilson: Back to the Acting Premier: On Friday afternoon of the August long weekend, your government decided it was a convenient time to release a report detailing the waste and mismanagement of government pensions in the energy sector.

The report, conducted by pension expert Jim Leech, revealed that Ontario taxpayers are contributing \$5 for every \$1 that employees contribute. In fact, it's worse: Hydro One employees only contribute 12 cents of every dollar in their pension.

Minister, we all know these pensions are far from sustainable, and despite your constant promises, you've actually done nothing to fix them. Now hydro rates are going up once again on November 1, in just a couple of days. Minister, how much more are hydro rates going to increase because of your inability to manage pensions properly at OPG and Hydro One?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Interesting question, given the fact that we commissioned Jim Leech to take a review and look at what is occurring, which has been occurring over many years. We have taken an initiative, recognizing how important it is to protect taxpayers' money, because after all, we are part of this initiative.

I commend Jim Leech on the work that he has done, that he has brought forward. The question comes as a result of the efforts that we're taking, not because of any design that they've made. In fact, we're trying to correct some of the things that they put in place.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Again to the Acting Premier: Let me read a few quotes from that report that describe the situation your government has got us into.

The report said that pensions are “generous, expensive and inflexible.” It also stated: “Should plans go further into deficit, the sponsors, and ultimately ratepayers, will be required to pay even larger contributions.”

Minister, your government did recognize this problem as far back as two years ago, in 2012, when you committed in that budget to reform these ludicrous pensions. But you've done nothing since except reiterate that promise two more times.

It's clear that you won't act, or you don't want to act, or you don't have the stomach to act to get these skyrocketing hydro rates under control. Do you really think it's fair that these people, public service employees in the energy sector, have these hugely fat pensions, yet people at the other end of the spectrum in Ontario are having the lights shut off because they can't pay their bills?

Hon. Charles Sousa: The question occurs only because we are taking action. The question is only being asked today because they've never had the stomach or

the gumption to make corrections to the mistakes that they made in the past.

We are moving forward. We've done the review. Jim Leech has consulted with Hydro One, OPG, IESO and ESA. We recognize that the pensions that have been negotiated over a long period of time need to be corrected. We have taken steps already with other pension holders to the tune of saving Ontario \$2 billion every year, and we'll continue to do that in this case as well.

We have an opportunity to save the ratepayers a total of \$1 billion by 2016, not because of what they're saying, Mr. Speaker, but because of what we are doing.

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

Mr. Jim Wilson: Minister, you had Jim Leech's report before the election. You sat on it; you didn't let anybody know that you had it; and you didn't let Mr. Leech speak about his recommendations. And then, when it finally was put out on the long weekend in August, on a Friday, you said you would review the report.

You have said since 2012 that you would do something about this. Meanwhile, you've continued to sign collective agreements in the energy sector that perpetuate these bloated pensions; these bloated, unjustified payouts to people who probably go home at 5 o'clock every night, if not 4:30.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, he mentioned the Electrical Safety Authority. Well, in May of this year, you signed a collective agreement with them that not only perpetuated their bloated pensions, but you gave them a 2.7% pay increase.

Mr. Speaker, 300,000 Ontarians are out of work in the manufacturing sector. Guess what, they've had a 100% pay cut.

Why do you keep going with these pensions and increasing hydro rates in this province?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, we have had over 700,000 net new jobs since 2003. We have over 100,000 new jobs that were created last year. They suggested that we cut 100,000 jobs in their platform.

As we review Jim Leech's report, we continue to pursue efficiencies at OPG and Hydro One, through ongoing business transformation initiatives. In fact, Ed Clark is looking at it as well, something that they deny as being appropriate.

Over the last three years, efficiency savings of approximately \$500 million have been achieved in both agencies. OPG launched a company-wide business transformation initiative to enhance efficiencies further and reduce spending. To date, OPG's business transformation plan has resulted in savings of \$275 million in 2011. As noted, the work that we're doing is going to save over \$1 billion in 2016 with pensions, and Hydro One has identified over \$500 million in cost savings and productivity improvements in 2013-15 alone.

We're doing the job, Mr. Speaker, and we'll continue to do so.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Catherine Fife: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Acting Premier.

Like Elvis, Liberal credibility on openness and transparency has left the building. They insist that this time it will be different, this time they're going to be progressive and this time they going to be transparent. So can the minister explain why this time they are protecting Liberal insiders, introducing a half-baked CEO salary cap, privatizing by stealth and selling off public assets?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Well, Speaker, I'm not exactly sure what the question was, but let me give the answer to what I think she was asking, and that's on our executive compensation bill. I think it's very important. I think the people of this province have the right to know why people are paid what they are paid, if they're paid by taxpayers. That's why we've introduced legislation. Yesterday we announced we're actually going to introduce an amendment at committee that will expand the reach of this bill. People deserve to know why publicly paid people are getting paid what they are., so we're bringing in a process that will gather the information and then set out thoughtful, reasonable caps, bands upon which compensation will be paid. It's a much more thoughtful response than that offered by the NDP.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Catherine Fife: The Deputy Premier should read her own legislation. There is no cap in that bill.

Speaker, we know that the Liberals are planning to sell down their interest in Hydro One and to bring private companies into our local hydro utilities. We know that this Liberal government is wasting Ontarians' money on the outsourcing of IT services. We found \$200 million. Help me help you. Why wouldn't you do that? I would call that privatization, and it's a stealth agenda that you have. What does the minister call it?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, this question is coming from the person who actually lobbied for the job of being the cut czar if, in fact, the NDP were to form government. This is the person who said, "Choose me. Choose me. I can find \$600 million of savings," primarily in health care and education.

This is one of the first opportunities to offer constructive advice on how we actually drive savings. To suggest that we could save \$200 million in IT by taking her advice is baloney. I don't know if that's parliamentary; if it's not, I apologize. But it just simply doesn't add up. She's got her facts wrong. She refuses to correct her facts.

We are committed to getting best value, and we would welcome helpful advice from the party opposite.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: Mr. Speaker, for 10 years the Liberals have been saying they'll deal with out-of-control public sector CEO compensation, and for 10 years public sector CEO compensation has shot through the roof. Now the minister is saying that they will have a salary cap, but

they just won't say what that cap will be. They apparently scribbled that legislation on the back of a napkin, because somehow they forgot to include agencies like eHealth and MaRS. How can the minister expect anyone in this province to take anything that she says seriously?

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Hon. Deborah Matthews: Well, once again I have to correct the facts. Yes, it is true that we have rejected the NDP position that there be a cap across all executives, no matter what the job is that they do. That is not a particularly thoughtful approach to what we all agree is an issue that we have to address.

So we will be creating hard caps. They will be different in different sectors, as well they should be. We will be looking at public sector comparators. We will be looking across Canada and beyond to actually justify the bands, including a hard cap by sector. It's a thoughtful approach to a complex problem, but we are determined to take it on.

I am very pleased that the member opposite is suggesting that they will support the amendment to expand the reach of the bill.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Catherine Fife: Again to the Acting Premier: The minister was given strict instructions, in her mandate letter, to increase transparency and accountability. But instead of ensuring that Ontarians hear testimony from the people accused of wiping computers in the Premier's office, like Peter Faist and Laura Miller, the government is protecting Liberal insiders.

Can the minister tell this House if her mandate letter is worth the paper that it's printed on?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I thank the member opposite for the question. I think that the member opposite will agree, by looking at the actions of our government, by the mandate letter—as she suggested herself—and by the legislation that she was referring to earlier on in the first part of the question dealing with government accountability and transparency, that under the leadership of our Premier, we are taking very concrete steps to ensure that government is open, that government is transparent and that information is readily available to Ontarians.

That is the commitment that we made to the people of Ontario in the last election. That is the commitment that is very clearly outlined in the speech from the throne, and we will carry through with that commitment, as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Again to the Acting Premier: The minister received a mandate letter that said to make government transparent, but instead she is protecting Liberal insiders from testifying at the committee. Her mandate letter talks about protecting public services, but the Liberals are privatizing public services like IT and hydro utilities. It talks about getting CEO pay under control, but the Liberals are introducing the first pay cap with no cap, and they're making last-minute changes

after they got caught leaving organizations like eHealth and MaRS out of the legislation.

The minister doesn't seem to take her mandate letter seriously. Why should anyone else?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The Premier has made it very clear: She wants Ontario to be the most open and transparent province in the country, and that is what we're doing.

The member opposite is even referencing the mandate letters. For the first time in our history, our mandate letters have been released publicly. The member opposite is referring fully to the mandate letters, as are other people across the province who are actually paying attention to what happens in the Ontario government. I think that by releasing the mandate letters, we have signalled very clearly that we are committed to openness and transparency.

When it comes to executive compensation, just to remind anyone watching, our initial legislation covers hospitals, hydro entities, school boards, universities, colleges and CCACs; and we're expanding to 64 more organizations. We will be introducing that amendment in committee.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: Well, I guess I would just say that actions speak louder than words printed on a mandate letter. The Liberals can tell themselves that they're being progressive, but this is what people actually see: They see Liberals scrambling to protect their Liberal friends from giving answers about the gas plants. They see a promise for a public sector CEO pay cap, but there's no actual cap in that legislation, and they're not even sure who it should apply to. They see a government that's outsourcing, privatizing and wasting money, but insisting that it's being responsible, this time. "Things will be different."

Does the minister think that protecting insiders, skyrocketing CEO salaries and an accelerated privatization agenda which is hurting this province is actually being progressive?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I think we are doing exactly what the people of this province elected us to do. We are committed to come to balance by 2017-18 and at the same time continue to strengthen public services and build the infrastructure that this province so sorely needs.

If the member opposite has a better idea on how we can build the necessary roads and bridges and transit systems that this province needs, I'd love to have her suggestion. All I'm hearing is, "You can't do it this way; you can't do it that way; you can't do it this way," and there are, so far, zero constructive ideas on how we raise the significant capital required to build the infrastructure and assets that the people of this province need.

DISASTER RELIEF

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister, during the ice

storm last January, many municipalities stepped up to assist stranded motorists who were unable to get home as a result of closed roads. In my own riding, Shelburne and Melancthon applied for \$51,000 and \$50,000 each to the Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program, only to be denied because, to quote the rejection letter, "These costs can be managed within municipal budgets."

Minister, do you believe it is fair for Shelburne and Melancthon to foot the total bill when they were sheltering stranded motorists from across Ontario?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: What I think is fair is that municipalities that for whatever reason or combination of reasons suffered the most damage and have the least ability to respond fiscally to the challenge that that presents get helped as quickly as possible. Those that have the financial wherewithal to handle the concerns will understand that those that are in greater need should get the assistance that they require. We can't respond to every request out there. The ice storm was a one-off issue as well; it wasn't like the normal ODRAP kind of position. But those municipalities that have been most challenged and are least able to respond are the ones that are getting assistance.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question to the minister is, how bad does it have to be? I understand you've approved \$190 million in disaster relief funding, yet decided that Shelburne and Melancthon don't qualify.

To put this in perspective, the mayor-elect of Melancthon stated that the costs of the damages would have a serious impact on creating the next budget for the township and stressed that \$50,000 is the equivalent of a 4% tax hike.

Minister, will you reassess these requests from Shelburne and Melancthon in light of the significant burden these costs will mean to their municipal budgets?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: We have a process in place. Before the ice storm, there was no funding allocated specifically to respond to ice storm issues. This government found a way to provide \$190 million to those most stressed. I think that should be celebrated.

TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Acting Premier.

The hundreds of thousands of Ontarians who work through temporary job agencies often work alongside co-workers while earning 40% less pay, with fewer or no benefits at all, job insecurity, and little protection against workplace abuses.

Bill 18 gave this government an opportunity to fix these problems, but the government has failed once again. Instead, they have left many of the barriers that have trapped people in insecure work for years. The government could have taken the time to listen to temporary job agency workers and develop real solutions to address the problems, but instead they are rushing through a deeply flawed bill through a time allocation motion.

Why is this government using strong-arm tactics and pushing through this bill instead of protecting those vulnerable workers in our province?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I thank the member for the question on Bill 18, which passed through the House yesterday, and I'm very pleased to say, with all-party support.

The intent of this bill builds on a 2009 bill which prohibited agencies from imposing barriers that prevent clients from hiring those assigned employees directly. They prohibit clients of agencies from any reprisal against assignment employees for asserting the rights they have under the Employment Standards Act.

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If this bill is passed, and I hope it is, it's going to ensure that temporary help agency recruits are not charged fees by those agencies for things like resumé, for simply taking a job, having the information they need. The seizure of passports and of documents is included in this bill.

I would urge the House and the member to support this bill. There's a process where people will be able to come forward and make recommendations along the way. I urge that we get to that point, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, a specific example of how flawed this bill is, and how it doesn't go far enough, is the fact that Bill 18 now only extends the joint and several liability to protect unpaid wages and unpaid overtime, but not public holidays and other basic employment standards. If the liability is not extended so that direct employers and temporary job agencies are responsible for all employment standards, then temporary workers are still left without protection.

New Democrats will be moving a motion that will extend all responsibility to both the employer and the temporary job agency. Will the government support this motion to truly protect the workers in this province?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you again for the supplementary question from the member. Obviously, we will all watch with interest as the process unfolds as it should.

But let me tell you what Bill 18 does do: It establishes joint and several liability between the agencies and the clients for their failure to pay wages. That means that those companies would now potentially be liable. If the agencies refuse or won't pay their workers, the companies themselves have to pay the workers. That's protection that these people don't have right now, Speaker, and it's good protection.

It also helps if the temporary help worker is injured. The injury could also affect the company's costs as well, which is an extra incentive to all companies in this province, those that employ temporary help agencies, to ensure that they've got a safe workplace. It's an added incentive. I know that that's an aim of all members of this House: that people come home from work at the end

of the day safe. This bill moves the yardsticks on this, and it's worth the support of every member in this House.

SENIOR CITIZENS

Mr. Chris Ballard: My question is for the minister responsible for seniors affairs.

Minister, I think I speak for everyone when I say that Ontario seniors have significantly contributed to the success of our great province and that they continue to make meaningful and significant contributions.

Mr. Speaker, October 1 is recognized in Canada as National Seniors Day and by the United Nations as the International Day of Older Persons. On this occasion, the minister made an important announcement and gave us an update on the new Seniors Community Grant Program that our government has launched. The program is a tremendous success, helping seniors across our province to stay connected and involved in their communities, especially the seniors in my riding of Newmarket–Aurora. Would the minister please inform the House of how this grant continues to help improve the lives of seniors in Ontario?

Hon. Mario Sergio: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Newmarket–Aurora and congratulate him on his election to this Parliament. I know that he will serve the people of Newmarket–Aurora with zeal and dedication.

Let me say that our government introduced the Seniors Community Grant Program with the idea to keep our seniors engaged in activity in their own environment, in their own community to live a better and more meaningful life. The grants fund not-for-profit organizations for groups that indeed encourage and promote greater social inclusion, volunteerism and community engagement and to bring our seniors out of isolation.

I'm very proud and very pleased to inform the House that, so far, 118 projects have been already funded. Groups that have received funds are reaching out to some 25,000 citizens in our province, and we will continue to build on the success of this program.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Chris Ballard: I would like to thank the minister for his response. It's great to hear how committed our government is to our seniors, and I'm delighted to say that this grant has been very well received in my riding of Newmarket–Aurora.

Mr. Speaker, I recently had the pleasure of attending the celebration of the re-opening of the Newmarket Seniors' Meeting Place, an organization that boasts a membership of a thousand seniors. It was a wonderful event, with a number of activities, food, entertainment and many, many seniors in attendance.

I'm pleased to say this celebration was made possible because of funding received from the seniors community grant that helped the centre reopen its doors.

Can the minister provide us with any additional details regarding this great initiative that's serving my senior constituents so well?

Hon. Mario Sergio: Again, I want to thank the member from Newmarket–Aurora. I know that the seniors in the ridings of the member are happy to have received the funds and done this wonderful event. Events like the one there and celebrations throughout Ontario are taking place as community groups are receiving the funding.

I have to say that I am so proud. This is the first time that our seniors in Ontario are enjoying the benefit of the first-ever grant for seniors in the province. This is going directly to helping our seniors stay connected and engaged in their own communities, living more meaningful lives.

I have to say that because of this access to the program, our funding reached from \$500,000 to \$1 million, thanks to Minister Sousa, in the 2014 budget. This is part of Ontario's Action Plan for Seniors. We will continue to work on it and continue to make Ontario the best province where seniors can age and live gracefully.

GO TRANSIT

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Minister of Transportation.

Minister, when I asked you in estimates this week about your government's commitment to deliver two-way, all-day GO service to Kitchener-Waterloo within five years, you told me, "There are a lot of commitments that governments make, that parties make ... that are aspirational in nature"—yes: aspirational in nature."

I believe that commitments made before, during or after an election are your word; they're your promise. Where we come from, we have a four-letter word for those who dress up their aspirations as commitments.

Kitchener-Waterloo residents are still waiting for the four trains going in and out that were promised seven years ago. Now they have even more reason to be skeptical.

Minister, I'll ask a very simple question: When will Kitchener-Waterloo residents see two-way, all-day GO service?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to thank the member opposite for his question. I certainly had a terrific time at estimates committee having the opportunity to respond to questions from this member, not just about issues relating to chrome yellow on school buses, for example, but also with respect to our very ambitious plan to deliver two-way, all-day—what we call regional express rail.

What I find troubling more than anything else is that this member repeatedly, in his own community—a community that is so ably represented by our member from Kitchener Centre—here today in the House and over the last few days at committee, seems to be far more interested in parsing my words and getting into a game of semantics instead of actually working hard for his community, to work with us to deliver two-way, all-day GO.

As I have said many times in this House, our government has a commitment and will deliver two-way, all-day GO service to Kitchener-Waterloo, to Milton, to Barrie and along all of our corridors over the next decade. That's our plan; we'll get it done.

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

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

I would be remiss if I—

Mr. John Yakabuski: I didn't like the answer either.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Your timing is so impeccable. Just when I'm ready to admonish someone on this side, you give me reason to do so.

I would be remiss if I did not tell the deputy House leader that he is warned. I will now turn to the member from Renfrew and say, you're next.

Carry on.

Mr. Michael Harris: Back to the Minister: It does appear we've struck a chord here. In fact, Minister, in committee, those were your exact words—your government's aspirations. At least the former Minister of Transportation was actually prepared to give a timeline. So why the change of heart?

Minister, I am trying to work with you here. I'm giving you another opportunity to clear the air with the people of Kitchener-Waterloo. So can you tell us today what timeline your ministry is now aspiring to for completion of all-day, two-way GO service to Kitchener-Waterloo?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member again for this question. It's interesting to me, at committee and in press releases that he has put out to his community and here again in the House today, Speaker, that this particular member seems very taken with the word "aspirational."

Let me talk about that for a quick second. In the last election campaign, in that last consultation that we had with the people of Ontario, that member, his leader, his party, aspired to fire 100,000 Ontarians. This party, our leader, our government, aspired to move Ontario forward by building it up with an ambitious \$29-billion plan for transit and transportation over the next 10 years. That's the work we're doing. We're going to deliver for Kitchener, for Milton, for Barrie, for Brampton, for Mississauga and for the entire province because that's our job, and we'll get the job done.

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CHILD PROTECTION

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Minister of Labour. Speaker, once again this afternoon, I will be bringing forward legislation protecting child performers, Bill 17, to the Legislature for second reading. This is essential legislation to ensure that working children have the safest working environment possible in our province.

My first bill, Bill 71, was tabled on May 15, 2013. Unfortunately, after going through committee with the government's support and assurances that the bill would go, it ended up as a political football on the order paper.

Can this minister confirm to me that there will be no—I repeat, no—political games for this current bill which protects children?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I thank the honourable member for the question. If I was able to guarantee there would be no political games in this House, I'd be one unique politician.

But let me tell you that I do support the bill personally. I know, through the ministry processes, as we've investigated the bill over the years, that it's a bill that's received support from the Ministry of Labour as well.

I look forward to the debate this afternoon. I look forward to the passage of this bill through the process. At the end of the day, Speaker, you know, I know, and the member knows—and we've had conversations on this. He knows how personally supportive I am of this bill. At the end of the day, it's the will of this House that will pass this bill. It will be the three parties working together and the House leaders agreeing that this bill will move forward.

I can honestly say that I wish the member well. He will have my personal support and the support of the ministry as this process continues.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Paul Miller: Thank you, Minister, for your support. I hope the House leaders feel the same way.

Speaker, Bill 17 encompasses the amendments that were made in committee just 11 and a half months ago. It has been through intensive writing, review and committee processes. Ministry staff worked with ACTRA, Equity and me on the bill. All the parties worked on it through the committee process and passed it. The protection of child performers, the only legal child labour in Ontario, must be enshrined in law. Their safety should never be subject to negotiations by House leaders.

Will this minister commit right now to his and his government's full support to protecting child performers by passing Bill 17 to third reading and royal assent, not stalling it at House leaders' meetings?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the member once again for the supplementary. I'm sure all members in this House understand that the need to keep our kids safe, whether it's at school or in the workplace, is something that we all—to use a word used recently—aspire to. It's something we want to see happen.

There's a process that's employed in this House. The House leaders meet on a regular basis. They decide on the agenda of the House. Bills proceed in that way.

Speaker, I've met with the member opposite to express our support for the bill. Nothing would make me happier than to see this bill proceed. If it's the will of the third party, which I believe it is—certainly my colleagues on this side of the House that I've spoken to are in support of this bill. We want to see it move forward. We wish you well in this regard.

There's a process that needs to be followed. The Conservatives I can't speak for; they can speak for themselves. I know where the rest of us stand.

PORK INDUSTRY

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. There are

approximately 1,549 pork producers in the province of Ontario. They market roughly 4.8 million hogs, an industry contributing upwards of \$5.6 billion to the Ontario economy.

On January 22, 2014, the first case of PED was discovered in Ontario—a virus causing high death loss in pigs, especially nursing piglets. The disease, which struck in the United States in the spring of 2013, has killed millions of piglets south of the border and helped drive up pork prices. It has spread through 30 US states and infected more than 8,500 farms.

Can the minister please update the House on what the government is doing to support Ontario's swine producers during their challenging times?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the hard-working member for Northumberland–Quinte West for that question this morning.

The agri-food industry in the province of Ontario represents \$34 billion of GDP, 760,000 individuals are employed in this industry, and the pork sector makes up \$5.6 billion of the total GDP.

Since PED was first discovered in the United States, the province and the industry have made concerted efforts to educate producers, transporters and suppliers about the virus and helped them implement strong biosecurity measures. In fact, through a RED grant in the county of Lambton, Ontario, we're providing funds now for a trucking firm which is the first biosecurity firm, I believe, in North America. That's a great tribute to the ingenuity of people in Lambton county.

Our government has provided over \$2 million in immediate assistance to Ontario Pork, following the outbreak, to support industry-wide enhancements—

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

Hon. Jeff Leal: —to biosecurity through a special—

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

Hon. Jeff Leal: —Growing Forward 2 intake. More than 1,000 applications—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member will sit, and he knows better.

Supplementary.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Thank you to the minister for his answer. It is clear that the collaborative efforts by veterinarians, farm groups, government, farmers and many people in the swine sector to fight the disease in Ontario, coupled with the province's preparedness and the resources put forward in fighting this virus, have been instrumental in responding to and limiting the spread of PED in Ontario.

But, Minister, on July 21, 2014, PED was found on an Ontario farm as part of the industry PED surveillance elimination project. Producers, industry and the public want to know why Ontario is continuing to see cases of PED. Can the minister please inform the House on why we continue to see cases of PED in Ontario and how we're addressing the challenges as we head into the winter months?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the member for his supplementary. The early identification of the source in Canada, along with the summer weather, has helped reduce the impact of the virus in Ontario and has limited its spread. In fact, it has been over three months since the last case of the virus was confirmed, while Manitoba and some US states continued to have new cases throughout the spring and summer months.

It's important to note that PED is a virus that tends to flourish in cold weather.

I recently had the opportunity to meet with officials from Mexico and the United States to discuss PED, and shared information and heard from experts on how leaders can help prepare their region to manage an outbreak and defeat it.

It remains critical for all the parts of the pork value chain—producers, transporters, suppliers—to be vigilant with biosecurity practices to prevent PED and other viruses from getting inside the swine production units in Ontario. My ministry has been working and will continue to work with the pork industry in strategies to mitigate the risk of PED's impact this fall and winter, and to ensure Ontario's vital pork industry in this province.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: My question today is for the Minister of Education.

Minister, we all know that your Bill 10 is seriously flawed. In spite of that, you still want to push it through this House quickly. The bill does absolutely nothing to provide a safer daycare system. We calculate that a minimum of 140,000 independent daycare spaces will be lost and eliminated.

You disagree with that number. So, Minister, it's very simple: How many independent daycare spaces have you calculated will be lost? A simple number is all I want to hear.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Actually, I'd love to hear how he calculated 140,000. I can actually—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm very happy to tell the member opposite that, in fact, we have, since we came into government, licensed 130,000 new spaces, and that's actual licensing data, that we have those new licensed child care spaces.

I really do have to challenge what the member opposite has said about Bill 10—because, as we all know, the Ombudsman recently tabled a report. He made a number of recommendations.

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I simply want to quote what the Ombudsman told a Queen's Park briefing. He said, "I am satisfied that the bill takes care of what needs to be legislated. I am satisfied with the current course of what's happening, and with the undertaking of the minister to continue"—

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: The same people who wrote your briefing notes are the same people who let down the daycare system for the last 10 years.

Minister, I want to tell you that there are rallies being planned to protest the flawed Bill 10 and the loss of 140,000 independent daycare spaces. We expect a rally will be held in your riding of Guelph in early November, and we'd like to do it according to your schedule.

These protests are being held because independent daycare operators have been completely left out of the consultation process that created this flawed bill, in spite of the fact that independent daycare providers provide about 78% of the spaces in Ontario. But you know what? They don't belong to the Working Families coalition. They don't have a big union to support them.

Since you are denying child care providers a voice by not allowing the bill to travel, as the MPP for Guelph, will you attend the Guelph rally and hear the concerns of your constituents?

Hon. Liz Sandals: We really do need to talk about the reality of how people have responded to the bill. For example, if you talk about the response of Andrea Calver, who is the coordinator for the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, she says, "This is broad legislation that is going to ... really crack down on those unlicensed operators who have more than five children. But it also has impact on child care centres and a very significant proposal for children from six to 12."

I'd like to tell you another quote from Andrea Calver: "It's really a big step to moving from a patchwork of programs to a system of early learning and child care.... We really feel this legislation is part of the move to create an early learning and child care system."

CHILD CARE

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is to the Minister of Education. Parents expect this government to do its job and keep kids safe in daycare, but the Ombudsman has uncovered a shocking lack of inspectors to do the job. There are just 49 permanent child care advisers in Ontario, and the minister's new enforcement unit will only add six inspectors.

It's no wonder illegal daycares operate with impunity, taking advantage of families without getting caught. There simply aren't enough inspectors to do the job.

How can the minister possibly defend having just one inspector for every 22,000 kids in daycare?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'd like to talk a little bit about the findings of both the Ombudsman and our ministry. When we looked at the old way in which inspectors were organized, they were responsible primarily for visiting, reviewing, issuing and renewing licences, and then, coincidentally, had additional responsibility to respond to complaints about unlicensed care.

What we've done is created a new unit whose only responsibility is to respond to complaints about

unlicensed child care. That move to create a totally dedicated enforcement unit that will only worry about complaints on unlicensed child care has been endorsed by the Ombudsman. In fact, his recommendations include moving ahead with setting that up, and I'm very pleased to report that that unit has been set up.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Miss Monique Taylor: Speaker, I must have read a different report, because the quote that I read from the Ombudsman said "too little, too late." Inspectors say they're drowning under their workload and are unable to keep up. That means that kids will continue to fall through the cracks.

According to the Ombudsman himself, the minister's new enforcement unit will just have six investigators able to lay charges against illegal operators. It's nothing but a drop in the bucket, because there is no way that one inspector can keep 22,000 kids safe day in and day out.

In contrast, the private day home agencies are required to employ one inspector for every 25 homes, which equals to 125 kids. Why does the minister have such low standards for her own department?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm afraid that the member didn't actually understand the previous response, but let's just move on to what the Ombudsman said. The Ombudsman said, in his report, that "the government and the ministry have taken positive steps and made concrete plans to improve the process for dealing with complaints about unlicensed daycares...."

"In the past year, the ministry has made genuine and focused efforts to rise to the challenge of ensuring that Ontario has a proactive, timely, risk-based, and effective system for monitoring unlicensed child care operations."

I would like to repeat that all the people in this unit will do nothing but respond to complaints and make sure that any directives they issue have been completed. When we get Bill 10, they will actually have the ability to impose fines; they will actually have the ability to close down daycares which are unsafe.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Ma question est pour le ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique. Tomorrow is Halloween, a day when ghosts and ghouls come out across the province looking for treats and hoping to avoid being tricked. It's a wonderful time when communities like mine come together with decorations and costumes, and get to meet their neighbours in the spookiest of settings. I know children in Ottawa-Orléans are particularly excited to show off their costumes and go trick-or-treating door to door.

While we all enjoy our time with family and friends during Halloween, and dress up as many of our favourite monsters and villains, it's important to remember the different ways we can be green while celebrating Halloween.

Speaker, through you, could the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change please update the House

on what our government is doing to help Ontarians enjoy a more environmentally friendly Halloween?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to thank my dear friend from Ottawa–Orléans for that great question. I also would like to wish everyone in the House a very safe and spooky Halloween, if you're out with your little ones. If you haven't gone door to door enough this year, at least you get candies and a smile this time.

I also just want to recognize that this program is really the remarkable creative work of the very great people who work in the Ministry of the Environment, and I'm very proud to be here on the floor on their behalf. They have come up this year with a campaign highlighting a number of Enviroween monsters to remind us ghosts and ghouls about some of the small actions all of us can take to help protect the environment. I've got some favourites. If you have been to the social media website, you'll see these folks.

Dr. Frankenfill's Monster reminds us of the importance of reducing, reusing and recycling to make sure we keep as much waste out of our landfills as possible.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Oh, I'm sorry. All right.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Got to go. Supplementary.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Again, my question is for the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Minister, I'm terrifically thrilled to hear that once again the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change is finding fun ways to encourage Ontarians to enjoy their Halloween in an environmentally friendly way. I'm sure constituents of my riding of Ottawa–Orléans will be happy to know they can have a frightfully good time at Halloween while doing their part to fight environmental evils like Dr. Frankenfill's Monster and something else, Bottlezilla.

I especially appreciate the minister's mention of Ontario drinking water. It's important that we protect one of our most precious resources now and for the future generations of ghouls and goblins.

Speaker, through you to the minister: Can you inform this House of any witches and warlocks the people of Ontario should be on the lookout for to help protect our water?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Maybe I can go through some of the other characters. There's Xhaust, who encourages people to walk, cycle, carpool or take public transit to reduce emissions from vehicles. My personal favourite, Bottlezilla, is a monster I have some personal experience with, encouraging people to fill up at the tap and bring a reusable bottle with them, to reduce waste and take advantage of Ontario's world-class, great drinking water.

It would be great if members of the Legislature—these are non-partisan. We have blue characters, red characters, orange characters and green characters, so you can find your favourite. It's a great social media to get kids more aware about the simple things.

My other favourite is the Pillutor, which teaches us not to flush our pharmaceuticals down the toilet.

There are some very good lessons here. I hope you'll take advantage of these very non-partisan tools.

1130

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Ted Arnott: My question is for the Acting Premier. In question period on July 8, the Premier acknowledged the need to construct the Highway 6 Morriston bypass. She said, and I quote from Hansard, "There are investments needed. I would just call attention to a statement that the member for Wellington–Halton Hills made yesterday." That statement of mine, the one she was talking about, had highlighted the need for the Morriston bypass.

If the Premier, who is herself a former Minister of Transportation, thinks that the Highway 6 Morriston bypass is needed, why is it not yet on the ministry's five-year plan for new highway construction?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to begin by thanking the member opposite for the question today and also for raising it on a number of occasions since June 24, when I was first sworn in as Minister of Transportation—and also for raising this issue at the estimates committee yesterday.

Just to be clear, our government does understand the need to move forward with the realignment of Highway 6 between Frelton and Guelph, which will of course bypass the community of Morriston and provide improved connection to Highway 401 and the Hanlon Expressway. We continue to move the project along with respect to the design and environmental phases, to eventually prepare for construction.

But what I also said at estimates yesterday I think bears repeating in this House: This is one of the reasons that I'm encouraged to hear these kinds of questions from members on the other side of the House, because it's a clear recognition from them that it's very important for our government to make the kinds of crucial investments in public infrastructure like highways, bypasses and transit. I look forward to seeing ongoing support from these members for our very ambitious \$29-billion plan for public infrastructure.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Ted Arnott: That's all well and good, but I think I need to point out that, on October 6, representatives of the Morriston Bypass Coalition were here at Queen's Park. The coalition includes the city of Guelph, the city of Hamilton, their chambers of commerce, businesses like Tim Hortons, Maple Leaf Foods, Nestlé Waters, Canada Bread and Cargill, as well as the county of Wellington and the township of Puslinch.

The minister knows that I've been calling for the construction of the Morriston bypass for many, many years, predating his appointment as minister. When will he finally put it on the five-year plan?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member for the follow-up. As I said at committee yesterday, the Ministry

of Transportation is in the process right now of finalizing the next rollout of the five-year plan that he referenced in the question. I do look forward to continuing to work with him, members from his community and members from communities right across the province of Ontario as we do move forward with our plan to build Ontario up.

Again, this is why it is so crucial for us to have comprehensive and full support in this Legislature for the \$29 billion that we'll be investing, \$14 billion of which will be for crucial infrastructure outside the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, and up to \$15 billion for public transit projects in the GTHA.

It's why it's so important for us to see—in communities like that member's, and in all other communities that we all represent as 107 members of this Legislature—that we need to invest. You can't slash and burn your way to growth. This is the way to build up Ontario and move the province forward.

PENSION PLANS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): New question. The member from Ottawa.

Interjections: Oshawa.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Oshawa. The member from Oshawa.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Yes, the far, distant land of Oshawa. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the Associate Minister of Finance. The government stated in this year's budget that individuals participating in a comparable workplace pension plan would not be required to enrol in the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. In that same document, the Liberal government committed to introducing PRPP legislation in the fall of 2014, nearly three years before the planned ORPP would even see the light of day.

The Liberal government claims that their priority is to create a public pension plan for the workers of this province, yet they are leading with a private option that will send Ontarians' hard-earned contributions to Bay Street.

Will the government's bank-friendly PRPPs be considered comparable and qualify for an exemption from the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan? Is this why the Liberal government is giving PRPPs a three-year head start over the ORPP?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I want to thank the member from Oshawa for her question and for her work as the critic on pensions.

Speaker, the fact of the matter is that we have a retirement savings challenge. People are simply not saving enough for their retirement, and this is of concern for our economic future. What we've committed to do in our budget is to introduce the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. That is our commitment and that is what we intend to do, to ensure that we have a secure retirement future for Ontarians. At the same time, we know that people will continue to have their goals in retirement. We have

to ensure that there is a strong retirement system here in Ontario, including voluntary measures such as the PRPP.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Simcoe North has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Education concerning Bill 10. This matter will be debated next Tuesday at 6 p.m.

DEFERRED VOTES

FIGHTING FRAUD AND REDUCING AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE RATES ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 DE LUTTE CONTRE LA FRAUDE ET DE RÉDUCTION

DES TAUX D'ASSURANCE-AUTOMOBILE

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

Bill 15, An Act to amend various statutes in the interest of reducing insurance fraud, enhancing tow and storage service and providing for other matters regarding vehicles and highways / Projet de loi 15, Loi visant à modifier diverses lois dans le but de réduire la fraude à l'assurance, d'améliorer les services de remorquage et d'entreposage et de traiter d'autres questions touchant aux véhicules et aux voies publiques.

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

The division bells rang from 1136 to 1141.

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

On October 21, 2014, Mr. Bradley moved second reading of Bill 15. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Hardeman, Ernie	McMeekin, Ted
Anderson, Granville	Harris, Michael	McNaughton, Monte
Arnott, Ted	Hoggarth, Ann	Meilleur, Madeleine
Bailey, Robert	Hoskins, Eric	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Baker, Yvan	Hudak, Tim	Miller, Norm
Balkissoon, Bas	Hunter, Mitzie	Moridi, Reza
Ballard, Chris	Jaczek, Helena	Munro, Julia
Barrett, Toby	Jones, Sylvia	Murray, Glen R.
Bradley, James J.	Kiwala, Sophie	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Marie-France	Naqvi, Yasir
Coteau, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Nicholls, Rick
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy	Oraziotti, David
Damerla, Dipika	MacLaren, Jack	Pettapiece, Randy
Del Duca, Steven	MacLeod, Lisa	Potts, Arthur
Delaney, Bob	Malhi, Harinder	Qaadri, Shafiq
Dhillon, Vic	Mangat, Amrit	Rinaldi, Lou
Dickson, Joe	Martins, Cristina	Sandals, Liz
Dong, Han	Martow, Gila	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dunlop, Garfield	Matthews, Deborah	Vernile, Daiene
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Mauro, Bill	Wilson, Jim
Fraser, John	McGarry, Kathryn	Wong, Soo
Gravelle, Michael	McMahon, Eleanor	Zimmer, David

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

Nays

Cimino, Joe	Gates, Wayne	Singh, Jagmeet
DiNovo, Cheri	Mantha, Michael	Tabuns, Peter
Fife, Catherine	Miller, Paul	Taylor, Monique
Forster, Cindy	Natyshak, Taras	Vanthof, John
French, Jennifer K.	Sattler, Peggy	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 66; the nays are 14.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated October 29, this bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Ms. Catherine Fife: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to correct my record from this morning. I used the wrong Judy. Judy Finlay was the former child advocate. Thank you very much.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member is correct in terms that all members have the opportunity to correct their record, and that was in order.

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

The House recessed from 1145 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

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

Am I watching a member hurrying to his chair to introduce a guest? The member from Newmarket–Aurora.

Mr. Chris Ballard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Shortly joining us are two members of the Aurora Lions Club. We have Ra'ed Dallal and Rola Issa Dallal joining us from King City and Aurora.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: It is my privilege and honour to welcome—before they get here—Brian Keys and his family and support: Terry Keys, Darlene Young and Trish Parr. Brian Keys is a proud recipient of today's Ontario Senior Achievement Awards from Oshawa for all of his hard work over the age of 65, and before then, in Oshawa at Hillsdale Terraces.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Joining me this afternoon—again, they will be here shortly—for second reading of the my bill are: Duberlis Ramos, executive director of the Hispanic Development Council; Claudia Montoya, president of Casa Cultural Colombiana; Margarita Feliciano, founder of Festival of Images and Words; Oscar Vigil, Hispanic Canadian Heritage Council; and Claudio Ruiz,

executive director of the Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further introductions? No further introductions? Last call for introductions.

You just slipped in under the wire. The member from Dufferin–Caledon.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My apologies, Speaker. It is a great honour to welcome Emil Kolb, who is current chair of the region of Peel and a 50-year long-serving public servant. So, welcome, Emil.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

Third last call for introductions of guests.

Thank you. It is now time for members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

VETERANS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: There are people who are willing to put their values and beliefs before their own safety: people like veterans who fought to protect our way of life, our freedom and our democracy; people who have made the ultimate sacrifice, like Tyler William Todd from Oxford.

Last week, that sacrifice was made close to home, when an unarmed soldier was shot guarding our National War Memorial. We can never repay the debt we owe these soldiers, but we should show them respect in every way we can.

Tomorrow, the Royal Canadian Legion poppy campaign begins. People will wear poppies to show their respect and thank our veterans. But even though the veterans fought for our democracy, we as MPPs are not supposed to have poppy donation boxes in our offices.

Mr. Speaker, the public comes to our office for help accessing their government, to speak about their concerns and their complaints. It should be a place where they can show their respect for the veterans who fought and ensured they had those rights.

Last week, I introduced a bill to allow MPPs to have poppy boxes in their offices. To ensure that we can accomplish this before Remembrance Day, in a few minutes I will be moving a unanimous consent motion asking that the Legislature declare that MPPs are allowed to have poppy donation boxes in their offices.

I thank the three House leaders for their support and hope that all members will join me in showing our respect and thanks to our veterans.

SUPER SANTA RUN

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to acknowledge the Essex Region Conservation Foundation's Super Santa Run. Amherstburg's annual Super Santa Run is to be held this year on November 15. Participants are asked to run or walk along a five-kilometre route starting in downtown Amherstburg. This event is a fun event for the

whole family. In addition to promoting healthy and active living, it is a great way to kick off the holiday season.

Runners are being asked to meet on Sunday, November 15 at 5 p.m. at Navy Yard Park. Upon arrival, participants will receive a free, five-piece Santa suit to wear during the run, including jacket, pants, belt, beard and a Santa hat. Last year, there were more than 350 runners. The cost is \$35 per adult and \$20 for children.

The Essex Region Conservation Foundation was established as a charitable public foundation in 1977 with the vital goal to receive and maintain funds for charitable, educational, conservation and heritage purposes related to the conservation and restoration of natural and heritage resources in the Essex region.

The foundation supports the Essex Region Conservation Authority by raising funds required to reforest and green the Essex region, protect those significant natural areas that remain, and preserve our natural and cultural heritage. They also restore wetlands and increase green connections through acquiring and developing trails.

All the funds raised go to the Essex Region Conservation Foundation and their Trail On! campaign to complete the Essex-Amherstburg Greenway. I wish them a great run, and merry Christmas to all the runners who are going to be participating.

EMIL KOLB

Mr. Bob Delaney: It's my pleasure today to recognize not merely one of my political mentors but also the retiring chair of Peel region, in the members' west gallery, Mr. Emil Kolb.

Mr. Kolb is going to be taking his leave after this immediately past provincial election, and I'd just like members and all of those watching to know what a wonderful contribution Emil Kolb has made to the development of the three dynamic municipalities that make up Peel region—certainly Mississauga, where I'm from, the city of Brampton and the town of Caledon, which is where Emil hails from. Emil has guided the region of Peel and its three dynamic, fast-growing cities for well more than a generation and has really seen Peel region and its municipalities from being almost rural municipalities to being the fastest-growing part of Canada today.

We are very proud of Emil Kolb's accomplishments as the chair of Peel region. He has worked very, very well and very effectively in his understated and professional manner with the city councils of Caledon, Brampton and Mississauga. The harmony that we've seen in the way our municipalities have developed is, in many ways, a testimony to the fine leadership provided to Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon by Emil Kolb. Good luck, Emil. Thank you.

EMIL KOLB

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I, also, am honoured to rise to recognize one of Caledon and the region of Peel's out-

standing public servants, Emil Kolb, who is retiring after 50 years of public service.

Emil began his career in 1964 when he sat as a member of the Albion township planning board. In 1970 he was elected as a Peel county councillor and served until 1973, when he took a seat as a Peel region councillor for the town of Caledon.

He continued to serve in that role until being elected mayor in 1985, and since 1991 he has served as chair of the region of Peel. In fact, Emil has served as a member of the Peel police services board for so long that he is known across Canada as the godfather of police board governance—but in a good way.

For everyone who knows Emil, you will know that there isn't a public building or an organization in the region of Peel that he cannot tell you a story of how it began, who was involved to get it started and, often, who you had to lobby to get it done. That must be the hallmark of great public service: have a great memory and never make an enemy.

On behalf of the residents of Dufferin–Caledon and the Ontario Legislature, I'd like to thank you, Emil Kolb, for your commitment to public service and to the region of Peel. Your 50 years of dedication to Peel is incredible, and your many contributions to the region are unforgettable. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We thank him for his service. Welcome.

CHILD PROTECTION

Mr. Paul Miller: This afternoon, we will once again debate second reading of the bill to protect child performers in the live and recorded entertainment industries. Currently this protection is left to the push and pull of contract negotiations. What child safety issues could negotiators be forced to give up for another pressing contract issue?

We had a chance, just 10 and a half months ago, to do it right, to become a leader in child performer protection, but some MPPs fell into the abyss of political game-playing with child safety.

We went through an intense process last year with ACTRA, Equity, the producers and the Minister of Labour and his staff, as well as a committee session that brought forward some adopted amendments. We did our due diligence, and we worked well together.

1310

I am hopeful that with some new faces in new party positions, we can again all work together. But this time, we need to get through third reading and to royal assent. We need to ensure the best protection for child performers. We have the chance to show that we can and will work for the best interests of Ontarians and of child performers, not just our own political agendas.

I look forward to all-party support to bring Bill 17, Protecting Child Performers, quickly onto the committee agenda, and then to third reading and royal assent.

RIDING OF CAMBRIDGE

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I stand today in this House to pay tribute to two long-serving politicians retiring from their roles as regional councillors in my riding of Cambridge.

Claudette Millar was elected as mayor of Preston in 1970, in a time when women politicians were not as commonly seen as today. After Preston, Galt and Hespeler amalgamated into Cambridge in 1973, she was elected as the first mayor of the city of Cambridge. In 2003, she was elected as regional councillor, and she went on to be re-elected in 2006 and 2010.

At the broader municipal level, Claudette served on the Ontario Municipal Board from 1987 to 1992.

Jane Brewer was elected as ward alderman to Cambridge city council in 1978. She was elected mayor of Cambridge from 1988 until the year 2000, when she was elected as the regional councillor for Cambridge, serving a combined 32 years on Waterloo regional council. She decided not to seek re-election, and she recently turned 90 years old.

These two extraordinary women, both role models for women in politics, are now retired. I know the city of Cambridge and all constituents will join me in thanking them for their many years of exemplary public service.

ART FLEMING

Mr. Tim Hudak: When my riding, the old riding of Niagara South, merged with the riding of Lincoln back in 1999, I did what a lot of members do and made efforts to know some of the leaders in that community. And I had to go and see one couple particularly, Art and Val Fleming. Business leaders and leaders in philanthropy—they were Conservatives—but they kind of knew what was happening in town. They had that one true value that we all admire in people: They told you not what you wanted to hear, but what you needed to hear.

Over the years, Deb and I were blessed to have their friendship. We got to know them quite well. Every Christmas, Val would send out a letter to all those on her list, with a nice picture of the family—the kids, the grandkids, the great-grandkids—and catch us up on their adventures.

Sadly, this year, Art won't be there. In his 91st year, just short of his 91st birthday, Art Fleming passed away. This was one of the leading citizens in Beamsville, Ontario, one of its most respected and beloved individuals, a man who was born, raised his family and passed away on the same piece of land that's been in the family since 1926.

He built Fleming Chicks, one of the largest employers in town, and then gave back far, far more to the community, setting up the Art and Val Fleming Fund and the Niagara Community Foundation. Strong in their Christian faith, they passed on to their kids values of hard work and community service. The love they had for each other was incredible to behold at their family functions.

Art passed away watching over his grandkids with great pride and incredible love. Today, I want to salute an extraordinary and historic figure in Beamsville, Ontario, Art Fleming. We're going to miss him.

AURORA LIONS CLUB

Mr. Chris Ballard: Thank you for the opportunity to bring good news from my riding of Newmarket–Aurora, specifically about the 70th anniversary of the Aurora Lions Club, which we celebrated this past weekend with a special dinner. Seventy years of contribution to the community is certainly something to be proud of, and it clearly demonstrates that Aurora Lions members live up to the international club's motto: "We serve."

In Aurora, the Lions have been among our volunteer leaders. There are a number of local Lions projects that stand out for me: Lions Park, the original town park band shell, funding for our public library, and the Christmas basket program that still continues. And for those fortunate enough to have tasted them, no one can forget hot pancakes served with fresh maple syrup at the sugaring off at Sheppard's Bush. Lions indeed serve, in this case, thousands of pancakes each year.

The Lions have also been a big part of providing visually challenged people with wonderful guide dogs, two of which attended last Saturday's dinner accompanied by their guardians. I was also impressed to learn that the Aurora Lions sponsor nearly 500 vision tests for young Aurora schoolchildren each year and continue to collect glasses for overseas use. This is in keeping with the club's strong focus on vision.

Going forward, the club is growing to meet the demands of the next 70 years. I'm honoured to stand here today to thank all who serve and have served in the Aurora Lions Club. I'm proud to say that the Lions still roar loudly in our wonderful community of Aurora.

HALTON FOREST FESTIVAL

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Earlier this month, I had the pleasure of stopping by Rattlesnake Point Conservation Area in Halton, one of the most beautiful places in southern Ontario. I was greeted by hundreds of schoolchildren exploring our local forest. They were everywhere: hiking down trails, sitting in circles around fire pits, and gathering in groups in tents. It was all part of the annual Forest Festival put on by Conservation Halton.

This festival is unique. It offers 24 interactive curriculum-linked outdoor activities to educate local students about the importance of respecting and appreciating our local wildlife and environment. They learn about everything, from the composition of the dirt under their feet to the impact of sunlight on our tall trees. It's a fantastic opportunity for kids to learn and explore our natural environment. Thanks to the 300 volunteers and organizers who tirelessly devoted their time and energy, it was an incredible success.

This year, 1,400 grades 6 and 7 students took part in the week-long event, along with countless others.

During my visit, I was taken on a tour of the grounds and I saw first-hand some of the innovative activities taking place. I strolled through the forest, even carried a corn snake—believe me, that's something I'll never forget—and I talked with instructors.

By educating our young people about the environment, the Forest Festival will hopefully inspire generations of environmentally conscious kids to safeguard our natural spaces.

WITHDRAWAL OF BILL 34

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

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to withdraw Bill 34, as I will shortly be asking for unanimous consent to move a motion that would accomplish the same thing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Oxford is seeking unanimous consent to withdraw his private member's bill, Bill 34.

Do we agree? Agreed.

VETERANS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding the Remembrance Day poppy boxes in members' offices.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Oxford is seeking unanimous consent to move a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

The member from Oxford.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, I move that in order to recognize the sacrifices that our veterans made to preserve our freedom and democracy, members of the Ontario Legislative Assembly are permitted to have Remembrance Day poppy donation boxes in their office.

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

Motion agreed to.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I beg leave to present a report on Ornge Air Ambulance and Related Services: Summary Report from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and move its adoption.

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

Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, the interim report was tabled on June 4, 2013, and focused on the identification of issues and a statement of observations.

The summary report, which covers the 2013-14 hearings, focuses on the committee's concerns which point to

the deviation from the fundamental principles of public administration, namely accountability, transparency and value for money. Program delivery at Ornge was compromised and patients did not always receive the optimum services required.

The objectives of this report were to examine why corrective measures were not taken when red flag warnings occurred and how to avoid a recurrence of similar problems by identifying contributing factors.

1320

The committee found the matters identified in the Auditor General's report could be attributed primarily to:

- the absence of due diligence and oversight on the part of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care in applying accountability;

- the lack of transparency and accountability on the part of Ornge's management and board of directors, compounded by systemic operational issues; and

- shortcoming in Ornge's first performance agreement.

There was an apparent inability or unwillingness by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to obtain the information needed to exercise proper oversight of Ornge. Where a government ministry is the primary funder of a crown agency or community service provider, reliable information is required on a timely basis to assess the service levels and cost-effectiveness of those services. The ministry was not diligent in pursuing red flags indicative of potential problems at Ornge.

As well, there are questions as to whether Ornge's current business model provides better patient care than the previous model.

The committee is of the view that Ornge, under the direction of Dr. Mazza, drove the air ambulance program into the ground, leaving very little to rebuild on. As well, poor staff morale was a significant factor in overall operations.

The committee would like to acknowledge the commitment of Ornge personnel in providing ambulance services to Ontarians in a challenging environment.

The report requires the immediate attention of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and Ornge's new management. Pursuant to standing order 32(d), the committee has requested a comprehensive response to this report from the auditees within 120 days.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts—Lisa MacLeod, Han Dong, John Fraser, Percy Hatfield, Harinder Malhi, Julia Munro, Arthur Potts and Lou Rinaldi—for dealing with this report.

I would also like to thank the previous committee, as everyone in this House will know this report was heard over a long period of time, and everybody put a lot of effort into it. In fact, the committee that is there today just did this as we started up the new committee under the new government. I just wanted to point out that the committee that did that was the public accounts committee. They held 40 days of public hearings to look at the Auditor General's special report on Ornge. A total of 85

witnesses testified for 147 hours over a 26-month period. I want to thank the members who served on the committee during that time: Lorenzo Berardinetti, France Gélinas, Helena Jaczek, Phil McNeely, John O'Toole, Jagmeet Singh and Soo Wong. I also want to recognize Frank Klees, Jerry Ouellette and Bill Mauro, who participated in the committee, and most of those all the time during the committee; they just substituted in for the whole committee.

So I want to thank all those people for a job well done, and I also want to thank the Auditor General for all the work that she did, the assembly staff and all the people who appeared before the committee.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me a few minutes to highlight the report. I move adjournment of the debate.

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

Debate adjourned.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SECURITY FOR COURTS, ELECTRICITY GENERATING FACILITIES AND NUCLEAR FACILITIES ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ DES TRIBUNAUX, DES CENTRALES ÉLECTRIQUES ET DES INSTALLATIONS NUCLÉAIRES

Mr. Naqvi moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 35, An Act to repeal the Public Works Protection Act, amend the Police Services Act with respect to court security and enact the Security for Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act, 2014 / Projet de loi 35, Loi abrogeant la Loi sur la protection des ouvrages publics, modifiant la Loi sur les services policiers en ce qui concerne la sécurité des tribunaux et édictant la Loi de 2014 sur la sécurité des centrales électriques et des installations nucléaires.

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: The Security for Courts, Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act is a priority for the government, which in essence would do three things: (1) repeal the Public Works Protection Act; (2) set out a legislative amendment to the Police Services Act to address court security; and (3) set out stand-alone legislation respecting security at prescribed electricity generating and nuclear facilities.

This bill would strike the necessary balance between protecting civil liberties and ensuring the safety of critical infrastructure.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

LONG-TERM CARE

Hon. Dipika Damerla: It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to share with the members the concrete steps our government is taking to accelerate the modernization of long-term-care homes in Ontario. A long-term-care home for its residents is just that—a home—and all Ontarians who reside in long-term-care homes deserve to live in a comfortable, safe and inviting environment.

Our government has made important investments in home care so that more seniors can live longer in their own homes. I am proud to say that our government has already made terrific gains in this area during the last decade with the creation of more than 10,000 new long-term-care beds and the redevelopment of nearly 13,000 older long-term-care beds. But we recognized that more needs to be done to speed up the pace of redevelopment.

As our population ages, long-term care will continue to play a vital role in our commitment to make Ontario the healthiest place in Canada to grow old. And, partly because of our increased supports for home care, we are seeing an increasingly acute population in our long-term-care homes. That makes it even more important that we invest today to ensure the continued safety and quality of care for residents by helping to bring all long-term-care homes in the province up to the most modern design standards.

To achieve this goal, we are committed to provide increased support to long-term-care home operators to ultimately redevelop about 30,000 long-term-care beds. We have set a deadline of 2025 for the operators of those homes to update their homes and to meet all provincial and local building codes, safety standards and revised design standards—all meant to enhance the quality of life and safety for residents.

Our enhanced Long-Term Care Home Renewal Strategy was noted in the July 2014 provincial budget, and today I would like to present it to the House in much detail. The members should also note that I announced our enhanced strategy at the Ontario Long Term Care Association's Fall Symposium on Tuesday.

First, we will establish a dedicated project office to support the program within the ministry. This office will facilitate a faster review of plans and will be a single point of contact for operators as they submit their plans and work through the process.

Second, we will increase the construction funding subsidies by up to \$4.73 per day.

Third, we will extend the maximum LTC home licence term from 25 years to 30 years. The necessary amendments to the Ontario Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, have already been passed and are ready to come into force on proclamation by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Fourth, we will establish a committee to review individual requests for exemptions from the existing

design standards. While we will not entertain variances that impact provincial or local health and safety regulations, operators have asked for other design flexibilities, and we will entertain those on a case-by-case basis.

Fifth, we will encourage the renewal of LTC home beds through increased premiums for preferred accommodations.

Finally, we will work with the sector to schedule the redevelopment of homes.

Over the next few weeks, we will turn to the sector to consult on these elements of our redevelopment plan and seek even further input on their implementation. This is something the sector requested, and we are happy to accommodate them.

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It is important to note that the changes we're bringing forward are the result of preliminary consultations with key stakeholders in the sector. I would like to thank the Ontario Long Term Care Association, the Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors, and other individuals and organizations for their advice on the best way to remove obstacles and kick-start the renewal of long-term-care homes. Further consultation is to improve delivery and content and will, we hope, encourage a greater uptake in the redevelopment process.

I want to assure the members that we will continue to talk to long-term-care operators, resident advocates and LHINs before we finalize all aspects of the strategy. Working closely with the sector will be a big part of ensuring success. To this end, we will be creating a stakeholder advisory committee to further engage the sector.

Our goal is to formally launch the enhanced renewal strategy during the winter of 2014-15, after the engagement process with stakeholders has been completed. We're aiming to have long-term-care homes begin redevelopment projects starting in the fall of 2015.

I'm very committed to addressing the disparities between older and newer long-term-care homes and to working with the homes to help them reach the revised standards in the appropriate timelines. The enhanced renewal strategy will boost redevelopment of older long-term-care beds by improving the business conditions in the sector.

I believe these proposed changes will greatly contribute to the stability and capacity of Ontario's long-term-care-home sector. Redevelopment is essential to ensuring the privacy, safety, security and comfort of all long-term-care-home residents today and well into the future. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Statements by ministries?

It is now time for responses.

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm pleased to rise in the House today, in my role as critic of long-term care and wellness, in response to the associate minister's announcement of her government's plan to redevelop 30,000 beds in 300 long-term-care homes, which is just under half of the province's 633 homes, a capital redevelopment plan that was promised in the last provincial budget.

Sadly, this announcement feels like Groundhog Day. In provincial elections beginning in the year 2003—that's four in total—the Ontario Liberal Party promised to do the following for long-term care if elected: to build 35,000 new long-term-care beds and to establish a standard of quality care that nursing homes must provide each resident. When they failed to deliver the first time around, they reannounced the same promises in the succeeding elections by signing the following pledges:

Pledge 1: "Ontario Liberals will increase the level of care in nursing homes and reinstate minimum standards."

Pledge 2: "Ontario Liberals will reinstate the standards of care for nursing homes ... including a minimum 2.25 hours of nursing care daily and three baths per week."

Eleven years and many Liberal health ministers later, our seniors continue to languish on wait-lists which have tripled since 2005. Meanwhile, those who are fortunate enough to land a spot in a care home continue to go without the minimum standards of daily care that they were promised by this government, leading perhaps to the many horror stories we've heard about residents sadly lying in their own waste for hours or not eating for hours after the usual mealtime. I say shame on this government.

Firstly, I want to say that we owe our senior citizens respect and thanks for the freedom and prosperity we enjoy today, and so it saddens me and it saddens my PC colleagues to see the seniors of our province struggling today to make ends meet.

Hydro rates are so high that, as I stand here before you, many seniors in my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and across Ontario are having their hydro disconnected because of their inability to pay your skyrocketing rates. And winter is not even here yet.

In addition to the unaffordable power rates as a result of the Liberal government, the new taxes that have been snuck in by this Liberal government since 2003 are also out of control and are an added burden, again, to many of our senior citizens.

Our seniors have many needs that we on this side of the House feel the Liberals continue to blatantly ignore. It is especially shameful that you're continuing to neglect the needs of our senior citizens while you are at the same time able and willing to provide billions of dollars to bail out the mostly empty MaRS office tower in downtown Toronto and on scandals like eHealth, Ornge and gas plants.

I have to say that I'm very worried about the number of calls and visits I get in my constituency office from senior citizens who come in to tell me they're in debt because of the rising cost of living in Ontario. It's an absolute shame. This is the same generation of people who taught us how to stand on our own two feet and the same generation who never believed in carrying a lot of debt but are now, sadly, paying for it. Shame on this government for letting them down.

We absolutely have to do better to meet the needs of our seniors. One of those critical needs is long-term-care beds. These troubling facts are the reason why: 1.6 million seniors live in Ontario. I ask, what's going to happen in 2028, when the number of seniors in Ontario doubles?

Seventy thousand of our seniors are housed across 625 long-term-care homes; 22,000 are still waiting for a bed; they wait an average of 109 days; 60% of them don't get their first choice of facility in their community. Here's the kicker: Our senior residents receive only \$5.46 a day for food, while prison inmates receive about \$10.

We know for a fact that for years this government actually froze construction of new long-term-care beds and put no shovels in the ground, leaving seniors to live in hospitals or, worse still, without help of any kind as there are no vacant beds. This is simply unacceptable. As a result, about 4,700 frail, elderly people remain in hospital beds today, due to a shortage of long-term-care beds or home services. The situation is critical.

We also know for a fact that the Liberal government's \$1.1-billion home care plan from three years ago has not helped. Wait-lists have grown, leaving more seniors in need of long-term care at home and thousands more taking up hospital beds with nowhere to go.

I believe the minister referenced a prior redevelopment project from 2006, and I just want to add to her comment—or rather clarify, perhaps—that the redevelopment of those beds was mostly done under the previous PC government back in 1998.

Recently, I had the opportunity to review an investigative piece by Metroland that yielded even more disturbing facts about the state of long-term care in Ontario. That investigation into Ontario's LTC found that “there are as many as 160 distinct steps, including accessing nine separate databases, just to move a senior from hospital into a long-term-care bed in Ontario. Bureaucracy is such an obstruction that consultants to industry in the US ... are being retained to help streamline the process of moving seniors into Ontario nursing homes.”

Mr. Speaker, we will stand very diligently on this side of the House to ensure that our seniors receive the care and respect they deserve. We'll remain diligent until that happens, and we plead with the government to step up and really do what they've said. They talk a good game. They've re-talked a good game. We need them to do that.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'm pinch-hitting today for our health and long-term care critic, France Gélinas, who could not be here.

Do we need redevelopment of long-term-care beds in this province? Yes, we do. However, this is like a regurgitated announcement. On July 31, 2007, Dalton McGuinty and George Smitherman announced that this Liberal government would redevelop 35,000 long-term-care beds within 10 years. In 2009, the Liberal government launched a Long-Term Care Home Renewal Strategy, promising to develop 35,000 beds—the same 35,000 beds—by 2019.

According to the Ontario Long Term Care Association, as of 2013, only 4,000 of those 35,000 have been approved for redevelopment, well below the 7,000 every-two-years target. With only five years left in the original timeline, the government is a long way from delivering on its promise and commitment to seniors by 2019.

Locally, in my riding, in 2007 George Smitherman announced 96 new long-term-care beds, which are

desperately needed, as we've heard from the PC member. It's now 2014. There is not a shovel in the ground. The licences have been awarded twice, both times to for-profit operators. They should actually have been awarded to a non-profit operator called Foyer Richelieu in Welland, a 60-bed, non-profit home, well respected in the community, related to Club Richelieu, which has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for superior care for residents in Welland over the years. They should have gotten those beds. Unfortunately, they didn't.

Now there are secret deals being made at the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to sell off 75 non-profit beds at the Welland hospital site of the NHS to the same operator that got awarded the 96 beds just last year—even though it's kind of in violation of the ministry's own policy that non-profit beds should go to the non-profit sector.

1340

There are 22,000 people on the wait-list. They're waiting for beds. Recently families have received notices that respite care from their CCACs is going to end, so we're going to actually need more beds in this province.

I can tell you that people don't really care about a frilly political announcement about redeveloping beds that they've announced seven or eight times. What they care about is that they have a bed when they need a bed, that they have a bed in their community and not in some community 100 kilometres away.

Their families want to make sure that the residents have nutritious foods, good-quality foods, foods that enhance the palate for seniors who have waning appetites.

What they want is to ensure that people have good activity programs, that they have physiotherapy in those nursing homes and that they have social programs that actually keep seniors from falling into depression, as so many of them do.

What they want is to be able to actually visit their family. What they want is more staffing hours so that their loved ones are supervised and protected from the physical attacks and potential deaths that have been experienced in our nursing homes across this province because there have not been enough staffing hours to ensure the safety of our residents.

Residents and families don't care about political announcements that never happen, year after year. They don't know why your redevelopment plans for 30,000 beds have failed. What they want is a guarantee, when they can no longer care for their parent or adult child—as is becoming the norm in our nursing homes—that they'll be safe, that they'll have good, adequate personal and nursing care, and that they can live the remaining time in their lives with dignity and respect.

PETITIONS

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Mr. Bill Walker: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

“Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

“Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

“Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

“Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

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

“To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research.”

I support it, will affix my name and send it with page Colston.

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas a healthy connection to our food system is vital to the health and environmental, social and economic well-being of all people in Ontario;

“Whereas too many young people in Ontario do not have access to nutritious food and grow up without basic food literacy or food skills;

“Whereas food bank use in Ontario is at an all-time high and over 412,000 individuals every month cannot afford to feed themselves or their families;

“Whereas poor diet and lack of access to nutritious foods is a leading cause of poor health and growing health care costs in our province;

“Whereas urban sprawl and poor planning continue to destroy valuable farmland, water resources and local food systems;

“Whereas sustained investment in local food and increased support for Ontario-grown foods will strengthen our food and farming sector and create jobs in Ontario;

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

“That this government strengthen the Local Food Act as part of a broader provincial strategy to put food first;

“That the government develop a provincial strategy that recognizes the importance of food to our environment, health and social and economic well-being.”

I agree. I’m going to sign it and give it to Darren to be delivered to the table.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas it is absolutely crucial that more is done to provide Ontarians retirement financial security which they can rely on;

“Whereas the federal government has refused to partner with our government to ensure that Ontarians have a secure retirement plan;

“Whereas more than three million Ontarians rely on the Canada Pension Plan alone, that currently does not provide enough to support an adequate standard of living;

“Whereas the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will provide the safe and stable retirement that Ontarians need;

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

“That all members of the Ontario assembly support a plan to move forward with an Ontario-made pension retirement plan that will provide a financially secure retirement for Ontarians.”

I’ll affix my signature and have Alex deliver it to the desk.

LANDFILL

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

“Whereas many of the resources of this planet are finite and are necessary to sustain both life and the quality of life for all future generations;

“Whereas the disposal of resources in landfills creates environmental hazards which will have significant human and financial costs for;

“Whereas all levels of government are elected to guarantee their constituents’ physical, financial, emotional and mental well-being;

“Whereas the health risks to the community and watershed increase in direct relationship to the proximity of any landfill site;

“Whereas the placement of a landfill in a limestone quarry has been shown to be detrimental...;

“Whereas the county of Oxford has passed a resolution requesting a moratorium on landfill construction or approval;

“Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, humbly petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“To implement a moratorium in Oxford county on any future landfill construction or approval until such time as a full review of alternatives has been completed which would examine best practices in other jurisdictions around the world;

“That this review of alternatives would give special emphasis on (a) practices which involve the total recycling or composting of all products currently destined for landfill sites in Ontario and (b) the production of goods which can efficiently and practically be recycled or reused so as to not require disposal in landfills.”

Thank you very much for allowing me to present this petition. I will affix my signature.

BEDBUGS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government of Ontario cut \$5 million of funding for municipalities to help eradicate bedbugs;

“Whereas reports of bedbug infestations continue to increase in Toronto and across Ontario;

“Whereas bedbug infestations can cause significant amounts of distress, shame, panic, anxiety, depression and other mental health concerns and affect anyone, anywhere regardless of where you live, how much money you make, or how clean you keep your home;

“Whereas the government of Ontario’s recent cuts to the Community Start-up and Maintenance Benefit—a fund that was critical to people on social assistance who found themselves without furniture and bedding after a bedbug infestation;

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

“That the province of Ontario restores the full \$5-million fund to assist with the eradication of bedbugs and implement a comprehensive bedbug strategy for Ontario.”

I couldn’t agree more. I’m going to sign this and give this to Raveen to be delivered.

SCHOOL TRUSTEES

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

“Whereas the provincial code of conduct governs every school board in Ontario;

“Whereas the provincial code of conduct provides directions for the creation and implementation of the code of conduct for all school boards;

“Whereas subsection 301(1) of part XIII of the Education Act states that ‘the minister may establish a code of conduct governing the behaviour of all persons in schools’;

“Whereas the current provincial code of conduct does not explicitly state the trustees are also required to adhere to this code of conduct;

“Whereas the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) trustees held a planning and priorities committee meeting on October 1, 2014;

“Whereas some members of the planning and priorities committee behaved unprofessionally and made racial overtone remarks at the October 1, 2014, meeting; and

“Whereas some members of the planning and priorities committee violated both the provincial code of conduct and the TDSB code of conduct;

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

“That members of the Legislative Assembly amend subsection 301(1) of part XIII of the Education Act to explicitly state the code of conduct also applies to trustees; and

“That members of the Legislative Assembly amend current provincial code of conduct to explicate the conduct and behaviours of trustees.”

I fully support the petition. I’ll give my petition to page Ben.

1350

ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario Municipal Board is a provincial agency composed of unelected members unaccountable to Ontarians; and

“Whereas the Ontario Municipal Board has the power to unilaterally alter local development decisions made by municipalities and their communities; and

“Whereas the city of Toronto is the largest city in Ontario; and

“Whereas the city of Toronto has a planning department composed of professional planners, an extensive legal department and 44 full-time city councillors directly elected by its citizens; and

“Whereas Toronto’s city council voted overwhelmingly ... to request an exemption from the Ontario Municipal Board’s jurisdiction;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to recognize the ability of the city of Toronto to handle its own urban planning and development; and

“Further, that the Ontario Municipal Board no longer have jurisdiction over the city of Toronto.”

I agree with this petition. I’m going to sign it and give it to Josée to be delivered to the table.

HEALTH CARE

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

“Whereas the Ontario government is committed to providing the right care, at the right place, at the right time, and by the right health care professional; and

“Whereas patients that are not satisfied with their care deserve the opportunity to voice their concerns and seek resolutions to their complaints; and

“Whereas patients sometimes need a third party to turn to when they have exhausted all local complaint resolution processes; and

“Whereas a patient ombudsman would facilitate the resolution of complaints, investigate health sector organizations, and make recommendations to further strengthen Ontario’s health care sector;

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

“That members of the Legislative Assembly pass Bill 8, and create a patient ombudsman.”

I fully support the petition. I give my petition to page Marie-Thérèse.

ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have here a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario signed by a great number of people, not only from Oxford but from around the province.

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

“Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

“Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

“Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

“Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

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

“To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research.”

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity, and I do want to affix my signature.

AIR-RAIL LINK

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas diesel trains are a health hazard for people who live near them;

“Whereas more toxic fumes will be created by the 400 daily trains than the car trips they are meant to replace;

“Whereas the planned air-rail link does not serve the communities through which it passes and will be priced beyond the reach of most commuters;

“Whereas all major cities in the world with train service between their downtown core and the airport use electric trains;

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

“That the province of Ontario stop building the air-rail link for diesel and move to electrify the route immediately;

“That the air-rail link be designed, operated and priced as an affordable transportation option between all points along its route.”

I couldn’t agree more. I add my name to the thousands and give it to Raveen to be delivered to the table.

AIR QUALITY

Mr. Michael Harris: I have a good one here, and it is also 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 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”—or former environment minister—“has ignored advances in technology and introduced a new, computerized emissions test that is less reliable and prone to error; and

“Whereas the new Drive Clean test no longer assesses tailpipe emissions, but instead scans the on-board diagnostics systems of vehicles, which already perform a series of continuous and periodic emissions checks; and

“Whereas the new Drive Clean test has caused the failure rate to double in less than two months as a result of technical problems with the new emissions testing method; and

“Whereas this new emissions test has caused numerous false ‘fails’, which have resulted in the overcharging of testing fees for Ontario drivers and car dealerships,

thereby causing unwarranted economic hardship and stress;

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

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

Speaker, I wholeheartedly agree with this petition, and I have signed it and will send it down to the table with page Félix.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I couldn’t agree more. I’m going to sign this and give this to Gregory to be delivered to the table.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LE MOIS DU PATRIMOINE HISPANIQUE

Mrs. Martins moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 28, An Act to proclaim the month of October as Hispanic Heritage Month/ Projet de loi 28, Loi proclamant le mois d’octobre Mois du patrimoine hispanique.

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

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to all the respected guests who are joining us in the gallery today: Duberlis Ramos, Claudia Montoya, Margarita Feliciano, Oscar Vigil, Claudio Ruiz, Angel de los Santos Vargas, Gabriella Gonzales and Eduardo Harari. Thank you all.

These individuals are only but a few who work tirelessly to promote the contributions of the Hispanic community in Ontario and in Canada. They publish Spanish- and English-language newspapers. They run cultural centres that welcome newcomers to our province. Everything these individuals do is dedicated to providing the incredible sense of cohesion that makes the Hispanic community so dynamic. Thank you all for your hard work.

Mr. Speaker, I’m very glad they’re all here today as we read my private member’s bill, An Act to proclaim the month of October as Hispanic Heritage Month, for the second time.

As a Portuguese Canadian, I feel a strong connection with Spanish speakers. Descendants of the Iberian Peninsula certainly hold similar traditions. Growing up and living in Toronto has only brought this point closer to home. I feel privileged that I’ve known prominent members of the Hispanic community for many years.

1400

My riding of Davenport has a large Hispanic population. Since I was elected in June, I’ve had the opportunity to represent the Premier and the Liberal Party at a number of Hispanic events in my riding and across the city. In July, I attended the incredible Salsa on St. Clair festival. The festival ran for an entire week and included cultural events, delicious food, arts exhibits and, of course, lots of salsa dancing. I was also given the opportunity to speak at the 33rd annual Hispanic Fiesta at Mel Lastman Square. It was a remarkable day, and I’d like to acknowledge Mr. Fernando Valladares, who co-founded this event 33 years ago and is still instrumental in its operation and growth all these years later. His Las Flores charitable organization, based in my riding of Davenport, does amazing work across Ontario and in Central and South America.

At the beginning of September, the Mexican-Canadian community welcomed me to two amazing events. I had the privilege of speaking at the Mexican flag-raising ceremony right here at Queen’s Park, and at the Viva Mexico festival, which was held outdoors for the first time this year in Earls Court Park, right in the heart of my amazing riding of Davenport.

By this time, I was starting to see a lot of familiar faces at these events, and relationships that had started off as professional acquaintances began to grow into real friendships.

At the opening of the city of Toronto’s Hispanic Heritage Month, I had a long discussion with Luis Ibarra and Steven Wharton, the founders of Latinos magazine,

who will be joining me later this afternoon for a reception. I saw them again the week after at the Ibero-American Gala consular event, along with many other guests.

I am touched and humbled by the warm welcome I have received from the Hispanic community since my election, and beforehand, actually. At this point, I really feel like an adopted daughter to this community, and for this I'm very grateful. Muchas gracias.

Attending these events over the summer and fall also helped me understand the community better and confirmed for me that the Hispanic community, very much like the Portuguese community, is dedicated, warm, welcoming and very engaged.

Hispanic Canadians, like many other immigrant communities, are committed to recognizing and celebrating their heritage. That's why it's so important for me to champion this cause and to be a voice for Hispanic Canadians at Queen's Park.

Peoples of Hispanic origin have made and continue to make significant contributions to the world. The masterpieces of Frida Kahlo and Salvador Dali hold a unique influence over the world of art. The late, great Gabriel García Márquez authored some of the most fantastic literary works of the 20th century. Of course, the great tenor Plácido Domingo's musical influence is impressive. Justice Sonia Sotomayor of the United States Supreme Court has inspired Hispanic people around the world by breaking down barriers in the legal profession.

The rich contributions of these giants of the Hispanic community are well known around the world. However, we must recognize the outstanding achievements and lasting influences of the Hispanic people right here in Ontario.

The Hispanic community in Canada was established in earnest at the turn of the 20th century. In 1914, 2,000 Spanish migrants settled in Canada, largely from the poor, overpopulated countryside of the Canary Islands, Galicia and Santander. The Hispanic Canadian population experienced only marginal growth until well after the Second World War.

The first substantial surge in Hispanic immigration came during the 1970s, a time of great socio-economic turbulence across Spanish-speaking countries. During this period, the so-called Andean wave saw an influx of Latin American immigrants from countries like Ecuador, Peru and Colombia. At the same time, an epidemic of military coups and domestic conflict spread across countries such as Chile, Guatemala, El Salvador and Argentina. These events, combined with Canada's open-door immigration policy, brought an estimated 68,000 newcomers from Hispanic countries during this decade.

Armed conflict in the 1980s in countries such as Nicaragua and Panama promoted another influx of immigrants, largely from Central America.

Lastly, since the 1990s, Hispanic immigration has been characterized as a "professional wave" of Spanish-speaking individuals travelling to Canada to study and to work. Life in Canada was quite challenging for those

who came during the initial waves. In particular, language barriers often made the transition to Canadian society difficult. These early immigrants experienced a loss of income, unemployment and, in many cases, racism and discrimination.

Because of these difficulties, Hispanic Canadians began to gather in certain hubs around the province such as Toronto's Kensington Market, which has always been a space for many new immigrants from many different countries. Despite emigrating from a number of nations, each with their own distinct customs, Spanish speakers offered each other a sense of community.

Recently, the Hispanic community has exploded in size and become one of the most prominent ethnic communities in the country. It is now estimated that there are approximately half a million Canadians of Hispanic origin. Some estimates put this population substantially higher when you include non-citizens and permanent residents. In my riding of Davenport alone there are approximately 10,000 citizens of Hispanic origin. Not only this, but the Hispanic community is also one of the fastest-growing populations in the entire country. Between 1996 and 2001 the number of Hispanic peoples in Canada increased by 32% while the overall population grew by only 4% during in the same period.

Stats Canada also estimates that close to 40% of all Hispanic immigrants came in the last 20 years. Spanish continues to be Canada's most spoken language after English and French, and has been the fastest-growing foreign language spoken by Canadians since 2001.

It's hard to argue with the fact that the influence of this population on our province is immense. Almost 50% of Hispanic Canadians have at least a bachelor's degree, and another 12% have a non-university diploma. What's more, the Toronto Hispanic Chamber of Commerce estimates the economic input of Latin American businesses on the Toronto-area economy between \$49.2 million and \$73.8 million.

I'd like to now tell the story of someone who truly embodies the rich contributions of the Hispanic community to our province. In 1886, Alberto Guerrero was born in La Serena, Chile. Guerrero was a leading figure in the vibrant Chilean music scene and was a conductor of the country's first symphony orchestra. In 1918, Guerrero moved to Toronto with his family to teach at the Hambourg Conservatory of Music. Guerrero was said to have single-handedly brought the music of modern 20th century composers to Canada, being the first to perform the music of Ravel, Debussy and Schoenberg. Guerrero extended Chile's musical culture to Canada and grew to become the most important music teacher in the country. He mentored young Canadian pianists, including Glenn Gould, arguably Canada's most celebrated classical pianist. Indeed, many have gone on to say that Guerrero is the unsung progenitor of our nation's musical culture.

Guerrero's story is but one of many examples of the outstanding contributions which Hispanic Canadians have woven into the multicultural fabric of our province. The young professional working for a start-up in Water-

loo, the banker on Bay Street, the vendor in Kensington Market, the community organizer in Ottawa, and the barber on Finch—all of these Hispanic Canadians work to make Ontario a better and brighter place to live.

It is precisely these stories that make it important to declare October Hispanic Heritage Month. This commemoration provides our province with an opportunity to recognize and praise the outstanding accomplishments of this community. We as a province must pay tribute to the culture that binds together Spanish speakers. We must educate future generations about the hard work, sacrifices and the important role the Hispanic community has played in the building of our province.

We've discussed similar initiatives at Queen's Park before. In December 2009, a motion was introduced to declare April Hispanic Heritage Month. The Hansard shows records of a lively debate on that motion, with supportive comments coming from all parties.

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This year, however, with the encouragement of the Hispanic community, my bill identifies October as Hispanic Heritage Month. As the preamble to the bill notes, October is a significant month for the Hispanic community. Around the world, Hispanic countries share and celebrate their culture in October.

This year, the city of Toronto joined many other jurisdictions and declared October as Hispanic Heritage Month.

Make no mistake: This is an important bill. In 2014, it can be easy to accept our province's multiculturalism as a foregone conclusion, and if you think back even 20 or 30 years, it's impressive how far we've come. But it makes it—

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

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Thank you.

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

Mr. Monte McNaughton: It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to add my comments to the debate here this afternoon. I'd like to thank my colleague from across the aisle, the MPP from Davenport, for bringing this bill forward. I saw last week when you introduced the bill, and I was looking forward to the chance to speak here this afternoon.

As the explanatory note mentions, "Hispanic-Canadians represent a dynamic community that has made" an important contribution "to the growth and prosperity of the province of Ontario...."

"By proclaiming ... October as Hispanic Heritage Month ... the province" will recognize "the rich contributions of Hispanic-Canadians" to the fabric of Ontario.

"Hispanic Heritage Month" will be "an opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about the outstanding achievements and contributions of Hispanic people in the province." I agree with these sentiments.

As the MPP for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex and as the opposition critic for citizenship, immigration and

international trade, it has been my privilege to attend many events that celebrate Ontario's cultural diversity, from the Taste of the Danforth in Toronto to the Ottawa Turkish Festival to Slovenian celebrations and Ukrainian Heritage Day celebrations, and, of course, the many ceremonies and flag-raising occurring here at Queen's Park on a regular basis. On these occasions, I've been so impressed with how vibrant these communities are, as well as by how engaged people from different backgrounds are in celebrating unique traditions, trying new foods, of course, and learning about the cultures new Canadians bring with them.

Ontario has long been home to a thriving Hispanic community, and over the years all the parties in this House have supported motions and presented petitions to recognize the vital cultural and economic role that this community plays. I'm happy to lend my voice to theirs today, to support formalizing recognition for Hispanic Heritage Month here in Ontario every October. Spanish-speaking communities around the world have adopted October as a time to celebrate their heritage, and it's about time that Ontario joined in these celebrations too.

I want to commend the member of provincial Parliament from Davenport for bringing this bill forward. She is continuing a Davenport tradition, I believe. It was another MPP from Davenport, Tony Ruprecht, who introduced a motion some years ago to proclaim a Hispanic Heritage Month. Of course, it makes sense that recognizing this community is not a new idea. Hundreds of thousands of people have come here from Hispanic countries. Overall, they make up about 11% of our new Canadians.

Many have come here for economic and political reasons, choosing to build a new life in Ontario, and they've enriched our province with their artistic, cultural, economic and scientific achievements and contributions. The rich history of these people and their descendants is something that we should all celebrate.

The Hispanic community in Ontario is highly diverse, made up of people from South America and Central America, Mexico, the Caribbean and Spain—23 different countries in all. This month of recognition will give all Ontario residents the opportunity to participate in and learn about the unique history and customs of these countries.

This is also a young and growing community. Almost 40% of all Hispanic immigrants came to Canada within the last 20 years. Of course, members here would know that Spanish is the second-most popular language throughout the world. The knowledge and skills of these Hispanic Canadians will help Ontario grow as they continue to make important contributions to all spheres of our society, as well as strengthen our relationships with our Spanish-speaking friends and trading partners abroad.

There is a laundry list of reasons to support this bill, and I'm looking forward to its speedy passage. Again, I would like to congratulate the member of provincial Parliament from Davenport for bringing this bill forward

and take a moment to urge all members of this assembly to support this bill.

My wife, Kate, and I look forward to celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month each and every October. As it's too early to say *feliz Navidad*, I'll say *feliz Halloween*.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Buenas tardes and good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to start by thanking the member opposite for the opportunity to speak to this bill, An Act to proclaim the month of October as Hispanic Heritage Month. Thank you to the other speakers here today as well.

Remarks in Spanish.

Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to speak for my time today in Spanish, but I know that in this great chamber we can only speak in French or English. Today, however, that is a shame.

This is a motion to highlight the impact and influence of Hispanic Canadians, to celebrate and share Hispanic culture and heritage, and what better way to do that than in Spanish? I went to high school in California, where I had the opportunity to study Spanish. In addition to the language, we also studied culture and heritage. I was lucky to gain a broader appreciation of a community outside of my own.

Like California, Canada is a place of marvellous diversity and shared stories, and Ontario is a rich and varied province that is only made stronger because of this. Where we have distinct pockets and communities, we find close-knit and traditional centres. Where we have overlapping neighbourhoods and cultures, we have shared learning and growth. We are a stronger province for our histories and cultural stories, and we are strongest when we share them together.

Though it is important that we recognize the many diverse communities in Ontario, let's not forget our mandate to address the issues that affect all communities in every corner of this province. The best way to prove how appreciative we are, as always, is to show it. Actions speak louder than words. Let's recognize the contributions that Hispanic Canadians have made, and will continue to make, to our province by taking action on the issues that affect members of their community and all communities across Ontario.

Of the many reasons that I am proud to call Ontario home, our diversity of language, culture and heritage is perhaps the greatest. Toronto is often heralded as the most diverse city in the world, and today we have the opportunity to recognize a piece of that diversity in a significant and meaningful way.

I should note that this assembly will not be the first to recognize the significant impact that Hispanic Canadians have made to our province. Earlier this year, the city of Toronto officially recognized October as Hispanic Heritage Month within the municipality, and we are pleased to echo that declaration.

As others have said here today, people of Hispanic heritage have a long and rich history in our province. The

preamble to this bill notes that, "As early as 1914, Canadians who originated from the 23 Hispanic countries began immigrating to the province...." That means that this year marks the centennial anniversary of Ontario's Hispanic population and makes the declaration of Hispanic Heritage Month all the more timely.

Diversity of culture is a core Canadian value. It is a core value of New Democrats and a core value of the community I live in, as well. Every June, in my riding of Oshawa, we celebrate Fiesta Week, a week-long multi-cultural festival that gives Durham residents the opportunity to experience various cultures from across the globe and celebrates the richness of our diversity. I invite all the members to join me next summer to experience Fiesta Week themselves as a way to continue to celebrate all of the many cultures that comprise our province and country.

Speaker, I hope that my thoughts have been informed thus far, but also informative as well. Though we have always recognized the impact that Hispanic Canadians have had on our province, it is important that we formalize that recognition as we are here today.

Remarks in Spanish.

I am not Latina, but I can appreciate the culture because Hispanic culture is so rich and so big. This month is for the wide Hispanic community, and for all of their friends and neighbours. We want to explore, know and celebrate Hispanic culture and heritage together.

Gracias.

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

Mr. Yvan Baker: It's a great honour to speak to this bill today. I'd like to first of all congratulate a fellow member of provincial Parliament, from Davenport, for introducing this bill. I look forward to its speedy passage through the House.

I'd like to welcome the esteemed guests we have with us today from the Hispanic community, and I'm going to do my best to introduce you again. I'm afraid my pronunciation is not nearly as good as my fellow members', but I'm going to do my best.

We have with us Duberlis Ramos, Claudia Montoya, Margarita Feliciano, Oscar Vigil, Claudio Ruiz, Angel de los Santos Vargas, Gabriella Gonzales and Eduardo Harari. I hope I got that right. Thank you all for coming, and thank you for all your contributions to our province and our city.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take my couple of minutes to just share with you why I think this is so important, why this is a special bill. My grandparents and my mother were immigrants to Canada. They were not of Hispanic heritage, but my grandfather invested a tremendous amount of time and energy in making sure that I would learn about his ancestral heritage, about my heritage. He wanted to make sure that we not only understood it, but that we understood the history, that we practised the culture, that we spoke the language.

One of things about my grandfather was that he was incredibly proud of his heritage, but he was also a proud

Canadian. In fact, he's the proudest Canadian I've ever known. I remember one day I was sitting with my grandfather and he was teaching me about my heritage. He was teaching me history and literature and those sorts of things. I remember saying to my grandfather after about an hour of discussion, "Grandfather, why do I have to do this? Can we stop?" He said, "You know, Yvan, this is important. It's important that you understand your culture and where you come from, but it's also important that you know the history of the people who came before you, because they are the people who make Canada so great." That is what makes this bill special to me, and that's why I'm honoured to speak to it today.

Today's bill is about two things to me. One, of course, is about celebrating Hispanic heritage and culture, but it is also about celebrating the people who have made, and continue to make, our country and our province so great.

As someone who is the son of immigrants and the grandchild of immigrants, I understand that by celebrating our cultural heritage, we maintain our ties. We show an appreciation for the trailblazers who came before us, including those in our own families who helped build our communities. Hispanic culture has, for a long time, been an important component of our collective identity, both in this city and in this province. The member for Davenport and the others have spoken to that.

While the Hispanic community has a rich history, a rich heritage in our province, this bill aims to recognize not only the cultural contributions of the past but also those of the present. We continue to have the pleasure of taking part in celebrations like the Hispanic Extravaganza, Salsa on St. Clair, the Mexican Festival and Hispanic Heritage Week in Hamilton—and this is just to name a few.

I spoke of the other reason I think this bill is important, and that's to celebrate the accomplishments of the Hispanic community in contributing to Canada and Ontario. The contributions span communities across our province. They're reflected in our economic, political, social and cultural life. Hispanic Canadians have played an important role in the development of Ontario, and they've made it one of the most desirable places in the world to live, and have contributed to making Canada the great country that it is today. It is truly important that we recognize and celebrate these contributions today, Mr. Speaker.

In Etobicoke Centre, my home riding, I have had the pleasure of getting to know many Hispanic Canadians from diverse parts of the world. I look forward to getting to know them and their culture and their contributions even better.

I hope that we can count on the support of all members in this House in passing this important act to celebrate Hispanic culture and heritage, to celebrate the contributions of the Hispanic community to our province, our city and our country. I look forward to celebrating in the years to come, not only the accomplishments of the past but also the accomplishments of the future, in my

riding of Etobicoke Centre, in Ontario and in our great country.

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

Mr. Norm Miller: It's my pleasure to have the opportunity to speak for a few minutes on Bill 28, An Act to proclaim the month of October as Hispanic Heritage Month. I, too, would like to welcome our guests to the Legislature this afternoon.

I'm already learning a little bit more about the Hispanic culture. I think that's part of the importance of a bill like this that would recognize October as Hispanic Heritage Month, that brings more awareness of the important contributions of Hispanic people to the success of the province of Ontario. Certainly, Ontario is a very diverse province, and that is part of its success. This bill would recognize that important contribution. As has been pointed out, there are 400,000 to 500,000 people of Hispanic origin in the province of Ontario that have made a great contribution.

As was mentioned, in the past there was a private member's motion, I believe, back in 2009, from the former member for Davenport, that recognized April as Hispanic Heritage Month, but October is more in keeping with the time of the year when Hispanic heritage is celebrated around the world. This bill would enshrine in law the recognition and celebration of the contributions made by Canadians of Hispanic origin, but it would also move Hispanic Heritage Month to October every year. As has been mentioned, Toronto city council recently declared that October would be Hispanic Heritage Month as well. So this brings that in line as well with what the city has declared.

I'm pleased to support it. I'm sure other members of our party will be pleased to support this bill as well. I think it brings an opportunity for all Ontarians to learn more about Hispanic culture. I won't make an attempt at speaking Spanish, because I think I'd do a little more disservice to the language if I tried to do so, but just to say that I certainly will be supporting the bill.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It's an honour to be able to add my remarks to this debate today about creating Hispanic Heritage Month in Ontario. In my riding of Timiskaming—Cochrane, there is not a large Hispanic population, but we have some, and I'd specifically like to focus on one individual who has made an incredible contribution to our riding. His name is Martin Melendez.

Martin was born in El Salvador, and he lived in a monastery in El Salvador. That monastery milked cows and made cheese. Martin didn't like milking cows, so Martin made cheese. Martin got very good at making cheese, and he got a scholarship. The priests helped him get a scholarship. He went to Germany to really learn how to make cheese. He travelled around the world diagnosing problems in cheese factories.

Martin came to my riding when the local farming community took over a cheese plant, Thornloe Cheese,

and Martin is the head cheese-maker at Thornloe Cheese. We are in his debt because when the farmers took over Thornloe Cheese, it made two kinds of cheese: It made orange cheddar and white cheddar.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: White cheese and red cheese.

Mr. John Vanthof: That's right. But now with Martin's help, Thornloe Cheese makes some of the finest cheeses in the world. They've won cheese championships across Canada, and it's all due to a little boy named Martin Melendez who grew up in a monastery and didn't like milking cows. So for all those people who enjoy Devil's Rock and Evanturel and all the other cheeses that are made by Thornloe Cheese, we would like to thank Martin Melendez and his contribution to the Hispanic contribution to Ontario.

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

Hon. Mario Sergio: I'm delighted to join the debate and spend three or four minutes on this wonderful piece of legislation introduced by the member from Davenport. I'd like to add my support to the bill. I have to say, I know she did a lot of work in bringing this bill to the Legislature today. I hope that indeed it will receive a speedy passage. I know the member from Davenport spent quite a bit of time in bringing the bill here and in consultation with the local Hispanic community. So we are here debating it. I hope that it will find quick passage because it is the right thing to do.

For me, it's like coming home, if I may say, because as an immigrant myself, we have seen a lot of immigrants coming from other countries, and I am one of those very fortunate people who has a very large population of Hispanic people.

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Remarks in Spanish.

Hon. Mario Sergio: We have to speak French and English in this House, but I would love to dwell in it. It's such a wonderful language that I think everybody should learn and speak it.

Why is it so important that we recognize and we join in supporting the bill today?

We recognize the contribution, yes, that Hispanic people have made to our country, our province and our neighbourhood. They came here early in the last century, like many others. They didn't have much with them, but they brought with them the spirit, the aspiration and the willingness to look for a job, work hard and make a better future, a better life for their family. They took every opportunity, like all other immigrants. They took every opportunity, and they grew. They grew economically and socially, making this contribution to our nation, our province and our community. So we have to laud the participation and the contribution that they have made and that they continue to make.

They are extremely hard-working people, Speaker, very law-abiding citizens, very lovingly attached to their families and to their culture. Thank goodness Canada offers us the wonderful opportunity to join in and celebrate with other cultures our own and theirs as well. This is what makes us bigger, richer, as a country.

Let me say that in my particular riding of York West, I have people from Chile, Peru, Colombia, Honduras, South America, whatever—

Interjection.

Hon. Mario Sergio: Including Mexico, indeed.

As a matter of fact, I promoted one of the first indoor—una marchetta, Latina's, if you will, the Latin market at 9 Milvan Drive. I'm sure that a lot of people know it. You will find everything you want in that particular place. It's wonderful. You go there on a Sunday or a Saturday afternoon, Speaker, and you can eat fresh empanada, paella and anything else that your heart wishes to eat.

Interjection: It's making us hungry.

Hon. Mario Sergio: It makes everybody hungry, absolutely.

So I love the language, I love the music, I love the culture, and of course, we love the Spanish people. They have enriched our society in a very special way. We wish them well. I wish the member for Davenport well in the passage of this bill.

God bless all the Hispanic and Latino community for their contribution to our country. Thank you and congratulations.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: On behalf of New Democrats, I want to welcome our visitors to the House today. It's wonderful to see you here. Certainly, we New Democrats support this. There's no question about that.

I want to give a shout-out to the member from Oshawa. Who knew? You never know the skills of your own members until a bill like this comes forward.

Of course, thanks to the member from Davenport for bringing it forward. It's always a joy to speak to bills like this because it gives us a chance to speak about the wonderful contributions of so many people from, really, all over the world who end up residing in Ontario or Toronto.

I'm from Parkdale—High Park, so of course we have a number of Hispanics. But like my friend from Timiskaming—Cochrane, I want to talk about two of them, Paula and Blanca; I'll call them that.

Before I was a politician—I still am a United Church minister in charge of a church on Roncesvalles. I have to tell you, the very first legalized same-sex marriage in Ontario, before the law changed, I had the honour and privilege of performing. Guess who it was between? Two Hispanic women, Paula and Blanca from Colombia. They were incredible women, and I just want to herald them, because to have stepped forward at that time in that way on that issue and to have declared their love for each other and for me to have presided over it was a great honour. I can tell you, the party afterwards was phenomenal too. They were incredible social justice activists, not only around the issue of same-sex marriage and LGBTQ rights, but also around all rights.

It's interesting that just while you were sitting here, I was reading petitions from Davenport and from

Parkdale–High Park on a whole lot of issues, on issues that actually have been fought for by all of my Hispanic residents, things like clean trains running through our riding, things like affordable housing—we have a number of Hispanics waiting on housing lists; 70,000 families and counting in downtown Toronto—things like food programs for children. Our Hispanic community has always been at the forefront of all social justice issues. Every one of those petitions that I read today and handed in had a Hispanic name on it.

I just want to say that the great contribution in my riding that our Hispanics have made is toward the issues of social justice. Thank you for being our conscience. It's wonderful that you have wonderful music; we all know about that. It's wonderful that you have great food; I love paella. It's wonderful for all of those things, but I want to thank you for being really at the front of many social justice movements. Certainly, coming from the countries that you do, you know first-hand what happens if you don't, and you bring that message forward to us.

I grew up, of course, on the tail of the Spanish Civil War. My Colombian and Chilean friends—in fact, Romero, probably listening right now, one of our staff people in the New Democratic Party, comes from Chile and brings that whole history with him. To hear and to know those histories and to welcome you to this country is to welcome a great wealth of knowledge.

My suggestion to all of us here is to eat the food, to dance to the music, but actually engage your residents and hear the stories of the politics and the history of the places they come from. Because it's politics and history like that that informs our politics and will make our history with you together.

So thank you for being here. Of course, we're going to support this; there's no question about that. Of course it's going to pass; we all support it. Again, thank you for your contribution to not only Ontario but Canada.

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

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I am very pleased to add my support to Bill 28, the Hispanic Heritage Month Act, which has been brought forward by my colleague the MPP from Davenport. I am delighted to work together with her and with all the members of this Legislature to ensure that October becomes the month that will identify the Hispanic community in Ontario. I would like to thank all those who are here in support of the bill today.

Christopher Columbus first reached America on October 12, 1492. That day is better known to the Hispanic community as el Día de la Raza. It has been mentioned before by my colleagues that October has always been an important month for the Hispanic community coming from Central and Latin America that started to identify the celebration of their history and their culture with this month.

We have spoken about the history of the Hispanic community here in Canada, but the big wave, I think, came in the 1970s. Since the 1970s, from a tiny group of pioneering Spanish and Latin American immigrants, we

now have a very vibrant community that resides here. Ontario is now home to over 400,000 first-, second-, and third-generation Canadians of Hispanic origin. Many of them made a lot of sacrifices when they first came; it's a typical immigrant story. But a lot of them worked hard to build a better future for themselves, their kids and their families. It's the same reason that we all came from distant parts of the world, but the Spanish, I think, have always shown great passion in everything they do, and I think we see that in the contributions they have given to our province and our country.

I have the privilege to represent the area of York South–Weston here in Toronto, and I am much honoured to say that I have a great Hispanic community that lives and works within the riding I represent. We have great residents, great businesses, great organizations and great restaurants. Just to mention a few, we have Las Americas and Rancho Latino. We have great organizations, such as the York Hispanic Centre, which provides a lot of services to newcomers and to the community. Several other organizations don't only serve the Hispanic community but have built programs that serve the Hispanic community, because there are a great number of them and they continue to grow within my riding and in the city of Toronto.

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Needless to say, as has been said before, they have contributed and they continue to contribute a lot to the fabric of our society. They bring us art, music and history. They bring us not only food and sports, but all things that we can enjoy. This bill is important because it's an opportunity not only for the community to celebrate their culture, but also for us to learn more about Hispanic history and culture, and for the future generations. It's really important to pass on all that culture to the future generation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Muchas gracias.

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

Mr. Paul Miller: I would like to touch on an area that really hasn't been discussed about this particular bill. I'm thrilled that it's come forward. I'm very supportive.

Don't forget the sacrifices that the Hispanic community has made in labour. Let's talk about countries like Mexico, or in South America, where they were actually tortured, arrested, for having unions. The Hispanic community is a brave community. In our steelworkers' union, we have sheltered some of their leaders in Canada and helped them go back—one of them has even returned to Mexico, putting his life on the line to rejoin his union brothers and sisters in the mining industry in Mexico and in South America. The bravery is unbelievable, and they're such kind people. They're honest, hard-working people. I admire their bravery for standing up to these tyrants, these governments and some of these large corporations that try to get concessions from them and have them work for nothing.

It's unbelievable. The history has not been talked about enough—how they stood up to these tyrants. I'd

like to thank them for their bravery. I'd like to thank them for their leadership in the labour movement. We will be with you, brothers and sisters.

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

I now recognize the member for Davenport. You have two minutes to respond.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I'd like to say to everyone: *Remarks in Spanish.* Thank you all for your support.

I'd like to acknowledge the members from York West, Etobicoke Centre and York South–Weston for their fine remarks this afternoon, along with the members opposite whose support of this bill is greatly appreciated: from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, Oshawa, Parry Sound–Muskoka, Timiskaming–Cochrane, Parkdale–High Park and Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. Gracias a todos.

Make no mistake: This is an important bill. In 2014, it can be easy to accept our province's multiculturalism as a foregone conclusion. If you think back even 20 or 30 years, it's impressive to see how far we've come. Just look around at the wide variety of cultures and ethnicities represented in the chamber. It is incredibly heartening.

The importance of the Hispanic Canadian community here in Ontario should not go unnoticed, and October's Hispanic Heritage Month celebration will be a fantastic opportunity to recognize the achievements of a community that is growing greater and greater in prominence.

We all understand the value of staying connected with our communities, and in the diaspora, events such as Hispanic Heritage Month are really an opportunity to pause and reflect on our cultural backgrounds. This bill encourages just that.

I'm incredibly proud to live in such a diverse and multicultural province. Active and engaged communities here in Toronto and across the province strengthen Ontario enormously, culturally and economically. I ask that we push this bill along—as the member opposite said, a speedy process to push this bill along—so that we may work to proclaim October as Hispanic Heritage Month.

Thank you to all the members who joined me in supporting this bill here today. Muchas gracias. And thank you to all those who came out today to represent the great community that is the Hispanic community in the province of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will take the vote on this item at the end of private members' public business.

MANUFACTURING MONTH

Mr. Monte Kwinter: I move that, in the opinion of this House, in order to celebrate, with the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, the contribution of Ontario's manufacturing sector, which contributes over \$75 billion to Ontario's gross domestic product; October in each year should be recognized as manufacturing month.

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

Mr. Monte Kwinter: I rise today in the House to continue our government's ongoing support for a critical sector—our province's manufacturing sector. Our government understands the importance that the manufacturing sector has on all regions of the province, direct and indirect.

If you talk to the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, they will tell you one of their biggest concerns is those who talk down the growth in the manufacturing sector since the global recession. The official opposition seems to have mastered this skill. Talking down the growth in the sector since the global recession is what they do best.

This is something that our government simply will not do. This is something that I simply will not do. This is something the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure will not do either. We understand how vitally important this sector is, and we also understand how important the sector's growth since the recession is. In fact, my private member's resolution will demonstrate our government's ongoing support for the manufacturing sector.

Throughout the entirety of my political career, I have been nothing but supportive of Ontario's manufacturing sector. The resolution I bring forward to the House reflects my political career, which has been extremely supportive of this crucial sector.

By following in the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters' footsteps, my resolution would proclaim October as Manufacturing Month here in Ontario. By doing this, the government and opposition, present and future, will be reminded each October of the importance of the sector. I would ask the members across the aisle to support my resolution.

There are currently 740,000 Ontarians who are directly employed in this sector, meaning there are 740,000 different families that are dependent on this sector for their livelihood. This type of proclamation is one of the types of support the industry is looking for.

This government has taken significant measures to sustain and create jobs. We are enhancing the competitiveness of Ontario's manufacturing sector, including comprehensive tax reform, expanding electricity rate mitigation programs and supporting private sector investments.

Supporting private sector investments through the regional economic development funds is one of the many ways that our government has supported this sector. These funds contribute over 90% of investments to the manufacturing sector. Since 2008, our government has strategically invested over \$120 million to these funds. These investments have leveraged over \$1 billion from the private sector. These funds have helped support over 27,500 jobs across southwestern and eastern Ontario.

I'd like to talk a bit about KPMG's independent report on the success of these funds. Their findings concluded that these funds' investments "meet and often exceed job creation objectives." As I said, 90% of these funds are being focused on the manufacturing sector.

I am really happy that our government introduced and fostered such successful partnerships with private sector manufacturers through these funds. That is why, during the start of the recession, when the manufacturing sector was feeling the squeeze of the global recession, our government stood with our manufacturers and created these funds.

I would like to remind the official opposition of their stance towards these funds. Not only did the PCs vote against both the southwestern and eastern regional development funds, but they stalled their formation. They were stalling the support the government was giving to the manufacturing sector when it was most needed. I don't need to go into detail about how these short-term political games that the PCs were playing were distracting from what was and is important: continuing to grow our manufacturing sector. Our government has its priorities straight. We have and will continue to support Ontario's manufacturing sector.

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To give the House an understanding of the magnitude of this sector and for the PCs to know what they voted against, I'd like to read some stats. The sector directly employs 740,000 Ontarians and contributes over \$75 billion to our province's GDP. Within the provincial economy, manufacturing accounts for about 12% of Ontario's total employment. That is, more than one in 10 Ontarians is employed in this sector. The sector represents roughly 11% of the province's GDP. That is just to give the House a sense of the magnitude of the sector.

Interjections.

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

Mr. Monte Kwinter: To break down the sector more so we all understand the importance, I would like everyone to understand that Ontario is among the top jurisdictions for vehicle production in North America. The auto industry supports 400,000 direct and indirect jobs alone. In June of 2009, the auto sector's employment was at a low of 80,000 members. We've seen an increase of over 18,000 net new jobs, and this is an incredible feat.

Our government has been there for the auto manufacturing sector as well. Since 2003, our government has invested over \$800 million in this sector, and that has leveraged over \$10 billion from the private sector. Our government has been the most supportive to the sector in Ontario's history. We have made many investments in Ontario's auto sector where it makes sense; for example: \$100 million for the Oakville assembly complex in 2004, \$98 million for the Essex engine plant in 2010, and almost \$70.9 million for an additional investment in Oakville in 2013 to modernize and provide a global platform in that plant for decades to come. Since 2003, we have made strategic investments with all five auto assemblers in Ontario as well as numerous auto parts manufacturing companies across the province.

When the PCs said, "Just let those plants close" during the recession, our government stood by Ontario's auto sector. Now there are 400,000 people directly and indirectly employed in the sector who are grateful that we

supported them when the PCs wanted to put them out of work. We remain committed to partnering with business on future proposals that provide sustainable economic benefits to Ontarians.

There is more to Ontario's manufacturing sector than just its strong auto manufacturing sector: Fourteen of the top 25 global aerospace companies have operations here in Ontario; 50 % of Canada's defence industry employment and revenue is from Ontario; Sarnia-Lambton is Canada's largest chemical and allied manufacturing cluster, recognized as Chemical Valley; seven out of the top 10 global chemical companies have operations in Ontario; 80% of Canada's steel production capacity is located right here in Ontario. I hope all these examples demonstrate the importance of this industry and why proclaiming October as Manufacturing Month is important.

As we know, there has been tremendous growth in the sector since the recession. There is also a consensus among experts that this growth will continue. For instance, in August of this year, auto sales increased to over 171,000 more units sold compared to just one year ago. Experts at TD Bank said on July 8, "Looking out over the next 12-18 months, we expect ... broad based gains in manufacturing output." The Bank of Montreal had a very similar outlook for the sector: "The stronger US economy/weaker loonie combination is a clear positive one-two punch for Ontario exports and manufacturing." CIBC is predicting growth as well: "Ontario is poised to be the single biggest beneficiary ... of sturdy US growth." I want to elaborate on what was said in CIBC's report. In an April 1, 2014, report, CIBC economists ranked the manufacturing subsectors that are best-positioned to regain a position in key export markets and better integrate into global supply-chain opportunities, and Ontario has strong positioning. Eight of the top 10 ranked subsectors—primary metals, machinery, aerospace, computers and electronics, plastics, rubber, fabricated metals, and electrical equipment—are located right here in Ontario.

This sector is well diversified across a wide range of subsectors, and this government has done a lot to support Ontario's manufacturing sector. I believe strongly that proclaiming each October as Manufacturing Month in Ontario will help remind our government and future governments how important this sector is for our province. I would strongly encourage each opposition party to support this resolution.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The member for York-Simcoe.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to begin by saying how pleased I am to lend my support to this resolution. However, having listened to the member go on a diatribe here about what, in his view, has been the position taken by this party leaves me somewhat surprised, given the actual facts.

Manufacturing is a crucial industry to our province, contributing \$75 billion to Ontario's GDP. As an economic driver and job creator, our manufacturing industry

deserves both respect and support. Unfortunately, this industry has encountered challenges in the last few years. In 2013 alone, Ontario lost 33,000 jobs in the manufacturing sector, and in the last decade the sector has lost 300,000 jobs. The industry is shrinking, especially relative to the rest of the province's economy. In 2002, manufacturing contributed more than 20% of Ontario's GDP, but by 2013 this number had shrunk to 12%.

Since 2003, the Liberal government has failed the manufacturing sector. I know that one of the most difficult challenges is the skyrocketing cost of energy, which has deeply affected the way in which businesses are able to operate. Many in the manufacturing sector are packing up and finding more affordable places to do business, including Caterpillar, Stelco, John Deere, Campbell Soup and Ford, just to name a few. In a statement this past July, the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters said, "Manufacturers are facing tough economic times and rising energy costs which are hurting their ability to compete..."

If the Liberals wanted to help our manufacturing industry, they would make Ontario a more friendly place to do business. Instead, years of waste and mismanagement have forced upon both Ontario residents and businesses increased costs, such as the global adjustment cost on energy bills. This is a surcharge as a result of over a decade of Liberal failures in our energy sector. Such pet projects have only increased costs for families and businesses, and have done nothing to help Ontario's economy. Charging more for energy when all of our neighbours are becoming more competitive is the wrong direction.

There is one other issue I would like to bring up, and I'm glad the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters have highlighted this as well in their July statement. The Liberals' proposed retirement pension plan is worrisome to businesses large and small, and the manufacturing sector is no exception. In their statement, the CME wrote, "While we support efforts to increase retirement income security, we're very concerned about the costs associated with the proposed ... plan. These costs will hit small and medium-sized manufacturers hardest, the job creators. It will ... impact low-income Ontarians that may not have the disposable income to afford mandatory contributions."

Mr. Speaker, I've expressed these sentiments as well, and I applaud the CME for speaking out about the new payroll tax the Liberals are going to impose on business in 2017. I hope that the Liberals take these comments into consideration.

I'd like to thank the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters for the important work they do to advocate for the manufacturing industry, and would like to recognize the industry for their contributions in our province. It is time that we properly recognize this industry, and hopefully, making October Manufacturing Month will be the Liberals' first step to making real change.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: I am certainly pleased to rise to speak on the Manufacturing Month of October. I think this motion is very important. Many of you know that I come from a background in the manufacturing sector. In fact, I spent my entire adult life working in the manufacturing sector, most recently as president of Unifor Local 199.

If anything, I think this motion's wording underestimates the importance of our province's manufacturing and exporting sector, including our auto, forestry, steel and agricultural sectors. It is more than just \$75 billion a year that is contributed to Ontario. Many people in those sectors have decent, safe and secure jobs. They're citizens who pay income tax, property tax, buy our cars and contribute to our economy. When they have good jobs, they have strong purchasing power.

The auto sector, where I come from, accounts for \$53 billion, or about 12% of the nation's total exports. It nearly doubles the exports from forestry and agriculture, and is a quarter more than mining. Canadian workers build 5,800 vehicles a day and export them. This all trickles down, from export sales all the way to the \$468 million a year these workers pay in municipal taxes for social services. These workers pay into our health care and our education. When these workers lose work, their communities lose this money.

So you can see how important the manufacturing and exporting sectors are, not just to me personally, but to this province and this country as a whole.

But I'm amazed, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, that this would be put forward by this government. I want you to consider for a moment that this motion is being put forward in the same week that the Liberal government is watching Ford pull its plan for a plant that would build 1.5-litre engines to power small vehicles. Instead of setting up in Windsor, they're going to Mexico.

This motion seeks to celebrate with the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters.

Ford was clear: They needed a deal from the Ontario government that would make it reasonable for them to set up a plant in Windsor. When the province didn't do this, Ford decided to ship those plans to Mexico. That means 1,000 jobs that could have gone to people right here in Ontario instead are being shipped south.

There's nothing for the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters to be happy about. It's certainly not something that the 483 workers who are on layoff in Windsor are happy about.

These aren't people who can be fooled by a quick motion that offers them a pat on the back. The auto industry is one of the major players in the Ontario economy and the economy of the entire country. It represents 112,000 people in Canada who pump \$6.1 billion into the economy, a large portion of that right here in Ontario, yet over the last 10 years all they have seen is jobs disappear. They're the men and women who make manufacturing and exporting happen in this province, and they're not happy with the state of the auto industry. They aren't bad workers; let's not blame the workers here. In fact, they're

highly qualified, highly productive and the highest skilled in the industrial world. If you talk to any manufacturer, they'll tell you that Canadian auto workers are the best.

I say to this government: You should invest in our manufacturing and exporting sector so that we can speak to this motion more truthfully, so that every year when October comes around, we can honestly say we're proud of what the province has done for manufacturers and exporters.

We see manufacturers leave this province under this government. We saw job losses at Hayes Dana, Edscha, Dana Brake, John Deere—all places where the government did nothing while manufacturing left.

Mr. Speaker, when the manufacturers take their business elsewhere, they're leaving workers out to dry. Look at Vertis in my own riding. The company went under and refused to pay the employees the severance pay they were owed. Some people had 35 years of seniority and received nothing, yet the company is still selling that product right here in Ontario.

Employees of Energex in Welland are just as nervous. Right now Energex is sitting in bankruptcy protection. Our Welland constituency office is hearing it daily.

Workers covered by US Steel are worried about their pensions. They put their lifetime of work in the manufacturing sector and now they're turning to the government to protect what they've earned.

These are just a few stories from struggling manufacturers right across the province. Places like Welland, Niagara Falls, Fort Erie, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Thorold need the government to properly support our manufacturing and exporting sector. People from Niagara don't want to hear about supporting our manufacturers in the same week they're hearing about layoffs and closures. But the government has the power to stop this, and that's key.

I ask my fellow MPPs: Have you been at a plant on the day it closed? I'm asking anybody here. Well, I've been there, to see them scared, crying, worried about their future, not knowing if they're going to be able to continue providing for their families. Imagine having to go home and telling your children that, through no fault of your own, their dad or their mom has lost their job.

Two things have caused the manufacturing jobs to flee this province: the high price of the dollar, the petro dollar that we've had for a number of years, and the price of hydro.

I was there. I watched the effects of both of these. With the price of the dollar falling back to the mid-80s, where a number of economists said it would be by the end of the year, the government can act today to make Ontario a better place for manufacturing. A motion like this won't do anything for workers who are facing job loss. Lowering hydro rates for manufacturers, supporting exporters and protecting pensions can help the manufacturers in this province.

In the auto industry, we have found that for every job created directly in a car manufacturing plant, there are

eight other spin-off jobs created. When we create 1,000 jobs, we're actually giving the province 8,000. From those 1,000 jobs in Windsor, you would have gotten 8,000 jobs. Imagine what that would have done to the high unemployment in Windsor. When we miss out on 1,000 jobs, we lose 8,000.

Let's come up with an Ontario-wide auto policy, and let's lower our hydro rates. That will actually help manufacturers.

But I also believe the members across from me need to step up and support our workers. Windsor is a great example—that money that won't go back into our province and the jobs that won't go to people who desperately need them. That's exactly the same story we saw over the last 10 years: 3,000 jobs were lost in St. Thomas—we're talking about the auto sector—2,000 were lost in my home local in St. Catharines and 3,000 in Oshawa.

Every other country in the world is supporting manufacturing because they know how important it is to the overall health of their economy and putting good-paying jobs—it doesn't matter where it is. It could be in the United States, it could be in Brazil, it could be in Sweden, it could be in Finland—they're all doing it. I'm encouraging this government to do the same thing.

Our children and grandchildren need that to happen. We can pass a motion like this and be done with it or we can fight to protect our manufacturers, our exporters and the workers who depend on the sector right here in Ontario for the betterment of our kids and our grandkids.

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

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: It's my pleasure to rise today to speak in favour of the member from York Centre's motion recognizing the month of October as Manufacturing Month. As we're all aware across the House, manufacturing in Ontario is a key economic driver. As a matter of fact, on July 8 of this year, TD was quoted: "Looking out over the next 12-18 months, we expect reasonably broad-based gains in manufacturing output."

BMO, as of May 2014, also said: "The stronger US economy/weaker loonie combination is a clear positive one-two punch for Ontario exports and manufacturing." I would agree with the member from York Centre who read the following quote as well: "If you talk to the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters they will tell you that one of their biggest concerns is one of those that whoever talks down the growth in the manufacturing sector since the global recession doesn't do us any favours"—that's my quote.

Our province's manufacturing sector is gaining, and it's gaining strength since the global recession. It has been supported by our regional economic development funds, which have contributed over 90% of the investments to the manufacturing sector.

The Ontario manufacturers and exporters report that exports totalled \$13.6 billion in August of this year, a 5% higher value than in August 2013.

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It has been a long time since a member from Cambridge highlighted the robust advanced manufacturing companies that we have in Cambridge. My riding of Cambridge is built on a foundation of manufacturing. Indeed, our industrial heritage harkens back to the mills that were built around the Grand and Speed Rivers that founded our city.

Cambridge has long been established as a manufacturing hub in Ontario, currently numbered at 495 manufacturing businesses. These range in diversity from textile manufacturing to leading-edge science and technology firms.

Advanced manufacturing companies are growing in Cambridge and are taking advantage of our highly skilled workforce that is supported by many programs from Conestoga College, and that contributes to our highly skilled workforce.

Companies such as Toyota came to Cambridge not only for the lifestyle benefits of living in that area but also because of the skills available. They currently have 8,000 employees in Cambridge. As a matter of fact, on September 30, Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada manufactured its six-millionth vehicle. This Toyota plant has won numerous awards, most recently, this year, winning the J. D. Power and Associates Platinum Plant Quality Award, which recognizes that the Cambridge facility was founded to produce vehicles with fewer defects or malfunctions than any other plant.

They also thanked the Ontario government recently during a meeting with myself and the Premier for Ontario's partnering with the auto sector during the economic downturn to ensure that auto manufacturing in Ontario would remain robust and growing.

One of the other manufacturing plants we have in Cambridge is Tenneco Cambridge. This plant, which currently employs around 470 people, makes exhaust systems for Toyota and General Motors vehicles. They recently had Southwestern Ontario Development Fund help to expand their business and hire more employees.

COM DEV International Ltd. is perhaps one of the best-known space industry manufacturers in Ontario. It's a global designer and manufacturer of space hardware for use in communications, space science, remote sensing and defence applications. Their new project will improve their plating and high-powered testing facilities and significantly enhance their productivity. To support it, they received a \$1-million grant from the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund to expand manufacturing facilities and hire more employees in Cambridge.

Centra Industries is also based in Cambridge, and it conducts research and development and manufactures aircraft components for major manufacturers such as Boeing and Bombardier. Centra, COM DEV and hundreds of other aerospace companies across Ontario have made this province an actual world leader in aerospace development. Centra employs 400 highly skilled people.

One of our other best-known and perhaps one of the oldest employers in our town is Babcock and Wilcox.

They employ over 700 nationwide, of whom 680 are employed in Cambridge. They engineer and manufacture thermal boilers and nuclear steam boilers.

I want to highlight all these companies—and that's just a fraction of what happens here in Cambridge. I really believe that supporting the motion to declare October as Manufacturing Month will serve to highlight the important manufacturing businesses that have made Ontario their home and their contributions to our Ontario economy and families. I think the highlighting of our manufacturing sector is going to be key in ensuring we have a robust manufacturing economy in the future.

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I will be supporting this motion this afternoon, but I believe we also have a responsibility to talk about the challenges facing manufacturing in Ontario.

Manufacturing is the backbone of this province's economy, and it's very important in my riding as well, manufacturing plants like KTH, Clorox, Husky, Mars, Blue Mountain Plastics and many more. But throughout Ontario's history, the manufacturing industry has played an absolutely integral part in the livelihood and productivity of this province's economy.

But now that we've become a have-not province, our manufacturing sector is being challenged. The policies of this government have decimated manufacturing jobs in Ontario. Over the last decade, the province has lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs. It must be pointed out that skyrocketing energy rates—which are the highest in North America—and red tape are some of the primary reasons that have forced many manufacturers to close or leave this province altogether.

One company wrote to me recently and notified me that their hydro bill for the month of April was \$37,802.41. The company's response to this: "The Liberal government's mismanagement of energy in this province is criminal."

Ontario's energy rates have tripled under this government's watch. No wonder companies are leaving Ontario when they realize that everywhere around us, they would have cheaper energy rates. Companies like Kellogg's, Heinz and Caterpillar—all of these companies still exist and manufacture, just no longer in Ontario.

This government needs to take a serious look at the problem and take proactive action in fixing our province's manufacturing sector.

While I agree with the motion to officially recognize and celebrate Ontario's manufacturing sector, we must also address the problems manufacturers face in Ontario today.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Thank you to the member opposite for the opportunity to speak to this motion to recognize October as Manufacturing Month.

We know how hard Ontario has been hit when it comes to manufacturing jobs. In Oshawa, we know it

personally. Province-wide, more than 300,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in the past 10 years. Ontario has gone from having 1.1 million manufacturing jobs to only 800,000. That means that 35% of all manufacturing jobs in Ontario have disappeared over this past decade.

As New Democrats, we know that manufacturing jobs tend to be good jobs. They tend to be jobs with pensions, with benefits and with strong, fair wages. Strong wages mean that people can afford to live and build a life in their community. With secure manufacturing jobs, families can buy homes. With quality manufacturing jobs, people can plan for their future in the short term and in their retirement. As New Democrats, we care about Ontarians' ability to retire with dignity and with financial security. We want people to make enough money in reliable jobs, like manufacturing jobs, so they can set goals, make plans, afford to live and afford to retire.

In short, we need to make significant changes. Currently, there are no comprehensive policies requiring the province or our municipalities to purchase Ontario-made goods and products. We shouldn't just be telling Ontarians to buy local; we should be actively providing incentives and leading the charge ourselves.

We also have to create a climate for investment and innovation in Ontario. Investment in machinery and equipment is at the lowest point in 35 years. This is unacceptable. Companies should be encouraged to invest in buildings, machinery and equipment. If they decide to invest and build in Ontario, they will stay in Ontario. We need a real and competitive manufacturing strategy to attract and retain investment in our communities and strengthen the manufacturing industry in this province.

This is a topic that is extremely significant to my riding. Oshawa is strong, and Oshawa is growing. Many people across the province are at least a little familiar with Oshawa's rich and proud automotive history. In terms of our automotive heritage, our history is well established. But our present and future are still unfolding. The future of industry and manufacturing is on display at GM in Oshawa. Our locally made GM products are top-of-the-line and cutting-edge.

I know this personally. I'd been planning for a while to buy local, and I am now the proud owner of a 2014 Impala, and it is unbelievable, and it is beautiful. I brought it up in my inaugural speech, and I've been looking for an excuse to bring it up again. If you don't believe me, come and find me, and I will show you. If you'd like, come on out to Oshawa, and I'll take you on a tour of the plant where it was made.

The point is, it is modern, it is competitive, it is innovative and it is manufactured locally—manufactured by my neighbours and people I know in my community. They don't just make great cars, by the way; they work in a high-tech cutting-edge facility.

We are also fortunate to have the GM Automotive Centre of Excellence at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, which showcases a unique wind tunnel among other top-of-the-line testing facilities. The ACE is a tremendous centre for learning and innovation.

Industries across the country can utilize their extreme testing capabilities to further their own product knowledge and advance development.

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We have remarkable support for innovation locally and provincially, but we need to have remarkable support to create, build, assemble and manufacture. We have to prioritize, not just recognize, manufacturing. Paying lip service to the importance of manufacturing is not acceptable. We should celebrate solid manufacturing job creation every day.

Speaker, we challenge the government to create a climate for that growth and to make it a priority, not just a token topic for a month.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The member for Ottawa—Orléans.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Merci, Monsieur le Président. I am proud to stand in the House today and support my colleague from York Centre's motion to celebrate Ontario's manufacturing and export sector, as it contributes significantly to the prosperity of this province. Ontario's manufacturing and export sector has been a considerable backbone to this province, and these sectors contribute over \$95 billion to Ontario's gross domestic product. Many people in this province proudly work in these industries, and this government is working hard to ensure that these sectors continue to grow, given the challenging economic time we live in.

Il est aussi important de noter la diversité de ce secteur. La manufacture en Ontario a plusieurs sous-secteurs.

These subsectors include automotive, aerospace, defence, agriculture equipment manufacturing, food processing, clean technologies and others.

In my riding of Ottawa—Orléans, we may not have an auto plant, a GM or some of my colleague from Cambridge's—but we are the home of a milk processing plant called Natrel. This business employs hundreds of people locally and thousands nationwide, and provides much of Ontario with dairy products, including milk and cheese.

Natrel's sole dairy processing plant in Ontario is in Orléans, while Agropur, the sister division of Natrel, has an additional two dairy processing plants in Ontario.

I also have the pleasure of representing ProSoya Inc., which processes soy products, and Yeliv Inc., which specializes in designing and creating the equipment used in the processing of soya products.

Ces deux entreprises emploient plus de sept personnes et continuent de grandir, while their products are used by major companies, such as DuPont, Unilever, Kraft and many more.

I know many of you represent numerous other manufacturers in this province. These businesses are part of the backbone of Ontario's prosperity, as well as employing hundreds of thousands of Ontarians in each of our communities.

Ontario is continuing to look forward and to help manufacturing continue to compete and expand around

the globe. To show the importance that we have placed in our manufacturing sector, our 2014 budget—a budget that the opposition did not support—introduced the 10-year, \$2.5-billion Jobs and Prosperity Fund. This fund will help the diverse manufacturing business across Ontario win the international competition for new investments, which will help our businesses grow and compete around the globe.

Monsieur le Président, nos investissements dans ce secteur fonctionnent.

Our government's investments are working. While manufacturing in Ontario, like many other jurisdictions around the world, saw a downturn in growth following the global economic crisis in 2008, our coordination with and investments in these many manufacturing businesses are allowing Ontario's companies to expand. According to the RBC economics Provincial Outlook, September 2014, "the ... export turnaround [has] gained traction." The report also stated that "we continue to expect that rapidly improving US demand will sustain further acceleration next year," and RBC continues to maintain their "solid 2.8% forecast for 2015."

It is undeniable that our government's investments have helped Ontario's manufacturing businesses retain, grow and compete worldwide. In fact, as mentioned by my colleagues, if you speak with the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, they will tell you that one of their biggest concerns is those who talk down the growth in the manufacturing sector since the global recession.

Our manufacturing sector is recovering and growing, and this government will continue to invest and work with our diverse manufacturers in order that we continue to ensure that our sector will grow jobs here and expand exports around the globe.

Mr. Speaker, we also created the regional economic development funds, and they have contributed over 90% of their investments to the manufacturing sector. Not only that, they helped create jobs.

One of the key highlights is a company that I would like to mention in this House. It's called Animat. This company recycles used tires and creates animal bedding. It is located in Moose Creek in eastern Ontario, near my riding of Ottawa–Orléans. The Eastern Ontario Development Fund provided Animat with \$600,000, which has helped create 10 more jobs and increased their recycling capacity to meet the demand for their product around North America.

This is why I'm very proud to be standing in this House in support of the motion by my colleague from York Centre.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: October is already recognized as National Manufacturing Month. Of course, it will be fantastic if our province followed suit.

It has already been pointed out that over the past decade, high taxes, skyrocketing energy rates and copious amounts of red tape, of course, have forced many manufacturers to close their doors or leave our province

altogether. As was also pointed out, Ford just this week announced that, instead of locating in Ontario, it was locating its manufacturing in Mexico, which leaves a sort of bad taste in a lot of people's mouths. To consider celebrating now is kind of difficult. Just last Friday they announced this.

I think it's hard to feel that we're really on the road to recovery, which we need to get to. We used to be the driving force of this country's economy, and we're nowhere near that.

Mr. Speaker, I truly appreciate what the manufacturing sector and all of its employees have done for our province. I'm happy to support this motion to recognize all the work that the industry is doing and will do. I also think that the manufacturing industry and all of its employees and their families, obviously, deserve better.

Just this morning, I was at a committee meeting. The Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters spoke about their concerns about new legislation. Basically, it was Bill 18, which is supposed to create stronger workplaces for a stronger Ontario. I'm worried that this is lip service and sentimental statements, much as having celebrations and special months. As was pointed out, we need more than just one month of celebration on a topic. I believe it was the member from Oshawa who said it: We need the whole year to focus on our manufacturing, not just one month a year.

The Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters this morning spoke about their concerns with Bill 18: decreased flexibility, increased Workplace Safety and Insurance Board premiums, increased insurance premiums, increasing expensive audits, increasing red tape and increasing bureaucracy. That would decrease productivity and actually hurt manufacturing.

I think that we all need to do better. The manufacturers want a friendly environment in Ontario. The employees and their families deserve a government that makes their industry's job creation and payroll a priority. They deserve a government that does more than just pay lip service and say "Thank you" for all the work they do. They deserve better than what they are getting, and I hope that this is just the first step to begin to rectify the government's shameful record on this industry. The manufacturing sector and the people of Ontario deserve better, and we can do better.

1530

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

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to have an opportunity to speak for a few minutes on this motion. Of course, I'm going to support manufacturing in Ontario and support this motion that October should be recognized as Manufacturing Month. But I think, as has been stated, Ontario could do a lot more to support manufacturing in the province. There have been a lot of challenges that have been put forward by policies of the Liberal government; in particular, I would mention high energy costs.

I look to my own riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka, where we have Kimberly-Clark in Huntsville, a tissue

manufacturer. I've met with them, and when you talk with them, they'll point out that of the many tissue mills in North America, Huntsville being the only one in Ontario—it has the highest energy costs of any of their tissue plants in North America. That makes it very difficult for them to expand and continue when they're competing for capital within the company. That's something that needs to change if we want to have more manufacturing in the province of Ontario.

I was talking just recently with a Muskoka business trying to expand into Barrie, and they highlighted just how the regulations and red tape in Ontario are crippling business, including manufacturing businesses. This particular business, trying to expand into Barrie, into an industrial park, has been at it for three years now and still isn't able to get the site going there. This has to change if we want to be welcoming and promoting business in Ontario. I think there are some concrete things we could be doing.

We have many manufacturers in Parry Sound—Muskoka, including Connor Industries, which builds Stanley Boats in Parry Sound, which are being sold around the world—fine-quality aluminum boats, unique designs. I met with Bill Connor just a couple of weeks ago. His biggest challenge? Trying to get enough skilled people, in particular welders and metal workers, to be able to produce as much as he would like to. Frankly, that's limiting the amount of business they can do. So these are concrete things that can be done to improve manufacturing and improve our competitiveness in this province.

I'm happy to support the motion. It's nice to say how important manufacturing is, but we really need to do much more: address these high energy costs, address the onerous regulations and red tape, and develop more skilled workers.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now recognize the member for York Centre. You have two minutes for reply.

Mr. Monte Kwinter: I want to thank those who participated in the debate: the member from Ottawa—Orléans, the member from Cambridge, the member from York—Simcoe, the member from Niagara Falls, the member from Dufferin—Caledon, the member from Thornhill and the member from Parry Sound—Muskoka.

I've been listening with interest, because over the years I've had five different portfolios, and one of them was industry, trade and technology. I can tell you that when we were attracting the auto sector—the one at Honda, the one at Toyota—they continually told me that they send their completed product back to Japan and the number one product in the world is produced in Ontario.

When we opened a van plant in Windsor, Lee Iacocca was there, and in his speech he said that the reason they have their plant here in Ontario is because of the labour force. The big factor is health care, where the fringe benefits in the United States cost more than the metal that goes into the car.

One of things we have to be aware of is that there are always factors out there—and on the Ford plant moving

to Mexico, you haven't heard the real background story of that. This is something where a decision was made; they're a global company and they have to play in a global market. But they have put a lot of money into Oakville, they've put a lot of money into a lot of their other facilities, and this is just part of the game. But I don't think that anybody can really deny that Ontario is a base for manufacturing and exporting. We have to support it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will take the vote on that item at the end of private members' public business.

PROTECTING CHILD
PERFORMERS ACT, 2014
LOI DE 2014 SUR LA PROTECTION
DES ENFANTS ARTISTES

Mr. Paul Miller moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 17, An Act to protect child performers in the live entertainment industry and the recorded entertainment industry / Projet de loi 17, Loi visant à protéger les enfants artistes dans l'industrie du spectacle vivant et l'industrie du spectacle enregistré.

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

Mr. Paul Miller: Speaker, it is again a tremendous pleasure to welcome to the Legislature of Ontario some of Ontario's finest performers in the recorded and live entertainment industries. We've had such a good working relationship with those who are on the front lines of this issue, and I want to thank the members and staff of ACTRA and Canadian Actors' Equity Association.

Here this afternoon from ACTRA and Equity are Art Hindle, David Sparrow, Sue Milling, Lisa Blanchette, Karen Woolridge, Barb Larose, Karl Pruner, Luca De Franco, Clara Pasieka, Lynn McQueen, Jeremy Civiero, Arden Ryshpan, David Gale, David Macniven, Ferne Downey, John Nelles, Kim Hume and Catherine Disher. Welcome.

These people, along with many others, have worked endless hours to ensure the best child performer protection in Canada. I thank them for all their hard work, for their support and for their sincere caring for these vulnerable child workers. They were, along with many of us in the Legislature, led to believe that this bill would be law by now and that we'd all be working on the associated regulations in the past year.

I also want to thank our legislative counsel, Pauline Rosenbaum, and her staff for their hard work and advice on Bill 17.

Speaker, here we are again, trying to make law the basic protections that all child performers should simply be able to expect in our province. Again, I will say many of the same things I said a year ago and hope that not only the new MPPs understand the importance of this

bill, but that the long-time MPPs will listen again and use all of their strength to persuade their leaders and House leaders to move this bill forward to committee agenda, third reading and royal assent as soon as possible.

Although we had hoped last year that it would be that one, there is still time to make this for Christmas, when Bill 17 will enshrine protection for child performers by becoming law.

Our live and recorded entertainment industries highlight the tremendous homegrown talent that we have from many areas in this province. Our entertainment industry is a significant economic force. I'll read a quotation from the Ontario Media Development Corp. March 1 news release:

"Film and television activity contributed \$1.28 billion to the provincial economy in 2012 and accounted for almost 29,000 full-time direct and indirect jobs. Since 2008, economic activity has increased by 90% and the 2012 financial results are the strongest ever."

In its March background to the OMDC release, it was reported that the domestic production dollars left in Ontario in 2010 were \$646.2 million, which increased to \$871.9 million in 2012. Additionally, foreign production dollars left in Ontario in 2010 were \$318.2 million, up to \$404.5 million in 2012. These numbers alone tell us the significance of the film and television production industry in Ontario.

The calibre of the writing, the performances and the productions are obviously top-notch, but in Ontario we have failed to enshrine clear and direct obligations to the child performers. We still don't have legislated hours of work, set breaks, play or resting areas, requirements for appropriate tutoring, for healthy snacks or for who can chaperone, tutor or act as a guardian.

Some time ago, the Ministry of Labour, ACTRA, Equity and the producers worked diligently on a series of very strong guidelines to address these concerns. But guidelines are just that, Speaker. They don't have to be followed. They look nice for a parent to read and feel safe about their child performer, but are only a preferred way of treating child performers. There will be those who will put the guidelines on the shelf, likely in outer offices so that the visitors can see them, but we all know that these folks have absolutely no intention of implementing these child safety measures if it is up to them. ACTRA and Equity have child safety as a standard ask in their contract negotiations, and have included as many safeguards as they possibly can.

But we all know that child performer safety should never be the subject of negotiations. It should be enshrined in law. The guidelines, contracts and input during the standing committee process in 2013 informed the writing of Bill 71 and now Bill 17. The writing process has recognized the obligations to child performers are different in the recorded and live entertainment industries and, as with Bill 71 and Bill 17, sets out requirements separately for each of these performance areas.

1540

Bill 17 has included the hours of discussion, amendment and negotiation that went through with Bill 71,

especially the amendments passing in committee on Wednesday, December 11, 2013.

Bill 17 will ensure that child performers will have the best and safest work experience while providing the entertainment industry with child performances necessary to tell the whole story. In June 2013, at a press conference for Bill 71, a fact sheet was handed out that provided information essential to this issue.

We have new MPPs in this Legislature. So to be sure that every member of the Legislature is able to know the essential information, I'll read it into the record now:

"Why do we need more than the Ontario Child Performers Guideline?"

"The Child Performers Guideline was developed by the Ministry of Labour in consultation with industry stakeholders.

"Some of these guidelines are supported by the provisions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, but others, like part 3 of the guideline, are presented as 'best practices' and carry little or no legal force.

"Furthermore, the guideline is silent on many aspects of the engagement of child performers.

"The Child Performers Guideline offers a solid foundation, but must be enshrined in legislation so that the full weight of the law may be brought to bear when necessary.

"For example, limited hours of work for minors are only 'strongly encouraged to be incorporated into workplace practices.'

"The same is true for the appointment of a chaperone, the provision of breaks in the workday, and travel to and from the workplace, among other provisions.

"Other aspects of the engagement of child performers that are not addressed in the guidelines include:

"—provision of tutoring;

"—regulation of exposure to moral hazards; and

"—protection of earnings through a requirement to put a portion of earnings in trust.

"ACTRA and Equity have negotiated strong collective-agreement language to address" some of "these issues. While we are proud of the work they have done, it is unconscionable that the welfare of children should be subject to market forces and the uncertainty of negotiated contracts.

"Some producers and engagers do not adhere to ACTRA or Equity contracts and, as a result, many child performers do not even have the protection of a collective agreement."

I've had about two dozen emails from parents of twins and triplets and three or more of children who are performers. They have been frightened that they can't afford to have guardians or chaperones for each child and therefore their children will not be able to perform.

I understand their concern but want to make it very clear that additional guardians or chaperones are the responsibility of the producer. This is a cost of doing business, similar to many other costs incurred during a production. It should be a line item in a production's

budget. It should be a basic to any production that protection for children is paramount.

The requirement for multiple children from one family to be in a production is likely quite low overall, and therefore the cost is also quite low. Really, how much is it to ensure the safety of children who are working?

I'll repeat my information about the child performer protection in other Canadian jurisdictions. In British Columbia, minimum standards for wages and working conditions for children working in the live and recorded entertainment industry are set under the Employment Standards Act and the employment standards regulations. The legislation covers minimum age, daily hours, split shifts, breaks, time before a recording device, hours free from work, work week, chaperones and income protection.

In Manitoba, the Worker Recruitment and Protection Act improves protections for children in the talent and modelling industry by making the agency and the parents/guardians of child performers jointly responsible for the safety and well-being of that child. It helps parents and guardians and agencies to recognize and to prevent the potential for exploitation before it happens.

A child under the age of 17 who will be promoted by a talent agency must have a child performer's permit from employment standards. The offence of operating without a licence or contravening the legislation is subject to fines from \$25,000 to \$50,000. I expect that fines of that amount would be significantly higher than the cost of ensuring what it would be to have a guardian or chaperone for each child on the set.

Again, for new MPPs, I'd like to provide a history of income protection for child performers. Some of these examples are from the States but provide the background that is applicable to this situation: Coogan accounts, aka blocked trust accounts, and trust accounts are required in the United States only in California, New York, Louisiana and New Mexico. Fifteen percent, which is not much, of the minor's gross wages are required to be withheld by the employer and deposited into the Coogan account within 15 days of employment.

The Coogan Law is named after the famous child actor Jackie Coogan. Coogan was discovered in 1919 by Charlie Chaplin and soon after cast in the comedian's famous film *The Kid*. Jackie-mania was in full force during the 1920s, spawning a wave of merchandise dedicated to his image. It wasn't until his 21st birthday, after the death of his father and the dwindling of his career, that Coogan realized he was left with none of the earnings he had worked so hard for as a child. Under California law at the time, the earnings of the minor belonged solely to the parent.

Coogan eventually sued his mother and former manager for his earnings. As a result, in 1939, the Coogan Law was put into effect to protect future actors from finding themselves in the same terrible situation that Jackie was left in.

Jackie Coogan went on to recover a small portion of his earnings after battling his mother in court. He became

well known for playing Uncle Fester on the television series *The Addams Family* and has always been remembered for the role his story played in protecting child actors from losing their earnings.

Even long after the Coogan Law went into effect, another child performer who grew up with no savings from years of child performances was Shirley Temple.

These are extreme examples, but we want to be sure that child performers in Ontario are not the next bad example of how to treat the monies they work so hard for.

The requirements for income protection are absolutely necessary to ensure that our child performers are properly compensated. How much should be protected and the amount arrived at need further study and resolution, and how that money is handled to ensure that when the child performer reaches the age of 18 their earnings are managed properly.

I would also suggest that a trust be made available to child performers older than age 18, even perhaps to 21. At 18, there might be a tendency to spend their hard-earned money on current interests rather than on what would be good for them in the future. I can remember myself at age 18, and I don't think I would have made all the right choices if money had suddenly become available to me.

Child performers not only spend their days learning their lines and performing them; they must also attend tutoring sessions to learn their school work and meet the education curriculum required at their grade level. Their days can be very full, with diverse demands on their learning abilities, their mental and physical capacities, and the loss of time with their friends and family.

One of the appealing things about this bill for the producers is that it's a very low-cost initiative. No matter how big or small the company, any changes of these working conditions are very, very doable. Ensuring that there is a safe, secure room for child performers to be tutored, to relax and to learn their lines would be an easy requirement when selecting a production venue.

I'm running out of time. I have more, but Speaker, I can tell you that this is a very doable bill, and all parties, I'm sure, would be onboard to protect the children of this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to commend my friend from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek for his persistent and unrelenting commitment to this issue. It's quite remarkable and worthy of respect in this House.

I also want to recognize that my favourite mayor is in the gallery: the best mayor Paradise Falls ever had, my friend Art Hindle. I was a mayor once; I never had that kind of fun—until I came to Toronto, and then I realized that mayors can do all kinds of things you can't do where I come from. Anyway, that's probably a conversation for another day.

This is a really important piece of legislation. I've said many times in this House that my favourite hours—and

every passing year I'm here, I find that to be even more true—are during private members' public business. I think we as MPPs should find some way to strengthen this process, because I think most of us come here—regardless of our party, we bring life experiences.

My friend is a trade unionist, a background that I share with him, and he is someone—he made those remarks earlier today—who understands how important safety in the workplace is, and brings that sense of commitment and his experience there to try to inform this House on those who are most vulnerable. He has picked an important group of people in the workforce: children who are extremely vulnerable to exploitation. I think that shows us at our best as MPPs.

I think that much will be said today about why this is such an important piece of legislation and why it needs to get support. I don't know anyone on this side who, in conversations that I've had, isn't supportive of this legislation. My friend Minister Flynn, the Minister of Labour, spoke quite eloquently earlier, and has on other occasions, and I know that he has been working with the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

1550

I think there's a need for this bill to go to committee—I don't think for protracted debate. I think there's a strong consensus around it.

I understand that there are three things that need to be done, and, Mr. Speaker if you'd allow me, I'd like to put them on the record as what I understand as the pathway forward and that we're actually talking about how we get this bill, eventually, to third reading.

One is that this is consequential to other bills. There are other bills that will need to be amended to support this piece of legislation. I would implore the—

Interjections.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I can continue? A changing of the guard there. I'm okay?

So I'm hoping that, in anticipation of that, the House leaders from the three parties are working to try and start to message that we would like to see this happen. I'm hoping that the work is being done to sort through those legislative amendments and the consequential amendments that would have to be attached to this bill or the other pieces of bills that need to be legislated.

There are two areas that I think, for technical and legal reasons, if I understand them, need some clarification.

One is the addressing of mental or emotional distress. There are certain legal definitions that have to be in the bill to ensure that those components work.

The other one is travelling with chaperones. There are some issues, and I'm told these are not substantive but are more technical issues.

So here we have a private member's bill that I think right now—certainly at committee, I know we on this side and the members of the New Democratic Party both supported it; I understand our friends in the official opposition did not. I'm hoping that maybe as a result of this debate they will be prepared, when this goes to committee, to maybe revise their views on this. But I

think this is an important piece of legislation, and I think that if we can concentrate our members on those issues and on getting this through—private members' bills: Mr. Speaker, you yourself have one that's embodied right now in a bill before this House on distracted driving. I don't think we would have had this bill if it hadn't been for that. The member for Parry Sound–Muskoka, also in that bill, has a piece of legislation now attached to a government bill that will see fewer tow truck drivers killed. Sorry; that's the member for Simcoe. We'll see fewer cyclists killed because of street widening. The member for Parkdale–High Park has a piece of that bill herself in the one-metre rule. These are all good, practical things that members in this House have seen as important.

I'm hoping that by the time I leave this place, one of the things we'll see is that these kinds of bills will find themselves at third reading more frequently and more easily. And as this is one of the first rounds of private members' bills that we have actually started to do, one of my observations is that this place is too crazy partisan too much of the time. I think once the election is over and we've settled in here, people expect to see the best of us. They want to see us, wherever we can, set aside our differences, join in, and find common ground and move those things forward.

I can't think of one reason why this bill should not be moving through this Legislature very quickly. So I'm hoping that members will implore their House leaders and that those of us who have been around here as long as I have, and many longer, will use their influence with their colleagues to ensure that these things happen. I think we sometimes get into transactional politics, and that's part of it. We all have big pieces of legislation, we have things that we want to do, that our particular political affiliations and parties want to see happen consistent with our values, and there's a certain amount of reasonableness in expecting a certain amount of transactional politics. But as I think the member said earlier, there are certain things that should exist above politics, and this is certainly one of the things that should be either above politics or at the very core of all of our politics.

I will sum up and leave it at that and thank my friend opposite for his leadership and his consistent, principled position on this.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to speak on Bill 17, the Protecting Child Performers Act. Of course, we want to protect children in all aspects of their lives, whether they are working or in school or playing. Wherever they are, they have to be protected. That's why we're here, I believe: to protect the most vulnerable in our society.

It's interesting that the member opposite who presented this motion spoke about Jackie Coogan, and I guess I'm from a different generation maybe, because I was thinking more along the lines of Macaulay Culkin, who we all know lost what he had earned as a child actor. It

was not put away by his parents. We see too often that children are taken advantage of. I mean, they are children, and how would they know about financial things and investments. They would believe that the money was being saved for them if that's what they were being told.

I, myself, have a neighbour who participated in the movie *The Music Man* when it was taped right here in the greater Toronto area, and I believe Peterborough as well. I was very interested at the time in hearing about some of the rules that were involved—she did join ACTRA—in terms of how many hours during the day the child performers could be on the set. In fact, she wasn't supposed to be in a scene, and then she was put in a scene at the last minute. The actor that was supposed to be in that scene had used up the maximum number of hours, so they had to make that switch.

I just imagine how complicated it must be to work with child actors. We often hear the more seasoned adult actors say that the last thing they want to do is be in a movie or a TV show with a child because they tend to steal the show, but obviously, for the people producing it, there are serious challenges. I think that we need to do more to protect the kids, but we also have to realize that there are a lot of people who benefit from children working in the entertainment industry. There are the agents, there are the producers, there are the distributors, there are the advertisers and the sponsors, and they're putting a lot of pressure on the entire industry as a whole. Obviously, we have to do what we can to ensure that the children are safe.

Now, we also have to look at the monies that the children are earning, that it's put away for them and it's not all being gobbled up by all kinds of expenses such as agent fees and things like that, and I'm not sure that's being addressed here.

I think that we need to also concern ourselves with who is working with our children. We are hearing that the Toronto District School Board is asking for background checks for parents who are just volunteering to go on a field trip, they're not even going to be alone with any children, and so, as we're debating this motion, I'm wondering if there are background checks being done on people who are working with children in the entertainment industry, if there are any rules in place or if they're planning to put any rules in place to ensure that children aren't left alone with somebody who isn't a designated chaperone or parent or grandparent or something like that.

Obviously, if they have to travel and they have to stay overnight somewhere, that obviously concerns me as a parent. Maybe we have to broaden our scope to also include children who are involved in semi-professional sports at a very young age where there are team sponsors and travel and there's a lot of room for exploitation as well.

I think that we definitely have to have some legislation in place—I think that all members of the Legislature agree with that—but I think that too often the problem with new laws that we're contemplating is that we don't

always recognize the consequences of what we're doing. I wouldn't want to see anything hamper our ability to allow children to participate in the entertainment industry. I would want to see something that wasn't a lot of red tape and a lot of bureaucracy. I wouldn't want to see something that slows down production in any way. Children, if they are cast in a part when they are 12 years old, are not going to look the same or act the same when they are 13 years old. Time is of the essence, so it has to be done in such a way that it doesn't slow down the production. We have to be very cognizant of that.

I want to thank the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, who mentioned that children are exceptionally vulnerable to exploitation, and I think that's what we need to focus on: that kids can't be exploited for financial gain, they can't be exploited for the entertainment of adults somehow, and that the monies that they are earning are put away for their future. Perhaps there could be some kind of RESP investment up to a certain amount. We have to realize that these kids aren't necessarily the star in a big production. A lot of those kids are already members of ACTRA. I think that what we're addressing more are the kids who are doing small parts, maybe in a commercial, a small part in a production. In the greater Toronto area, we have such terrible traffic now that I'm concerned about the kids just travelling, how they're getting to places and how they're being picked up and that they're not being left alone to walk and to try to find transportation somehow.

So I think that these are all things we have to address. Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing us to speak on this private member's bill today.

1600

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

Miss Monique Taylor: Imagine for a moment watching *Anne of Green Gables* or *Annie* with a cast full of adults, or perhaps a production of *Oliver Twist* where the six-foot-tall lead says in his deep, booming voice, "Please, Sir, can I have some more?" I'm sure many of our talented performers, some of whom are with us today, could miraculously pull this off, but let's be honest: If we want to portray real life in our scenes and on our stages, we must include children to play those parts.

In that respect, this is a workplace like no other. But because children do not take part in other workplaces, there has been a failure to properly recognize what it means to be a child in the workforce. These are exceptionally talented young performers. Some of them act from a very, very young age, and they do it with virtually no protection at all from the law. Yes, there are some guidelines, but they are just that: guidelines with no legal force. That is why Bill 17 is so important, and I greatly appreciate the opportunity to speak to it today.

I want to thank my colleague the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek for acting so quickly to bring this bill back before the Legislature and for being such a strong advocate on behalf of child performers. I also want to recognize the important work that has been

done on this file over the years by ACTRA Toronto and the Canadian Actors' Equity Association.

The story goes that renowned Canadian actor Shirley Douglas was on the set of *Wind at My Back* many years ago. She noticed a room off to the side where the children she shared camera time with would go for their tutoring. The other thing that she noticed horrified her. Adult crew members would sometimes enter the same room, but when they did, they wore a mask. They wore a mask because it was used for storing paint and they needed protection from the fumes. Well, Shirley Douglas grew up in a home that very well understood and clearly knew the need to promote the rights of workers, the rights of children and the need for health and safety in the workplace. Never shy to speak her mind, she took it upon herself to do something about it.

Since then, ACTRA and Equity have worked to build into their contracts protection for their young members. They have developed a fine set of rules to make sure that producers never forget that although those child performers are workers, they are first and foremost children. Let me quote from the relevant section of ACTRA's Independent Production Agreement: "The parties recognize the special situation that arises when minors are engaged in the workplace. The parties are dedicated to ensuring a safe environment for all performers, with extra care given to the proper health, education, morals and safety of minors."

The rules flowing from that include strict limits on hours of work and rest periods depending on the age of the child. Responsible adult supervision of the children on set, guided by the child's parents, is required. Qualified psychologists must be hired to oversee the scenes that might be emotionally disturbing to a child. Provisions are included for tutoring on set to ensure child performers continue to receive the same education as their peers. There are rules in place to protect the money earned by a child performer, rules that require a certain percentage of earnings to be put directly into a trust account that the performer can access when they reach adulthood.

Speaker, that is how the game is played on a union set. ACTRA and Equity should be commended for the work that they have done on this, developing the rules and enforcing them. Yes, there are disturbing stories of violations, but at least there are rules and actions that can be taken when those rules are broken. But not all child performers are so lucky. There are many child performers working in this province without the benefit of a union contract. The type of rules I just described do not apply to them. They work in an industry where contracts are short, work is intermittent and hiring is often done in quite a subjective way. They are vulnerable to producers making unreasonable demands as they try to cut corners. Without the support of a union, they are left exposed to whatever may come their way. That, Speaker, is unconscionable.

Protection of child performers should be the law in Ontario. It shouldn't be left to the goodwill of producers,

and it shouldn't be left subject to negotiations that will happen every two or three years. We take great pleasure in watching the work of these talented performers. Our culture and our economy are enriched by the fruits of their labour. It is our job to put in place the laws that will protect the children who play a vital role in the entertainment industry. This is what this bill does, and I encourage all members of this House to support it.

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

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise this afternoon to thank the member opposite from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek again for bringing this legislation forward, the proposed Bill 17, An Act to protect child performers in the live entertainment industry and the recorded entertainment industry.

Mr. Speaker, I follow my colleague the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change in support of the proposed legislation. I also want to remind the members of the House and those who are watching this debate this afternoon that the Minister of Labour this morning was very forthcoming and very explicit in his support of the proposed legislation. I wanted to make sure those two comments get recorded.

I also want to pay tribute to the member for Parkdale–High Park. I believe in 2007 she introduced similar legislation, so I want to say thank you for her work to lead this conversation.

We all agree in this House that children are one of the most vulnerable populations in our community. It's our legislative effort collectively to ensure that they're protected at all times. The proposed legislation is clearly an important piece of legislation.

More importantly, it talks—and I want to applaud the member opposite—in the explanatory note, which is very self-explanatory, in terms of explicitly stating "child performers in the live entertainment industry and the recorded entertainment industry." It talks about the issue of promoting the best interests, protection and well-being of child performers. That's what legislation is about. Who are we trying to protect? What is the intent of the bill?

In my very short time, I want to provide some suggestive feedback to the member opposite, because I believe there is extensive clarity in the bill but there are certain pieces of the legislation where there can always be improvement, particularly when it comes to the hours of work. On page 8 of the proposed legislation, it talks about maximum number of hours of work in terms of four to 16 etc. I think when the bill goes through second reading to the committee, it is very important for us in the Legislature to make sure this maximum number of hours of work is based on best practices, better known as evidence-based.

The reason why I'm talking about this is because I have some personal experience about this particular bill. I don't think the member opposite knows that. My young nephew Neil, now 24, was a young actor. As his aunt, I got stuck with supervising and chaperoning him, so-

called, for his performance. I got stuck there for eight hours and I had no idea what I was supposed to do. I was told that he's going to be at this hour, and that's it. I said, "Well, wait a minute here. He can't sit here for X amount of time." When we talk about maximum hours of work, sometimes we may even have to help the employer—explicitly state in the legislation how many periods of breaks and rest. If you have a young child performer who's six years or two years old, unless the law explicitly says that, the employer may not do that. I like the fact that it's spelled out in terms of hours of work.

The other piece is that the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change also talked about enforcement. I totally agree. As a former nurse, I believe that we need to make sure that we have strengthened the law, protection—and also explicit fines. Sometimes people don't do anything unless you spell out the fine. How much will the consequences be?

1610

I know the member opposite talked about healthy food in the proposed legislation. I want to make sure that that healthy food reflects the provincial guidelines we have right now in the Ministry of Education. Also, respectfully, we need to add the word "diversity," because you may have healthy food but not respect the culture of the community, especially of young performers.

Mr. Speaker, I know this member and many of my colleagues here on the government side are very supportive of the proposed legislation. I do agree with the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change: We need to make sure private members' bills like this should not be debated to death, and make sure we move this particular legislation forward, go to committee and have a proper conversation and bring in witnesses if there is any amendment to the bill.

I do want to conclude my remarks by thanking the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. Thank you for your tenacity. Thank you for your perseverance on this particular bill to ensure that every child who is a child performer will be protected in this province. We all believe every child needs to be protected, whether they are in a classroom or in a workplace.

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

Mr. Michael Harris: I'd like to thank folks for the opportunity today to speak to Bill 17, the Protecting Child Performers Act, 2014, a bill that certainly resonates with many who have watched as children in Ontario perform and grow on both stage and screen. I think of so many who have taken to the stage and grown to such heights with the support of Ontario's performing industry.

When it comes to young entertainers in this province, we have a rich history. Even in the last few decades we can think of so many success stories that got started right here in Ontario, and I'd like to list a few of those folks.

Ryan Gosling, from London, started when he was a young boy in *Are You Afraid of the Dark?* in 1995; *Goosebumps*; my staff's childhood favourite, *Breaker*

High; and of course my wife's favourite, *The Notebook*. I'm sure you've seen it. I even had a bit of a tear myself watching that. But my personal favourite is *The Ides of March*.

That brings me to his *The Notebook* co-star, Rachel McAdams from St. Thomas.

Drake, from Toronto, in *Degrassi: The Next Generation*, starred as Jimmy Brooks, and later moved on to a very successful music career.

Robbie Amell from Toronto: *Scooby-Doo!*, *Cheaper by the Dozen 2*, *Murdoch Mysteries* and *How I Met Your Mother* are some of the performances he was in.

Sarah Gadon from Toronto: *Are You Afraid of the Dark?* and now starring in the TV series *Being Erica*.

We've got Charlotte Sullivan: *Harriet the Spy*, *Goosebumps*, *Murdoch Mysteries* again and *Rookie Blue*.

Shenae Grimes-Beech, from Toronto: *Degrassi, 90210*—also one of my staff's favourites.

We've got Kevin Zegers, from Woodstock, known as a child star from the movie *Air Bud*, who has since moved on to a series of TV shows and movies.

Michael Cera was born in Brampton, starting his career in an unpaid commercial role for Tim Hortons kids' camp that led to a Pillsbury commercial in which he poked the Pillsbury Doughboy. You likely remember that, Speaker. Now we recognize him from movies like *Juno*, *Superbad*, and *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World*.

And of course, we cannot forget Mike Myers, who started out on CBC's *King of Kensington* and is world-famous today. Speaker, the list goes on and on.

While I may be digressing somewhat here, many in this House may recall spending family time around the TV watching the CHCH-produced *Tiny Talent Time* out of Hamilton, the riding that the member who has tabled Bill 17 comes from. For almost four decades, Bill Lawrence hosted *Tiny Talent Time*, showcasing area children, who had the opportunity to display their talents on TV screens across southern Ontario. While there are no statistics to track, you can rest assured that there are many who got their start on the CHCH stage, to go on to enjoy great careers as performers around the world. Some good news just in, too: *Tiny Talent Time* made a triumphant return to CHCH last year, so stay tuned.

But back to the bill itself: As we've heard, child labour is of course illegal in Ontario, with one notable exception, that being the entertainment industry. That said, it is easily understandable why proponents look to enact regulation to protect our young people as they look to do what young people can do so well, and that is to entertain.

Bill 17 would introduce rules for dealing with child actors in both the live and the recorded entertainment industries. It calls for the mandatory creation of trust funds. This is something that has been around in the United States since the Jackie Coogan case in the late 1930s. Further, the bill addresses the need to ensure our child actors do not miss out on the educational opportunities that are the right of every child here in the province of Ontario. In addition to mandating tutoring for child

actors, the bill looks to ensure that our young performers are not being overworked or lacking adult guidance to prevent pitfalls that are, of course, likely to occur even with our adult performers. Regulations on working hours, the establishment of break periods and mandatory chaperoning—these are all measures that help enshrine respect for the child performer, both as a child and as a performer.

None of this takes away, of course, from the unforgiving job that most stage parents do. Bottom line: It is Ontario parents who must have our children's best interests at heart—to protect them, to ensure that they stay on the right path. I believe that is what parents in Ontario do their best to live up to. This legislation simply fills in that societal gap to help parents and their children reach these shared goals.

Speaker, it should be noted as well that the independent production agreement, IPA, of the Canadian Media Production Association and Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists is considered the gold standard in Canada when it comes to non-legislated protection of our child performers. It contains over a dozen pages relating directly to the protection of child performers in film and television. Currently, no other document or law serves to offer this level of protection to child performers. As such, we believe that if this bill does pass and make its way to committee, we should look to the IPA for direction on possible amendments to move this legislation forward.

I do appreciate the opportunity to speak to Bill 17 today. I know we had some very valid discussion last session. It did get to committee. With that, I will close by encouraging you all to check out the new Tiny Talent Time Saturdays at 8 p.m.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a pleasure to rise on this bill. I feel like this should be a tabloid headline, but I was a child performer. Every Wednesday when I was in primary school, I went down to CBC and took part in a show that most of us are too young to remember called Time of Your Life.

I was an extra on that show. I was a dancer. When I think back to what we actually did, what they actually had us do—no slight to the CBC; big fan of the CBC. But I would dance and be in rehearsals for three to six hours. Think about it: an eight- or nine-year-old. There was no tutor. I just missed a day of school every week for a year. I loved every minute of it. It wasn't a problem. I never saw a penny from it. I had good parents. I'm sure if they had stuck 15% of it in the bank, it would be worth about \$5 today.

But still, looking back on what could have happened, one can say very clearly that that's not what children should be put through—very, very clearly.

I have to say, this is a long time coming. As I said to our friends from ACTRA and from Canadian Actors' Equity, back again. Back again to the Legislature. They have been back again because this is part of the status of

the artist legislation that Peter Tabuns from Toronto–Danforth brought in, and that was before 2007. We're going back to the very beginning of the Liberals being in power here at Queen's Park. Then it was part of the status legislation in 2007, as you heard the member from Scarborough–Agincourt say. Kudos to the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, who has brought it back twice since then. We are talking about a bill that has been before this Liberal government for 11 years almost, two majority governments and one minority government.

When I hear great support from across the aisle, as we've always heard when we've talked about this for those almost 11 years, I have to say, put it into action. Enough talk. Where's the walk? We all know that in a majority government, the opposition gets its say, and the government gets its way. We want you to have your way on this. You support it. We want you to pass it. You can do it in a heartbeat. As it goes to committee, you can bring it back quickly. You can pass it in third reading and you can make it law. It's entirely up to you. Let me repeat that: It is entirely up to the Liberal government to make this law.

1620

I have to say, I know it's going to pass on a voice vote, but certainly today—we miss him, we had Santa Claus up there for a while from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek—

Interjection: No. Hamilton Mountain.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Pardon me?

Interjection: Hamilton Mountain.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Hamilton Mountain, sorry.

So we had Santa Claus sitting behind ACTRA and Canadian Actors' Equity. I can think of no better Christmas present for the children of this province than to pass this legislation into law before Christmas. That's a great Christmas present for children. What is this bill actually asking for? It's really just asking for protection for child workers. These are workers.

You heard the member from the Progressive Conservative Party talking about the fact that child work is supposed to be illegal. Well, it's not in this instance, and with good reason, because children want to and enjoy working, as I did, in the entertainment industry. But surely, if we have child workers, we have to have child worker protection. Surely, if we have child workers, we have to have child worker protection.

Sometimes when we think, "Well, because it's the entertainment industry, they're not really workers." Yes, they are. I remember those rehearsals really well. I remember how tired I was at the end of the day of going over and over and over a dance step or two or three with a line or two, if I was really lucky that week, on a week in, week out show. I remember how exhausted I was at the end of the day. I remember that it was sometimes fun and I enjoyed it, but it was sometimes work because little kids—I had a stage mother. Most child actors do have a stage mother or father. She enjoyed it way more most of the time than I did—I have to say that—because, quite frankly, at eight or nine years old, you'd rather be

playing with your friends, you'd rather be at the playground at a certain point. You make friends on set and it's fun, but it's not always about you. It's not always about you.

Certainly, as we heard in the case of Jackie Coogan and Shirley Temple—huge child Hollywood stars—who came out of it, all of that child labour work, with nothing to show for it. That should be criminal. It should be criminal.

What we ask here today, and I'm going to repeat it: We ask it again, of a majority government—we've asked it of another majority government—for what they are completely capable of delivering, nothing more, nothing less. We ask them for something very simple and basic: to protect child labourers, child workers in the entertainment field. They say they support it. They've said they've supported it before. But nothing has changed for child workers in the entertainment industry in the province of Ontario in 11 years since they've been in government.

I know, my friends across the aisle, that this time it will be different. I know, because you're wonderful people elected by wonderful people, that you'll do the right thing. Many of you have children. Many of you have grandchildren. Many of you know children in the entertainment industry. I'm seeing smiles across the aisles, smiles across the aisles, so I know you're going to do the right thing this time. I know that it's not only going to go through committee, it's going to come back here for third reading and it's going to pass into law this time.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now recognize the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. You have two minutes for your response.

Mr. Paul Miller: Well, Speaker, I was going to finish off with some more details, but I think we have to get into the meat of this situation. The bottom line here is, when I went through this last year and this went to committee, every party passed this through. It was the first time in the history of this Legislature that 64 amendments passed in less than an hour with no discussion—no discussion.

I might add, the bill was written and worked on by the minister of the time, who is now the House leader, and his staff, with my staff, with Equity and with ACTRA. We all assumed, and we had assurances, that it would go through at that time, but it got caught up, as I've said before, in the House leaders' situation, which was unfortunate.

But I'm a little surprised at the official opposition—that all of a sudden they have concerns—because their three members who sat on that committee, all three of them, were in total agreement at the time. They had no problems with it, and they also did not ask for any changes or amendments. They passed it fully. That went through. It sat on the order paper and was not brought forward.

That's where it died: on the order paper. It had already been through committee. They had already been lobbied

by the ones who may have had a problem with it—who, I might add, will not say it publicly. Nobody wants to come out against children, but there are people who are doing that behind the scenes; and they may have got to the official opposition to talk to them about it.

I don't know, but the bottom line is this: They knew about it. They knew about the amendments. They had an opportunity to change things that they were concerned about, and nothing happened. Everybody was happy. It was a big, happy family. I was actually stunned, surprised and overwhelmed by the co-operation. Little did I know that it was headed for more problems, out of my hands.

Once again I've brought it back, and I'm giving the people in this Legislature the opportunity to do the right thing for the children of Ontario: to protect child workers and entertainers. This is an opportunity for all of us to do the right thing. We talk about accountability. We talk about working with other people. Here's an opportunity to prove it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The time for private members' public business has now expired.

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LE MOIS DU PATRIMOINE HISPANIQUE

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will deal first with ballot item number 7, standing in the name of Mrs. Martins.

Mrs. Martins has moved second reading of Bill 28, An Act to proclaim the month of October as Hispanic Heritage Month.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to—Mrs. Martins?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Referring to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): It has been requested that the—

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Let me correct that, sorry: social policy.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy—

Interjections: Social policy.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): — Social Policy. Agreed? The bill is so referred.

MANUFACTURING MONTH

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Kwinter has moved private members' notice of motion number 8.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

PROTECTING CHILD
PERFORMERS ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA PROTECTION
DES ENFANTS ARTISTES

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Miller, Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, has moved second reading of Bill 17, An Act to protect child performers in the live entertainment industry and the recorded entertainment industry.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to—

Mr. Paul Miller: The Standing Committee on Social Policy.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy. Agreed? So referred.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CHILD CARE MODERNIZATION
ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA MODERNISATION
DES SERVICES DE GARDE D'ENFANTS

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 28, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 10, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, the Education Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 10, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur la garde d'enfants et la petite enfance, abrogeant la Loi sur les garderies, modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les éducatrices et les éducateurs de la petite enfance, la Loi sur l'éducation et la Loi sur le ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités et apportant des modifications corrélatives et connexes à d'autres lois.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): When this item of business was last debated, we completed questions and comments on the shared speech of the Minister of Children and Youth Services and the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Further debate?

Mr. Ted Arnott: Well, Mr. Speaker, I can't tell you how excited I am to have this opportunity this afternoon

to speak for 20 minutes on Bill 10, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, the Education Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts.

1630

This bill was first introduced in the Legislature on July 10 when we were sitting, of course, for what I call "our special summer sitting" after the provincial election. It stands in the name of the Minister of Education and of course has been called for second reading.

The bill is quite long. The title of the bill is quite long. In fact, it's 118 pages. From the outset, I want to congratulate and commend the critic for education from our party, the member for Simcoe North, for the good work that he has done on this issue and all of the education issues that he has addressed since being appointed the critic.

He has expressed a lot of concerns about this bill. I know he's consulting very widely. I want to indicate at the outset that I support his efforts to get this bill to committee and ensure that there are extensive public hearings when the Legislature has recessed for the winter.

I was privileged to serve in this Legislature going back to 1990 in my first term in office, between 1990 and 1995, in the days when Bob Rae was the Premier and the New Democrats were in power. I must say that there were extensive public hearings on a great many bills. I remember travelling the province, going to a lot of communities and listening to the presentations that were made by people in their communities. I think it was very helpful for us to hear the concerns, ideas and input from the general public. Of course, there was an onus upon the members and staff to make those hearings happen. It was a lot of work, certainly, but I think democracy was enhanced when people had that opportunity.

Of course, today we have modern methods of communication, and we have teleconferencing, and there are lots of opportunities. But I must say that I think, on average, legislation that has been passed by the Legislature in recent years has had far fewer hours of public hearing at the committee stage than was the case when I was first elected between 1990 and 1995. I would just submit to the government that Mr. Dunlop has put forward the suggestion that there should be extensive public hearings, that the committee should travel, and I would encourage them to give that serious consideration because we know that there are a lot of very serious concerns about this bill.

I just want to put the issue of child care in a bit of context. I want to thank and commend the legislative library and research services for putting together this research document for members, which I think we were given last week. It's very, very helpful in terms of putting some of these issues into context. Of course, our legislative library and research staff are non-partisan, impartial, and they do an outstanding job of researching the history of some of these issues, which helps us inform the discussion and the debate that we engage in today.

We know that since April 2010 the Ministry of Education has been responsible for what we now call the Early Years program, which includes the child care programs, and they're responsible for and involved with the funding, licensing and policy development of child care in the province of Ontario.

We know there are 47 local government entities, for example, consolidated municipal services managers, as well as district social services administration boards. These municipal entities are responsible for planning and managing child care services in their respective communities and administering fee subsidy programs to ensure that families who need the financial support of the provincial government and the taxpayers are in a position to receive that support.

It's interesting to point out that 2.6% of regulated spaces are operated by municipalities and regions. That's a very small percentage of the total but an important percentage of the total. Twenty-five per cent of child care is considered to be "for profit," but the vast majority of child care spaces are administered by non-profit agencies. I think the 25% of child care that's for profit is actually growing as a percentage of the whole. That says to me that obviously parents are looking for alternatives with respect to child care. It's a very significant and emotional decision that families have to make when they look for a child care provider for their children. So many families today are two-income families where both parents work, and when the children come along and when the maternity leaves must end, or the paternity leaves, whatever, there's a need for child care to be determined by families. Certainly we have confidence on this side of the House that parents are best suited and in the best position to make those decisions on behalf of their children. No one cares more about children than the parents, and we as a society have to recognize that, and the government needs to understand that too.

We have a system of regulation of child care already in the province, and have had for many years, under the Day Nurseries Act. That is the act that is the most important one in terms of the regulation of our child care system and programs. Of course, the Day Nurseries Act speaks to the health and safety of daycare centres and places, regulates staff levels and qualifications, ensures that children get a certain amount of outdoor time, and ensures proper nutrition for the children who are in child care. All of those are, I believe, things that all of us in this Legislature care about and support.

It's my understanding that 95% of regulated child care spaces are in one of the 5,050 licensed child care centres in the province of Ontario and that home-based child care, as we call it, means that children are in private residences outside of their homes. These are licensed by private home care agencies, and they contract with the individual caregivers so that there is some level of consistency and oversight. I think that's something that's in the public interest too. We have apparently, I'm told, 127 of these agencies in the province of Ontario today.

We also, within the provincial government, have something called the child care quality assurance and

licensing branch, and that branch is responsible for inspections and to ensure that minimum standards are being observed and met in child care centres. It's also responsible for the issuing of licences, the renewal of licences and, in many cases, the investigation of complaints, if there are any.

The provincial government at present, it's my understanding, spends \$971 million on child care in the province of Ontario: almost \$1 billion. That's a lot of money, Mr. Speaker, I think you would agree. But it's also interesting that when we had the provincial budget in the spring and then the regurgitation of the budget in the summer, the budget promised \$33.6 million in new child care funding over three years, I understand. That sounds like a lot of money, but if you think of it in terms of a percentage of almost \$1 billion total, you're looking at an annual funding increase of around 0.01%, which is not as big an increase as I think the government would like people to believe. They certainly would want people to think that they are doing wonderful things in child care, and really they are keeping the funding for child care pretty much—actually, it's probably a real reduction when you consider inflation is approximately 2%. When they were in opposition, they would have called that a cut, but, of course, today they talk about a \$33.6-million increase over three years. Certainly if we were in government and, again, if we were increasing child care funding by that amount, they in opposition would have argued that that was a cut. But, anyway, we'll move on.

We know that this Bill 10 opens up a significant number of bills. It opens up and amends the Assessment Act; the Child and Family Services Act; the Day Nurseries Act; the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007; the Education Act; the Health Protection and Promotion Act; the Housing Services Act, 2011; the Income Tax Act; the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act; the Pay Equity Act; the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005; the Smoke-Free Ontario Act; and the Social Contract Act, 1993. So clearly a significant number of provincial acts will be amended by this bill if it is passed in its current form, again speaking to the complexity of the bill and again reinforcing why our critic, the member for Simcoe North, is right that we need to have extensive public hearings. It would be in the public interest to have this bill sent to a committee sometime after the House recesses for Christmas, perhaps in January when the House isn't sitting, when there's time, and have a standing committee of this Legislature, an all-party committee, travel the province, seek public input and listen to the concerns that might be out there about this bill.

1640

Our caucus position has been outlined by our critic and, I think, by a number of other speakers from our caucus who have had the chance to speak to second reading of this bill. We're saying that this bill proposes to spend more on child care while actually providing less child care. We're saying that it would actually mean spending more on a licensing regime and inspectors without increasing the number of child care spaces.

We're spending more on inspectors and the whole regime behind that without actually increasing the number of child care spaces. Of course, when you look at the value for money, you'd have to question whether or not this makes sense. Why would we spend more on child care while getting less in the way of spaces and service? I'm not sure that the Minister of Education has adequately answered that point that our critic has made, and I would certainly hope that, over the course of this debate, the government speakers will, in fact, address that.

We're saying as well that viability for child care in rural Ontario, once these rules are enacted—or, I should say, if these rules are enacted—would be hindered. Of course, rural Ontario is different than urban Ontario, as you know, Mr. Speaker. I'm privileged and pleased to represent a small-town and rural riding, largely, although I have a large community in Georgetown, a large community in Acton and a large community in Fergus and the Elora area. I also represent a large number of farm families and people who live on what would be known as rural properties in rural Ontario. You can't just have a one-size-fits-all policy. I think there has to be a recognition and understanding on the part of the provincial government that indeed rural Ontario has unique and special needs. People know each other; they know their neighbours. In many cases, communities are stronger in rural Ontario because people know their neighbours and they get to know their communities. They're active and involved in their community organizations, in their churches, whether it's helping out with the school councils or what have you. That's a real strength in rural Ontario. At the same time, I think there has to be a recognition on the part of the government that rural Ontario is different when it comes to the need to support child care and improvements to child care.

Our caucus is saying that there is a conflict of interest inherent in this bill, because in the case of this legislation, the municipality and the region would act as a licensee, and yet at the same time, in many cases, municipalities are also child care providers. So the sense is, is there a conflict of interest or not? If they're going to be the licensee as well as a provider, does that make sense? I think that's an important point that the government needs to address. I'm not sure that they have so far.

We know that regions are going to be seen as the licensees, or municipalities. We have the municipality that is also a child care provider. In effect, a competitor would be judging whether one can provide child care in a particular area or not, because the municipality would be given authority to revoke licences. Again, that leads to us to wonder whether or not a conflict of interest is present, and that would perhaps lead to considerable problems down the road if it was.

We believe that there needs to be a common and consistent approach to pedagogy, meaning that every child care centre should be subject to this. But we wonder about the fact that private business is able to offer something different, to offer programming in an environment that might be different.

This bill, we're told, will limit the number of available spaces for child care for children less than two years of age and will make child care more expensive. We believe that the centres should be given a period of time to address the financial impact of the new regulations and that third-party child care providers are important because they can provide additional values and services.

We say that more consultation is necessary to ensure a well-thought-out bill that will allow the opinions of as many people as possible to be heard.

Many unlicensed daycares, if this bill is passed—and we're very, very concerned about this—would be shut down, depriving parents of a place for their child to be looked after. As we know, a significant percentage of the care is unlicensed today.

We believe that this bill affects 70,000 child care providers and roughly 350,000 people in the province of Ontario. We are saying that parents may face a hike of 30% to 40% in daycare fees to make up for the shortfall of income to providers if this bill passes as it's currently written.

We're concerned that providers will perhaps lose an average of \$12,000 to \$20,000 of family income per year through the involuntary reduction of spaces or by being coerced to work for a licensed agency. That's a significant concern.

Due to the potential of being fined up to \$100,000, many providers may in fact go underground in order to continue to support their families. If these child care providers go underground, there will be absolutely no oversight. That's a serious concern as well.

We say that the red tape involved in starting up a licensed child care centre in the province of Ontario is cumbersome already.

We're questioning whether or not this bill will actually improve safety.

If there's extra money in child care, we should be reducing the cost for families.

Again, that is the position our critic has outlined over the course of his discussions in this House.

I think we have to move very carefully on this piece of legislation. We have the time to engage the public, to ensure that everyone who has an interest in this issue—whether it be for-profit providers, non-profit agencies, municipalities or individual families and parents—to ensure that we get this right. We're dealing with children, our most precious resource. Surely, our children, the future of our province—I think we're united, as a Legislature, that this is perhaps one of the most important issues the Legislature will deal with in this fall session. We've got to make sure we get it right. We can't forge ahead just because the government feels that they've got an agenda and they just want to ram it through the House.

Surely, Mr. Speaker, we owe it to the children of the province of Ontario to get this right, to take the time to get it right and to ensure that there are adequate public hearings. I think Mr. Dunlop, our critic from Simcoe North, is absolutely right that we need to do this.

As we continue with this debate, I certainly look forward to hearing the views of the other members. I think that there'll be significant input in this House.

I would urge the government members to participate in this debate. We have seen, from time to time, in debates on other bills, that it's the opposition that is taking up the majority of the debate time, and sometimes we're accused of slowing things down. We would encourage government members—all of whom recently consulted with their constituents in the month of May and early June and have heard a lot, I'm sure, about all the issues in their respective ridings, including daycare issues—to participate in this debate.

Most of us have House duty time, and we're here—but I think if this place is going to be meaningful, and if this place is going to be an effective legislative body, we're going to have debate on these issues. This child care issue, this Bill 10, is obviously a very, very important issue that we need to extensively debate.

I would challenge government members not just to listen to what the opposition is saying, but to go home to their own ridings, to seek out advice from their constituents, to go to the child care centres and the Montessori schools in their ridings and see what's going on. Bring that perspective and those ideas back into this House. Bring those ideas and perspectives back into the government caucus room and challenge the minister on some of the points that she has made, if you're hearing different things from what you've heard in the government caucus office, if you're hearing different things from your constituents. I think that's how we'll keep the minister on her toes, and how we'll ensure that this legislation is properly amended and that we'll get, in the end, the best possible bill that the people of Ontario deserve, quite frankly, but most importantly that the children of Ontario deserve. Certainly, it's our obligation, as members of the Legislature, to ensure that that happens.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for your indulgence this afternoon. I've enjoyed having this opportunity to speak to Bill 10, and I look forward to the continued contribution of other members over the course of this debate at second reading.

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

1650

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'm happy to spend a couple of minutes talking about this. Ontario has a child care crisis because we don't have enough licensed, non-profit, subsidized spaces to actually meet the needs of parents in this province.

Just as I talked earlier today about the lack of staffing in our nursing homes, the same situation arises in the Ministry of Education as it relates to daycare spaces. We have a government that is basically cutting 6% off most programs across the province. Education isn't one of them, but it's being flatlined.

Although they want to set up this registry, which is going to take on all of the unlicensed daycare centres, they only want to add six people to actually do that kind

of investigating and oversight—maybe 20,000 kids per staff. That is just unreasonable for anyone to expect from any one employee.

Of course, our federal leader, Thomas Mulcair, has introduced the notion of a subsidized daycare system across Canada, where parents could rely on \$15 a day as the max for children who would be in licensed, regulated, subsidized daycares across Canada. It seems to me that this is probably the way that we need to go. The province of Quebec has gone that way. If it's good enough for Quebec, why shouldn't it be good enough for parents and children in Ontario?

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

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: At the outset, I would commend our colleague from the PC side, the member from Wellington-Halton Hills. I find his remarks always sensible and measured, and I think we will take to heart some of his comments in our deliberations.

I would, however, with respect, like to point out to the NDP that your most recent non-expired platform committed to a \$600-million further cut, and one would only assume that things like child care would probably be components of that.

Interjection.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Actually, I have the floor just now, but thank you.

In any case, I hope that it can be seen by what the government is doing, essentially doubling the funding to close to now a billion dollars, increasing the number of child care spaces by 90,000, including 22,000 new licensed, non-profit child care spaces—also something that should be near and dear to the NDP, although they seem to be slightly missing in action, for which some of your chronic stakeholders called you on: the fact that you are not really supporting or really bringing as much attention as you might have in the past to, for example, the funding for things like early childhood education.

This government is committing something more than \$250 million to this field. There are annualized increases which are now set to occur, and I think between all of these things you can see that the government is taking measurable and concrete steps to increase the quality, the stewardship, the legality and the status of child care in Ontario. Is it everything? Is it everything that we would dream of? No. Is there more work to be done? As always, yes. But I hope that, even in the midst of the partisanship, you will at least acknowledge some part of the earnest commitment here.

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm delighted to have a couple of moments here to respond to some of the issues that have been raised. I think the most important thing for the public to understand is that this bill purports to change the manner in which daycare is organized and supervised—two important words for what this bill stands for. I want to speak to, particularly, the issue of at-home daycare, because that happens to be the part of daycare

that is dealt with by most people; 80% have their children in at-home daycare. It is that group of people who right now feel that because they, under a technicality, are referred to as unlicensed, it somehow means they're illegal. Quite the opposite: They've been under the Day Nurseries Act for years and years and years, and certainly by their own admission, and by many parents', the fact that people still continue to flock there demonstrates the kind of work that they have done.

With legislation, it's always a question of balance, a balance between the issue of appropriate supervision and choice for families. In this piece of legislation, there's a third element, and that is the problem of public hearings because there's such a difference between the circumstances for young parents in small-town, rural Ontario than in urban centres. Their voices are lost in this discussion the way the bill is presented, without hearings.

I also want to say one more important thing about not getting it right. That is that child care is something that everyone is an expert on because you were a child once yourself and you are a parent or a grandparent or you know somebody. Everyone's an expert, so it's a very emotionally charged topic that quite frankly, we need to get right.

This government is taking a risk by not having hearings.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm pleased to speak on the Child Care Modernization Act. We have been hearing the terms "optimize" and "modernize" a lot this session, but I think the focus isn't just to make things newer, but rather to make things better.

Anyone in the province can tell you that Ontario has a child care crisis. Understand, though, that the crisis isn't whether we care. Most of us, I would argue, do care. It's whether we will actually do anything about it. We don't have enough licensed non-profit subsidized child care spots for our children. We do have a patchwork system with long lists, high costs and questionable safety.

As a New Democrat, I believe all of Ontario's children deserve safe high-quality care and early years programming. To that end, we agree with the government's recognition that a child care system is a matter of provincial interest. We've seen that it's also a matter of federal interest as well, looking at the priorities of the official opposition.

This past summer, I had the opportunity to sit with the leader of the official opposition, Thomas Mulcair, who visited Oshawa and hosted a community round table with parents and families and those concerned about child care challenges. Among those countless concerns, we heard that if families can find a child care spot, they pay the highest costs in Canada.

This bill won't reduce costs for parents or provide for additional subsidies to support families. Good legislation should work for the people, and we know the people of this province are working. They need their children taken care of so that they can do that work. They deserve safe, affordable, quality licensed options.

At that round table, locally, we heard concerns that are probably going to resonate across the province about challenges in child care: obviously, the waiting lists being unacceptable, issues that face parents who have recently graduated and are struggling to carry debt along with the cost of child care—

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: —and parents of children with special needs—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member from Wellington–Halton Hills. You have two minutes for a reply.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I want to thank my friend the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka, who gave me the opportunity to speak this afternoon for 20 minutes, again, to start my response.

We've heard from the member for Welland, the member for Etobicoke North, the member for York–Simcoe and the member for Oshawa. I think in their two-minute responses, they've all offered some interesting perspectives, and I appreciate their contributions.

Because of the rotation, of course, the New Democrats have two opportunities normally after an official opposition member speaks. Both of them talked about the commitment to child care from Thomas Mulcair, the NDP leader nationally. He brought out some sort of commitment with respect to child care.

I think that's something that has been promised before by the national leaders, not necessarily the New Democrats, but it has been something that has been talked about for years. I'm not sure what has stood in the way, but I suspect it's cost, most likely, in the end. When promises have been made for national child care programs and when the cost is all added up, it would appear perhaps to be determined to be something that is not affordable. At the same time, good for the New Democrats for promising it.

I want to express my thanks to the member for York–Simcoe for her comments especially. She talked about the need for balance in terms of whatever we do with respect to this bill and revisions to daycare programs and policies.

1700

In my riding, people's expectations for daycare programs are very reasonable, in my opinion. They expect to have access to high-quality daycare. They're concerned about quality and safety for their children, obviously, and they make sure that their children are put in a safe environment. They are concerned about the costs. So those are, really, I think the key concerns. But I think there's also an obligation and onus upon all three orders of government—federal, provincial and local—to work together to improve child care in the province of Ontario.

I'll conclude with that. Again, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the opportunity this afternoon.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this very important legislation today, Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act.

I would like to begin by talking a little bit about why this bill is in front of us. The history may be known to most of us here in the Legislature, but perhaps a short review would help the newly elected members of this House, as well as viewers at home who are watching today's debate. I will also review a lot of the information from the Ombudsman's report to this House, and I will speak to that later in my time.

The original Day Nurseries Act was first introduced in 1946 when, quite frankly, the world was a different place. In those days, most families did not have to use child care. One parent would work and be able to earn enough money to support a family comfortably while the other parent would stay home with their children. We all know that this simply is not the case today in 2014, and it really hasn't been the case for many years.

The act that was brought forward in 1946 was simply not prepared to deal with today's child care needs. The numbers that I was able to locate are from March 2013, and they provide a snapshot of what the needs are in comparison to its birth in 1946.

As of March 2013, there were 5,050 licensed child care centres in Ontario and 294,490 spaces in those licensed child care centres. The Ombudsman quoted a further 16,807 children in those 5,960 private home daycares affiliated with a licensed agency. This is only enough spaces for 20% of our children under the age of five. The government itself has admitted that only a fraction of children receive care in a licensed setting.

This is where it gets complicated, Speaker. It is abundantly clear that there are not enough licensed spaces for all families that need child care. It is a crisis situation that we've been trying to highlight for years. We know that many families rely on family members, grandparents, aunts or friends to help out, so that mom or dad can go to work. But not all families have those resources to pull from nor the funds to support the cost of today's child care. So the neighbour and the nice lady down the street began babysitting children and bringing money into their own households.

This created a whole section of child care that was not under the purview of the government other than the one single rule, which is the number of children that can be watched at one time, with no more than five children under the age of 10 in addition to their own children.

Now we have an estimate of 823,000 children in these informal, unlicensed settings. Remember, like I said previously, the only rule for these centres or homes is the number of children that they can have at one time. There are no spot checks or regulations to ensure that children are safe, and the only way the government would get involved is if there was a complaint about the provider.

Please don't get me wrong. There are many unlicensed home daycare providers who operate completely as if they were licensed. They get appropriate training and offer good programs and healthy food. These independ-

ent child care providers give a great service to our communities and the families that they serve. Unfortunately, there are unscrupulous people in this world, people who have abused and taken advantage of families due to their desperation to find child care. There are reports and true accounts of too many children in facilities who could not possibly get the care they need. They can be in dirty, damp, unsafe conditions.

When there are too many children, but for no other reason, they are called an illegal home daycare. Unfortunately, in the past few years, we have seen the terrible consequences of such a child care setting. Also unfortunately, many of these good unlicensed, independent providers feel vilified and accused due to the inaction of this government to deal with the bad ones.

Many who have contacted me asked for stricter rules to govern them. They know what they do. They know steps should be taken to make sure all child care providers are held to an acceptable standard, but they're not happy with the way this legislation has been brought forward.

Again, there are not nearly enough licensed spaces for families and there are not enough rules to hold the unlicensed sector accountable. So after years of this government's inaction to address the growing crisis in child care, let's take a closer look at the events that forced the government to act on their outdated legislation.

I know the government was recognizing a problem in 2010 when they decided to enact all-day kindergarten. When that happened, the child care file moved from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to the Ministry of Education, where it currently rests. To quote the Ombudsman, "It discovered it had inherited a legacy of dysfunction." They knew there were serious concerns, and yet they still did nothing about it.

Then, in January 2011, 14-month-old Duy-An Nguyen died in an unlicensed Mississauga daycare, where the provider was charged with murder. No actions were taken to correct the flaws apparent from this incident.

In July 2013, Allison Tucker, aged two, was found dead in an unlicensed child care in North York. Her provider is now charged with manslaughter. Still no action was taken on this file.

In July 2013, two-year-old Eva Ravikovich died in an unlicensed daycare in Vaughan. This daycare was illegally overcrowded, and there were at least 35 children who attended that daycare. When the police got there that day, there were 27 children in that home. Action finally happened, but it was too late to save Eva. It didn't have to be this way, because there had been several complaints about this child care setting before Eva died.

Remember, the only complaints that could be made were about too many children. Well, the ministry had received those complaints. In fact, they received five complaints specific to this one address, but they took no action and allowed them to continue to operate.

This child could have been saved if the Ministry of Education had done their job. The Ombudsman's response to this was, "Too little, too late."

Eva's family filed a lawsuit against the Ministry of Education for \$3.5 million, but the ministry stated its position, in a notice of motion, that it "does not owe a duty of care." They claim that because it was an unlicensed facility, the ministry is not responsible. Does the government really believe they do not have a duty of care to the children of this province? The Ravikovich lawyer quickly rebutted that statement with the negligence of the government in not responding to complaints filed to the ministry regarding the number of children in this home.

There was only one rule that they were required to police, and they failed miserably. The minister herself admitted in this House that her inspectors had failed to respond to complaints in overcrowded unlicensed facilities.

In November 2013, a nine-month-old baby, Aspen Juliet Moore, died in an unlicensed child care facility. The minister states that there were no complaints about this facility, but without a proper reporting system or a registry, how can she truly know that?

That was four children deceased within a seven-month period.

1710

After the death of Eva Ravikovich, I wrote a letter to the Ombudsman asking him to do an investigation into the adequacy of the government of Ontario's protection of children in an unlicensed child care operation. It seemed very clear that the government was dropping the ball on this file, and it was a huge concern that our young children's lives were at risk as a result. The government needed to step up to the plate with changes to the sector that would suit the needs of today's families.

In April 2014, Bill 143 was tabled and debated, and it is now before us again as Bill 10. It is a very extensive bill that overhauls the legislative framework for our child care in Ontario by repealing the Day Nurseries Act and enacting the Child Care and Early Years Act. Some of the changes include: larger group sizes being allowed for licensed home care providers; extended day programs will be provided at schools for children up to grade 6 on school days; beefing up investigative powers; duty that a provider disclose that it is unlicensed; and several other measures.

But what's not included in Bill 10 is certainly more worrisome. It does not address the insufficient number of spaces in this licensed sector. It does not address the lack of affordable child care. It does add six more inspectors, but six is not enough to cover the province. It does nothing to include measures for unlicensed providers to be accountable—and I had previously suggested a registry, as did the coroner, as well. It does nothing to address the negligence of the ministry in protecting children in known illegal daycares.

The bill increases the number of children that a licensed provider can have, but lowers the number that an unlicensed can have. I don't believe that lowering standards in the licensed sector will create a better child care system.

The Ombudsman also had quite a bit to say about Ontario child care. His response to my request was a scathing 142-page report that was titled *Careless About Child Care*. Just the title alone sets the tone for a report about the lack of adequate child care in this province. Let's take a look at some of his report and his findings.

The Ombudsman made 113 recommendations for change. He revealed the legacy of dysfunction that was compounded by the shift from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to the Ministry of Education.

He spoke about the lack of tools that the ministry had in response to the complaints system. The system that was supposed to track complaints was outdated and did not track the unlicensed sector, and the complaints were treated as secondary to the branch's licensing responsibilities. Staff were completely backlogged and they were not able to keep up. In September 2013, 1,400 of the 5,295 licences had expired due to the insufficient number of staff; because of that, complaints such as the one in Vaughan fell through the cracks.

Ministry officials told the Ombudsman that they were drowning under the volume of work. One staff member said, "We're so busy ... It's not that we don't want children to be protected, but please don't go out looking for them because we can't handle what we have now."

The addition of six new inspectors: Does the government really believe that this is enough to fix the problem? The government needs to commit to real funding to address this issue, not just provide lip service to a crisis. The training that was provided to these inspectors and their learned behaviours to make up for the shortfalls included things such as calling to advise care providers that they were planning a visit. They conducted inspections over the phone. Inspections were not done in a timely manner.

Inspectors could not enter into facilities without being invited in. The inspectors had no teeth. After the ministry investigated 289 complaints in the year prior to the death of Eva, they only laid one fine of \$1,500.

This is clearly a case of neglect by this Liberal government and their negligence in dealing with unsafe conditions. The Ombudsman clearly stated that the Liberals have been sloppy, inconsistent, dysfunctional and neglectful, to name a few of the colourful adjectives he used for them. I'm concerned that this bill does a lot of lip service and changes ratios that even the coroner himself has recommended they not do.

On July 28, 2010, the death of two-year-old Jérémy Audette in Orléans focused attention on the issues of illegal daycares. Jérémy was taken by his unlicensed provider, without his parents' consent, to another unlicensed home daycare. There was a pool in the backyard. Jérémy accessed the pool unnoticed and drowned.

The inquest into his death in December 2012 resulted in 16 recommendations. Directed specifically at the ministry, they included ensuring that unlicensed home daycare providers are not allowed to care for more than those licensed through an agency, creating a registry for unlicensed caregivers, ensuring that the licensing process

involves first aid and CPR training requirements, and investigating opportunities for increasing the number of regulated home daycares.

This was in 2012, Speaker. Some of these recommendations by the coroner are still not implemented, and that is very concerning. The Ombudsman has also stated that things could be changed right now under regulation without the need of this bill. To my knowledge, no changes have been made as of yet. So, I think we need to go over this again, and what this bill does not address—the very real crisis in child care—in hopes of making some changes during the committee process.

It does not ensure sufficient annual investment to support more child care centres. It does not eliminate the huge wait-list for subsidized spaces. It doesn't stop the cuts to child care funding that are happening in 18 communities across our province. The government will still have no knowledge of where unlicensed child care is being provided. It doesn't adequately address the negligence of this ministry in protecting children in illegal home child care. It doesn't ensure that every complaint is investigated in a timely manner. It contains no legislative mandate for the ministry to hire an adequate number of inspectors. There is no requirement to publish inspection reports.

Speaker, these are some serious gaps in this legislation. The government that speaks of accountability and transparency is failing to listen to their own advice in one of our most vulnerable sectors.

I have to say that I am very proud of our federal New Democrat cousins in Ottawa. They have proposed a universal child care plan that would provide child care for \$15 per day, per child. It is a smart economic decision. Currently, fees are simply unaffordable for families. Child care in Ontario can cost \$70 to \$80 per day, up to \$20,000 per year.

Ontario families pay the highest child care costs in the country, and here are some examples: Quebec, \$152 a month for all children; Manitoba, \$631 a month for infants and \$431 a month for toddlers; Nova Scotia, \$825 a month for infants, \$694 for toddlers; Alberta, \$900 a month for infants and \$825 a month for toddlers. Meanwhile, the unfortunate families in Ontario pay an average of \$1,152 a month for an infant, but it can be as high as \$2,000 a month, and \$925 a month for toddlers. Manitoba, Quebec and PEI have set maximum fees, but in Ontario, every centre and home-based child care provider is responsible for setting their own fees.

High daycare costs generally hit parents when they have the least amount of money in their adult lives. They are just starting careers, paying off student debt and making mortgage payments. How can we possibly expect families to pay these extreme amounts while they give their children the best start to life?

A TD economist had this to say about child care: "For every dollar invested, the return ranges from roughly 1.5 to almost 3 dollars, with the benefit ratio for disadvantaged children being in the double digits." They have also been quoted as saying, "Further government

investment would go a long way to helping achieve a better system," and "the benefits of early childhood education far outweigh the costs."

This bill goes some way to addressing some of the problems, but when will this government make proper investments to truly address the child care crisis in our province?

1720

Speaker, I have had a lot to say in the last 20 minutes regarding this bill, and there is still so much to say about the gaps that we're facing with this bill. Yes, we need to make sure that we make changes. Bill 10 couldn't be more timely. We knew for years that it was outdated. There are changes that need to be happening, but we need to ensure that we're bringing our child care up to 2014-plus—that can handle the system.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'd like to just start off where my friend from Hamilton Mountain ended. It was actually your federal cousins that brought down a Liberal budget that had a national child care program that was probably the best we've ever seen. Ken Dryden worked for three years to broker that, and we've never had a government federally, before or since, that was ever able to broker that.

This government is spending more money on child care—in my community, Parents for Better Beginnings—early childhood education and more daycare spaces than we ever have. It would be nice if we could get consensus and we could actually get partisan politics a little bit behind this issue. I think there is some consensus around that, to actually do that kind of stuff, because we actually are—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Would the member from Hamilton Mountain come to order.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: —one of the few countries that doesn't have a funded national child care strategy, and we need to do that. Quite frankly, municipalities and provinces in this country are carrying all of the freight and weight of the child care system; we simply have a federal government that is missing in action.

The honourable member opposite seems to have a little bit of an axe to grind on funding. You ran on the same fiscal plan that we ran on, minus \$600 million. If this was such a priority, why didn't you have, in your platform, \$600 million more for child care? We're actually increasing inspections and increasing funding.

The member makes a very good point about Manitoba, which I'm very familiar with. I was the mayor of the capital city for a number of years, and I worked for 12 years on the streets of the city with street-involved youth. I used to say that much of our child care money came from Ontario. Social services for settlement and for education and early childhood education, Alberta and Ontario pay most of that money. She's quite right when she says people in Ontario not only pay more as a percentage, but we also subsidize that right now because

of the way redistribution works. That seems to me to be unfair.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I want to thank the member from Hamilton Mountain for her presentation. It was not far from my house that the little girl Eva passed away in the daycare that had far more children than they were supposed to. As she rightly pointed out, families or neighbours—probably neighbours of the house—had been reporting that there was activity going on in the house, and they raised concerns.

You can have laws; we can debate laws and we can pass laws. But the reality is that if we don't enforce those laws, it's all quite meaningless and a big waste of all our time. I think that we need to enforce the laws that we already have, and we need to look at ways to make daycare affordable and safe for families.

We want communities where kids are going to baby-sitters or daycares or schools that are within their community. We might feel that we're making it safer for children to go to large, institutionalized daycares that are far from their home, but the reality is that we have to get those kids to those daycares. That has to be part of the equation, how they're going to travel to those daycares in a car, and the safety issues and the fact that the parents are having to deal with traffic, and by the time they get to the daycare in traffic, they are late for work.

These are all issues that we have to look at. We want our kids to grow up in the community, knowing their neighbours. We all know the expression "It takes a village to raise a child." Well, let's put some meaning to that, and let's encourage daycares, small ones, within the communities where the kids can get to know the other children in their neighbourhood and make lifelong friends. I think that's what it's all about. Let's encourage communities to keep an eye on houses where children are being cared for. Maybe we need some kind of hotline. Maybe we need public education.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Firstly, I want to say: Incredible kudos should go to the member from Hamilton Mountain. If it were not for her, we would not have what can only be described as an absolutely scathing indictment of this government on child care from the Ombudsman's office. She was the one who set that in motion. Thanks be to the member from Hamilton Mountain for doing that, first of all.

Second of all, to my friend across there who skipped town—I shouldn't say that, I know—the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would caution the member that we don't—

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I know.

How many years and how many Liberals—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would caution the member. You've been here long enough to know that we don't refer to members, if they're not in the House, as being absent.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I know.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): You do know that. But when I see a willful attempt to do it, it does upset me.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: To him, I would say: How many Liberals and how many years in power federally does it take to bring in a child care program? Ten, 20, 30? Because that's what we're looking at. To complain that we voted against the budget and therefore destroyed child care that could have been brought in by the Liberal government is nothing short of laughable.

The member from Thornhill is absolutely correct: Enforcement is where it's at. There is no enforcement in this province; that's the problem. The member from Hamilton Mountain talked about that. She talked about the fact that we've got 50-something enforcers, for tens of thousands of children, to investigate complaints. This is absolutely unacceptable. How could they possibly do their job? They can't.

Just to sum up what she already said: too little, too late. That's the real substance of this bill: too little, too late.

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'm delighted to be able to make a few comments on what I've heard from members across the floor and, indeed, our own member here.

Everyone, I think, agrees. We're all on the same page that children are our most precious resource and we have to do everything in our power to make sure that they're protected. I think we all understand that quality daycare, protective daycare, is something that is not only a nice-to-have, it's a must-have for our children and parents, especially parents who are struggling to make ends meet.

I just wanted to take some time to focus on some of the positive key aspects of this piece of legislation. I just want to walk through it for a second. In the absence of that national daycare program that was referenced earlier, some of the key things that leap out at me off the page—

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: What are the keys, Chris?

Mr. Chris Ballard: Some of the keys: If passed, this legislation will increase the maximum penalty for illegal offences under the proposed act from \$2,000 to a quarter million dollars.

It would give the province the authority to issue administrative penalties so the province can act much faster to deal with issues—administrative penalties of up to \$100,000 per infraction by a daycare provider.

There have been some concerns about the number of children that can be covered under the act. Frankly, it will allow an increase in the number of children a licensed, home-based child care provider can care for from five to six, provided they're licensed, which means there are some controls in place.

One of the ones that I like the best: Amend the Education Act to ensure that school boards offer before- and after-care for six- to 12-year-olds where it's warranted.

There are a number of very positive things in this legislation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now recognize the member for Hamilton Mountain. You have two minutes for your reply.

Miss Monique Taylor: I would like to thank the Minister of the Environment, the member from Thornhill, the member from Parkdale–High Park and the member from Newmarket–Aurora for their comments.

This is a bill that we know we all need to make sure we get through, and we need to make sure that we do the best thing for the children of our province. I know that is our intention. Sometimes we have different ways of getting to that view and to what that actual good bill would be, but that's why we have these debates. That's why we go to committee and talk to stakeholders: to make sure that we get everybody involved.

1730

I really think that we need to pay some attention to the independent child care providers. I think we need to make sure that we're listening to what they have to say. They are providing 80% of the child care in our province. They are a major piece of this puzzle. And for the ministry to vilify them and to make—quite frankly, they've victimized them, because they're talking about the unlicensed like they're all the illegal ones, and that's not happening. So that's something that I think is important that we need to do. We definitely need to make sure that we're enforcing the actions when they happen, because, yes, they have beefed up the penalties, but if they don't make sure that we get the investigation and the inspection right, the penalties are all for naught.

We need to make sure that we have a registry so that we know where unlicensed child cares are, because they want to be accountable, they want to be transparent, they want to have rules, they want to be able to participate in our society and to fill this absolutely critical need, as they're currently doing.

I'm really thankful for the opportunity to talk on this bill before it gets time-allocated.

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

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise this afternoon to lend my voice to support the proposed Bill 10, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, the Education Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts.

Mr. Speaker, I listened passionately all afternoon to the debate from opposition members, as well as my own colleagues here. We all agree that children are a precious resource for all Ontarians. We all agree in this House: It is our collective responsibility to make sure we have tools to support the most vulnerable. This afternoon we heard a very compassionate proposed bill, by our colleague from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, dealing with child actors. So maybe this afternoon we'll have a debate basically on children in Ontario.

I'm very pleased to lend my voice on this proposed legislation. I'm also very pleased that the Minister of Education took the opportunity, at the beginning of this new session, to bring in this proposed legislation very

early, to ensure that we can pass it, hopefully, before we recess this coming summer.

There are certain parts of the bill I want to address. It's very lengthy, as my colleagues said this afternoon.

The first section of the act I want to comment on—because I know there is an audience at home listening and watching this debate. The Day Nurseries Act has been enacted in Ontario since 1946. We need to move with the times. More importantly, when we change the proposed legislation, it must be based on best practices and be evidence-based. The portion of the legislation that the minister is proposing talks about strengthening the oversight of the province's unlicensed child cares. We, as a government, want to make sure we have a system that is responsive and dealing with safety, where high-quality daycare is being provided, but at the same time is supporting the families and parents in our community. We want to make sure that children, in terms of early development—there must be protection about that piece.

The other portion of the bill deals specifically with enforcement. This afternoon, the member from Thornhill talked specifically about making sure we have enforcement. If you look at the proposed legislation, schedule 1, part II—there are actually 14 sections; section 5 through section 19—is specifically called “Protective measures.” I know every member of this House would have an opportunity to read that particular section. I want to highlight certain portions of schedule 1, part II, “Protective measures.” One, it will give the province the authority to issue administrative penalties up to \$100,000 per infraction by a child care provider;

—increases the maximum penalty for illegal offences under the proposed act from \$2,000 to \$250,000;

—increases the number of children that a licensed home-based child care provider can care for from five to six; and

—clarify some of the programs that are out there.

But more importantly, a big portion of the legislation—and I'm not sure all the members have had an opportunity to review the legislation—talks about the enforcement piece. I know, again, my colleagues opposite talk about enforcement. It is absolutely true. If you have legislation without teeth in terms of inspectors, in terms of enforcement—ensuring that this has been explicitly stated. Section 5 of part II of schedule 1 deals with that piece.

The other piece of the bill talks explicitly about the whole issue of inspectors going into the premises. I wanted to take time to talk about that portion of the bill because, at the end of the day, those who are watching on television would not know and would not have a copy of the bill. We know that this proposed legislation will give inspectors the right to enter the premises without a warrant. I want to take some time to talk about that.

If passed, the legislation will allow the inspector to enter a premises without a warrant—that's clearly and explicitly stated in part IV, section 30 of the legislation—if the provider is operating under the authority of a licence, including home child care associated with a

licensed home care agency. This automatically allows the inspector the right to enter the premises. In the past you would have to have a warrant, or some of the bad operators would prohibit the inspector from entering the premises. If the legislation is passed, the inspector now has the right to enter the premises.

This provision of the legislation is no different than currently in the retirement home sector. Currently, in the retirement home sector, the inspector has a right to enter those particular facilities to inspect.

The province, if the legislation is passed, also allows the inspector to have the power and duty to inspect and examine records, demand documents and remove and/or copy records. Again, it provides greater clarity, and it provides opportunities for enforcement.

Also on the enforcement piece here, there have been concerns raised—and I know that in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt, there are a number of unlicensed daycares, daycares run by family members, meaning the family members are overseeing the child, the grandchild or nieces and nephews. This legislation will exempt those particular operators.

I'm going to share some experiences with members of the House. For years, my mother has been looking after her grandchildren. The proposed legislation will permit her to continue to look after her grandchildren. She will be exempted from the legislation. Again, we need to ensure that there are explicit statements in the proposed legislation to allow relatives to look after their loved ones because, at the end of day, we need to ensure enforcement—as well as those who are unlicensed daycares because we know they exist all over the province of Ontario.

The other piece of legislation that is also very important is the fact that if the legislation is passed, it will require the Ministry of Education to publish the information of those who contravene the law. Again, this is something that I know in another sector. I know the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care would recognize that piece when we're dealing with long-term care, as well as others. We now have laws that require the disclosure, more transparency, of those who violate our legislation. We will publish that information so that those who are bad operators will be known. Those new parents looking for daycare, looking for licensed daycare, now know which operators in their community are breaking the law and are in non-compliance of the law, so they will not send their child to that particular daycare—again ensuring transparency, more openness on that particular in our legislation.

1740

The other piece of the legislation that I wanted to spend some time on—with respect to the comments made earlier by the member from Thornhill, there are extensive comments in the proposed legislation talking about communication. Since August of this year, the Minister of Education has launched an online tool to allow anyone across Ontario to have information about the Ministry of Education dealing with daycare. It provides people with information to confirm if their daycare is licensed or not.

It also allows an opportunity for individuals who are seeking more information about daycare—there will be a 1-800 toll-free telephone number so that communities in rural areas who need to contact the Ministry of Education now have an opportunity to make their call. The other thing about this toll-free telephone number is that it allows individuals to report any alleged complaints of unlicensed providers.

It also allows filing a complaint on those who are suspect, because we don't know until the inspector is on the premises; we have to be on the premises until it has been proven and there is evidence of an offence. We have to make sure there is evidence before the inspection. At the end of the day, in this proposed legislation, there are fairly lengthy, extensive pieces of the legislation that specifically deal with enforcement.

The other comment—I know the members from the third party talked about the daycare piece, and I know the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change spoke earlier. I'm very pleased that our full-day kindergarten is now providing new opportunities under the proposed legislation. If passed, the proposed legislation will amend the Education Act to place a duty on school boards to ensure that the programs they are offering include before- and after-school programs.

Those of us who came from the education sector before becoming MPPs heard about these kinds of concerns: that parents want a seamless day program, so that they can drop off their sons and daughters at school and have before-school programs, as well as extending the day with after-school programs. That is the right thing.

I'm going to end by saying that I encourage all members of this House to seriously think about what our purpose is here in the Legislature. We are here to ensure that especially the youngest citizens in our province are protected. The proposed legislation will do just that.

At the end of the day, we are all here for one thing: to ensure that the youngest citizens, meaning our children, are protected every day throughout the province. I encourage—and I heard it passionately in the debate this afternoon, and not just on the proposed Bill 10 but, as I said earlier, our colleague from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek about the child actor protection act.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank everybody for this opportunity to talk about this bill, but more importantly, I encourage every one of us to expedite this bill so that we can go to committee to have a conversation and talk to our daycare sector operators.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I want to thank the member from Scarborough–Agincourt for all of her great input into this discussion. She mentioned protective measures in the new bill; I think that, before we create new legislation with new protective measures—I'm assuming that they're new protective measures that aren't already needing to be enforced—we need to focus on enforcing the protective measures that are already in place. There seems to be a lack of oversight, a lack of inspectors.

Maybe we need a better system, as I mentioned before, for reporting any concerns that neighbours might have. Maybe we need a public awareness campaign to let people know that we are expecting input from the community; that if they see too many children in an unlicensed daycare, maybe this is who they should be reporting it to, and that it's going to be taken seriously—that they will be treated anonymously. I think that is always a concern: Neighbours don't want to be ratting out other neighbours and have it known about the neighbourhood.

She also mentioned seamless day programs, which is that parents want daycare for a couple of hours, then kindergarten, then daycare at the end of the day, because we all know that the work day is far longer than the school day.

Well, that's a great idea and I certainly understand why parents want that; it's certainly what I wanted. But unfortunately, most schools aren't implementing the seamless full-day program that parents were promised. Maybe we have to address that before we worry about enforcing new measures that make life even more difficult for parents. Maybe let's focus on bringing out that seamless full-day program that the parents so desired.

You know what? I think that we need to have input and I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this new legislation. I hope that parents and daycare workers and, yes, even grandparents and neighbours get to have input as well.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to be able to stand in this House, and, today, to speak on Bill 10, Child Care Modernization Act, and in response to the member from Scarborough—Agincourt. I listened to her remarks and I think we all agree that we want what's best for our children. We definitely want to make sure our children are all safe.

I might not have a lot of time to talk on this bill because it might be time-allocated like other bills, so I'd like to give a shout-out to some of the organizations.

When my children were young, there was a program in my rural area for child care for farm families, because often farm families are forgotten in the child care talks. And you know what? We were starting out, we had a big mortgage to pay, and that program had a lot to do with our success on that farm, and it kept our kids safe. That's one of the things that, by crunching this up—they're hurrying to do this now, but one thing people at home have to remember is that this government has been in power for over a decade. What's spurring this rush to the podium for this bill is several tragedies, followed by an Ombudsman report spurred by one of our members, and now we're rushing to get things fixed. But in that rush—and I find this over and over again with this new government—the rush is central: "We'll worry about the peripheries after. We'll rush debate; we'll rush at committee. We'll maybe have the committee meeting in

Toronto." But this province is much, much larger than Toronto and daycare is much, much larger—

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

Mr. Arthur Potts: It is a great pleasure to speak on this bill and especially to follow on comments from the member from Scarborough—Agincourt. I've known the member for—I don't want to say it—almost 30 years. She was tirelessly advocating for children back then, and I see her still doing it now. It's just fantastic.

My own experience in daycare comes from, as a parent, when my first daughter, Robin, was born. Her mother, after about six months, wanted to go back to work. I was working at a consulting firm, and I went and said, "I'd like to take some time off to be with our six-month-old." Unfortunately, we didn't have parental leave back then, in the old days. I worked with a labour relations firm at the time and they just wouldn't grant it; they didn't think it was sending the right signal. I insisted, and eventually I just quit. I went home and I was the primary caregiver for about a year and a half with my daughter Robin, and then we went into an unlicensed situation with home care and it was extremely positive. As a parent, I went in and spent some time with my daughter at the new location. We all felt very comfortable with it.

I've often said that the most important thing that men and fathers can do for equality for women in the workplace is to actually take that time out with their children and spend some time with them so the women can go back to work and it doesn't become a source of discrimination in employment and such, because if men are taking that time too, it won't discriminate against women.

After about two years—my daughter stayed in that daycare setting and went into a wonderful licensed facility in my neighbourhood called Children's Circle, and had a wonderful early childhood upbringing before she went into school full-time and attended part-time. It was the same thing with my second daughter, whose mother, Laurie, spent that time for the first two years of her life at home because she had a home business, and then she went to Children's Circle.

We know that the legislation here is about protecting children's safety. I don't see the concern that people are having that we won't have enforcement out there for all the unlicensed spaces. Like the Employment Standards Act, we will have the opportunity to go in with inspectors under a complaint-based situation, and that's a huge movement forward.

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

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to comment on Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act, and the speech of the member from Scarborough—Agincourt.

Mr. Speaker, I know that our critic the member from Simcoe North is quite concerned about this bill. In fact, he has been involved with many different groups that

have been holding rallies and protests with regard to this bill, so that concerns me. His ask is simply that the government take the time to let the people who have concerns with this bill have their voice; that in the process of the legislation going through the Legislature, there be time for committee hearings around the province. I think that's a reasonable request.

In the first iteration of this bill, prior to the spring election, I was called by the Muskoka Montessori School in Huntsville, who asked if I would spend a morning at the school. I went into the class that has the youngest kids in it. I sat on a little stool in the middle of the class and spent a couple of hours in there and just watched what was going on. I have to tell you that I was really impressed with what I saw. I learned a thing or two, as well. Those young kids were all really polite. They were coming up and offering me snacks, this stranger sitting in the middle of the class. I was impressed with the life skills they were teaching them: how to fold laundry and all the basic things we should all know how to do; how to look someone in the eye and, as I say, be respectful and polite. This school had concerns with this legislation, because it would basically characterize them as a daycare instead of a school, and it is very much a school. If it's going to mean that this school that I was so impressed with would not be able to do what they're currently doing, I have concerns.

I hope the government takes the time to listen to the people of the province and travel around the province to get input so this legislation is improved.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I refer back to the member for Agincourt. You have two minutes.

Ms. Soo Wong: I want to thank all the members who contributed to the debate this afternoon. I was particularly thrilled to hear the two male members opposite who were debating this particular bill, Bill 10. We all hear compassionate stories about different versions of day-care, but more importantly, we all love children across Ontario. This is what this bill is about. At the end of the day, I was very pleased and very touched by the comments made by our colleague from Parry Sound–Muskoka about his experiential learning. I also heard from our colleague from Timiskaming–Cochrane about the families in rural areas.

When this bill goes to committee, I am sure there will be amendments and there will be more discussion.

More importantly, at the end of the day, I believe each one of us in the Legislature values our youngest citizens and we are doing our utmost to protect them. We do not want to hear of more tragedies, whether it's in my riding or any other riding, because we're here for one job and one job alone: to protect the youngest and the most vulnerable.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands adjourned until Monday, November 3, at 10:30 a.m.

I just want to wish all of you happy trick-or-treating.

The House adjourned at 1754.

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