



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 41st Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 41^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 18 November 2014

Mardi 18 novembre 2014

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Tuesday 18 November 2014

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Mardi 18 novembre 2014

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BETTER BUSINESS CLIMATE ACT, 2014

**LOI DE 2014 VISANT À INSTAURER
UN CLIMAT PLUS PROPICE
AUX AFFAIRES**

Mr. Duguid moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 7, An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014 / Projet de loi 7, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur l'obligation de faire rapport concernant la réduction des fardeaux administratifs et la Loi de 2014 sur les partenariats pour la création d'emplois et la croissance.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Duguid.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, the traffic from Scarborough sometimes can be a little bit troublesome. I got here just in time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to let you know that I'll be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the great member from Ottawa—Orléans, who was ready to get up right away and sub in for me if I didn't get here completely on time. But I did make it, so kudos to Palmer, my great driver, who didn't break any traffic laws to get me here, but was very adept at getting me through all that construction in downtown Toronto.

It's a privilege for me to reintroduce—that's what we're doing today—the Better Business Climate Act. It's introduced primarily in very similar form—very close to identical, I believe—to the original bill that was introduced in the previous Parliament. It was done that way deliberately, because we made the commitment to reintroduce the bill in that form. That doesn't mean, though, that if there are improvements that can be made to the bill, we wouldn't be open to doing that as the bill works its way through the Legislature and through the committee process.

Today I am pleased to have the opportunity to discuss this proposed legislation that, if passed, would create a better business climate by reducing burdens. It will drive economic growth by supporting the development of clusters. These initiatives are part of our government's eco-

nomie plan, which is focused on sustained job creation and building stronger partnerships across the economy. The proposed better business climate legislation is key to building on those partnerships. It's about providing faster, smarter and more streamlined government services to our businesses. It's about reducing the unnecessary regulatory, administrative and compliance burden, with the key word being "unnecessary."

It's not about impacting or removing necessary protections or regulations that impact health, safety or workplace standards. I think it's always important, when we talk about removing unnecessary burdens, that we stress that: It's not about removing the protections that Ontario's quality of life and Ontarians' quality of life is dependent upon; it's about removing those unnecessary regulatory burdens that really aren't contributing to our quality of life or safety in the workplace, or health or safety issues across the province.

It's not only about what we regulate sometimes, it's about how we regulate it. An example of the kind of actions that we're taking was highlighted in the Fewer Burdens, Greater Growth report published by my ministry earlier this year. The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board has reduced the length of the no-lost-time injury claim forms by 60%, which is a very significant time savings, and it now allows claims to be made online or over the phone, which is a better situation for everyone.

Another example is the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change improvements to the approvals process for small-scale solar facilities. By moving from a one-size-fits-all to a more risk-based approach, they have reduced approval wait times from 147 days to less than 10 minutes for low-risk projects. That just makes sense, Mr. Speaker. These actions have managed to cut the pre-application costs from \$100,000 to less than \$5,000 per operator, contributing almost \$2 million in industry-wide savings. Those are the kinds of initiatives that make a difference for our business community, save our businesses money and, at the same time, often streamline our ability to get through approvals quicker. Administrative process changes like these can save Ontario businesses millions of dollars, while still protecting the public interest.

These burdens, be they time, money or resources, frankly are a drag on businesses, and they're a drag on our productivity, innovation and economic growth. When you think about these being tough economic times, this really is a time when all of us—and I mean all of us in this Legislature—ought to be working together to reduce regulatory burden for businesses, because this is a time when we don't have the fiscal wherewithal to be able to

put as much resources as we'd probably like to into some of the partnerships that we provide with businesses. This is a time, though, when reducing regulatory burden just makes sense. So we're committed to reducing unnecessary burdens on an ongoing basis.

We're committed to making Ontario one of the few places in the world that measures and reports on the time and financial savings to businesses. That's really important. Not only does this help our businesses, especially by saving them time and money, it makes Ontario a more attractive place to invest in the global economy.

We're pleased to be recognized as a leader in the reduction of unnecessary regulatory requirements by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. In fact, I believe Nicole Troster is here. When I came in this morning—there she is. Nicole, thank you for being here. Welcome. Nicole is the senior policy analyst for the CFIB, who is here today to support second reading of this bill.

When we announced our intent to introduce this proposed legislation, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business was there to support these changes. In fact, when I held a round table with the CFIB back in 2012, they said that a concrete outline of the government's commitment to cut red tape in legislation was one of their top priorities. I know that politicians, government and ministers like to take credit for ideas, but I have to tell you it was the CFIB in that round table, and through a series of round tables that we had with small businesses across this province back in 2012, that came up with the proposal that we ought to bring forward legislation such as this to enshrine in legislation our commitment to reduce regulatory burden and to measure regulatory burden and the impact in time and dollars that it has on our businesses. So I want to give the CFIB the credit for their leadership in this area and for working with us on this initiative, and I'd like you to acknowledge Nicole Troster and her colleagues' efforts to bring this forward. Thank you, Nicole.

0910

I know that enshrining accountability in legislation is not always the easiest road for a government to choose, but businesses have told us that burden reduction is very important to them. By introducing this legislation that will hold us to account on our commitments, we're demonstrating that it is also very important to our government. Holding the government accountable on regulatory burden also has strong support from our stakeholders, such as the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the Toronto Financial Services Alliance and the Toronto Region Board of Trade.

Since 2008, our Open for Business initiative to modernize government has eliminated some 80,000 burdens, which represents 17% of all regulatory requirements. We plan to continue these efforts with a goal to save businesses \$100 million over the next three years. This is an ambitious target, but we're very determined to meet it. It will help businesses across the province as they spend less time filling out paperwork, searching for informa-

tion, hiring consultants and waiting for government approvals.

You may ask: How do we know that \$100 million is achievable? Well, Mr. Speaker, we know this because we started in 2013 to attribute dollar- and time-saving costs to work on burden reduction projects.

It's worth noting that the proposed legislation is only one piece of a suite of initiatives the government has implemented under our Open for Business initiative to make Ontario's business and regulatory climate predictable, transparent and responsive. For example, we've held 10 round tables with key business sectors to address their top five priority issues. We now require that proposed regulations impacting business be posted online for 45 days for stakeholder feedback.

And when they're introduced, it's done predictably. When we change regulations in the province of Ontario, they're either introduced to begin on July 1 or January 1, for the most part, so that businesses have time to adjust. They see these changes coming; they're not coming throughout the year. It makes life a little bit easier for our businesses, stakeholders and others. It probably makes it easier to do government in that way, too.

We all know that the world of business is changing constantly, and government needs to keep pace with this change by continually making its processes faster, smarter and easier for businesses and stakeholders. That's why this proposed legislation is so important. By committing government to annually report, this legislation will, if passed, ensure that this and future governments will stay focused on reducing burden and modernizing processes. In a sense, it holds all of our feet to the fire.

British Columbia and Saskatchewan have both passed similar pieces of legislation in recent years. By enshrining annual reporting on regulatory burden in legislation, Ontario will not only catch up to other leading jurisdictions; we'll leapfrog to the head of the line. That's somewhere that I think all of us in this Legislature want our province to be.

There is a second component to the proposed Better Business Climate Act. Just as reducing burdens helps improve partnerships between government and businesses, building stronger, more competitive regional economic clusters will also further develop these important partnerships. I want to acknowledge and thank the Toronto Region Board of Trade for their leadership on the development of clusters.

Mr. Speaker, it's not like this is a new concept—cluster development has been talked about for at least 20 years, if not longer—but it's a technique that has proven to work in jurisdictions around the world. It's something that our Toronto Region Board of Trade has been a real champion of, and something that I'm very proud this government has partnered with them and other organizations like the Ontario Chamber of Commerce to continue to promote. As they so aptly put it, clusters collaborate to compete.

Clusters exist across the province, from the mining and forestry clusters, which I know my friend behind me

here is a big leader in, to the financial services cluster in Toronto, to the information and communication technology clusters in Ottawa, Toronto and Kitchener-Waterloo. We have a huge bioscience cluster in this province that has so much potential, one of the top in North America. We have a very significant aerospace cluster, seen as one of the fastest growing anywhere in the world today. Our clean tech cluster is one that would rival any cluster anywhere in the world, and it's growing. Our clean water tech cluster is another one that has huge potential.

So we have a number of clusters across this province. Many of them have developed just organically. Some of them have developed with the help of our government. For instance, just this past July, Minister Sousa announced that our government is renewing funding for the Toronto Financial Services Alliance, an organization representing an important Ontario cluster.

The Toronto region is North America's second-largest financial services hub. After New York, Ontario's financial services account for 50% of Canada's sector, and generate over \$54 billion in gross domestic product. So we're real players when it comes to the financial services sector—as I said, top two in North America. It's a good place for us to be, but it's an increasingly competitive global environment, and we need to continue to invest in our strengths. This renewed funding demonstrates not only our commitment to this sector, but our understanding of the importance of cluster development.

Another example of our commitment to cluster development is our investment in the Bombardier-Centennial College aerospace hub project, to be located at Downsview. I had the privilege of being part of that when I was Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, and as well when I held this post previously. I'm really excited about what that investment entails. What it does, Mr. Speaker, is create a great example of experiential learning, where we have a private sector partner, Bombardier, partnering with one of our leading educational institutions, Centennial College, to put together an incredible experiential learning opportunity, a right-on-site learning environment for aerospace students to learn with Bombardier and create that next-generation aerospace workforce.

But it's the beginning of a vision to potentially create, in and around Downsview, one of our fastest-growing clusters, a part of our economy that has done reasonably well through the recession but is really starting to excel now, as we come through this into this period of growth. It's something that I see as almost a visionary investment that I think is going to pay huge dividends in the decades ahead and make Ontario—we're already one of the fastest-growing aerospace clusters, but I think we want to see Ontario as one of the global-leading aerospace clusters.

When you combine Ontario's aerospace strength with Montreal's aerospace strength, you've got a little bit of Canadian access to aerospace technological strength that I think can be very globally competitive—and is very globally competitive. So this is an area that merits con-

sideration, as well, as a cluster worth watching and a cluster worth supporting.

If passed, our government would be the first jurisdiction in North America to legislate the development of clusters. But let's make it clear: Governments can't create clusters. I think it's really important that we say this as we bring forward legislation to commit this government and future governments to being involved in and facilitating clusters. That's what our role is: to work with the private sector, identify our economic strengths and do everything we can, as a government, with the programs we have in place and the policies we put in place, whether they be taxation policies, whether they be business-partnership-type policies or whether they be policies to support organizations that advocate to grow business clusters. That's the kind of input that government really has.

At the end of the day, it is the business community that has to drive these policies and the business community that has to grow these clusters. We're there to help in any way we can, and in some cases we're there to lead, where leadership is required. For the most part, we get really tremendous leadership in this province from our business community. The Toronto Region Board of Trade has, I think, matured over the last 20 years to be one of the most effective regional boards of trade anywhere in North America today. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the success story there—Allan O'Dette, whom I think every member in this Legislature has worked with, has done a tremendous job maturing that organization and creating relevancy to that organization, reaching down to the business grassroots across this province to make the Ontario Chamber of Commerce one of the leading chambers of commerce anywhere in North America.

Certainly, both of these organizations have been integral in the development of our government's economic development policy. In fact, if you look at some of the work that has been done by the Ontario chamber and the Toronto Region Board of Trade, you'll see much of that reflected—actually, it's very similar—in our economic development plans and policies that we've brought forward as well. I think it's important that governments are in sync with their business community, and that's very much what this legislation helps us do.

0920

The Better Business Climate Act, if passed, would provide our government with a new tool to help clusters like Toronto's financial sector through development plans. They will help facilitate stronger planning and collaboration with industry and with partner ministries to raise the province's capacity for innovation and economic prosperity.

Through the planning process, Ontario will facilitate new partnerships by working with industry leaders, academic and research institutions and local businesses to identify key policies that will support a long-term vision and plan for cluster growth. The plans will bridge industry and Ontario's academic and research institutions to

commercialize leading-edge research. The role of industry in the development of cluster plans is crucial. Cluster plans cannot and shouldn't be, as I said before, led by government; rather, they must develop out of leadership from within the industry.

The proposed legislation will also provide a cluster-focused lens to all of our economic development initiatives as we move forward. Collaboration with Ontario's key clusters will allow government to better allocate and coordinate access to government programs and help shape future policy. To build upon the success of these cluster plans and ensure that they're aligned with changing industry and economic trends, mandatory reviews of the plans will be required every five years. Again, Mr. Speaker, that's important—to make sure that the plans that we put in place remain relevant in this fiercely competitive, fast-changing global economy.

This legislation is critical as it recognizes the importance of clusters to Ontario's economic development. As I mentioned, this will be a first for any North American jurisdiction. As always, we encourage discussion and input from the members opposite and my colleagues behind me here today as well. This is a piece of legislation that was introduced to the Legislature earlier in the previous term. Our stakeholders have had an opportunity to have a good look at it; there may be some ideas as to how it can be improved. I want you to know that, as minister, I'll be encouraging my colleagues at committee to consider any ideas that come forward that would strengthen this legislation in ways that we could all agree on.

I look forward to seeing this bill go through this Legislature and go on to committee. I know that my parliamentary assistant will do a great job at committee, and she'll be open to suggestions from the parties opposite. As always, when I have legislation going through, I welcome that input. I encourage members opposite, if they do have amendments that they'd like to bring forward, to talk to my colleagues as well to make sure we can word those amendments in ways that make it easier for us to be able to adopt them at committee rather than come in and word some of these amendments in ways that make it difficult for us to support, even though we'd like to support them. That's an open-door policy that we'll have, and I know my parliamentary assistant will look forward to working with my friends in opposition.

I'm pleased to be able to lead off debate on this important piece of legislation. I see it as an important piece of legislation. It is by no means the centerpiece of our economic development strategy; it is but one part of it, but an important part of it. More than anything, what this legislation indicates is that our government listens. We sit down and we consult with the business community. We consulted with the CFIB and small businesses a number of years ago, and this legislation is the result of many of those discussions. We've consulted with the Toronto Region Board of Trade and our business leaders across the province on the importance of clusters, and this legislation reflects that input as well. Sometimes

when you get legislation that is crafted not only here internally but crafted with the help of our stakeholders in our business community, it makes for a stronger piece of legislation.

I don't know whether the opposition will be supporting this legislation or not; I can't recall what their views were when we initially introduced this in the last session. But I encourage them to approach this particular piece of legislation in a constructive way. It's there to be constructive; this is not really a political piece of legislation. This isn't the kind of legislation that goes in our political brochures at the end of the day. I can't see my good friend Mike Colle putting in his householder that we're going to do massive cluster development. I don't know if his constituents would jump up and down about that.

Mr. Mike Colle: It helps small business, though.

Hon. Brad Duguid: But he knows how important this is to building a strong business community, and that's important to all of our constituents. He did mention his support for small businesses, and that's something that I think each and every one of us in this House can rally around and something that probably would resonate a little bit better in our householders and in our communications with our residents.

But it is really important, I think, for this government and this Legislature to continue to be in sync with our business community. As I said before, when you look at the work that's been done, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce put out, many years ago now, their Emerging Stronger plan, and they've renewed it again; they had a second phase of it. If you look at the things that they're talking about in that plan and you look at this government's economic development strategy, it is absolutely in sync. It's about investing in our people, building a strong education system, building strong skills, building the strongest workforce anywhere in the world. That's our single greatest competitive advantage. It's also about investing in infrastructure. As members in this Legislature know, this government is very in tune with that: a \$130-billion investment that we're making over the next 10 years, a record investment not only in Ontario, but right across this country. There are few jurisdictions anywhere in North America that are making that kind of commitment during challenging fiscal times, but we recognize the linkage between infrastructure and the economy, and how important it is for us to be able to drive jobs and economic growth through our investments in infrastructure.

We recognize the fact that we've gone through decades of not having adequate investment in infrastructure. In the last 10 years, we've invested \$100 billion in roads, bridges, transit, water, waste water, hospitals and schools, and many other forms of infrastructure. So we've picked it up the last 10 years, but we've got to keep that going and we've got to actually enhance those efforts. Our plans do that. That creates jobs as well, Mr. Speaker. When you think that the investment is \$130 billion over 10 years, estimates are that it will support about 110,000 jobs every single year. Our investments over the last 10

years have supported, on average, about 100,000 jobs every year. I think in many ways our investments in infrastructure helped Ontario get through that global recession a lot stronger than most other jurisdictions in North America were able to weather it. So they're smart investments for the economy, but they're also smart for our quality of life. As I experienced this morning, getting here just in the nick of time, giving myself an hour to get here from Scarborough—10 years ago I would have been here with 15 minutes to spare. But it's a little tighter now getting around our urban areas—and not just in Toronto; in Ottawa, throughout the greater Toronto and Hamilton region it's getting harder to get around. So that's why those investments are important, not only from a business perspective but for our quality of life. Of course, when you look at the Emerging Stronger documents and you look at our economic development strategy, you see a real synchronization as well when it comes to building a strong, dynamic economy and making investments that ensure that we have a strong climate for investment.

Our efforts to date, among other things, have made Ontario number one in North America for foreign direct investment. That's not just something we're proud of as a government; it's something that's really important, because that's what drives business growth, that's what creates jobs and that's what sets Ontario in a class of its own when it comes to attracting new businesses to locate here, when it comes to attracting new businesses in advanced manufacturing, which we're seeing more and more of—

Mr. Mike Colle: Alliston.

Hon. Brad Duguid: —because Ontario has very much become a gateway to investment and access to that North American market.

The member beside me, Mike Colle, just mentioned that Alliston had a recent announcement that this government and Honda made together, where we—I'm getting a note here asking me whether I'm concluding soon. Yes, I'm concluding soon, but I'm on a bit of a roll here.

0930

When I talk about Alliston, it's something that excites me, an \$857-million investment in the Alliston Honda plant that's going to support over 4,000 jobs, which is terrific, and thousands more indirect jobs across this province in the auto sector. That's the kind of investment that we're working to continue to try to attract.

Given the note that I have now, I have been trying to keep my eye on the clock here because I want to make sure there is lots of time for my parliamentary assistant to be able to speak as well. I'm looking forward to hearing her comments and I know she's going to lead this legislation through, with the will of the Legislature, to committee. She's going to do a great job getting this through and working with my colleagues opposite to ensure this is a strong piece of legislation to drive growth and drive job creation throughout the province of Ontario.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll now turn it over to my parliamentary assistant.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'd like to thank the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. That's a long title, Minister.

Now I recognize the member from Ottawa–Orléans.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: It gives me great pleasure, actually, to be here and introduce and bring forward Bill 7, and not only because of everything that was mentioned by Minister Duguid, but also as a previous business owner myself and seeing the importance of partnership between government and businesses.

I also want to pick up where Minister Duguid left off about those partnerships and how the Better Business Climate Act will, if passed, help build better partnerships between the government and Ontario businesses.

L'Ontario a certes fait de grands pas en s'adaptant aux récents changements de l'économie mondiale.

Our economic plan is focused on sustained job creation and building stronger partnerships across the economy. The proposed legislation will facilitate collaboration with industry, academic and research institutions, and local governments to support the development of cluster plans. This initiative will complement the government's actions to strengthen the economy and increase Ontario's overall competitiveness. That includes our investment of \$130 billion in infrastructure over the next 10 years; introducing Ontario's Going Global Trade Strategy; announcing our \$295-million youth jobs strategy; reducing the marginal effective tax rate on new business investment in Ontario by half since 2009; and ensuring that Ontarians have the skills and education they need.

Nous avons accompli beaucoup pour positionner l'Ontario malgré les défis des dernières années. Mais nous ne pouvons pas prendre cela pour acquis.

Many economic experts say Ontario can become an even more prosperous and competitive jurisdiction in the 21st century by leveraging government-business partnerships to help strengthen industry clusters. In markets worldwide, clusters have jump-started industries and accelerated economic development by creating a supportive economic environment for business, academia and innovation.

Les niches industrielles jouent un rôle clé dans le développement économique régional.

They can help support the creation of sustainable, well-paid jobs, stimulate innovation, attract investment, strengthen linkages between research institutions and firms, and anchor pools of talented labour.

Mr. Speaker, that's half of the equation of the proposed Better Business Climate Act. The other is burden reduction.

I want to emphasize that Ontario's new approach to burden reduction was not developed in isolation. It has emerged from relationships and partnerships that the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure has been building with business groups and stakeholders for several years.

In 2008, the government created Ontario Open for Business, a cross-government initiative to create faster and smarter government-to-business services and to

establish a modern system of government. Through this initiative, ministries undertook an extensive baseline count of all regulatory requirements and then removed over 80,000 unnecessary regulatory burdens.

Ontario is now moving from counting the number of burdens eliminated to measuring the real impacts of this work in terms of time and cost savings for Ontario businesses and other stakeholders. This practice will put Ontario in line with leading jurisdictions and will help ensure burden reduction activities have tangible results for business.

Mais ceci n'est qu'un seul aspect des efforts que l'Ontario fait pour améliorer la façon dont le gouvernement réglemente et travaille avec les entreprises.

Ontario's regulatory policy includes a range of tools and processes to make sure that when new regulations are needed to protect Ontarians' health and safety or our environment, they are effective, transparent and evidence-based.

We recently introduced a mandatory review policy to ensure high-impact regulations are reviewed at least every 10 years and tested to ensure that they are relevant and up to date.

The new tools, policies and processes of the Open for Business initiative are changing the regulatory landscape across the Ontario government, helping to ensure ministries continue to work creatively and transparently to reduce unnecessary burden and to find ways to make business-to-government interactions as seamless and cost-effective as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the work that we are doing in collaboration with business leaders and other stakeholders to help position Ontario as a global leader in reducing barriers to business, and proud of the great strides we have made in developing clusters in important sectors like financial services and information and communication technologies.

The proposed legislation will further support the development of established and emerging clusters to enhance the level of innovation and productivity of industry in Ontario. The Better Business Climate Act, if passed, will help us build better partnerships between government and businesses, et une meilleure qualité de vie pour tous les Ontariens.

I encourage every member of this House to support our bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm very pleased to have this opportunity, as our party's critic for the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, to respond briefly to the minister's speech this morning, as well as to the remarks of the parliamentary assistant to the ministry, the member for Ottawa–Orléans, leading off the debate on Bill 7.

I listened quite closely to what was said by the minister and the parliamentary assistant. Of course, the context of this debate is that it follows the fall economic statement that we all listened to yesterday, the Ontario

economic outlook and fiscal review. While Bill 7, of course, is important, I think it's important to talk about the economic context in which it's presented.

We heard the minister, in his remarks this morning, say that we have a strong and dynamic economy in the province of Ontario. I think we all see strengths in the economy in the province of Ontario and in our own individual ridings. But, obviously, there are some serious problems out there. The unemployment rate is still 6.5%, which is way too high for the province of Ontario, historically. It has come down to where the national average has been, but for 90 months it was above the national average. I would certainly acknowledge that that's good news for those who have gotten jobs in the last month, but at the same time, there are serious economic concerns.

We learned yesterday that there is a \$509-million revenue shortfall in relation to what was presented to this House just back in July by the Minister of Finance, suggesting that there would be \$118.9 billion in revenue this year. Of course, just in the last four months, apparently, \$509 million has evaporated.

I would like to ask the minister, in his response, how does he explain this? What happened? Why are the revenues drying up? Why did they introduce a budget four months ago, claiming that there would be revenues of \$118.9 billion, and yesterday we learned it's \$509 million less than that? I think the people of Ontario deserve answers to those questions this morning.

0940

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize now, for further questions and comments, the member from London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm very pleased to rise on behalf of the people I represent in London West to offer some comments on the presentation from the minister and the member from Ottawa–Orléans on the Better Business Climate Act.

I want to share with this Legislature that in my community of London, Ontario, we have a thriving digital media cluster that has grown of its own accord. It now employs 8,000 people in our city and is bringing new life into our community with the kind of young talent who is attracted to our city to work in these digital media firms. But, at the same time, London has lost 30,000 positions since 2008, since the collapse of the manufacturing sector. So while the language that's included in the bill about clusters is good, and it's great that the government is indicating an interest in doing something to support clusters, a lot more needs to be done to get our economy moving.

The other point I wanted to make is that to really support these kinds of new economy clusters we need more focus on other aspects of what makes a thriving community. Walkability—transit infrastructure is absolutely vital, because many of these young people who want to work in these new-economy firms don't have cars. They want to walk to work; they want to take public transit to

work. So we need strong investments in infrastructure to enable the growth of these cluster sectors.

We also need investments in arts and culture. People want cultural amenities that they can enjoy—these young people who are attracted to these kinds of firms.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments? I recognize the member from Beaches–East York.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be recognized in this House by yourself or other Speakers who sit in that chair. But I'm delighted for the opportunity to stand here in support of Bill 7, the Better Business Climate Act. This is a tremendous step forward for innovation in the province of Ontario.

I've had the pleasure in my past world as a consultant to be involved in numerous clusters assisting companies in their development of new products, particularly in the environmental world and in sustainability issues up in Downsview. The minister of—I always get this wrong, too—of economic development, employment and immigration—

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Infrastructure.

Mr. Arthur Potts: And infrastructure. Sorry. That's right: infrastructure. Thank you.

He talked about the Downsview project becoming an aerospace cluster up there. I've had the pleasure to assist a number of companies in the Downsview community as part of a cluster in sustainable development of new technologies, environmental technologies—in vermiculture, for instance: in having worms eating Toronto's organic waste and creating worm castings, which are great for planting soil, remediation and such.

I worked with a company that was collecting vegetable oil from restaurants all over the city of Toronto and turning that into a bio-diesel product which had a very low carbon impact. It was a tremendous way of taking a waste product and turning it into valuable fuels.

We know that in clusters, people gather, they collaborate, to compete to make sure that we are moving forward. There are other tremendous parks: up in Dundalk, for instance, where they're bringing in companies that can do work in organic composting and other waste-to-energy kinds of opportunities. They are attracting people because they're reducing the burden on industry in order to compete in a way—and this is what this act is going to do. It will reduce more of the burdens so people aren't faced with insurmountable hurdles so they can come forward with great ideas and new technologies—driving jobs, driving growth, driving tax revenues for local municipalities and driving jobs for the province of Ontario.

I'm delighted that we have had a chance to introduce this bill and I hope we'll have the support of all members.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I think it's really important that we acknowledge the direction that our economy is taking and, on a global level, the direction that all economies are taking.

More and more, we're seeing that developing nations are really tapping into the talent of their populations, of their human resources, in terms of technological advancements, and it's really a knowledge-based economy that we're moving towards. While we absolutely need to bolster our manufacturing sector—we've lost a lot of great jobs and we need to bolster that—we also need to recognize that the new economies that are developing, the countries that are doing so well, are tapping into their talent in terms of innovation. When I look at countries like Korea, and their advancements with very limited resources—if you look at the natural resource capabilities of Korea, they're very limited. However, they've really invested in and developed their technology, they developed their advancements in innovation. That's an area where I find we're not doing enough here in Ontario.

We have a wonderful education system that's very capable of training and developing people who can get engaged in this sector, but we're not doing enough. This is one step, but it's far too little. We need to do a lot more in encouraging young people to get involved in developing their own opportunities, and we need government support to make that happen. We need to ensure that the skills that we develop in our schools and our universities are translating into innovation so that people can develop new ways to expand the economy, expand their ability to be employed, their ability to gain new opportunities in a global market. This is the direction we need to head in, and we need to ensure that there's more done in supporting and fostering this type of climate for our future in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton. Back to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'm going to have to petition the Premier to change that title, because too many people are having trouble with it in the Legislature, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you to the members for Wellington–Halton Hills, London West, Beaches–East York and Bramalea–Gore–Malton for their very instructive and constructive interventions at this time.

I think one of the things the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton touched on that I will touch on as well is the need to focus on our talent and skills, and how that is a competitive advantage for us. I'll just go through, in the minute and a half that I have left, the last couple of weeks here in the province of Ontario, where we've seen some really good progress made as a result of that talent base: the recent mission to China, where the Premier came back with close to \$1 billion of contracts signed—1,800 potential jobs created through that. One of the leading investments was a high-tech company called Huawei, and they're investing in Ontario because of our talent base.

Not long after that, we made the Honda announcement. The primary reason Honda is investing \$857 billion in Ontario is because we have the best workers anywhere in the world today. That plant is going to be

the first lead plant ever outside of Japan for a new product, the new next-generation Honda Civic. Again, that's because of the talent of that workforce that they have the confidence to invest there.

Our job numbers are up: 37,000 net new jobs last month, well up over half a million net new jobs since the recession—all good news. I think a lot of the investment that has created that is based on the fact that we have one of the most talented, skilled workforces anywhere in the world. Just last week I was with the member from Peterborough announcing 250 jobs in the Peterborough GM plant—again, an investment there that could have gone anywhere—because of our talent in that particular plant. So it is very much about talent, it is very much about working in partnership with our stakeholders, and this legislation helps us to continue to advance those competitive assets.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Ted Arnott: I appreciate this opportunity to speak in the Ontario Legislature this morning in response to the debate that's been initiated on Bill 7, An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014, standing in the name of the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. This bill was first introduced in the Legislature in the special summer sitting that we participated in right after the provincial election, and it was first introduced on July 7.

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But as the minister pointed out, correctly, this is an identical bill to one that was introduced in the previous Parliament before the provincial election, Bill 176. What they called at that time the Better Business Climate Act, 2014, was introduced by the former Minister of Economic Development. There was an initiation of debate on that bill, but that, of course, was before the government decided to call the election, pulling the plug on the previous Parliament.

Interjections.

Mr. Ted Arnott: That's exactly what happened. I saw it happen on TV. As a matter of fact, the New Democrat leader indicated that she would not be supporting the budget, and then the Premier made, quite frankly, a political and pragmatic decision to seek the dissolution of the House. The Premier called the election. The Premier asked the Lieutenant Governor to dissolve the House, and that's something that I think all members need to understand.

Mr. Speaker, I believe in our province's prospects because I believe in our people. Working together, I believe that we can seize the opportunities of the future and get Ontario back on track and build a better future for our children and grandchildren. That is really the reason I ran again in the most recent provincial election. I've had the privilege of serving here for a number of years, and that is the main reason why I decided to seek re-election. I was very pleased and honoured to again receive the trust and the support of my constituents. I wanted to start

off with that positive comment as we begin this debate on Bill 7.

Of course, Bill 7 is an effort on the part of the government to demonstrate that they care about small business, that they are making an effort to reduce burdens on small business.

They call the first schedule of the proposed act the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, where they say that the Minister of Economic Development will present an annual report on what they're doing to reduce burdens on small business.

The second schedule in the act is, of course, the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, again suggesting that the government wants to encourage the establishment of economic clusters in the province. We heard the minister, in his speech, talk about some of the economic clusters that he admitted have been in large part formed and originated because of the leadership of the business community, as well as, I would argue, the academic community in those areas, but it can be facilitated and encouraged by government. Certainly there is a role for government in that respect.

I think some of this thinking goes back to some of the work that was done by Michael Porter, who was a Harvard-trained academic. I think he still teaches at Harvard, or did at the time. In the early 1990s he wrote an interesting report about economic clusters and how government could be helpful in facilitating those. As far as it goes, we support that in our caucus. We believe that's advantageous, obviously. But we would question, still, why does the government need to introduce a bill requiring the minister to do this? Why can't the minister just do this? Why can't he just release a report on what the government is doing or may not be doing to reduce the burdens on small business? Why can't the minister just release a report on what they're doing to encourage economic clusters and develop the plans? I don't believe he needs legislation to undertake this work, and I don't think anybody in this House believes that either. But the government wants to be seen to be doing something, and so here we have Bill 7.

I certainly do want to acknowledge and thank the representatives from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business who are here. They have done an extraordinary job over the years. They're a strong voice for small business. There are a number of other organizations, of course, that get into this particular line of work, but I think the CFIB is the leader in terms of supporting and encouraging small business and advocating for small business, whether it be in the Ontario Legislature, whether it be in our local municipalities or whether it be with respect to the government of Canada. I think they've done an outstanding job through the years. Through the years that I've been privileged to serve here, I've met some outstanding people who have done good work for the CFIB.

Red tape has been a concern of the CFIB for many years, and not just the CFIB. When I talk to small business people in any of the communities in the riding of

Wellington–Halton Hills, or before that Waterloo–Wellington, or before that the riding of Wellington—my first riding—the concern that small business people have about red tape and regulation always comes up in the course of conversations about what the provincial government can do to help. I think that obviously we need, as a provincial Legislature and throughout the government, including all the agencies, to be cognizant of the fact that small business people, in many cases, are single proprietors or have fewer than 10 employees. They don't have a lot of time to deal with government's expectations, government forms, government regulations. They are focusing on growing their business. They're focusing on trying to serve their customers, exceed their customers' expectations, and expand their business so that hopefully they can make a profit. There's nothing wrong with that, Mr. Speaker. I know there are some parties in this Legislature that might think there is, but there isn't. That's how the market economy works, and we should encourage and support our small business people to the greatest extent possible.

Over the course of the last 11 years, this government has added layer upon layer of red tape, and we all know the examples. They seem to look at these regulations in isolation, as opposed to looking at the cumulative effect that's impacting our small business people. Of course, the net result is that our small business people feel that they're being strangled by red tape. Again, that is something that the CFIB has been talking about for years. It has intensified under this government, going back to 2003. Now the government would have us believe that they're going to start studying what they're doing, studying the impact and then putting it out in a public forum, I guess, and then, without committing to what they're going to do about it, at least quantifying it and then publishing it.

Again, as far as it goes, that's helpful, but it's not as far as we need it to go. Certainly, our caucus believes that greater steps have to be undertaken by this provincial government to look at the cumulative impact of red tape and try to find ways to reduce it so as to allow small business to unleash its potential and create new jobs. We know that with a high unemployment rate of 6.5%, albeit somewhat lower than it has been in recent months—in the last 90 months or so, our unemployment rate has been higher than the national average, which is an embarrassment for the province of Ontario and something that, unfortunately, the government seemed to be oblivious about for so long. At least it is good news that the unemployment rate has finally come down to the national average—good news for the families who now have jobs, good news for the province of Ontario, but I would again argue that our unemployment rate is far too high. With the right economic approach, we should have an unemployment rate of between 2% and 3% in the province of Ontario nine years after the financial crisis of 2008-09. We really should have an unemployment rate between 2% and 3% after the years that have passed since the economic downturn. If the government thinks they can

crow about this, and if they think they can pat themselves on the back and people are going to be excited with a 6.5% unemployment rate, they are sorely mistaken, Mr. Speaker.

There has been some good economic news in my riding, though, that I want to inform the House about, because it was recently announced, actually in October, that a manufacturing concern in Fergus called Nexans, which is a cable manufacturer, is going to be investing \$15 million in a plant expansion. The plant has been there for many, many years; I visited it many times. They're going to expand their footprint by 132,000 square feet, which I think is about a 50% increase in their size. We hope that leads to retained jobs in the province of Ontario and in our community of Fergus, as well as an expansion of jobs, but this is something that the company went ahead and did without any provincial government support in terms of a grant from any of the government's funding programs.

We see that some of these companies are going ahead and making announcements and investments without the direct assistance of the government. We know the government likes to be involved in these photo ops and, in many cases, writes big cheques like the \$80-million cheque that went to Honda. The minister even acknowledged today that the reason the investment took place by Honda was because we have the best workers in the world, and that's why Honda decided to invest over \$800 million in the Alliston plant, but the government chips in \$80 million, about one tenth, so that the Premier can be there for the photo op, so that people will think the Premier had something to do with it.

Mr. Todd Smith: Expensive photo op.

Mr. Ted Arnett: It's a very expensive photo op. That is, of course, taxpayers' money, which the government would like us to forget about too.

The fact is, many of these companies see opportunities in spite of everything that's going on. I would still argue that there would be more companies expanding, more companies investing if indeed the government took the right economic approach. But there is some positive news out there. I want to encourage that in my riding and do whatever I can to support these companies that are willing to expand in spite of what I would argue is still a very negative investment climate in the province of Ontario, largely because of the actions of this particular government.

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During my response to the minister when he gave his speech initiating this debate and I had the two-minute response opportunity, I felt I had to talk about the economic climate that this bill is being presented in in the province of Ontario. Of course, yesterday we heard from the Minister of Finance, who gave his fall economic statement, the Ontario economic outlook and fiscal review. Again, I think it's important that we think about the economic climate that this bill is presented in and look at some of the key numbers that were presented yesterday in this House by the Minister of Finance, some

of which, I think, were finally picked up by the *Globe and Mail*. The headline today says, on the front page, “Ontario Fades; Alberta Rises,” and there’s a big graphic of Ontario with all the red Liberal ink that we see on the front page of the *Globe and Mail* today, talking about the \$12.5-billion deficit. This has been something that we’ve been warning about for years now in this Legislature, asking the government to get control of its spending so as to ensure that spending doesn’t cause a huge increase in the debt. As we know, the debt has doubled in the last 11 years. But some of the key numbers that I think people need to know about and need to understand: For the current fiscal year—meaning from April 1, 2014, to the end of March 2015—the deficit that they’re projecting is still \$12.5 billion.

If you break that down, they’re borrowing about \$1 billion a month. All of that is money that is borrowed, that somebody is going to have to pay for some day. In the meantime, we have to service it; we have to pay the interest. It’s an absolutely staggering amount of money, but because of these years and years of high deficits, unfortunately, I think some of us have become hardened to these numbers. But the fact is, we’re still on the road to insolvency. We’re not, maybe, racing towards insolvency; it’s not going to happen next year, but if we stay on this path, the province of Ontario will not be able to service its debt and its obligations.

I should also add that while the government claims to be working towards a balanced budget by 2017-18 and claims to be making progress towards that goal, and the minister reiterated the government’s commitment to balance the budget by 2017-18 yesterday in his economic statement, the deficit this year is \$2 billion higher than it was last year. It’s higher than it was last year. They’re not going in the right direction towards a balanced budget. Last year, it was \$10.5 billion. This year, it is \$12.5 billion—\$2 billion higher than last year.

The projected provincial net debt is an important number because, as we’ve seen, under the Liberal government over the last 11 years, the debt has doubled. The debt this year, according to the government’s own background papers that were presented in this House yesterday, stands at \$287.3 billion. Again, in 2003, when the government took power, the debt was \$139 billion. So in 11 years, we’ve doubled the debt. Who is going to pay for the debt, Mr. Speaker? We know that it’s our children and our grandchildren who will have to pay higher taxes or receive less service because of this government’s inability to control its government spending.

Another important number that I think people need to know about from yesterday’s statement: The provincial government spending for the current fiscal year—again, the first of April of this year to the end of March of next year, 2015—is going to be \$130.2 billion. That number is up considerably from last year. The government would have us believe that they’re holding the line on spending. In fact, last year they spent \$126.4 billion. This year, they plan to spend \$130.2 billion—almost \$4 billion more than last year.

Another important number is the net debt per capita. This, in effect, is what each Ontarian owes because of years of government overspending. Every man, woman and child who lives in Ontario, in effect, is on the hook for this amount of money. This year—this is from the background papers—it is \$21,003, and that’s just the provincial debt that each and every Ontarian is on the hook for. That number is up from \$11,339 in 2003. Our population has grown quite dramatically since 2003, but it’s also true that the net debt per capita—in effect, the amount that each Ontarian owes because of years of government overspending—has almost doubled over that period of time.

Another important number in yesterday’s fall economic statement is the interest payments on the debt. This is an obligation that the government has to pay first if it’s going to be able to borrow money. It has to service its outstanding debt. This year, the number is \$10.8 billion. Looking at future years—and of course, the economic statement presents some speculation on future years. They go out, of course, to 2017-18, the year that they claim they’re going to balance the budget. The projection in the fall economic statement of what it will cost to service the debt by 2017-18 is \$13.9 billion, which is up about \$3 billion from what we’re going to be spending this year. So each year, as our debt grows, our debt service costs grow as well.

The government has been fortunate—we’ve all been fortunate—with low interest rates in recent years as we tried to encourage the economic recovery and as the Bank of Canada has tried to encourage economic recovery. But the fact is, as the deficit and the debt continue, the cost of servicing the outstanding debt will continue to grow. We would anticipate and expect that, at some point in the future, interest rates are going to rise. When that happens, the debt servicing costs will explode, and then we’ll be in real trouble.

Again, this is all going to happen in the next few years. Whether or not this government is going to be in power in 2017-18, no one knows. But they are leaving a legacy of debt that is absolutely staggering for the next government, whoever it is, and the next generations.

This is something that, unfortunately, the Liberal members do not want to talk about. I don’t know if all of them understand it, Mr. Speaker. I have a feeling that many of them don’t, but I think it would be helpful to some of them if the Minister of Finance would actually tell his caucus colleagues the whole truth of the situation, the finances of the province, and what the province faces in terms of choices, because we are on the road to insolvency. There is no disputing that. If we can deviate from this course, there is still time, perhaps, to avoid that fate. But the current trends and the current direction that the government is following are leading us to financial insolvency, and it’s something that should concern all of us.

I would now like to talk about the actual bill that’s before the House, Bill 7. Of course we know that the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has been

involved in the drafting of the legislation and has encouraged the government to do this. Again, I want to acknowledge that.

In detail, this is an omnibus bill that deals with two separate activities.

Schedule 1, the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, requires the minister to publish an annual report on regulations or burden reduction, if they do anything. A burden is defined as a cost that is measured in “money, time or resources and is considered ... unnecessary to achieve the purpose ... that creates the cost.” In other words, they will report on how many unnecessary regulations they have eliminated, if they eliminate any. It also permits the minister to “make regulations respecting the report, which may include regulations” itself, which is kind of interesting.

Schedule 2, the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, permits the minister to prepare plans with respect to the development of geographical economic clusters. The minister has the authority to consult with those who have an interest in his plan and amend, review or revoke the plan. The minister can also make regulations about what goes into the plan, decide who will be consulted with and determine how the plan is to be reviewed, revoked and made public.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I believe and submit to this House the minister could do both of these things right now. He doesn't need a law that compels him to do it. It would probably be in the public interest that he initiate these plans, but he doesn't need the legislation to do it.

This act, we say, does nothing to improve the business climate in Ontario. It does not create any new private sector jobs. It leaves the definition of “burden” to the interpretation of the minister. This will allow the minister to pick and choose examples of what he considers to be burdens while simultaneously providing him with the opportunity to ignore any economic problem that should arise during his mandate.

Red tape burdens, we believe, cost businesses in this province over \$11 billion in lost productivity annually. Think of that number: \$11 billion in lost productivity. That's time and money that could be better spent by small business and medium-sized business and large business servicing their customers, finding new customers and also expanding their businesses, which would create new jobs.

Something I've neglected to point out is a statistic that I've referred to for many years, and I think it's still valid: Coming out of an economic downturn, it is the small business sector that is the largest driver of job creation in the province of Ontario and, I think, in most jurisdictions across Canada. Something like between 65% and 80% of new jobs that have been created through the years after an economic downturn have come from small business. Again, this is the engine of economic growth. This is the sector of economy that, obviously, we need to be paying a lot of attention to.

This bill only provides for reporting on the state of unnecessary regulations or, to use the minister's word,

burdens, but it does not compel the government to reduce any of the burdens, nor does it establish a timeline or process for how these so-called burdens are to be eliminated.

Again, Mr. Speaker, they may come out with a report, say, next year or two years from now. Obviously, if Bill 7 passes, the minister is compelled to do this, and he'll have his staff do a report of some sort. They'll release the report, hopefully, in the public domain and, hopefully, table it in this Legislature. But there's absolutely no requirement upon the government to do anything about it.

So if we have a minister who wants to reduce red tape and burdens, in theory, in the future, perhaps he or she will have this report, will be able to take it to their cabinet colleagues and try to use it to try and encourage, whether it be the Minister of the Environment, the Minister of Labour or which other ministry—the Minister of Natural Resources. If there are outdated regulations that are no longer relevant, he or she will be able to try and use that as a persuasive tool. But there's absolutely no requirement upon the government to do anything about these reports.

That is, again, a weakness and drawback of this bill and, quite frankly, I think, something that needs to be addressed in committee. I would hope that we can see this bill go to committee, if it passes second reading, and bring forward those kinds of amendments. I would hope that the government will listen to them. If this bill is going to have any impact or be effective, they will have to listen to what we've got to say on that point.

The second part of the bill, schedule 2, may actually exacerbate the problem that is trying to be solved by the first part; that's a point that we make. I hope that's not the case, but at the same time, it's possible that the two schedules are conflicting and the so-called solution in the first part might create a problem in the second part.

We also say that this bill gives the mandate for economic planning and established a bureaucratic burden to the economic planning process.

We believe that this bill could go much further and does not go far enough to address the issues surrounding the burden of red tape in this province. I say again that the red tape burden costs businesses in this province \$11 billion a year in lost productivity annually. Real action is necessary on this issue. The bill only requires the minister to review the state of burdens in the Ontario economy every five years, and it does not compel the minister to reduce any of the burdens, as I've said before, or establish a process to access and eliminate the burdens.

The second part of the bill actually may accentuate the problem that's trying to be solved by the first part, as I said earlier. The Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act is designed to legislate the government's involvement in the planning and organization of geographic economies. It gives the government the mandate to plan and consult on, as well as amend and revoke, economic planning. It reduces economic flexibility—a bureaucratic burden to the economic planning process. It will be a handcuff to business and prevent them from properly responding to the dynamic of the flexibility of the marketplace.

Those are some of the concerns. I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that those concerns can be addressed over the course of this debate and through the committee hearings. But certainly, on first blush, these are some of the concerns that our caucus has.

I see that it's almost 10:15, and I'm shortly running out of time. But, Mr. Speaker, there are still approximately 35 hours—35 minutes to go in my presentation—

Interjection.

Mr. Ted Arnott: It may seem like 35 hours.

But the fact is, I'm looking forward to when this bill is next called for debate. I'm hoping I can be here. I'll have the floor, and I will be able to continue my comments on Bill 7.

I want to thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for your interest this morning in my comments.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Since it is now almost 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Just before we begin introductions—I suspect that we have quite a few to make—I'll remind members: Please, just introduce your guests and maybe their title, and we'll get through all of them today. We also have to introduce a special group today.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure today to introduce some friends to this Legislature: Matt Hiraishi and Doug DeRabbie, who are with the Insurance Bureau of Canada. Of course, we welcome their entire group today.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I'd like to welcome representatives from the College Student Alliance: Sarah Ryrie from St. Clair SRC—she's the president—and Olivia Bauer, who is St. Clair SRC vice-president of downtown affairs.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'm absolutely delighted to welcome a delegation today led by Xie Changjun, vice-president of China Guodian Corp., and Mr. Huang Qun, executive director and vice-president of the China Longyuan Power Group. Mr. Xie and Mr. Huang are here today with senior executives from China Guodian Corp., the China Longyuan Power Group and Longyuan Canada Renewables Ltd. Many of these representatives are visiting Ontario all the way from China. Ni hao, and welcome.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise to welcome the representatives from the Insurance Bureau of Canada. In the gallery we have Ralph Palumbo, regional vice-president for Ontario; Doug DeRabbie, Matt Hiraishi, Karyn Hamilton and Brian Shephard. I thank them for visiting Queen's Park and I encourage all members to attend the insurance bureau reception in room 228 later this evening.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thanks so much, Mr. Speaker. I know you'll be introducing the pages later, but I'm very excited that the page captain today is Albany Sutherland from Thunder Bay–Superior North, who's also a proud resident of Marten Falls First Nation. We've got a number of people here to see Albany do her work: her mother, Denise Baxter; her grandfather, Lawrence Baxter; and some close friends, Alexa McKinnon and Libby Stephenson.

While I'm at it, I also want to introduce the interim chief of Marten Falls First Nation, Bruce Achneepineskum. Let's welcome them all here today.

Mr. Michael Harris: I have Jeff Scherer from Conestoga Students Inc., as well as Katie Turriff from Conestoga. Jeff is the president. Katie is on the board of directors. They're here with the College Student Alliance today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have visitors all the way from Sudbury, from Cambrian College: Brandon Guertin, who is the president of the student association; and Jennifer Toomer, who is the vice-president. Give a good southern welcome to those northern people.

Hon. Mario Sergio: From sunny Sicily and the town of Cattolica Eraclea, we have the mayor, Dottore Nicolò Termine. We have the president of the Cattolica Eraclea Social Club here in Toronto, Peter Borsellino; and Mr. Dominic Campione and Mr. Anthony Avola. I wish them a good stay in the House today.

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to welcome a constituent from my riding. She's here with the College Student Alliance. I'd like to welcome Robyn Phillips from St. Lawrence College in Brockville. She's the president of their student association. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Joe Dickson: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today, from Ajax, page Haniah Igbal and her mother, Kubra Mir, who is in the east gallery—such a young-looking lady that you almost would think they're sisters. I welcome you.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my pleasure to introduce to the Legislature this morning two very engaging young ladies from St. Clair College in Windsor, Ontario: Olivia Bauer and Sarah Ryrie. Congratulations. Thank you for coming and making the trip all the way.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I'd like to welcome Rob Williams from Fleming College, Peterborough campus. Rob is the president of the student association there.

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to introduce page Joshua Liao's mom who is here, Michele Curry. She's in the west members' gallery and is down for the month while her son is acting as a page here at Queen's Park. Welcome.

Hon. Michael Chan: Today I would like to welcome the Target department store government affairs team, who travelled here from Canada and the US. Their names are Matt, Amy, Isaac, Yanis, Irene, Thad, Onika, Mila, Adriana, Jennifer and Rajesh. Welcome to Canada.

Hon. Reza Moridi: Please join me in welcoming Matthew Stewart, president of the Fanshawe College student union as well as president of the College Student Alliance. He's joining us in the west gallery with leaders from student unions across the province of Ontario. Please welcome them.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: It's my very great pleasure to welcome April Singleton this morning, who is the mother of page captain Jared Singleton, both from Cambridge. Welcome.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I'm pleased today to welcome the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network. They do a fantastic job advocating for cancer patients and survivors. They are here today at Queen's Park to raise awareness about metastatic prostate cancer and the financial, emotional and health costs of this disease on patients and their families. In particular, I would like to welcome Jackie Manthorne, Sapna Mahajan and Tiffany Glover. Please welcome them.

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

The member from Barrie.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): She took it from you. Okay. Sorry.

The Associate Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: It's my pleasure to welcome Deepika Gangwani, who is the president of the student association at Centennial College.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to welcome Tiffany Glover, who is in the House today. Tiffany worked very hard along with me to give me the opportunity to represent my community of Ottawa Centre in this great Legislature. I thank Tiffany and welcome her to Queen's Park.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'd like to welcome Matthew Stewart, president, and all the folks from the College Student Alliance as well, but also, we have in the audience today members of the Canadian Steel Producers Association. Welcome to Queen's Park as well.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Once again, I'm very pleased to welcome Dr. Brian Stevenson, president and vice-chancellor of Lakehead University. Brian, welcome.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I would like to welcome the mother of page Hannah Hamilton, Jennifer Hamilton; her brother Jake Hamilton; and family friend Payne Crighton. They are on their way in, I believe, at the moment.

Mr. Paul Miller: I also would like to introduce and welcome the steel producers. Being in the steel business for over 30 years, I certainly can relate to what they're going through right now. Welcome.

Hon. David Oraziotti: I want to introduce Brenda Stenta and Kalyan Ghosh, the CEO of Essar Steel in Sault Ste. Marie, a great steel town in northern Ontario, and as well, welcome the steel manufacturers to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): In the Speaker's gallery, we have with us today Matthew Thornton, a former intern of mine, and the Brant representatives of

the Ontario Real Estate Association. A warm welcome to my visitors from Brant. Thank you for being here.

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LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have a joyous task of asking our pages to assemble to be introduced as our new group of pages for this round, so if the pages could assemble, please.

From Scarborough Southwest, Kate Beverly; from Carleton–Mississippi Mills, Kelsey Clark; from York West, Jenny Doan; from Perth–Wellington, Nicole Eaton; from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale, Elijah French; from Durham, Hannah Hamilton; from Welland, Vida Han; from Ajax–Pickering, Haniah Iqbal; from Hamilton Mountain, Steven Kottaras; from Ottawa South, Moiz Lakhani; from Parry Sound–Muskoka, Joshua Liao; from Richmond Hill, Johann Muthukumaraswamy; from Chatham–Kent–Essex, Mikaila Nouhra; from Simcoe–Grey, Nicholas Sammon; from Mississauga–Brampton South, Ethan Sequeira; from Cambridge, Jared Singleton; from Thunder Bay–Superior North, Albany Sutherland; from Etobicoke Centre, Maja Toman; from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Claudia Velimirovic; from Brampton West, Tyler Vis; from Burlington, Ella Walsh; from Oakville, Noah Westwater; and from Don Valley East, Nicholas Zalewski.

These are our pages for this round. Thank you very much.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank the members for their patience in introductions. If we continue to simply make the names available, we'll get through all of our introductions with guests.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Monte McNaughton: My question this morning is to the Premier. Premier, I listened to the fall economic statement yesterday, and while I appreciate a nice story with a happy ending, this isn't the time or place for fiction. You continue to rely on rosy assumptions about the growth of our economy in spite of the half-a-billion-dollar shortfall you announced yesterday, and in the face of a flagging economic outlook globally.

In just the last few weeks, we've learned Japan and Italy are officially in recession. Germany struggled to grow its economy by 0.1% last quarter, and China's growth is continuing to slow. Yesterday, UK Prime Minister David Cameron cautioned that, "red warning lights are once again flashing on the dashboard of the global economy."

Premier, how can you expect the people of Ontario to believe that you'll balance the budget without raising

their taxes when you keep overestimating revenue and won't stop spending?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I appreciate the global context that the member opposite has painted, and those are realities that we are contending with, but we have a plan and we are executing the plan that we ran on. That plan is multi-faceted; it is not one thing.

The party opposite had one song that they sang during the election campaign. Their only thought was to cut and slash, fire people and cut services. That is not a plan; that is a recipe for disaster.

What we have said is that we have to make investments that will allow for job growth now and in the future, and economic support for communities in the future. We have said we have to constrain spending, and we have a program review in place that is going to allow us to do that. And we've said we have to partner with the private sector.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Back to the Premier: I know you don't have a background in business or experience meeting a payroll, but let me tell you this: A small business that grows its debt—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Start the clock.

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

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

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Premier, a small business that grows its debt year after year wouldn't get back in the black just by raising its prices and cracking down on kids pocketing a few candy bars.

It's clear that much more fundamental change is needed in this province. The debt is nearly \$300 billion, and you, Premier, are paying \$29 million a day just to service the debt.

Premier, can you tell us exactly how this government is going to significantly reduce spending?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just say to the member opposite that I believe that government and society need leadership that brings life experience to those roles, that allows for a complex solution to complex problems. That's what leadership is.

Confronted with a complex problem—I would just remind the member opposite that, actually, the government of Ontario is not a small business. The government of Ontario is a government responsible for the life and—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The government of Ontario is responsible for the life and livelihood of 13.6 million people in this province. It is a complex enterprise; it's a complex society. The plan that we have to review the programs and transform this government, to manage compensation costs, to ensure that everyone pays their fair share of taxes and to unlock the value of the assets

that belong to the people of Ontario—that's the complexity that we bring to this task.

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

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Back to the Premier: With no real intention to get spending under control, you have said that you will rely on cigarettes to balance the books. You have presented strengthening revenue integrity as if it was a revolutionary idea, but in fact it's simply an admission that your government has failed to protect tax dollars. Either you have been unable or unwilling to enforce these laws, properly collect taxes, or deliver on old promises to crack down on contraband tobacco.

If in fact there is significant revenue to be found from stopping this "revenue leakage," as you call it, how many millions or billions of dollars has this government lost over the last decade by failing to enforce its own laws?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, I understand that the questions that are written down, and the decisions that are made about the way the questions are going to go, are made before question period. But I really think that this is an important discussion that we should be having about how we solve a problem that, quite frankly, we are all in together, as the member opposite outlined.

There are global forces that we are all dealing with. We have put in place a plan that, yes, speaks to making sure that there is revenue integrity, that the revenue that should be coming into the provincial coffers comes into the provincial coffers, while at the same time making sure that we pay attention to the economic development of all our communities across the province.

If the member opposite looks at the work that we have done, for example in the Ministry of Health, over the last number of years and at the transformation that has taken place, the way spending has been constrained, the way costs have been controlled and the limits on growth that we have put in place there, he would understand what's possible.

CURRICULUM

Mr. Monte McNaughton: My next question is for the Premier. In 2010, the Liberal government of the day, of which you were the Minister of Education, retracted its controversial plans to introduce a new sex education curriculum in our schools and promised to widely consult with parents before attempting another sex ed revision.

But, Premier—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, you will come to order.

Please continue.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Just a few weeks ago, your Minister of Education suddenly announced that there would be a new sex education curriculum in place for the 2015 school year, and yet there have been no meaningful consultations with Ontario parents on this issue.

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My question this morning, Premier, is very simple: Why have you decided to break the 2010 Liberal promise to consult with parents before reintroducing new changes to Ontario's sex education curriculum?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Quite the contrary: We have followed through on that commitment, and the Minister of Education has announced a process whereby parents across the province will be consulted.

Interjection: No, they're not.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, I will just say that the notion that the chair of the school council, the representative of the school council, somehow doesn't have access to the school population just demonstrates how little this party opposite actually understands about how education works.

To that life experience point that I made earlier: I've been the chair of a school council, I've been a school trustee and I've worked in community. I understand that the role of a school council chair is to talk to the people in his or her school, to get that input and then to feed that input into a process. That's how it works.

We promised we would consult with parents. That's exactly what we're doing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Back to the Premier: One carefully selected, hand-picked parent per school—

Interjection.

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

Mr. Monte McNaughton: —represents only 4,000 parents out of millions of Ontario parents. That's barely 1% of parents, Premier. This is not consultation.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: For the minister to suggest—

Interjection.

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

Mr. Monte McNaughton: —that such a covert process constitutes a meaningful consultation is an insult to the intelligence of parents right across this province. It is simply smoke and mirrors, Premier.

Premier, when will you reveal the contents of the new Liberal sex education curriculum so all parents in the province can see for themselves what you have planned for their children?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'll just quickly answer the first part of that question and say that what is an insult to the people of the province, and particularly to the hard-working volunteers in all of the schools in this province, is that this member wouldn't understand that those volunteer roles are extremely important, that they do connect with the parents in their schools, and that they have a very important role to play. He really should learn that, if he's going to be able to represent his schools.

I want to say something else—

Interjections.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I want to say something else, Mr. Speaker, to the second part of the question. I believe that what this is really about is that this member wants to once again undermine the very real need for a strong, updated and modern sex education, physical and health education curriculum in our schools.

I would think, given the issues we have dealt with as a society in the last few weeks, that he would have begun to understand that.

Interjections.

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

Final supplementary.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Back to the Premier: Even this flimsy promise to consult the tiny, hand-picked, select group of parents is a farce.

On Thursday, October 30, your Minister of Education suggested that it was unlikely that any feedback, even from these people, would have an impact on your Liberal government—

Hon. Liz Sandals: I didn't pick them. Parents picked them. I have no idea what they're going to say.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. The Minister of Education will come to order.

Please finish.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Premier, this is another Liberal broken promise, another example of Liberal contempt for voters and parents in the province of Ontario.

Premier, it seems you are afraid of telling parents what you intend to teach their children. Why don't you simply release the details of the proposed Liberal sex education curriculum now? Premier, what are you trying to hide?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Here is my advice to the member opposite in answer to his question, and that is to go to the schools in his riding to talk to the elected chairs of the school councils—because they are elected by the parents in the school—and to have a conversation with them about what they think should be in the physical and health education curriculum, because that is the consultation that we're doing.

I just want to point out that there are members of this party that have called for a select committee to look into sexual harassment and sexual assault. I have said that I'm open to making changes and that that's a conversation that House leaders can have. But that flies in the face of what this member is doing, which undermines—if he doesn't think that at a select committee we would hear how important it is for—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. It goes both ways.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm not getting quiet for people to take their last cheap shots. It's reached a point of regret for me.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: In any discussion about the needs for children to learn about sexual harassment and sexual assault, there will be, and necessarily, a discussion about health and physical education curriculum

in schools. Those two things are necessarily linked, Mr. Speaker.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Yesterday, the Liberal government released its fall economic statement. Ontario's bank account is short half a billion dollars. The Liberals are slashing 6% out of nearly every ministry, and now we're finding out that they are short on revenues.

What is the Premier going to do to cover the losses, Speaker?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the leader of the third party understands our plan and understands the fiscal underpinnings of our plan, because she ran on that plan, Mr. Speaker. She understands that we have a path to balance. She understands that we are looking at our assets to make sure that they are working for the people of Ontario. She understands that we are constraining compensation. And she understands that we are working to transform the programs, as we have done across government. We will continue to do so, to make sure that we are providing the services that people in this province need, but that we are providing them in the most cost-effective way possible, and at the same time making investments that will allow the economy to thrive, those investments in transportation infrastructure, in transit, roads and bridges around the province that we know communities need in order to draw business.

That's the plan. I know she's aware of it because, as I say, she ran on it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, when the government released its fall update, we found out that Liberal mismanagement has left revenues \$5 billion lower than projected since the 2010 budget. But instead of looking for ways to ensure that we can actually pay the bills, the Liberals are handing a brand new tax loophole to corporations so that they can write off the HST on Leafs tickets and the company car. Steve Orsini, former Deputy Minister of Finance and now the Premier's secretary of cabinet, says that this loophole will cost \$750 million annually.

Now, when we're falling short on revenues and we're slashing services to people, does the Premier really think it's wise to open up a new corporate tax loophole?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know that the Minister of Finance will want to speak to the specifics, but again, let me say that we presented our fall economic statement yesterday to the people of the province and we are very confident, given what has been happening in the province, given that our unemployment rate is at 6.5%—that's the lowest rate since October 2008—given that those jobs are 90% full-time jobs, 37,000 net new jobs last month in October. The fact is that we are seeing an uptick. Absolutely, there are challenges ahead of us and we have acknowledged that, but we have a plan. We understand that there have to be constraints, and

at the same time we must make those investments that will allow the economy to thrive.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, another way to increase revenues is certainly to grow the economy, but we've learned that the Liberals will be missing their growth targets that they just set five months ago, pre-election. That didn't take long, now, did it? We won't hit the growth targets in any of the next four years coming. That's what that economic statement said: four more years of lost revenues, four more years of slashed services. Does the Premier really think her plan is working?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I appreciate the question. I understand that the member opposite is talking about our path to balance and our stimulus package. Both combine to achieve the positive results that are necessary. She referenced the fact that revenues are down by half a billion dollars, which is correct, noted earlier, because of global forces. And what have we done? We've recalibrated and reassessed it to ensure that we continue to balance and we meet our targets.

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But the member opposite is basing her assumptions on our platform. Now, I know it's difficult for her to read more than nine pages, as she has written on hers. Ours is a little bit more complex than that. It's fully detailed and it's out there for all, to be used and recognized. We will achieve our target. We're balancing our books by 2017-18, and we're stimulating growth as necessary.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, we certainly didn't include billions of dollars of new corporate tax loopholes in our plan.

My next question is to the Premier. In yesterday's economic statement, the government has admitted for the very first time that they will not meet—that they didn't meet, in fact—their 8% auto insurance premium reduction. Now they're saying that the rates may come down 6%.

The election is over. The government has been backing away, in this economic statement, from the promise that they made just a few months ago to reduce rates by 15%. Is the Premier going to keep her promise to reduce those rates by 15%? Or is this fall economic statement really an admission that they're going to go nowhere near 15%?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, the Minister of Finance will want to speak on the specifics, but let me just be clear: What we have said in the fall economic statement and what we have said consistently is that auto insurance rates are down. They have already come down. We are already seeing success and we will continue to work to make sure that we reach those targets. But the fact is that the work that we have done so far and the changes that have been made have already produced results.

The fact is that the members opposite need to look at the legislation that we've brought forward because in that legislation are the mechanisms to remove fraud from the system to make further changes that will continue to bring auto insurance, on average, down across the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: In the fall economic statement the government appears to be backing away from their promise to cut auto insurance rates by 15%. That's the bottom line. They're using something called the annual Automobile Insurance Transparency and Accountability Expert Report as the reason why they're backing away. But this report is so transparent that it's being kept from the public.

Can the Premier explain why her transparency report that underpins her economic statement and her broken promise on auto insurance is being kept from the public?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: It's pretty rich, I've got to tell you. We're in the midst of trying to look at legislation on auto insurance which the member opposite and her team voted against. They voted against the very measures to reduce auto insurance further. Had we taken the steps, as we proposed, months ago, we would have reduced auto insurance even more. Notwithstanding, a lot of insurance rates are down—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Eglinton–Lawrence will come to order and the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek will come to order.

Finish, please.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Auto insurance rates are down on average by 6% because of the measures we've taken to date. We need to do more. We need to do the necessary work around fighting fraud. We have to go against dispute resolution systems. We're looking also at a number of issues around the tow truck industry and a number of initiatives that will enable us to reduce costs in the courts. That was necessary months ago. They stopped it. They delayed it. They voted against it. We're going to make sure it gets passed now and reduce rates even further.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, in fact, what they've done is they've taken away people's rights to sue and have justice in terms of auto insurance disputes.

The economic statement has real impacts on people across Ontario. Our growth is not keeping up. That means losing out on over \$1 billion worth of jobs, investments and prosperity. Bills are going up for hydro, and they're not coming down for auto. People are wondering if they're going to be facing more cuts and more privatized services because the Liberals have emptied the piggy bank.

Does the Premier still think her plan is progressive?

Hon. Charles Sousa: The member opposite ran on our platform, said that she's going to the find \$600 mil-

lion more in savings and in cuts to health care and education that she said she would be able to find, and now she's saying, "Well, we don't want to do that either." You can't have it both ways.

We are taking the steps necessary to transform government through the work that the President of the Treasury Board is doing now. We're going to make certain that we provide for open and collective agreements that honour and respect the rights of others, but ensuring that we have net zero so that we can all be in this together. We're going to continue investing in those matters that are important to Ontarians, to promote and increase our growth.

Mr. Speaker, she makes reference to tax loopholes, which is wrong. We have revenue leakage that we are attacking. But what she makes reference to is incorrect. She knows that fully well, that we need the federal government's support in those initiatives, that we do not have. We're fighting hard for Ontario. She should fight hard for Ontario as well, instead of putting them down and making—

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

ONTARIO ECONOMY

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

The Bank of Canada and the Conference Board of Canada both forecast that you would not make your revenue numbers this year. But you didn't listen to the experts, and you put a high revenue number in your budget. Well—surprise—the experts were right again and you were wrong again. Revenues came in half a billion dollars lower than you told us they would be, and that was only four months ago. You raided our reserves again—\$300 million more out of the piggy bank—so it doesn't look as bad as it really is.

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce has concluded that "we are likely to reach a state of crisis unless the province cuts spending and changes the way it does business."

Premier, will you please listen to the experts in the financial community and finally change the way you do business in Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, the premise of the question is completely inaccurate, and I'll tell you why. We have independent economists around the world and across Canada assessing the degree of revenue that would be achieved.

In fact, last year we had Don Drummond look at the integrity of the revenue numbers that were projected by independent economists outside of government. We took those projections and pared them down even further. We were below their projected amount, and even still, we were able to use the shock absorbers that have been built into the system—that's why they exist—and it's also why we're borrowing \$24 billion less and have \$200 million lower in interest costs because of the efforts that we're taking to offset these very measures.

We're moving ahead. We're on target to balance the budget by 2017-18 by taking a balanced approach.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Well, quite a pant-load there.

Premier, we've seen the direct results of your spending spree—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to ask you to withdraw that.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I withdraw.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: You've already cut 1,600 nursing jobs; physiotherapy for our seniors; cataract surgeries, and diabetes testing strips. Premier, you're the one holding the knife today.

It's not getting any better. Your own plan shows you need to raise revenue \$15 billion by 2017-18 to balance the budget. But you've missed your revenue targets every single time.

So, Premier, what are you going to do now? Are you going to raise taxes, as mentioned twice yesterday? More health cuts, in addition to the ones you've already done? Or are you going to legislate the wage freeze your finance minister announced in this House yesterday?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, we've adopted now over 80% of Don Drummond's recommendations. We've taken measures of austerity in a very pragmatic and appropriate way by transforming government without hampering services, in health care and education especially, and for our social well-being. But as a result of that, we've become the lowest-cost government per capita in Canada. We've done our job in that regard.

What we will not do, though, is cut 100,000 jobs from the system and put people at risk—what he's been implying and what he's been suggesting.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Just 140,000 child care spots.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean-Carleton, come to order.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Instead, we have a net increase of 500,000 net new jobs since the recession. We have recovered the 300,000, plus 500,000 more. Unemployment right now in Ontario is 6.5%, 1% lower than last year.

We're continuing to do what's necessary to promote the economy, and we continue to manage our program spending as necessary.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Minister of Finance. According to the fall economic statement, the first annual Automobile Insurance Transparency and Accountability Expert Report was delivered to the Minister of Finance. The whole point of this annual report was to let the public know why premiums were so high, despite the fact that the insurance industry was saving billions of dollars flowing from the draconian benefit cutbacks of 2010 and subsequent years, but this government has refused to release this so-called transparency report to the public.

Minister, why haven't you released this report to the public? What is in this report that you're so afraid of showing to the millions of drivers in Ontario?

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Hon. Charles Sousa: The real question is, why did you vote against the very bill that would lower auto insurance in the first place? Why were you not standing up for the people of Ontario, the very drivers you claim to be supporting?

We've been able to reduce rates by 6% on average. We can reduce rates even more by imposing and providing the legislation that we brought forward that will be debated in this House, that will be debated at committee and that will enable us to have that discussion which you are trying to avoid.

I've got to tell you, I'm disappointed at the very nature of your question because you, of all people, stood in this House trying to claim to support auto insurance reducing drivers' rates, just like many private members' bills on this side of the House have fought for. We'll continue to do our part. You should be joining us in doing it as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, that's going to make a great quote in Hansard. The minister is disappointed that I asked him to release a transparency report. We're going to definitely quote that in Hansard.

New Democrats have long argued that the insurance industry has pocketed \$2 billion from the 2010 benefit cutbacks without passing a penny on to drivers. That's why we called for a 15% premium rollback, which we thought this government agreed to in the 2013 budget. But it's pretty clear now that they have no intention of implementing it.

Minister, you admitted yesterday that the 15% rate reduction is stalled at 6%, but you didn't say why. What's in the transparency report that you refuse to release? Again, what are you hiding from the eight million drivers in Ontario?

Hon. Charles Sousa: We have a regulatory system that forces the companies to post online their rates, their activities and the reductions they are proceeding with. There's over 100 companies competing. Almost 20 of them or more are actually well above the 15% reduction in rates already. We encourage that activity to proceed, and that is transparent.

I've got to tell you, the reason why rates are at only 6% is very clear. It's because you stalled the very legislation that enables rates to go down, because you voted against it, because you enabled an election that wasn't necessary. Those are the issues that are creating the slowing of that rate reduction.

We're going to act quickly. We're going to ensure that rates are reduced by taking the actions necessary in this piece of legislation, which I hope you will support in the end.

NORTHERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

Mr. John Fraser: Ma question est pour le ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines.

Just a couple of months ago, the Premier released mandate letters to each minister outlining the key priorities for their ministry. Minister, in your mandate letter, the Premier made it clear that we have made it our government's priority to ensure that Ontario's north continues to realize its potential as a sustainable, diverse, stable and innovative region that significantly contributes to the overall growth of Ontario's economy.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please explain what our government is doing to drive growth in northern Ontario?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I'm very grateful to the member for Ottawa South for that great question. Certainly, it's a complete priority for our government to ensure that our northern communities continue to remain on a positive track towards prosperity. That's one of the reasons why we are continuing to work so hard on the implementation of the northern Ontario growth plan. We're diversifying the economy, helping communities attract investment and building more efficient infrastructure.

The key, we believe, is to take a very collaborative approach. That's why we are directly engaging municipal, aboriginal and community leaders from across northern Ontario. We held a Northern Leaders' Forum in Timmins last December and followed that up with a very positive session in Thunder Bay. May I say, Mr. Speaker, that we are looking forward to continuing that dialogue with another Northern Leaders' Forum happening early in the new year in Sault Ste. Marie—looking forward to it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you, Minister, for informing the House, informing this Legislature, about the strategic investments our government is making in northern Ontario.

We need to ensure that we continue to support the talent and skills of all Ontarians so that we can build a dynamic business climate in our province, one that thrives on innovation, creativity and partnerships. I think we would all agree that successful development relies on modern and efficient infrastructure, a vital component of building prosperous communities.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please explain what our government is doing to improve infrastructure in northern Ontario and support growth across the region?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Another great question—thank you so much. Certainly, we know that infrastructure is absolutely a vital part of realizing the full potential of our northern communities, which is why we're so proud of this last year's investment of \$527 million for northern highways, which was about \$147 million for expansion and \$380 million for rehabilitation—actually, over \$5 billion over the last 10 years. We made a \$32-million investment to support the expansion of broadband infrastructure to 21 First Nation communities, an additional \$30 million in projects extending broadband coverage to over 96% of northern Ontario homes, and we're going to get all the way there. We've launched a new Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund, providing an-

nually now, and permanently, \$100 million per year to small, rural and northern municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, it's important to note that these are priorities for us. We never heard a thing from the opposition party during the campaign last year at all about its northern plan. We're very proud of our northern plan, and it's a total priority of Premier Wynne and our government.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is to the Minister of Infrastructure. Minister, your revolving door of excuses is getting old and tired. Your newest excuse is trying to pull the wool over taxpayers' eyes by telling us the MaRS loan is fully secure.

Minister, CBRE's most recent appraisal pegs the value of the building at \$303 million if 100% leased. You've blown \$224 million on the loan, \$65 million more on ARE, and now we're on the hook for \$106.5 million in interest. That's a lot more than \$300 million, Minister. You're like the Energizer minister: You just keep digging and digging and digging us into a deeper hole.

Minister, are you planning on cutting our losses and selling the building, or will you just keep pouring millions more into a bad deal you never should have signed off on in the first place?

Hon. Brad Duguid: What's getting old and tired is the member's daily attacks on the integrity of MaRS and the opportunities that MaRS brings to our bioscience cluster. If the member was really concerned about the economy and jobs, he'd be supporting our bioscience cluster and the efforts that MaRS makes to grow jobs and attract investment.

But there's a big difference between that party and this party. Yes, Mr. Speaker, when the MaRS phase 2 project was having challenges, we did step up and provide support to ensure that that building did not rot in the ground. His party would have let that building rot in the ground. He would have kissed away the jobs that are going to come from the work that MaRS does and the economic development and investment that that will attract to this province.

I will not be taking his advice. I'm looking forward to the advice of Michael Nobrega and Carol Stephenson, who will help us ensure that this project becomes a success.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Minister, we know that you don't understand the business case, and no one is surprised now that you don't understand an appraisal either.

Your appraisal just doesn't add up. Both CBRE and Altus based their valuations of MaRS on it being fully leased to tenants paying for research and life science spaces, yet we know there is no market for the 780,000 square feet of research space. But we do know you're planning to put bureaucrats in there, and the market value for office space is \$8 to \$10 less per square foot than for research space. That means the value of the building is tens of millions of dollars less, even when it is fully rented.

Can you tell this House exactly how many millions more MaRS 2 is worth when filled with bureaucrats instead of scientists? Or are you just going to pass this off to the finance minister as more leakage next year?

Hon. Brad Duguid: The PC Party's approach to dealing with the challenges faced by MaRS phase 2 was to let that building rot in the ground. That was their approach, but it shouldn't surprise us. It shouldn't surprise us, because when things get tough, Tories run and hide. Look at what they did with the auto sector when the auto sector was having challenges. We stepped up, partnered with the auto sector, and ensured that 400,000-plus direct and indirect jobs were saved in this province. The approach of that party was to let those plants close.

When it comes down to it, this party has the intestinal fortitude to make the investments we need to make to grow our economy, to partner with the private sector when necessary, to make the important business decisions going forward that are responsible to taxpayers, that are going to create jobs and grow our economy. That party clearly does not.

1120

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of Education. On July 9, the Premier stood in this House and said, "We're not going to cut education." Yesterday, the economic update poured cold water on that Liberal promise. The Liberals have quietly admitted that they're actually planning half a billion dollars in cuts to schools in this province. The 2015 education funding guide shows up to \$500 million in cuts by 2017.

Why did the Premier promise Ontarians no cuts to education while asking you, Minister, to slash \$500 million in crucial funding to our schools?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I think one of the things that you need to recognize is that, in fact, we have increased spending in education more than any other government has ever done. In fact, on average, per-pupil spending has increased anywhere from 50% to 60%, depending on where the board is in Ontario. So I absolutely challenge anyone who says that we are not funding education properly.

It is true that we have declining enrolment, and that when you find that enrolment is declining, there may be individual boards who, because they've had dramatic declines in enrolment, may not have had as much funding this year as last. But the—

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The Premier said one thing and now she's doing the opposite. Her budget promised increased funding to school boards to keep up with growing enrolment. She's on the record promising no cuts to schools, and yet the Ministry of Education is spelling out \$500 million in cuts to our classrooms and says annual increases are things of the past.

These cuts will hurt an education system that's already hurting from being underfunded. It could mean balloon-

ing class sizes, teacher layoffs and even more school closures.

Will the minister tell Ontarians exactly what this cut of half a billion dollars will mean to the students, teachers and education workers of this province?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Let me repeat: The funding is now at \$22.5 billion through the Grants for Student Needs. That represents an increase of 56.5% or over \$4,000 per pupil since 2003. The funding has gone up. In fact, in the area that he's talking about, this year, which is looking at some of the operating issues, we've actually added \$8.3 million to help boards with planning. We've added \$15.5 million to help them invest in teaching staff in remote areas of the province where we know that the schools are going to remain open. We're actually increasing the funding so that those schools can remain open. The bottom line here is, yes, the funding keeps going up, the per-pupil funding.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: My question is to the Minister of Research and Innovation and Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, Ontario has some of the best-educated, hardest-working and most creative young people in the world. Many of them live in my riding of Burlington, where I've had the privilege of meeting post-secondary students who are eager to transform their bright ideas into successful businesses. However, what I'm finding out is that many of them are not aware of the programs, tools and services that the government makes available to them to develop their entrepreneurial skills and launch their own companies.

Minister, I understand that the response to Ontario's Youth Jobs Strategy has been very strong. Our government is well on its way to achieving its target of connecting 30,000 young people with job opportunities.

Minister, can you please tell the members of this House what steps our government is taking to support young entrepreneurs and help them thrive in today's market economy?

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank the member from Burlington for that very good question. This week is Global Entrepreneurship Week, so the question is great.

Building a culture of innovation, research excellence and entrepreneurship is at the heart of our government's jobs and economic strategy. We recognize that the economy needs a culture of start-ups and workers who drive creativity and competitiveness in the new world economy. That's why entrepreneurship programs form a key part of our government's youth jobs strategy.

Mr. Speaker, the Ontario Youth Entrepreneurship Fund provides young people with mentorship and seed capital to start their own businesses.

The Ontario Youth Innovation Fund helps young innovators get the advanced work experience and start-up support they need to translate their research into the 21st-century economy.

Helping young people get the experience and resources they need to launch their own companies is part

of our government's plan to develop an innovative business climate in this province.

We will continue to build Ontario up by investing in a suite of programs and services that will help young people turn their ideas and dreams into reality.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: It is great to hear that our government is taking the necessary steps to help our young people become successful entrepreneurs.

Minister, post-secondary education plays a crucial role in preparing the next generation of Ontario's entrepreneurs. It is imperative that our government invest in student entrepreneurship at the post-secondary level in order to provide our future leaders with the tools they need to succeed in tomorrow's economy. Investing in a dynamic, innovative and entrepreneurial post-secondary system will nurture our business visionaries, ignite their entrepreneurial spirit and help them grow Ontario's economy.

Can the minister tell us more about the different on-campus programs being offered to young entrepreneurs and how our government is building a dynamic entrepreneurial post-secondary system in our province?

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank the member again for that question.

Mr. Speaker, our government understands the importance of investing in student entrepreneurship in the 21st-century global economy.

That's why our government is building the most entrepreneurial post-secondary system in North America by investing \$25 million in two dynamic on-campus programs. The first one is the campus-linked accelerators, which is providing funding to institutions to integrate on-campus entrepreneurial activities with local businesses and industry. The second program is the On-Campus Entrepreneurship Activities Program, which is helping to kick-start business activities within institutions.

I'm proud to report that of the 44 Ontario post-secondary institutions, 42 of them now have on-campus entrepreneurship programs.

These programs are giving students the chance to develop their business ideas while at the same time transforming our post-secondary institutions into entrepreneurship hubs.

Mr. Speaker, we are producing some of the—

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

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Jim Wilson: Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Last week I received an email from a local news organization indicating that your government plans to approve, by the end of November, wpd's application to build eight 500-foot-tall wind turbines, structures that will be as tall as the TD tower here in Toronto, directly beside the Collingwood Regional Airport.

I've raised this issue, as you know, many times with your government over the years. You yourself visited the area just before you became leader. You said that this

specific project should not go ahead in the face of community opposition, and you also said that an airport should not have to shut down because of wind turbines.

So, Premier, is it true? Are you going to approve these 500-foot wind turbines in proximity to Collingwood airport?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Interjections.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, there's an environmental assessment process for these things as well, in which the public has a chance to comment.

Airports and airport standards are regulated by the federal government. We've had this debate with members opposite. We have a federal transportation minister who doesn't like to return provincial ministers' calls, and that's always a challenge. We're really looking for some leadership from the federal government here, because you cannot build things in the pathway of an airport contrary to federal government fly-in approach and rules.

I've offered many times to meet with the member opposite; I've offered to sit down. I've actually met with people from the airport. We need greater clarity from them.

We're following our rules. We'll follow our EA process, and we're looking—

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

1130

Mr. Jim Wilson: Premier, all four surrounding municipalities are against this project.

They would like their planning power back so that at least they would have the common sense and wisdom to not put these damn things next to an airport.

It's insane what you're doing. It's insane that you say one thing in the area just before you're elected leader and then not do the review that you said you would do—or at least I'm not aware that you've done it—and that this process just keeps plowing ahead. It doesn't make any sense.

Minister, I say to you, the federal government has no rules about wind turbines near airports because they didn't need to develop rules because the municipalities used to have the planning tools to make sure this wouldn't happen. They're looking at you like a bunch of dummies that you would actually do this in the first place. They're saying, "Give back the planning power."

So why don't you do that? Why don't you give these municipalities and all the municipalities across rural Ontario the authority they deserve? They can tell you where to put your garage or where to place your house, but a 500-foot wind turbine, they have no say in. Shame on you.

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Start the clock, please. Order, please. Thank you.

Minister.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I don't know quite what to say after that other than that the member should really be the member representing—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound will come to order—second time.

Finish, please.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: After that dramatic performance, the member should be representing the community of Stratford. That's an Academy Award-winning performance.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Huron–Bruce will come to order.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I know the minister—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Huron–Bruce will come to order—second time.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If I knew what direction that was, I would warn that member. It's not a laughing matter.

Please finish.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We're not interested in endangering the lives of Ontarians, and we also respect the constitutional authority—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'm the member for Toronto Centre. I fly out of the island airport. There are very tall structures all around that, and we—

Interjection.

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

The member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound is warned.

Finish, please.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Thank you very much, Speaker. There are large smoke stacks about—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: A little more fibre, a little less coffee, maybe, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish your answer.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: The—

Interjections.

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

FOREST INDUSTRY

Ms. Sarah Campbell: To the Minister of Natural Resources: This is a question about priorities.

No price was too high to bail out the government's MaRS project even though high-tech companies showed little interest in occupying the space, but a company is interested in taking over the Fort Frances mill. There is a deal to be struck that would create and save 1,000 jobs in the Rainy River district. The people of Fort Frances don't need \$300 million; we just need \$5 million to save the mill from being destroyed this winter so that we can finalize a plan to keep the mill open and save 1,000 jobs. The clock is ticking.

Will this government pay to heat the mill this winter?

Hon. Bill Mauro: I thank the member for the question. I've responded to this question in the House before. When I responded to it last time, I advised the member and the House that we were investigating what possibilities there might be around this should the eventuality arise which has arisen; that being that the business-to-business relationship that was trying to be struck between the owner of the mill, Resolute Forest Products, and the potential purchaser of the mill, Expera, fell apart. The deal did fall apart, but I'm saying here, as I said back then, that even before that had occurred, even before the member was on her feet asking this particular question, we had already begun to see what was possible in that regard should we be needed to step in to see what we can do.

I said that a couple of weeks ago, and I'll say it here again today. I have nothing to announce today. We're investigating the possibility to see what we might be able to do, and hopefully we will have a response on that in the not-too-distant future.

We've been in contact with the owner of the mill. There is still an opportunity. We understand time is short to make a final decision in that regard. We're on it; we're looking into what's possible. It is still a privately owned mill—

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

Ms. Sarah Campbell: This government has bent over backwards to bail out the MaRS project, spending over \$300 million—

Interruption.

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

Sergeant-at-Arms. Thank you.

Stop the clock.

The House will stand recessed for five minutes.

The House recessed from 1136 to 1141.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sarah Campbell: This government bent over backwards to bail out its MaRS project, spending over \$300 million for a two-thirds-empty building. But when the people of the Rainy River district asked the government to help save 1,000 jobs that depend on the Fort Frances mill, we get only excuses.

As you can tell by the ice on the ground, winter is here. If the Fort Frances mill is not heated, it will be damaged and lost forever.

Minister, it's simple: The government could find \$300 million for MaRS. Will the government find \$5 million to save 1,000 jobs and heat the mill this winter?

Hon. Bill Mauro: I thank the member for the question. As I've mentioned on several occasions, we were investigating this possibility long before the NDP were on their feet, talking about or asking this particular question—a long time ago.

I also think, Speaker, that it is a bit disingenuous for the member to get on her feet and suggest, with apparently some certainty, that there is a deal to be done here. There is no guarantee that a deal can be done here.

It is just as disingenuous to say that as it is to suggest to the people—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You have to withdraw.

Hon. Bill Mauro: Withdraw.

I think it is, Speaker, unfortunate language to somehow be conveying to the people of Fort Frances that there is some guarantee of a deal to be done, as it is unfortunate to convey to the people of Fort Frances that, with a stroke of a pen, somehow we could have fixed this particular deal.

The tenure system that is in place today is one that was created by the NDP in 1994. It's a system that we moved forward with, legislatively, in 2011 to change. Even if the new change was in place, it would not have guaranteed a deal in any particular way, Speaker.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Ma question est pour le ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement. Minister, as you're well aware, on October 27, people across my riding of Ottawa–Orléans, and Ontario, came together to elect our municipal leaders and school board trustees. All told, approximately 28 council members and 700 trustees were elected from the thousands of candidates who put their names on a ballot. While local elections have now drawn to a close, the work ahead for both our government and our municipal partners is really just beginning.

Throughout the province, including my riding of Ottawa–Orléans, where four councillors are being sworn in, including one newly elected member—on December 1, the province is readying for new municipal governments.

At the provincial level, Minister, you and your staff are beginning a review of the Municipal Elections Act, as is typical after every municipal election cycle. Minister, can you tell us at this point about where you stand on municipal electoral reform, please?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Thanks for that great question. I don't mind telling you where I stand on municipal reform. I stand with any change that makes sense and has a lot of support from our municipal leaders and our stakeholders, as well as the people of Ontario. That's why we will be consulting broadly with AMO, the Ontario elections people and other stakeholders.

But before I say anything more, I just want to take a moment to congratulate the 2,800 or so folk who stood for election as mayor or councillor and the 700 who

stood for school board trustee. It takes a lot of courage to put your name on a ballot and to go out in the public and talk about your hopes and dreams, and to listen to the hopes and dreams of others and respond. So congratulations to those folk. I know I can speak for the Premier when I say we're going to be looking forward to working closely with them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: For constituents of my riding of Ottawa–Orléans and communities across the province, municipal electoral reform is a hot-button issue. After all, municipal elections are the fundamental way that Ontarians can engage with government and make their voices heard on the issues that affect their lives on a daily basis.

During Ottawa's local elections, I have been offered no shortage in suggested changes to the ways our municipal elections are conducted. I know the minister will share my sentiment and enthusiasm surrounding local government, and how we can choose to elect local officials is something that we at the provincial level must encourage.

Mr. Speaker, through you, can the minister share some details about how the review of the Municipal Elections Act will welcome input? In addition, what do you hope the review will achieve?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I hope the review will achieve great things. I know I speak for the Premier when I say we look forward to working with the new municipal leaders. It's a core principle of our government that after every election we review the Municipal Elections Act. I would welcome the honourable member, who said she has heard many ideas from her constituents, to share those with me, and anyone else who has ideas as well. We intend to invite the public to submit their thoughts, and we're getting some of that. We will organize post-election meetings with AMO and other stakeholders, because we think it's important to hear directly from them.

As you may know, the Premier has directed in my mandate letter that we'll be providing municipalities with the option to introduce ranked balloting, and we intend to go forward with that.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Attorney General. Minister, yesterday I had asked you about David MacPherson, a Londoner tragically killed in a fire that engulfed the unlicensed group home he was forced to live in.

Days before this fatal fire took place, a manager from your ministry's Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee toured the building. Despite all the health and safety violations charged against this home, you claimed in this very House yesterday that the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee does not make personal decisions for their clients, recommend or refer clients to this type of housing. Instead, this office is satisfied with allotting the funds needed to sustain people in substandard housing and passing the buck on to the next ministry.

Minister, will you admit that because of your government's inability to provide quality services to our most desperate citizens, this tragedy occurred?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Again, I offer my deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the gentleman who perished after being in this building, after the fire. It's very important that all the agencies that deal with these individuals work together to make sure that this does not happen again.

As I said yesterday, the agency that the member is speaking about is only responsible for administering the monetary administration, but I know that the city of London is going to look into it and work with the Ministry of Community and Social Services to make sure that this does not happen again.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Minister, you're talking more about passing the buck down to the municipality of London. Maybe you should take a stand and stand up for the people of Ontario.

The police department has visited this facility over 100 times in 2014. Red flags were everywhere—health, safety, fire and zoning violations—but still, some of our most vulnerable citizens in London were living in those conditions. This tragedy could have been prevented if your government acted on the 2011 mental health strategy to ensure safe, stable housing. Instead, that part of the strategy remains a standing item at the deputy minister's social policy committee.

Your ministry needs to take action and demand answers about this tragedy. You owe it to the people of London. Minister, will you confirm today that your ministry will call a coroner's inquest into the death of Londoner Dave MacPherson?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: The minister of public safety and corrections.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. Of course, our condolences go to the victim's family for this tragedy. Of course, we all have to resolve that we prevent these types of tragedies from taking place.

The member raised the question around asking the coroner to do an inquest.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: If you read this report, it might help.

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

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I think the member opposite knows quite well that a coroner is an independent officer who makes a determination on the facts of the case on his own, whether to hold an inquest or not. There is no capability on the part of the government or me, as the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, to ask the coroner to do an inquest, so I leave it up to the coroner to make that determination.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Parkdale–High Park on a point of order.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: According to standing order 99(d), ministries have 24 sessional days to answer written questions. I want to draw your attention to page 14 on the order paper, where I've asked three questions of the Minister of Transportation and I have received absolutely no answers.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That is a point of order. I will remind the minister that, indeed, the time frame in which they are to respond is on. I believe it's overdue, so we'll make sure that that happens.

VISITORS

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the Ontario Environment Industry Association. They represent some of Ontario's most innovative environment and clean tech companies. We look forward to working with you in the coming year.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'd like to correct my record. Yesterday, in responding to the fall economic statement I quoted that 53% of children in Toronto live in poverty. I was quoting the Poverty-Free Toronto report. In fact, the number is: 63% of children in some Toronto neighbourhoods live in poverty.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That is a point of order. All members are eligible to correct their own record.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport on a point of order.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'd like to welcome a former colleague from the House of Commons, my friend Jennifer Sloan, to the Legislature. Welcome.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on a motion for allocation of time on 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.

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

The division bells rang from 1154 to 1159.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On November 17, Mr. Naqvi moved government notice of motion number 8. All those in favour of the motion, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McMeekin, Ted
Anderson, Granville	Fraser, John	Meilleur, Madeleine
Baker, Yvan	Gravelle, Michael	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoggarth, Ann	Moridi, Reza
Ballard, Chris	Hoskins, Eric	Murray, Glen R.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hunter, Mitzie	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Bradley, James J.	Jaczek, Helena	Naqvi, Yasir
Chan, Michael	Kiwala, Sophie	Oraziotti, David
Chiarelli, Bob	Kwinter, Monte	Potts, Arthur
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Marie-France	Rinaldi, Lou
Coteau, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy	Sergio, Mario
Damerla, Dipika	Malhi, Harinder	Sousa, Charles
Del Duca, Steven	Mangat, Amrit	Takhar, Harinder S.
Delaney, Bob	Martins, Cristina	Vernile, Daiene
Dhillon, Vic	Matthews, Deborah	Wong, Soo
Dickson, Joe	Mauro, Bill	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dong, Han	McGarry, Kathryn	Zimmer, David
Duguid, Brad	McMahon, Eleanor	

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

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hardeman, Ernie	Natyshak, Taras
Arnott, Ted	Harris, Michael	Nicholls, Rick
Bisson, Gilles	Hatfield, Percy	Pettapiece, Randy
Campbell, Sarah	Hillier, Randy	Sattler, Peggy
Cimino, Joe	Horwath, Andrea	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	Hudak, Tim	Singh, Jagmeet
DiNovo, Cheri	Jones, Sylvia	Smith, Todd
Dunlop, Garfield	MacLeod, Lisa	Tabuns, Peter
Elliott, Christine	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
Fife, Catherine	Martow, Gila	Thompson, Lisa M.
Forster, Cindy	McDonnell, Jim	Vanthof, John
French, Jennifer K.	McNaughton, Monte	Walker, Bill
Gates, Wayne	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Gélinas, France	Miller, Paul	Yakabuski, John
Gretzky, Lisa	Munro, Julia	Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 56; the nays are 45.

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

Motion agreed to.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Kenora–Rainy River has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry concerning the Fort Frances mill. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Parkdale–High Park, asked on a point of order today: The answers to your questions on the order paper have been tabled this morning.

There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1204 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I would like to introduce a number of people here in the west gallery this afternoon, if I could. They're here for the Ontario Environment Industry Association day. They include Paul Murray, who is the senior vice-president at AECOM; Derek Webb, the vice-president of Guelph-based Biorem and chair of the ONEIA board; David Henderson, the managing director of XPV Capital and chair of the Environment Industry Day; Ellen Greenwood, the founder of Greenwood and Associates and chair of the EID organizing committee; and Alex Gill, executive director of the Ontario Environment Industry Association. Welcome to Queen's Park.

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

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Good afternoon, Speaker. I would like to introduce the people that I was supposed to introduce, but it doesn't look like they're here: Jackie Manthorne, president and CEO of the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network, and Tiffany Glover, government relations and engagement manager for the CCSN.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We normally just pretend that they are here.

Further introductions?

We have with us today in the Speaker's gallery C.J. Augustine-Kanu, the Honorary Consul General of Grenada at Toronto. Welcome, and congratulations on your new posting. All the best.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: We should be able to visit and reciprocate.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We'll do an all-party visit.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT

Mr. Michael Harris: I stand to recognize the township of Wilmot in my riding of Kitchener–Conestoga today on the significant achievement of eradicating all debt from their books. That's right: Yesterday was "debt-free day" for Wilmot following a final \$30,000 payment for roadwork on New Hamburg's Hamilton Road and Arnold Street.

How did they do it, Speaker? Mayor Les Armstrong told the Waterloo Record, "We just managed to be able to keep ourselves controlled over the last four years knowing that this day was coming—we managed to keep ourselves under control and not go into a bunch of debt."

"Under control," Speaker. I pause to just make sure my colleagues on the opposite side heard that.

While they stayed controlled, the township managed to build the \$10-million Wilmot Recreation Complex, begin work on the New Dundee splash pad and renovations at New Hamburg Arena, and, of course, the New Dundee library, as well as work on road and bridge improvements. It can be done. You can have fiscal control and forward-moving progress at the same time.

Now, rather than throwing tax dollars at debt interest payments of, at one time, roughly \$160,000 annually, they can go towards building an even brighter future in Wilmot. So I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Wilmot council: Mayor Armstrong, Councillors Peter Roe, Al Junker, Barry Fisher, Jeff Gerber and Mark Murray—and CAO Grant Whittington and his staff on this significant achievement.

BEV McCLOSKEY

Ms. Jennifer K. French: This weekend, we lost a gleaming light in my riding of Oshawa, and a bold trailblazer for women's and workers' rights across this province.

Bev McCloskey was an active member of Local 222 in Oshawa for 65 years. She started at GM in 1949 and served on the executive board for 17 years.

She was a founding member of Local 222's first women's committee in 1968, and in 1969, the members of that committee successfully fought to end segregated seniority lists and male-only jobs at General Motors. The women's committee was also instrumental in changing the Ontario Human Rights Code to include gender as a prohibited ground for discrimination.

Bev would not back down for anyone. She fought battles on the shop floor to get Sunshine Girls and pin-ups taken down. When they wouldn't, she would slap a sticker on the picture stating, "This offends women." She also gave out famous yellow cards to men who spoke offensively to women.

Her activism spanned the community of Durham region, including the Unemployed Help Centre and Sunrise Seniors Place.

Bev received the Agnes Macphail Award from the Ontario NDP women's committee in 2012. She was named the CAW's Outstanding Retired Worker of the Year and named to the OFL's Labour Honour Roll in 2013.

Bev leaves behind her husband, Pat, and generations of women across our province who will be forever in her debt. For that, I am honoured to have the opportunity today to recognize her immeasurable impact. Thank you, Bev McCloskey.

ENVIRONMENT INDUSTRY

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Today, members of the Ontario Environment Industry Association, or ONEIA, are here, holding their annual Environment Industry Day at Queen's Park. This event, which is supported by the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, showcases the important work and incredible growth of Ontario's environmental industry.

Ontario's environmental sector has 3,000 firms, employs 65,000 people, and is worth an estimated \$8 billion in annual revenues and \$1 billion in export earnings. This is an incredible achievement, and one we should all be proud of.

Our province is now home to 35% of Canada's innovative clean-tech companies.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that a number of forward-thinking environment companies have their offices in my riding of Halton. Renewable Energy Management, or REM, is a Burlington-based company that is on its way to becoming a leading provider of sustainable water management solutions while contributing energy to surrounding communities.

Similarly, Newalta is a massive multinational company with 85 offices across the United States and Canada. It helps customers reduce disposal, enhance recycling and recover valuable resources from industrial residues.

Together, we will build a clean, sustainable and prosperous future for all Ontarians.

BRIDGE DEDICATIONS

Mr. Steve Clark: This year I was proud to attend two bridge dedication ceremonies in Gananoque to honour a pair of true hometown heroes. The tragic deaths of Corporal Randy Payne and Constable Henry Harper in the service of others was the reason we gathered in tribute. But the ceremonies were also a celebration of two remarkable lives and a strong message to the families of both men that they will never be forgotten.

First, I want to publicly commend the Ministry of Transportation for its bridge dedication program and for working with the Canadian Forces to extend the honour to Corporal Payne, a military police officer.

I also want to thank my friend Jerry Carmichael for his invaluable role in championing Constable Harper's tribute.

These public memorials are a reminder to millions of motorists on provincial highways of the risks the brave men and women of our police services take every day to keep us safe.

Constable Harper, a 28-year-old father of four, died after being struck while investigating a traffic incident in August 1957. Corporal Payne, a 32-year-old father of two, died on patrol in Afghanistan in April 2006, when his vehicle hit a roadside bomb.

The deaths of these young husbands and fathers hit their small town very hard and sadly stole a lifetime of new memories from their children.

To motorists passing these dedicated bridges in Gananoque, or any other Ontario community, I ask you to reflect on the sacrifices of the officers whose names you read. Then, honour their memory by asking what more you can do to serve your community.

NDP CONVENTION

Ms. Catherine Fife: It is my pleasure to speak today about the Ontario NDP's 26th biennial convention this past weekend. With over 1,100 delegates, the convention

was the most well-attended in the party's history. It was a rejuvenating convention, and there was a great deal of the kind of vigorous policy discussion that New Democrats are known for.

During her speech to the convention, our leader, Andrea Horwath, spoke to the delegates of the importance of confronting climate change immediately. She said, "Climate change is real and a threat to the future of the human species on this planet"—an important reminder of the work that we all need to be doing.

1510

One theme of the convention was something the Ontario NDP have been talking about for years, and that's the importance of ensuring our shared prosperity. Taking seriously the challenge of climate change and the protection of our environment is a pivotal aspect of our shared prosperity, and there is also convincing evidence that the degradation of our environment will have an even greater impact on our most vulnerable citizens.

Just days before the convention, I had the opportunity to speak at the Creating Action event in Waterloo, hosted by ClimateAction Waterloo region. I spoke of the grave state of the environmental policy in this province but also of the opportunities for the future.

There is so much more that we should be doing and can be doing. We should be pursuing environmental assessments on Line 9. We should be addressing transit infrastructure and not building diesel trains. We should be addressing the fact that the OMB can override progressive planning in this province.

Clearly, local communities are leading on this front, and we need to catch up.

CANADIAN CANCER SURVIVOR NETWORK

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: It is a pleasure to rise today in the House to welcome and congratulate the CCSN, the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network. I had the honour of sponsoring the group for their legislative breakfast this morning. Thank you to all who took time to drop in and to hear all the good things that go on through the CCSN.

As a cancer survivor myself, I would have appreciated having access to this wonderful resource when I was going through cancer. CCSN works to connect patients, survivors and other stakeholder groups with decision-makers and the wider community to engage in discussion and to act on evidence-based best practices to alleviate the medical, emotional, financial and social costs of cancer and encourage research on ways to overcome barriers to optimal cancer care and follow-up for survivors in Canada.

Among other things, they educate the public and policy-makers about the financial, emotional and health costs of cancer and offer positive ideas and recommendations to help them.

Please join me in congratulating the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network for all the great work that they do. Congratulations, CCSN, and thank you for educating us.

WIND TURBINES

Ms. Laurie Scott: On Monday, the appeal of the Sumac Ridge wind turbine project finally got under way, giving the impacted residents of my riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock the chance to have their concerns heard when it comes to five 500-foot-tall wind turbines being built in their own backyard.

Over the course of the next several weeks, the tribunal will hear from dozens of concerned citizens, including: Manvers Wind Concerns; the city of Kawartha Lakes; First Nations groups, including Curve Lake and Hiawatha; and the Cham Shan Buddhist temple, which will be the only temple of its kind outside of China when finished.

Unfortunately, the city of Peterborough was denied participation in the tribunal, even though these turbines will impact safety at the Peterborough airport.

In 2001, under a Progressive Conservative government, the Oak Ridges moraine received special protection from the province of Ontario. This present government even created the Greenbelt Plan and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe to further protect the Oak Ridges moraine.

The Oak Ridges moraine is the rain barrel of southern Ontario. But now the moraine is at risk if these wind turbines are allowed to go ahead on protected lands. This project will require new roads to be built on the moraine, thousands of trees to be cut down and removed, and alterations to the elevations in the hilly landscape. This will begin the industrialization of this pristine area.

I hope that the tribunal and the Ministry of the Environment will hear these concerns and agree to reverse the approval of the Sumac Ridge wind turbine project.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Members' statements. The member from Newmarket–Aurora.

CONSERVATION AWARDS

Mr. Chris Ballard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to rise and speak about how the people of Newmarket–Aurora are committed to protecting our natural environment.

The Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority is a leader in ensuring the environmental health of the Lake Simcoe watershed. That's why I'm excited about the authority's annual conservation awards, which were handed out in a ceremony earlier in November in Newmarket.

These awards recognized 22 individuals, schools, businesses and groups that all exemplify the desire to preserve Ontario's natural environment.

Two groups in Newmarket and Aurora took home an award that night. I couldn't be more proud. First, Lester B. Pearson Public School was recognized for the creation of their eco team, made up of young environmental leaders in grades 2 to 8. As an example, the eco team organized the week-long litterless lunches program. Selling solid, fillable water bottles, students were able to

raise enough money to buy a water bottle refilling station and reduce the use of plastic bottles. The future looks bright indeed with tomorrow's leaders like these.

Mr. Speaker, also recognized was the York Region Geocachers Club. This group embodies a love of adventure and, most importantly, the outdoors. The club organized two successful cleanup events across the region and encourages all Ontarians to contribute to keeping our beautiful province clean.

Mr. Speaker, again, it's an honour to stand here today and thank both of these winners for their tireless work and their responsible vision.

GasTOPS

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Today I rise to talk about an innovative and exciting business presented to me last week. GasTOPS, which stands for Gas Turbines and Other Propulsion Systems, provides support to the energy, marine and aerospace industries by creating equipment which detects bearing and gear damage at its earlier stage. This allows operators to reduce lost revenue and repair costs.

One of the cornerstone products of GasTOPS is the MetalSCAN, which is installed on more than 2,000 operational gas turbines worldwide. The MetalSCAN is an online debris monitor that creates a clear picture of the health of each gearbox to avoid expensive surprises.

GasTOPS employs 130 professionals and plans to continue expanding. This creates much-needed high-quality jobs in Ontario, and will continue to do so, as they are committed to remaining in the east end of Ottawa.

GasTOPS works closely with Carleton University's aerospace engineering program and brings in around five students every year for co-ops.

I would like to thank David Muir, the president and chief executive officer of GasTOPS, as well as Ross MacDonald, vice-president of corporate development, who have taken the time to meet with me. A special thank you goes to Sylvie Tremblay, manufacturing engineer, for showing me around.

Ce fut un privilège d'observer le processus de la création de leurs produits.

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

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated November 18, 2014, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Grant Crack: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on General Government and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Mr. Crack from the Standing Committee on General Government presents the committee's report as follows and moves its adoption.

Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

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): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated October 29, 2014, the bill is ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

WALKER TOWNE CENTRE INC. ACT, 2014

Mr. Hatfield moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr13, An Act to revive Walker Towne Centre Inc.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO AMENDMENT ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT LA LOI FAVORISANT UN ONTARIO SANS FUMÉE

Mme Gélinas moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 38, An Act to amend the Smoke-Free Ontario Act / Projet de loi 38, Loi modifiant la Loi favorisant un Ontario sans fumée.

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

First reading agreed to.

1520

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I will be very short, Speaker. This bill is a bill that I have introduced five times. It has been introduced by the Liberal government, and I think we're on the same page on that one. Basically, it makes the sale of flavoured tobacco products prohibited. It's as simple as that. That includes all flavours, including menthol. The sale of promotional items together with tobacco products is prohibited, and there are a few adjustments made to the penalty provisions that already exist in the Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

I sure hope that this bill goes through—the lucky fifth time.

PLANNING STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE
L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU TERRITOIRE

Mr. Milczyn moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 39, An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006, the Planning Act and certain regulations / *Projet de loi 39, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la cité de Toronto, la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire et certains règlements.*

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I'm proud to rise for the first time with my first private member's bill.

This bill addresses three broad areas of land use and planning reform:

—more local decision-making by constraining the number of types of OMB appeals that could be filed and restricting the types of appeals of committee of adjustment decisions, permitting local appeal boards to move forward.

—It also will modernize the planning process by allowing for electronic notice, extending timelines before appeals can be filed, and defining what minor variances actually are.

—The third area of reform would be giving municipalities more control to manage the impacts of growth by better means of instituting section 37—which is providing community benefits from development—by implementing inclusionary zoning, which will provide for more affordable housing, and by instituting excellence in design for buildings in public places.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, I believe you'll find that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion

without notice regarding the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

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

Hon. Brad Duguid: I move that the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet for up to six days between January 19 and 30, 2015, in order to conduct the 2015 pre-budget consultations.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Duguid moves that the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet for up to six days between January 19 and 30, 2015, in order to conduct the 2015 pre-budget consultations. Do we agree? Agreed. Carried.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES

GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK

Hon. Brad Duguid: I rise today to recognize Global Entrepreneurship Week. I ask all sides of this House to join me in celebrating our entrepreneurs, who contribute so much to our economy and our quality of life.

Global Entrepreneurship Week is truly a worldwide event. An estimated 7.5 million people participate in approximately 140 countries. It's an international movement to inspire innovation, imagination and creativity through entrepreneurship.

Futurpreneur Canada, formerly the Canadian Youth Business Foundation, is the Canadian host of Global Entrepreneurship Week. For nearly two decades, this organization has worked to fuel the passions of young Canadians who want to start a business. They are critical partners in our government's efforts to create a culture of entrepreneurialism in our province. I was proud to extend funding support to Futurpreneur Canada in my previous days in this post, and I look forward to working with them to advance the work they are doing in the days ahead.

Just last week I was at my former high school, Woburn Collegiate, to launch the Make Your Pitch competition. I met a number of current and future young entrepreneurs there, and I must say that I reached the conclusion that the IQ level at Woburn has certainly gone up since my days there; I don't know if it has anything to do with me. These students were downright inspiring.

The Make Your Pitch program challenges high school students in any grade to sell their business idea in a two-minute video. The public and expert judges vote on the video pitches. The top six business ideas automatically qualify for Ontario's Summer Company program. Summer Company includes mentoring, training and up to \$3,000 to launch a business.

I've made a point, through the years, of spending a lot of time with young entrepreneurs. One of the things

they've said repeatedly is that the mentoring they have received through Summer Company or other programs has been invaluable to their success. Connecting successful business experts and serial entrepreneurs with aspiring entrepreneurs breeds success. I've also come across countless examples of entrepreneurs who got their start with Ontario's Summer Company program, so the opportunity to gain entry to this program can be very valuable for a young entrepreneur.

Building a culture of entrepreneurialism in our society in Ontario not only provides opportunities for success for our young people; it is also critical for our economy. The fact is that small entrepreneurial businesses make up 99.7% of businesses in Ontario. They employ almost five million Ontarians. Small businesses truly are the backbone of our economy.

Our government is working hard to build a province that welcomes and nurtures small businesses. We have fast become one of the best places in North America to launch and grow a small business. We have a competitive tax climate, a highly skilled workforce, a modern and efficient infrastructure, and a strong culture for innovation. Those competitive advantages have contributed to our success in being the number one destination for foreign direct capital investment in North America.

These competitive advantages have also contributed to building a successful climate for small business start-ups. We're committed to supporting entrepreneurs in Ontario, which is why we're so supportive of the work being done by our Ontario Network of Entrepreneurs, also known as ONE. It's a one-stop shop to help people who are thinking about starting a business. It, along with the leadership of the Ontario Centres of Excellence, provides support to our growing legion of start-up incubators rising up across Ontario; some on university and college campuses, and others right in our communities.

Our universities and colleges have embraced the need to include entrepreneurial thinking and programs in their offerings to Ontario students. Many students are taking advantage of those programs, and many are graduating from college or university not just with a diploma or a degree, but with their own business.

Ontario's start-up incubators have become known as among the best in the world. From the Digital Media Zone at Ryerson, to Communtech in Waterloo, to the work being done at MaRS Discovery District in Toronto, to name just a few, Ontario is attracting attention from across North America. It's not by accident that great, innovative companies like Google, IBM, Cisco and Ubisoft, among others, are making significant investments in Ontario. They want to be where the young entrepreneurial talent is, and that's right here in the province of Ontario.

I want to talk more about the young entrepreneurs and young Ontarians who are really the key to our next-generation economy. Helping them get the right education, skills and mentoring that they need to succeed in tomorrow's global economy is absolutely critical for our economic plan.

1530

A year ago, Premier Wynne launched Ontario's Youth Jobs Strategy. The strategy is an investment in the talents of this province's young people. Summer Company and Make Your Pitch are just two of the strategy's programs that help young people connect with the support they need to start their own business. The youth jobs strategy began with a goal of providing 30,000 young people with work experience. It has been a huge success already. I am pleased to report we've already created more than 23,000 job opportunities across this province for Ontario youth. Who knows how many companies our young entrepreneurs will start up?

Building a culture of entrepreneurialism and innovative thinking is a crucial part of our economic plan. Ontario is now producing some of the best entrepreneurs in North America. This is one of the reasons why Ontario will fulfill our destiny to be a global economic powerhouse in the next-generation economy.

Please join me in celebrating Global Entrepreneurship Week in the province of Ontario.

ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: November is Adoption Awareness Month. I don't know if everyone in the House is aware of that. I want to highlight that our government, along with partners in the child welfare sector, is working very hard to increase the number of crown wards living in permanent homes.

Mr. Speaker, we know that children and youth who grow up in permanent homes—we call them the "forever" homes—are more likely to be healthy, graduate from high school, hold a job, and contribute to their communities.

We also know that children's aid societies, also known as CASs, often face more challenges when placing the older crown wards and siblings into a permanent home. That's why our government introduced financial subsidies to eligible parents who adopt or take legal custody of crown wards 10 years of age and over.

The Ontario government also provides subsidies when crown ward siblings of any age are adopted, as we know the challenges that can exist when siblings are separated.

Adopting an older child or sibling group is a significant responsibility and one that comes, of course, with added costs. These subsidies go a long way to supporting families to care for these young people, allowing them to meet the child's needs without creating undue financial hardship.

In addition to these financial supports, our government is very proud of other accomplishments we've made in the adoption area. Among them is the Building Families and Supporting Youth to be Successful Act, 2011. This removed legal barriers so that more kids in the care of CASs can be adopted. In the past year there have been almost 1,000 public and private adoptions in Ontario—1,000 adoptions.

We continue to fund the Adoption Council of Ontario to manage the AdoptOntario program. There is a website

there that helps match children available for adoption with prospective adoptive parents wanting to build their families.

And, with the help of the child welfare sector, we have more than doubled the number of Adoption Resource Exchanges held every year. This is a forum that helps match potential adoptive families with children needing adoption. I was very happy to give opening remarks this past weekend at the most recent Adoption Resource Exchange, which took place on the 15th, I believe. I was able to share my own story of pursuing an international adoption that my husband and I went on. Although it did not conclude with us adopting children, I certainly can empathize fully with the process and the due diligence one must go through to become an adoptive parent. It was really great to be at that conference and to meet parents and couples and others who are wanting to adopt children.

We're also committed to improving outcomes for aboriginal children and youth. We know that it's very critical for aboriginal children and youth to remain connected to their families, their cultures and their traditions. That's why in April 2013 this government released a formal customary care practice guide to help support culturally appropriate placements for First Nations children and youth receiving child welfare services. Training sessions on the guide were delivered to CASs and to the First Nations stakeholders across the province to support the use of the formal customary care guidelines.

Speaker, our government is committed to improving the lives of all children in Ontario, including the children who live in care. While I'm very proud of the progress we have made to support children and youth in finding permanent homes, I know and we all know that there is much more work to do. With the ongoing support of our partners in the child welfare sector, we can, and we will, do even more to bring families together and help children and youth in care reach their full potential.

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

It's now time for responses.

GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm honoured to have this opportunity to speak on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus to help recognize Global Entrepreneurship Week.

When Global Entrepreneurship Week was first launched in 2007, it was recognized in 18 countries. This week, from November 17 to 23, 150 countries around the world will be participating in this annual celebration. The goal of Global Entrepreneurship Week is to inspire people around the world through local, national and global activities designed to help them explore their potential as self-starters and innovators.

Around the world, Global Entrepreneurship Week connects more than 7.5 million people in those 150 countries with potential collaborators, mentors and investors. According to Futurpreneur Canada, the host of this year's

celebrations in Canada, there will be 475 events taking place across the country to mark this occasion. These events introduce aspiring entrepreneurs to new opportunities and new connections, which will help them as they embark on the journey of starting their own businesses.

Global Entrepreneurship Week is the world's largest celebration of innovators and job creators. It recognizes the people who launch start-up companies and the individuals who do the hard work to build companies from the ground up.

Entrepreneurs are people who have the dedication, the commitment, the perseverance, the persistence and the vision to take their dream and turn it into a reality. They are individuals who take pride in seeing their businesses grow from the ground up. They're willing to take risks, to put in the work and drive economic growth and create jobs for millions of Canadians. Entrepreneurs and the small businesses that they start are the backbone of our economy.

The minister, in his remarks, mentioned young entrepreneurs. I'm proud to say that my grandfather Leonard Arnott was a young entrepreneur, starting in the construction business in 1929 when he had just turned 21 and was old enough to sign a contract on his own. The company that he founded, Arnott Construction Ltd., continues to this day, 85 years later, serving private and public clients primarily in the Simcoe county area.

According to Stats Canada, in December 2012, there were more than 1.1 million small businesses in Canada, 381,000 of them here in Ontario, accounting for 98.2% of Canadian companies. In 2012, over 88% of Ontarians worked for a small or medium-sized business.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the entire PC caucus, many of whom are entrepreneurs and have been entrepreneurs before their election to this House, I want to thank entrepreneurs for the hard work that they do.

We encourage everyone to learn more about Global Entrepreneurship Week and to see what we can do, working together to support Ontario's entrepreneurs.

ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Monte McNaughton: It really is an honour to rise today to talk about Adoption Awareness Month. This is an issue that I've raised a couple of times since I've been elected here at Queen's Park, and one issue that I'm quite passionate about.

I want to acknowledge all adoptive families, who have opened up their hearts to children in need of loving homes.

Raising awareness about adoption is incredibly important here in Ontario, where we have almost 7,000 children and youth without permanent homes. Every child needs a family to love and support them, but ensuring these children find stable, supportive homes is a real challenge. It's a challenge for us, as MPPs, to find effective legislation. It's a challenge for families struggling with custody issues. It's a challenge for the hundreds of dedicated people working in our child welfare system. But this is not a challenge that we as legislators can back

away from or an issue to play political football with, because more than anyone else who struggles with this challenge are children who need families.

Over the course of this month, I encourage all current and prospective adoptive parents to speak to their local MPP about their experiences. Stories of happiness and joy should inspire us. Those of delays, difficulties or frustration should spur us into action to ensure that every child in Ontario can have a loving, nurturing home.

1540

GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK

Mr. Wayne Gates: Canadians across the country have been partaking in Global Entrepreneurship Week, a week to network, discuss with one another and share their innovative ideas. The event aims to inspire and empower our next generation of entrepreneurs and leaders. The event takes place in more than 140 countries, with some 30,000 events being run. Here in Canada and Ontario, the focus has been on supporting our young entrepreneurs. It is my hope that young people will drive the economic recovery in this province.

I've been reading and listening to some of the comments made by this government when it comes to young people who want to take their ideas to the next level and benefit the province of Ontario. I actually think most of it is right. We do have the most talented young people in the world right here in Ontario. They are some of the smartest and hardest-working people you can find in the world. Young people in my riding in Niagara—it's easy to see them as future leaders. They're dedicated to what they love. It's incredible. They all want the opportunity to prove it. If we're committed to keeping our young people here in Ontario, we need to support them.

There are 42 campuses in Ontario that offer students a chance to start their own business. These are the kinds of students who thrive when opportunity is given to them. I'm glad they're being recognized this week, yet young people in Ontario continue to leave this province because of the high price of post-secondary education. We see it every day: talented young people graduating with \$30,000 or \$40,000 of debt without a job.

Then there are the young people who can't even afford to go to university or college. I saw these people during my campaign. They were incredibly talented. They were getting politically involved because they wanted to seek change. They didn't want to live in a province where they studied hard, worked hard and still couldn't afford post-secondary education. They can't thrive if they can't afford to go to school and nurture their talents. We need to make sure young people have access to affordable education and that they aren't graduating with debt they can't imagine.

We also need to make sure there are jobs waiting for them when they graduate. We told them that if they worked hard and went to school, when they finished, there would be good-paying jobs waiting for them. They did their part. Now we have to do our part and make sure they have a future.

I hope the minister will continue to support our young people and push to make their education more affordable so that we can keep all these talented young people right here in Ontario.

ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's an honour to respond to the minister, and I want to thank the minister for highlighting Adoption Awareness Month.

Many of us here know that I was a street-involved youth and actually slept just north of this building when I was 15, 16 and 17 in the park when I had to. I wasn't a crown ward, but in a sense, looking back, I should have been. So it's incredibly important that we highlight the 7,000 youth in care, as you heard the gentleman say, who need a home.

I wanted to also point out to the minister, however, that there are some issues that need to be addressed. Six years later, after 2007-08, when the Expert Panel on Infertility and Adoption called on the province to double the number of adoptions, we still only have 977. Back then, we had 822. So although 1,000 sounds like a lot, it's not double. It's not the aim that we should have. Only 5% of those youths were older than 13.

It also recommended a raise in the amount of money allocated to families who adopt a youth. It costs \$32,000 a year to keep a youth in care. We don't give that to families, who probably pay more than that to adopt a child who perhaps has special needs as a teenager.

The other thing I wanted to point out to her, and I know she must be looking at: I'm sure she probably saw the Fifth Estate program on rehoming children. Unfortunately, there's no law against that here. People may know that these are folk who adopt a child for free—because we should—and then go on to enter the private adoption arena and get money for adopting that child out again. This is an absolutely abysmal practice. It could happen here. It has been highlighted that it is happening in BC. We have to make sure it never happens here.

Finally, just on behalf of the Ontario New Democrats, I want to say thank you to all of those parents who did go this route, who did adopt a child perhaps with special needs, perhaps older—not the cute, little traditional baby—and who brought them into their family. They are in fact doubly blessed because we bless you and your child blesses you, and we thank you.

Thank you again to the minister. I know she's going to look at those shortcomings and make a difference.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements. It's now time for petitions.

PETITIONS

TOBACCO CONTROL

M^{me} France Gélinas: Today I had the opportunity to introduce a bill to ban flavoured tobacco. I did not do that

alone; I did that with close to 57,000 youths who signed these postcards.

The petition reads as follows:

“More than half of youth who smoke use flavoured tobacco products. Flavoured tobacco products, like little cigars, chew tobacco and shisha, or hookah pipes, are available in brightly coloured, candy-like packages in common flavours like grape, cherry and piña colada. These tobacco products clearly appeal to youth and encourage tobacco use.

“We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ban all flavoured tobacco products in Ontario.”

I could not agree more. I will sign it and send all of those petitions with Jared, the very strong page I have with me.

LEGAL AID

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. It's been sent to me by some of the clients of Mississauga Community Legal Services, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas Mississauga Community Legal Services provides free legal services to legal aid clients within a community of nearly 800,000 population; and

“Whereas legal services in communities like Toronto and Hamilton serve, per capita, fewer people living in poverty, are better staffed and better funded; and

“Whereas Mississauga and Brampton have made progress in having Ontario provide funding for human services on a fair and equitable, population-based model;

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

“That the Ministry of the Attorney General revise the current distribution of allocated funds ... and adopt a population-based model, factoring in population growth rates to ensure Ontario funds are allocated in an efficient, fair and effective manner.”

I'm pleased to sign and support this petition, and send it down with page Moiz.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Todd Smith: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas household electricity bills have skyrocketed by 56% and electricity rates have tripled as a result of the Liberal government's mismanagement of the energy sector;

“Whereas the billion-dollar gas plant scandal, wasteful and unaccountable spending at Ontario Power Generation and the unaffordable subsidies in the Green Energy Act will result in electricity bills climbing by another 35% by 2017 and 45% by 2020;

“Whereas the soaring cost of electricity is straining family budgets, particularly in rural Ontario, and hurting the ability of manufacturers and small businesses in the province to compete and create new jobs; and

“Whereas home heating and electricity are essential for families in rural Ontario who cannot afford to continue footing the bill for the government's mismanagement;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately implement policies ensuring Ontario's power consumers, including families, farmers, and employers, have affordable and reliable electricity.”

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

MIDWIFERY

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

“Whereas midwifery care in Ontario is perfectly aligned with transforming the health care system toward quality care that uses resources effectively;

“Whereas midwives, who are primary care providers, ensure the provision of the right care, in the right place, and at the right time;

“Whereas the Minister of Health expressed commitment to work closely with midwives to ensure they have the support they need to carry out their work as well as grow the profession;

“Whereas midwifery in Ontario is currently being destabilized by negotiations that have broken down, a contract that expired on March 31, 2014, and a compensation structure that has not addressed pay equity;

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

“That the government resume negotiations with the Association of Ontario Midwives and enable midwives to continue to provide the highest standard of primary health care to women and their families.”

I couldn't agree more, and I'm going to give it to Vida, 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

1550

“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 organ-

izations, 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, Mr. Speaker, and I will give my petition to page Hannah.

COAST GUARD AUXILIARY

Mr. Todd Smith: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Coast Guard Auxiliary units are oftentimes the first responders to any emergency situation that occurs on our waterways;

"Whereas the use of green flashing lights by Coast Guard volunteers in their vehicles would help to cut down on their response time by alerting others on the roadways to their presence;

"Whereas these flashing green lights are currently prohibited from use in Coast Guard volunteers' vehicles under regulations in the Highway Traffic Act that restrict the use of flashing green lights to only the vehicles of volunteer firefighters and ministry-prescribed medical responders;

"Whereas the flashing green lights cost nothing to the government as they are bought and paid for by the volunteers themselves;

"Whereas, if the Coast Guard Auxiliary units were allowed the use of these flashing green lights in their vehicles, it would cut down the transportation time on the roadways, and this cut in time could very well mean the difference between life and death;

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

"That Coast Guard Auxiliary units either become prescribed medical responders, or a change to the act that adds ministry-prescribed volunteer first responders access to the use of the flashing green emergency light."

LEGAL AID

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I do have a petition here.

"Whereas Mississauga Community Legal Services provides free legal services to legal aid clients within a community of nearly 800,000 population; and

"Whereas legal services in communities like Toronto and Hamilton serve, per capita, fewer people living in poverty, are better staffed and better funded; and

"Whereas Mississauga and Brampton have made progress in having Ontario provide funding for human services on a fair and equitable, population-based model;

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

"That the Ministry of the Attorney General revise the current distribution of allocated funds in the 2012-13 budget, and adopt a population-based model, factoring in

population growth rates to ensure Ontario funds are allocated in an efficient, fair and effective manner."

I will sign this petition and send it with Noah.

AIR QUALITY

Mr. Todd Smith: "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 vehicles' emissions have declined so significantly from 1998 to 2013 that they are, in fact, no longer among the major domestic emitters of smog in Ontario; and

"Whereas the overwhelming majority of reductions in vehicles' emissions were, in fact, the result of factors other than the Drive Clean program, such as tighter manufacturing standards for emissions control technologies; 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 this new emission test has caused numerous false 'fails', which have resulted in the overcharging of testing fees for Ontario drivers and car dealerships, thereby causing unneeded economic hardship and stress; and

"Whereas the Auditor General has found the program to be not effective with current technologies and has suggested that the government phase it out. On top of the program's ineffectiveness the Auditor General found the program started turning an illegal profit of almost \$19 million annually since 2011, something the program has done through unnecessary tests and fees;

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

"That the government must take immediate steps to begin phasing out the Drive Clean program and its illegal profiting."

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

UTILITY CHARGES

Mr. Percy Hatfield: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas nonpayment of utility arrears by a tenant is not a ground for termination of a tenancy under the provisions of the Residential Tenancies Act, and landlords are forced to continue to house defaulting tenants to the financial detriment of landlords; and

"Whereas section 398(2) of the Municipal Act, 2001 (the 'act') allows a municipality to add public utility arrears incurred by a defaulting tenant to the municipal tax bill of the owner; and

"Whereas Ontario regulation 581/06 permits such arrears to have priority lien status under the act; and

“Whereas municipalities and utility providers maintain that they cannot disclose to the landlord whether a tenant’s utility account is in default or the extent of such default due to privacy legislation; and

“Whereas landlords are burdened unfairly, and potentially catastrophically, with fees and charges they have no control over; and

“Whereas these provisions will also impact tenants who are not in arrears with their utility payments but who will now face rent increases and/or increases in utility payments where such payments are pooled as landlords attempt to recoup their outstanding liabilities; and

“Whereas municipalities and utility providers in Ontario already have at their disposal a number of means by which they can control or collect outstanding arrears, including by requiring deposits for the utility service pursuant to the Public Utilities Act and by seizing personal property in the possession of the ratepayer;

“Now therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“Repeal section 398(2) of the Municipal Act, 2001, and amend Ontario regulation 581/06 accordingly, to ensure that property owners are not responsible for the payment of outstanding utility arrears where they are not the consumer.”

I was asked to present this petition. I will sign it and give it to Vida to present to the Clerk.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member from Windsor–Tecumseh for reading the entire act.

LEGAL AID

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I have a petition here from Mississauga Community Legal Services.

“Whereas Mississauga Community Legal Services provides free legal services to legal aid clients within a community of nearly 800,000 population; and

“Whereas legal services in communities like Toronto and Hamilton serve, per capita, fewer people living in poverty, are better staffed and better funded; and

“Whereas Mississauga and Brampton have made progress in having Ontario provide funding for human services on a fair and equitable, population-based model;

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

“That the Ministry of the Attorney General revise the current distribution of allocated funds in the 2012-13 budget, and adopt a population-based model, factoring in population growth rates to ensure Ontario funds are allocated in an efficient, fair and effective manner.”

I agree with this petition. I am going to sign it and hand it over to page Johann.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here signed by a great many people, not only from Oxford riding but from all the surrounding ridings.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the purpose of Ontario’s Environmental Protection Act (EPA) is to ‘provide for the protection and conservation of the natural environment.’ RSO 1990...; and

“Whereas ‘all landfills will eventually release leachate to the surrounding environment and therefore all landfills will have some impact on the water quality of the local ecosystem.’—Threats to Sources of Drinking Water and Aquatic Health in Canada;

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

“That section 27 of the EPA should be reviewed and amended immediately to prohibit the establishment of new or expanded landfills at fractured bedrock sites and other hydrogeologically unsuitable locations within the province of Ontario.”

1600

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to present this petition. I will sign it as I agree with it and I will send it with Hannah to the table.

OPPOSITION DAY

CHILD CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I move the following motion:

Whereas the government of Canada has failed to provide predictable funding to develop and deliver affordable, accessible and high-quality early childhood education and child care programs in Ontario;

Whereas families pay monthly fees of \$1,152 on average for one child care spot in Ontario, compared to \$152 per month in the province of Quebec;

Whereas investing in high-quality child care will reduce the stress on families; benefit children’s development and future academic success; allow more parents to re-enter the workforce, retrain or go to school; reduce dependence on social assistance; reduce poverty; and will bring \$1.75 in return for every \$1 invested by our government;

Whereas families, businesses and the economy at large will benefit from investing in our early childhood education and child care programs;

Therefore, in the opinion of this House, this province should partner with the federal government to ensure that every parent in Ontario has access to child care at a cost of no more than \$15 a day per child.

This motion is addressed to the Premier.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Ms. Horwath now has moved opposition day motion number 3. Back to the leader of the third party.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I’m pleased to rise and bring this motion before the House today to deliver universal, affordable access to licensed child care to all families in Ontario. Frankly, I wish it wasn’t necessary. I wish parents weren’t still waiting for the day when they have

access to affordable, high-quality child care spaces no matter where they live in this province, and I wish we didn't have to debate in 2014 whether this province actually needs an affordable child care system. The answer should be obvious to every single one of us. Everywhere I go in this province, I hear from families struggling to find child care—child care they can afford, child care that doesn't eat up more than their rent, child care that lets them return to work to support their growing family, child care that they can trust and depend on to be there when they need it, child care that keeps their kids safe and helps them get the right start in life. I hear those concerns everywhere I go from parents at the mercy of a patchwork of services that do not meet their family's needs. I've heard their concerns, unfortunately, year after year after year.

In 2007, in fact, I introduced a private member's bill myself that would ensure that new child care licences would be awarded to not-for-profit child care centres, not big-box, for-profit daycare chains that reap the windfalls off the backs of hard-working families.

In 2012, New Democrats forced the government to inject \$242 million in child care funding to help save 2,000 child care subsidies in the city of Toronto alone that would have otherwise disappeared, and to stabilize our child care system overall.

In the last election, we were the only party that pledged to increase child care funding and to link it to inflation so that funding for child care would increase each and every year and not be eroded as the years go by. The fact is, more is needed. More needs to be done to tackle the huge scale of this problem. That's why I've introduced this motion today, which calls on the provincial government to commit to working with the federal government—a federal government led by Tom Mulcair of Canada's NDP—to deliver a universal child care system for just \$15 a day to every family that needs it.

Ontario needs to lead the way by signing on to that plan today; by being a willing partner and showing that we are ready to lead on this issue, because we cannot stand by while families struggle to find child care. We cannot say it's okay to have only one licensed child care space for every five kids in this province. We cannot say it's okay to let 20,000 families in Toronto alone languish on a wait-list for a subsidized child care spot. We cannot say it's okay to force parents and kids to fend for themselves when we could do so much better by working together. Yet that's the reality for far too many young families that face that reality day in and day out. That's the sad reality of child care in this province today. It is a reality that we actually have a responsibility to change.

As I'm speaking today, just down the hall the committee on social policy is hearing from child care providers and advocates about Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act. I want to say one thing about Bill 10: That bill is only necessary because of this government's neglect and its failure—the failure of many governments, in fact, over the years—to build an actual child care

system that meets the needs of every young family in this province.

If we had a real child care system, there would be enough spaces for every single child who needs one, and those spaces would be available without wait-lists and at a cost that parents could afford. Early childhood educators and child care workers would receive good wages in recognition of the value of their work and their education.

If we had a real child care system, subsidies would be available to all low-income families to eliminate the financial barriers that we now have to child care. Municipalities would have the funding that they need to support their local public child care centres. Parents would know when they dropped their children off at the start of the day that they'd be safe until they picked them up at the end of the day.

If we had a real child care system, no mother would have to choose between child care and her career.

But that system just doesn't exist today in Ontario, Speaker. It exists next door in Quebec, but not here. So I want to address at least five pervasive problems, problems that plague child care here in Ontario, problems that show us how much more work actually needs to be done.

First, there is the problem of access. The government readily admits that “only a fraction of children receive care in licensed settings.” Only about 20% of children under age five have access to full- or part-time space at a child care centre.

The problem is all that much more difficult for infants. Approximately 100,000 infants are competing for just 10,000 licensed infant spaces this year. Those numbers reveal the extent of the shortage of licensed spaces for child care all over this province.

It is a sign that Ontario needs a real child care system. It's a sign that the status quo simply is not good enough. But even when families can find a space, cost is a huge barrier that stands in the way.

Over the past few years, I've had the pleasure of spending a lot of time in the wonderful community of Brampton. I've met hundreds of working moms and dads who are raising their families in that dynamic and diverse city. Brampton is a great city with such vibrancy and opportunity. It is a city that people from around the world call home. But when I talk to these parents, more often than not, they tell me how hard it is to find child care at a price that they can afford.

Those parents certainly weren't surprised to learn that Brampton is the least affordable city for child care in the entire country. In Brampton, child care fees are worth 36% of a working mom's income, meaning she has to work four whole months every year just to pay for child care. Who can afford that, Speaker? Which single mother holding onto three part-time jobs can afford that? Which new Canadian trying to start life in a new country can afford that? Yet the families of this province are on the hook for the highest child care costs in the country because governments leave parents to solve the problems on their own.

Here in Toronto, less than 25,000 fee subsidies are offered, reaching fewer than 50% of low-income kids. That's why Toronto city council has called on this province to deliver more subsidies and increase the number of licensed child care centres in this city.

This Liberal government should follow through and deliver on that request. If cutting child poverty is still on this government's agenda, that's exactly what they should do. But the fact is, it's not just the most vulnerable families who can't afford child care. The median cost for infant care here in Toronto is nearly \$1,700 every month—for one infant to be in child care. Families in London and Mississauga face toddler fees of over \$1,000 each and every month. Who can afford that? Which young working family still paying off student loans can afford that? Most importantly, can our province really afford to saddle young families with the burden of these high costs?

1610

For New Democrats, the answer is clearly no. Here's another sign that Ontario needs leadership to build a real child care system. Here's another sign that the status quo just is not good enough. There are 18 communities across our province, stretching from Windsor to Cochrane, from Kenora to Kingston, that have seen their child care funding cut by this Liberal government. These cuts, which average about 10% of funding, have already resulted in the closure of vital child care spaces in public and not-for-profit centres—exactly the type of child care centres we should be opening up, not shutting down.

About 40 good jobs are disappearing at the Coronation Park Day Nursery in Sarnia, which was attended by at least 100 children as of this past March. It makes absolutely no sense to cut child care funding to some communities, because no community can actually afford these cuts. It would cost less than \$18 million to stop these cuts and keep these child care centres open, but the Liberals refuse to budge. It's another sign that Ontario needs a real child care system. It's another sign that the status quo simply isn't good enough.

With so few affordable child care spaces to turn to, too many families are forced to rely on illegal child care. I'm not talking about unlicensed home child care provided by a caregiver who follows the rules and looks after the few kids in the neighbourhood. I'm talking about illegal child care centres, illegal child care operations flouting the rules to make a quick buck while putting kids' lives in danger. In a seven-month period within the past two years, at least four children died in illegal daycare operations. That is the clearest sign of a broken system that it is our obligation, in this House, to fix.

Speaker, the deaths of children are something we cannot ignore. It is a price we cannot afford to pay, and it's one of the very best reasons to build a proper child care system based on universal and affordable access to high-quality licensed child care.

Last month, the Ombudsman released a scathing report—an indictment, frankly—of this government's negligence when it comes to conducting inspections and enforcing the law against illegal child care operations.

The Ombudsman concluded that “systemic government ineptitude” puts kids at risk for years. It's a startling and distressing report that describes the government's efforts to regulate child care as “sloppy,” “inconsistent,” “inadequate,” “patently defective,” “alarming” and “ridiculous.” These are the words of our Ombudsman to describe the way that this government regulates our child care in this province. It's a disgrace.

The problem, though, is not just a matter of government neglect. Illegal daycares exist in Ontario in the shadows and in the gaps, the gaps where properly functioning, publicly funded, not-for-profit child care systems should exist. That is the surest sign of failure, because when we cannot keep kids safe, when we cannot make that guarantee to parents, we know that the status quo is acceptable no more.

Now is the time to build the child care system that our province needs. There is a new sense of momentum in Ontario and right across the country, a new sense that families cannot wait any longer, a new sense that we cannot afford to delay any longer, a new sense that progress is not only desperately needed, but actually possible. This is, in large part, the result of years of commitment by tremendous child care activists and advocates. They have been telling governments to do the right thing, and for the better part of a decade, they've received the cold shoulder from the Harper government, a government that promised to create 125,000 new child care spaces but has failed to open even one single new spot.

It's against that Conservative record, a record of ignoring the families of this province, that the federal NDP and our leader, Tom Mulcair, have put forward a real plan to deliver a child care space for every kid who needs one, at a cost of just \$15 a day. New Democrats have recognized the problem. We have heard the pleas of parents. Most importantly, most fundamentally, New Democrats understand that some things in life can only be done when we do them together. That's how our province and our country built the public services that we have today.

At some point, when people looked around and saw seniors living in abject poverty, living in deplorable conditions after contributing so much, they decided to stop ignoring the problem and to build a social security system that helps more seniors live with dignity in their old age.

At some point, people looked around and saw children working in mines rather than going to school. They decided to build a publicly funded education system so that children of the working class were not left behind.

At some point, workers decided that injuries and deaths on the job were not acceptable and they demanded laws to protect the health and safety of employees on the job.

At some point, we decided that health care should be based on need, not the ability to pay, and we built a public health care system that we hold dear in this country.

At some point, we decided that public assets worked better for all of us when they are owned by all of us.

That is a principle New Democrats will always defend, because that is how progress is made: by deciding at some point that a problem facing families can no longer be ignored, by deciding that the cost of doing nothing is far too great, and by deciding that people—the families, the children of this province—come first above all else. That is how we make progress. That is the only way that progress has ever been made. And that is precisely what we need to decide today in order to make real progress on building the child care system that our province needs.

The time has come to say that we will not leave families to fend for themselves. The time has come to recognize that the rewards of a child care system far, far outweigh the costs. The time has come to acknowledge that inaction is the worst thing we can do. And the time to do that is today.

This motion is our opportunity, as a province, to stand up to the federal government and to say we will not watch families struggle any longer. This is the moment to stand up alongside Tom Mulcair and to support his plan to ensure that every Ontario family and every family across this great nation of ours can access child care for just \$15 a day. This is the time to stand with the families of this province, to let them know that we will work for them, we will listen to them, and we will deliver the universal child care system that has never been in closer reach and has never been more desperately needed.

Speaker, I look forward to the rest of the debate and thank you for your time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Arthur Potts: It gives me great pleasure to stand up and talk to the motion from the leader of the third party.

Before I talk specifically to her motion, I would like to congratulate the member of the third party, the leader of the NDP, for her resounding vote of confidence from the convention last weekend. I had the pleasure of attending the conference as an observer of our party and had a chance to listen to the member's speech. I tell you, it was a barnburner. It was delightful to see her with that fire back in her belly, that commitment to move forward.

We've tracked her directions over the years. We tracked when she was first elected as a self-proclaimed socialist and looking at some very left-leaning causes that she championed back before the 2011 election. Then, during the 2011 election—there was a subtle shift after the election, where she became more of a pragmatist, a realist. And then, as we saw in the last election, moving so significantly towards the right and competing for Tory votes, becoming the fiscal fighter, the champion of deficit reduction—this was the direction she was going. I appreciate the direction that took because, having turned down the most progressive budget we've seen here in decades, I was no doubt a great beneficiary of that direction.

1620

Watching this transformation of the leader of the third party coming back once again to her progressive roots—I'm just delighted to welcome her back here. With the

support she's obviously getting from her caucus, it will be a much better three and a half years knowing she is there in that position to do so. It is very clear from her motion here today and from her speech at the convention that she has consulted with her colleagues—that she's come back to this position. This motion is clearly in line with this new, progressive direction the member is taking, and we welcome it, because it's a direction that our party has been supporting all along. It's a direction in finding opportunities for daycare spaces that we agree with wholeheartedly.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: So are you going to vote for the motion?

Mr. Arthur Potts: You know what? We are really, really encouraged to vote for this motion, because I think it does mirror the things we have been talking about as a party; it mirrors what our federal cousins are talking about as a party. When we talk about universal daycare, I believe that's a concept that very much resonates in federal Liberalism. It's a concept that my good friend Paul Martin—this is where the expression was coined. We're going down a direction that is so important for us, to bring in a much more universal daycare program, and we're working hard to make sure that that in fact happens.

I compare this motion to the first motion that the leader of the opposition brought just last week—I had the pleasure to speak to that as well—where we were looking at issues around referendums. This is not the progressive direction we would have anticipated: her membership talking about spending taxpayers' money and having votes on all issues and referendums and recalls. Those are such far-right concepts, and I'm delighted to see that we've come back to a socially progressive cause: daycare spaces.

I'm also delighted to see in the motion that the member is tying it to these discussions we should be having with the federal government. We don't disagree with her. I believe that the federal government is extraordinarily remiss in its partnership in moving forward in this direction.

Also, we seem to be tying this whole debate to what is going on in the province of Quebec. I think that's a very apt comparison. We have to be very clear that Quebec's daycare system is being financed on the backs of Ontario taxpayers. Let us understand the deficit situation between what is collected in taxes in the province of Ontario that does not come back to us, and compare that with the amount of money collected in the province of Quebec that goes back to the province of Quebec. They, in Quebec, are clearly net gainers from Confederation, whereas in Ontario we're net losers to the tune of \$11 billion a year. If we had the same level of subsidy per taxpayer in Ontario as they have in Quebec, \$15-a-day daycare would be more attainable. It would be something we could aspire to.

So, while we may be inclined to support the motion, I'm not sure we will concur in the financial expenses she is claiming—the average cost of daycare in the prov-

ince—nor with whether \$15 is the right, sustainable solution moving forward. We have to find a right number. We need to make daycare affordable. That is a direction our party is clearly going forward with.

We have done so much in the area of child care. The leader of the third party referenced the Child Care Modernization Act. This is very clearly an important direction we are taking in order to ensure that children are safe. The member talks about mothers who are leaving their children and worried about their safety. But let me remind her that it is fathers, too, who are concerned about making sure their children are in safe, licensed—or at least safe, unlicensed—daycare settings.

As a parent myself, this was a decision I took: I left my job, because my partner wanted to go back to work. Our child was six months old, and we weren't prepared to just have a six-month-old go into a daycare space—it would have been an unlicensed space with a neighbour looking after two or three children at the time. So I stayed home and took a leave of absence from my job; in fact, I quit my job. I made a career decision that it was more important for me to support my child at the age of six months, to allow my partner to go back to work.

I know that the number one thing that men in the workforce can do to support women in the workforce is not to make the decision around child care just the women's decision. Right? I took that step. And this was before parental leave was on the books; this was before I had a chance to be paid to take that time off under the unemployment system. I made the decision because it was important to me to go down that direction.

Our Child Care Modernization Act is looking to create safe licensed and safe unlicensed spaces. I think it's very interesting that the member has focused exclusively on licensed daycare spaces. We in our party believe that unlicensed spaces have a critical role to play in serving the needs of our young children.

The issue had become that in some unlicensed situations, it was becoming unsafe. The recommendations—was a result of some tragic deaths—were very clear that we had to have rules prescribing how many children at certain ages it was safe to care for in an unlicensed daycare space, and so we've done that. That bill is in the middle of clause-by-clause consideration, and that is extremely important. At the same time, by changing the rules around licensed spaces, we think we will be encouraging so many of the unlicensed daycare spaces to become licensed daycare spaces, increasing the oversight, which allows them to have more children in the system. This is the way we will be building up licensed spaces while protecting the right of some families, considering the right numbers of kids, to be in their unlicensed homes, being treated, we believe, in a safe, efficient and cost-affordable sort of way.

This is the direction that we are going in, and we have done other things. We have introduced full-day kindergarten. This is taking so many children out of the need for child care in the mornings and the afternoons. There are 470,000 children who are benefiting from full-day

kindergarten at the ages of four and five. We know that this program in itself is saving the average family \$6,500 a year. We know that this has had a great impact on making sure that children are being cared for. They're in the school system, full day. They're learning. They're getting early education. The records show that these children will be better educated going into grade 1 than they otherwise would have been. Their parents don't have to be as concerned about them, and they can go off to work and do what they need to do there.

Mr. Speaker, you have to appreciate that we've also increased child care funding by almost 90% since 2003. We've gone from about \$530 million annually in child care funding to just under \$1 billion. We have created over 130,000 new daycare spaces. We believe that we are doing our part, but that doesn't mean that we can't be entering into long-term conversations with our federal counterparts. I would encourage every single member of this House to be sure that the issue of universal daycare and adequate funding at the federal level, in partnership with the province, is in front of us in the next election campaign. We should make this a critical issue so that all three parties are going to move forward federally with a plan to bring in daycare. We will partner with them regardless of who is in power. I appreciate the member's comments about doing things together; that will be our plan.

As I said earlier, it's our intention, I believe, for our caucus to support this bill, but with that visceral attack that we took, it really becomes irksome: Do we really want to give that satisfaction? But I believe we do, because I think the needs of our children are so important that we will work very hard in partnership, even with our friends opposite, even if their tone is not nice. We will work very hard to ensure that our children are well cared for and that they're safe.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member from Beaches–East York.

Further debate?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise to speak to the NDP's opposition day motion on child care. This is an important issue. We all understand how much parents need access to good, reliable child care. Parents need to know that they are leaving their children in a safe place when they go to work. Parents need those daycare spaces to be available when they need them. We've all heard from parents who are struggling to find a place or who were told by a daycare that the only way to get one was to put their name on a list before they actually started thinking about having children.

I recently received an email from a constituent who said, "As a mother in a small community I rely on home daycare. Leaving my son at 12 months with another person was so hard, but she has been a wonderful person in our lives." She went on to say, "My family needs my income to support our family, and I don't have the opportunity to stay at home."

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Mr. Speaker, I think that people like that would be pleased to know that we are talking about child care, but

they will be disappointed to know that we are spending our time talking about a resolution which can't be implemented by anyone in this Legislature. Too often it seems that when you don't have a solution to a problem, people try to blame another government or put forward a resolution that calls on someone else to address the problem. It has become that way to try and shift the focus off our responsibility, a way to distract people from the places where this government should be doing better, a way to look like we are fighting for things that we can't afford.

We had this fight for years with the business risk management program for our farmers, where the government avoided their responsibility by saying that they were waiting for the federal government when they knew that the federal government wasn't going to participate. In fact, yesterday one of the headlines after the fall economic statement read, "Charles Sousa Targets Conservative Government in Economic Update." The government has brought forward numerous resolutions targeting the federal government, but they haven't resulted in real action.

Today's resolution, unfortunately, is the same. There's no plan to find the money to pay for this daycare, no plan on how it would be implemented, and it is dependent on another level of government that we here in this House don't control.

There are too many parents struggling with the high cost of daycare, absolutely. Should Ontario be treated fairly? Yes, and we can have arguments all day about whether we are, but that won't change a thing for many people in Ontario who depend on daycare. The people are depending on us to spend our time on actions and debates where we can make a difference.

We have a bill before this Legislature, Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act, which will have a significant impact on the future of child care in Ontario. It's something that constituents in my riding and people across Ontario are concerned about. I think we've all received emails and phone calls about it from parents and daycare providers. Unfortunately, the government chose to time-allocate Bill 10, cutting off debate, which means that MPPs don't have the ability to raise the concerns that we're hearing.

I'd like to share a few of the emails I've received. One of my constituents wrote:

"While I agree that there needs to be many changes made to the current model being used, the current proposed act, as written, will gravely affect many families that I know, including my own.

"My sister and I currently run an at-home unlicensed daycare together. I worked over 10 years as a legal assistant, although after I completed my maternity leave there was no way that I could return to work. I needed to be home with my daughter. My sister also had recently finished her maternity leave and was feeling just the same as myself.

"After much discussion with our families, we felt starting an at-home daycare together was a perfect deci-

sion. We came from a large family and both loved children.

"We spent many hours doing our research, trying to determine if we should join an agency or start out on our own. From our research with other daycare providers and parents, we came to the unfortunate conclusion that an agency was nothing more than a cash grab, with the added disadvantage of more restrictions on the allowable number of children we could care for.

"In my opinion, being licensed or unlicensed does not mean better or worse care; it just depends on the actual provider.

"Once we decided being unlicensed was in our best interest, we then set out on our research of what would be required of us and what the law would permit.

"Since my sister would be coming to my home with her son each day, we called the ministry in order to have clarification on our allowable numbers.

"We were advised he would count as one of our allowable five and that my child would not count in the numbers. We then obtained police record checks, obtained daycare insurance, renewed our CPR and first aid training.

"I spent countless hours preparing a handbook and a contract, from precedents I found online from other home daycare providers. One of the lawyers from the firm where I previously worked took the time to review all the documents and make suggestions, as well as amendments.

"As you can see, my sister and I put a lot of heart and effort into our ... careers."

She goes on to explain that now that she has had another child, under the new rules, she and her sister will only be allowed two additional children. They believe the sister's house isn't suitable for a daycare, but if her sister was to operate from there under this act, she would be allowed four additional children, not the two that they are limited to if they operate in the same house.

Unlike the resolution put forward by the third party, if Bill 10 passes, there will be a real impact on these families and the parents who depend on them for daycare.

When the minister introduced the act, I doubt that she took into account situations like this. One of the things that I've learned from talking to people impacted by this act is that all of their situations are different and it's going to be a challenge for the legislation to get it right.

Another constituent wrote:

"Basically, if I have five children here for preschool and one of my children has to come home for any reason," that would be illegal. "I can't have more than five children, including my own. How am I to make up for this? Raise my rates to have less children just in case?"

We need to make sure that we are protecting our children while at the same time providing parents with the number of child care spaces and the choices they need. We need to make sure that the government is closing down providers who cannot meet standards or put our children in danger while, at the same time, encour-

aging hard-working people who are putting the interests of our children first.

It's not an easy task, and I'm not going to pretend that I have all of the answers. I want to commend the third party for giving us an opportunity to debate the important issue of child care so that, hopefully, we can start to find more ways to help these families.

I believe that one of the first steps has to be for the ministry to be properly monitoring and inspecting these daycares. We heard that the ministry failed to answer 25 of 448 complaints made about unlicensed daycare between January 1, 2012, and January 12, 2013. They failed to follow up right away with site visits on 24 complaints, 18 of which were in Barrie and Vaughan and two in London. If the ministry can't monitor what they have now, how are they going to look after any more daycare?

With that, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak to this motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Ontario has a child care crisis. We don't have enough licensed, non-profit subsidized child care spots for our children. What we have instead is a patchwork system with long lists, high costs and questionable safety.

Our federal NDP counterparts have made it a matter of focus and priority. In fact, this past summer, Thomas Mulcair kicked off his discussions about child care in Oshawa. We held a round table with community members invested in and challenged by child care issues. The issues around that table, across our community and typical across the province are significant and far-reaching. If families are able to find a child care space, they pay the highest costs in Canada. As stated in our motion today, families pay monthly fees of \$1,152 on average for one child care spot in Ontario compared to \$152 per month in the province of Quebec. Quite simply, the costs have become unmanageable for families in Ontario.

At our local round tables, we listened to voices from across our community. We know that the people of this province want to work and that they struggle to find affordable child care. The reality in Oshawa and across our province is that many parents work opposite shifts so that they can alternate and provide care for their children. Spouses don't see each other because they can't afford child care, and families are literally being separated.

We heard from a single mother who is trying to work to pay the bills and trying to secure a spot for her child with autism, which is no small challenge. We heard from parents who are students wishing there were child care options on or near campus. We heard from families struggling to repay huge student debt, pay rising housing costs and afford care for their kids. We heard from members of our francophone child care community who fill francophone child care spaces just as soon as they are made available. Every section of our community needs affordable child care.

We heard from families whose children age out before they're even off the waiting list. In Oshawa, that list is

about two years long. Many parents' incomes go entirely to child care. Today, it is unimaginable to survive on a single income with children without struggling.

Since introducing the NDP's affordable child care plan, Tom Mulcair has been back to the Oshawa area to hear from real families about the difference that this plan will make to their lives.

One mother and her husband were planning to put their young son in child care so that she could take classes to improve her skills and get into the workforce. Instead, they've discovered that the costs are so astronomical that they cannot afford it. Her husband has to work overtime to make ends meet and has to spend more time away from his new family. This child care plan is for them.

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We also met with another young mom who is looking for a job, and she's been looking for two years. The only jobs she can find are in Toronto and she can't afford to take the train and pay for child care. She wanted to be a mom. She did not want to be forced onto social assistance and out of a job, but that's our system. This child care plan is for her too.

Plain and simple, the cost of child care in Ontario is a barrier. It is a barrier to families trying to get off social assistance. It is a barrier to families trying to go to school to better their lives. It is a barrier to women simply trying to enter the workforce. There are too many barriers to women when it comes to the workforce.

In the Toronto Star, just today, a recent poll of working women found that more than 50% of women who responded perceived that absences due to family obligations or possible maternity leaves would prevent them from advancing to senior roles in their workplace. The employment firm that sponsored this survey, Randstad Canada—senior vice-president Faith Tull said this about why women aren't climbing the ladder at work: "We are the sandwich generation. We're taking care of elderly parents and we're taking care of kids. Then we're balancing careers. When organizations are not showing they are embracing the uniqueness of those pulls and pushes, then we don't think we can do it."

Mr. Speaker, this is another example of systemic barriers to women and families. In short, we need to acknowledge and address the challenges that families are facing. As members of provincial Parliament, it is our job to make life easier for Ontarians, to encourage growth in our economy and to move our province forward. By investing in affordable child care, we can achieve all of these aims at once, and it is an issue we cannot afford to wait on.

Thank you to the other speakers and to those listening today. I urge you to make child care a focus in our province and support this motion. Our families are worth the investment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member from Oshawa.

Further debate?

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I am happy to have the opportunity here today to speak to this motion and to talk

about our responsible plan to modernize child care. As a parent, I can tell you there is nothing more important than safe, quality and affordable child care for our children. Child care has always been one of the top priorities of our government, and we are happy to see the NDP treating it with the same degree of importance.

In Ontario, our government has made a lot of progress to improve the care we provide our youngest children, to help their families and to support the educators and staff who provide that care day in and day out. Child care providers provide a strong foundation for our youngest learners, and we remain committed to modernizing child care in Ontario.

Since 2003, our government has prioritized child care and early child care education. We remain committed to ensuring that families have access to safe, modern child care to make sure our kids get the best possible start. It is our hope that this plan will include a real partnership with the federal government to increase the quality, accessibility and affordability of child care in the province.

Our government will continue to call on all federal parties to adopt a national child care program in their 2015 election platforms. We would like to work with a willing federal partner to increase access and strengthen the quality of licensed child care providers as core priorities of such a program. All of Canada's federal parties should be talking about child care. This is too important an issue to be swept under the rug and ignored by those who make decisions.

Providing opportunities to give our kids the best start in life must be a top national priority. But instead, the federal government has prioritized divisiveness and short-sightedness when it comes to solving the problems Canadians are facing.

When the federal government was elected in 2006, one of the first things they did was cancel the Canada-Ontario child care agreement. In 2007, Canada had the distinction of being at the bottom of the OECD list of countries' investments in child care and early learning. Again, this month, a new study by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons noted that Canada only spends 0.25% of the GDP on child care, while most other OECD countries spend 1% on child care. This is not the direction we want our future to be heading in. The importance of investing in our young people cannot be overstated.

That is why I stand with the Ontario government in calling on the federal government and all federal parties to reassess their national child care strategy and to make sure they join us in doing their best to give young Canadians the best chances in life.

When it comes to child care, I'm proud to be standing alongside my Liberal colleagues on this side of the House. When the federal government turned their backs to a national child care strategy, the Ontario government stepped up to the plate and invested in programs to help children and families. We stepped in with an investment of \$63.5 million a year to permanently fill the funding gap left by the federal government after they abandoned

their child care strategy. Since 2003, child care funding has increased from \$532.4 million to close to \$1 billion a year. That's a 90% increase, and that's remarkable. Starting in 2014-15, our government is also investing an additional \$33.6 million over three years to further support the ongoing operation and modernization of the child care system.

According to a report released by the Atkinson Centre last week, Ontario spends the most on early childhood education, more than any other province. In addition, we will provide wage increases of \$1 an hour in 2015 and \$1 an hour in 2016 for child care workers working outside the public school system, and we increased the Ontario Child Benefit by \$100 in July 2014.

Investing in our young people is one of the best things we can do for our community, and we need to be doing it in every community across the provinces.

Let me talk about my own riding. In my own riding of Halton, even as we deal with population growth and massive infrastructure expansion, we have not forgotten about the need to put our children first. Halton's population grew 56.5% between 2006 and 2011, with the majority of new residents being young or growing families, and we've had to make sure we can deal with the influx of young children. Today in Halton, we have 38 schools and close to 6,000 kids enrolled in full-day kindergarten. That's 6,000 children being given the tools and opportunities to succeed later in life.

In September, I was fortunate to visit a school in my riding, Hawthorne Village, to see its full-day kindergarten program in action. It was extraordinary. The level of innovation, engagement, and simply joy that the young children were experiencing was inspiring. This is just one example of the many success stories from around the province.

But more needs to be done, and we call upon all parties and all levels of government to join with us in recognizing and addressing the need to put our children first, to give them the early advantages that they need to succeed.

So the province of Ontario has invested billions of dollars in child care and full-day kindergarten, but we need a national daycare strategy to prepare our future generations.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member from Halton for the debate.

The member from Nepean-Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It is my pleasure to join the child care debate in this assembly right now. I've relished, since the opportunity to arrive here in 2006, to discuss child care and my beliefs as a Progressive Conservative on how child care should be developed in this province.

I noticed the member from Halton talking a bit about the 2006 election, and I remember that election because it was my little girl who was with Prime Minister Harper, then opposition leader, as he announced he would be directly investing in our children by giving parents \$100 a month for their child care needs. I must say, I appreciated that and I appreciate his long-standing commitment to trust mothers and fathers with their children.

In fact, I view this legislation today before us by the NDP and the support by the Liberal government, and in fact their Bill 10, which is before this assembly as well, as a move to an expensive babysitting bureaucracy first put forward by Paul Martin between 2004 and 2006. It will be expensive, but most importantly it will eliminate parental choice, it will eliminate parental responsibility and it will actually drive up taxes across this province and the rest of this country. As a Progressive Conservative, I believe in and I value parental responsibility. As a Progressive Conservative, I value parental choice. I don't believe that this will be successful, if these government-paid bureaucracies for children are implemented.

1650

In fact, what I believe will happen is that you will look in urban centres where there will be institutional child care for our children, yet in suburban and high-growth areas—like in Halton, like in Oakville, like in south Ottawa, like in Brampton—it will be more difficult for people to find the care that they need. In addition, it will be very catastrophic for rural Ontario. I can understand why the Liberals wouldn't understand anything about rural Ontario, given that they've been effectively shut out of those communities.

But let me say this: I think that this is just picking a fight on behalf of Thomas Mulcair and on behalf of Justin Trudeau for the 2015 election. I don't believe that that serves our purposes as legislators here in the province of Ontario.

In fact, we have a bill before the assembly, Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act, which I believe is equally as problematic for child care in the province. In fact, what we know from Bill 10—and public hearings are ongoing as I speak right now—we know that the Liberals will eliminate 140,000 child care spaces in independent settings across Ontario. We know, for example, that as a result of that, that will increase parental contributions to child care by as much as 30% to 40%, making child care less affordable in the province of Ontario almost immediately.

We know that those who will be affected most by what the NDP are proposing and what the Liberals are proposing are Montessori schools, who will be affected by their pedagogy as well as their ability to recruit people into their communities. We know that independent and religious schools will also be affected based on the curriculum issues. We're hearing, as we speak, from people in Boys and Girls Clubs across Ontario that there may be a negative impact on them as well, based on the recreational requirements.

These are all issues that we are dealing with in the assembly today. They are all issues that the government is not addressing. They are issues that the Liberals and the NDP would like to gloss over, as they want to take away parental choice and responsibility from moms and dads across this province, who demand flexibility in their care, demand affordability for their care and demand that their children are cared for in an accessible way in their own communities. That is not what these two parties

stand for, but as a Progressive Conservative, I assure you, those are the things that my colleagues and I stand for. We actually think it is not a problem if a mother stays at home. We don't think it is a problem if Grandma looks after their children. We don't think it's a problem if a loving neighbour is going to help out a family in need.

In fact, that is what has brought me here to this assembly—because as a young mother, when I first arrived here, we did have in-home child care for my daughter. In fact, my husband and I still have our friend Myrna Hay, who spent over 40 years volunteering in my daughter's school, look after our daughter.

Who better to make a decision on child care than a parent? If the Liberals think and if the NDP think that we should take away parental responsibility, then that is their prerogative, but it will never be the prerogative of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario.

In fact, I also would like to point this out: In the Bill 10 hearings, those who supported the government's legislation were those who were almost entirely funded or fully funded by the government of Ontario. Why did they support this bill? Because they stand to gain the most. I don't think that's right.

I think that there are a lot of independent child care operators out there. There's the association of daycare providers of Ontario. There are Montessori schools. There are private independent schools. There are private religious schools. There are other organizations out there that are quite capable of looking after our children—but don't take away parental choice. Don't take away parental responsibility. It almost seems as if the Liberals and the NDP would choose to take our children from us at six months old and put them into an institutionalized setting until they're 18. I don't agree with that. That's a nanny state. I don't believe in that. I believe that every parent, when they have a child, has a responsibility to ensure their child's safety, and I believe that they have a responsibility for a choice in child care.

I also believe that it is the government's role to create regulations and to enforce them. This is where we are today in the health care and child care debate in this province: We are in a situation where the government didn't do its job; it didn't enforce its regulations. They have let children down who have not only been injured in care but they have died in care, and that is on the government of Ontario. However, Speaker, don't take my word for it; take the Ombudsman's word for it.

So as I stand here right now to defend my parental choice and my parental rights and my parental responsibilities, I can tell you that I, as a Progressive Conservative, believe that the best person to look after your child is you. That is not something I share with the NDP, and it's not something I share with the Liberals, because they think it is the government's job to look after your child. And in so doing, they take away your obligations as a parent.

This is something I have seen over the past couple of days in the committee hearings on Bill 10, and it is something I am now starting to see is going to take shape

in the 2015 election, notwithstanding the fact that not once, not twice, but three times the current federal government was elected on a platform of choice in child care. If that is something this assembly chooses to ignore, based on the coalition developing between the Liberals and the NDP, that will be their choice. But I can assure you that I will continue to defend mothers and fathers across this province who want to have a say in where their children get their care, who delivers that care and where they get the care in their community. I see that we have a growing array of opportunities and options for mothers and fathers, and I think that needs to be extended.

We must remember as well that the Liberals first started trying to bring in this universal child care that Paul Martin first talked about in 2004 and 2006, when they brought in full-day learning, which significantly hampered many of the child care spots across this province, particularly those that are licensed or unlicensed. That's the reality. This is just the extension of a government policy that is bound and determined to have our children raised by the state rather than raised by us. They simply don't trust us. I think that is a shame, and it's something I'll continue to oppose. I don't understand why they would refuse to allow grandmothers, neighbours or even in-home child care facilities or licensed child care facilities across the province to look after our children if that is what we choose.

I understand, from the enormous amount of heckles and hoots and hollers, particularly from the older gentlemen in this assembly, that they don't think that I, as a mother, should be looking after my own child. In fact, they want to tell me how to look after my child. And I respectfully—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member from Hamilton-Stoney Creek, come to order, please.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Child care is a very passionate debate, particularly for those of us young mothers in this assembly who want to share our views and have our needs in child care met.

Speaker, I'll relate this story I will tell you back to 2007, and then I'd like to share my time with one of my colleagues.

In the 2007 election my father passed away in the first week of the campaign. My daughter was just under two years old; she was about 18 months old. She was quite sick. And obviously I had dealt with a significant loss, at the age of 32.

At that time, I was trying to do some campaigning. And if it weren't for our in-home child care provider and the flexibility she provided us, I'm not sure how we would have gotten through that very difficult time in our lives. During that time, my little girl—she's nine now and she's a very healthy little girl—had contracted a bug. We weren't sure what it was; we weren't sure if it was viral or bacterial. But she had a very difficult time keeping her food down. So we had to deal with significant diarrhea; we had to deal with significant vomiting. We

would take her almost nightly to the Queensway Carleton Hospital, by my home. Finally they said, "Please take her to the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario," where my daughter was on intravenous during that campaign, about two weeks after my father died.

Given the constraints during that time, if we did not have our independent child care operator helping us, providing her with that detailed level of care, I don't know what would have happened. I really don't know if I'd still be standing here today. That is why I am so passionate.

When the members opposite decide they want to drown my voice, when they decide they want to stop people with a different perspective than them by heckling as they are now, it not only infuriates me but it drives me more in my passion for choice in child care, because I believe that every parent should have choice. At the same time, they have obligations and responsibilities, because they are parents. I believe that has to happen. But in no way, shape or form will I ever cede my parental responsibility or my parental choice to the New Democrats or to the Liberals. And I will tell you, as a defender of choice in child care, that I reject this motion and I'll be looking forward to voting against it. Thank you very much.

1700

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I have to say I'm so glad that was on the record, because I don't think anyone would actually believe what the member for Nepean-Carleton said. I'm going to go and cut and paste that and put it in my scrapbook for my next election when we have a debate with the Conservative Party over "conservative."

First of all, I want to sincerely congratulate the—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I thought you weren't running again.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Oh, I'm running again. If I wasn't before, I am after that speech. So you can take personal credit for it.

I want to commend the member of the New Democratic Party on her affirmation last weekend, on a successful convention. Congratulations. It's tough to lead a party these days. As any of us who have been in political leadership know, we dish it out to each other. I remember I gave her a little bit of a difficult time before. Such is the nature of partisan politics.

Interjection.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No, no, but it is. I get it pretty good from my friends over in the third party sometimes, and sometimes deservedly. Hopefully, we don't take those things personally and we try to keep some humour in it.

In my lifetime, I have been a member of the Liberal Party, in my youth a member of the NDP, and in my municipal career in what was, I think, a rather remarkable coalition, working with Greg Selinger, who is currently the Premier, and many others in building a progressive coalition in municipal politics. I think a lot of us who have worked in local government did that.

You can, and it will be done today, make criticisms of the Liberals and Conservatives and the New Democrats.

In our case, we Liberals and New Democrats tend to criticize each other for not being pure or good enough or for who's better on child care. I think it's a little bit ridiculous.

I actually give real credit to the New Democrats for bringing forward this motion. I will certainly be actively supporting it, and I'm led to believe that most of my colleagues around the table here will be as well.

I've often said in this House, and you've heard me say it many times, that I like Thursday afternoon because we do private members' bills. It's the least partisan and when we, as members of this House, reclaim our position to be members of this House first.

This is a very good example of something that I think we should do more of. It takes some willingness by a majority government to be able to reach out. I take this as a pretty positive offering from the third party, that these are the kinds of things that we should do. We have gotten too partisan before. I remember when Paul Martin and Ken Dryden worked so very hard and we almost had brokered a national child care agreement, and that was so hard. I remember because I had just been mayor of the capital city. I was working as chair of the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy. I remember how excited so many of us were at that moment.

I don't think we can afford to let those opportunities slip away any more. Obviously, after our friend from Nepean-Carleton, if this goes forward it will happen because of New Democrats and Liberals working together here and hopefully working together in Ottawa to create the kind of pressure.

I grew up in Quebec. My sister was a single mom whose husband left her, which was probably a good thing. She had three children. I know that the child care system in Quebec was one that allowed her to get a nursing degree mid-life and to restart her life in ways that women don't often get to do.

But I will also tell you that in my years chairing the Big City Mayors' Caucus, the 22 mayors, we would often talk at that time, particularly Ontario and later Alberta, about how much of our child care infrastructure in Manitoba and the city of Winnipeg when I was mayor was paid for by Ontarians. I would estimate that probably—I mean, the entire budget of the province of Manitoba at the time was \$6 billion. The transfers out of Ontario were three times that. You know, the floodway, the human rights' museum, and a lot of the social infrastructure in the so-called have-not provinces—I've always hated that name, but more modest-income provinces with smaller populations and smaller economic bases because of the geography—are paid for by the big provinces, by places like Ontario.

I knew in Quebec, growing up, that Quebec was in a net deficit situation. Quebec struggled economically through the 1970s and 1980s, and it built this remarkable child care system a lot with the tax dollars coming out of Ontario and other provinces. As much as we're a federalized state, we sometimes seem to get—and it was on the front page of the *Globe and Mail*: "Which province is doing better and which isn't?" I always remind

people that it was the Atlantic Canadian provinces whose Maritime wood, forestry and fishery actually built the railroads that allowed the rest of us to prosper. Now that some of those Maritime economies are more modest than they were in their contributions to the federalist thing, it's important.

This is the kind of thing that we should work more on together. I'm very proud of early childhood education, and I think most of us would say that that was a very good move. It's not perfect, and we'll all point out where there are shortcomings, as with every program, but it's a really good program. I look at low-income kids in St. James Town and in Moss Park, and I just look at their self-confidence and the abilities their moms and their dads have that they didn't have before we had early childhood education. The child care providers in my community in Toronto Centre, which I know is very similar to many other members in this House, have really adapted to that.

It's interesting. In the Catholic school system—Jo-Ann Davis is my Catholic school trustee—we really worked out a strategy with their child care providers. We were really successful at creating, at the neighbourhood levels—a lot of the moms who had a number of kids, who had often been providing those services for each other co-operatively, almost like a shared babysitting service, actually were able to improve and get into child care.

We can beat up one of these things against the other. They're complementary issues, and they're things that we should be working on together. I think there are some things that divide us from the Conservatives of today—not necessarily the Conservatives of Bill Davis or some of the others—that are really historic. I was pretty offended in some ways by some of the things the member for Nepean-Carleton said. Why? Because I didn't have a mom at home when I started in life. I didn't have a dad at home. I actually was entirely dependent on the state. My mother was 16. She couldn't have a child. I'm not a lesser person; she made a difficult choice. My son Michael—the most dangerous people in his life were one set of parents he had.

This idea that somehow parental choice for the Conservatives is this God-given right and that if the state interferes—that the rights of parents trump everything: That is the most elitist, ridiculous position I have ever heard. I spent 12 years working on the streets of two cities. Every single child I saw—to my friends in the official opposition—80% of them were on the street because they were raped by their fathers; thrown down a flight of stairs by their mothers; given alcohol at age two. I fostered and adopted kids who had bones broken before they were six years old.

I heard from my friends in the NDP, and I've heard from all of my colleagues over here in the Liberal Party. My friend from Peterborough was joking about how close we are on this issue, and I agree with him, because there are certain points of principle where you agree. The difference between New Democrats and Liberals vis-à-

vis Conservatives is that we actually think that children's safety trumps parents' rights.

All you have to do, Mr. Speaker, is walk three blocks. I know you live not far from here. You have a lovely wife and a great family and you're a great dad, and you understand how important it is to take care of kids.

Parents should be supportive. I'm very proud. I've always said that the most important thing I've done in my life, more important than politics, is fathering my son Michael, who had such a struggle, who now has his own business, 17 employees and four trucks. For a street kid who came into the world with fetal alcohol syndrome and had trouble getting through a day, he's doing really, really well, and he's doing really, really well not just because of me but because of great people in the public service who were great social workers and great teachers and great mentors. It was beyond my ability to care for that child and make sure that Michael grew up to be the parent—he's getting married, by the way; I just found out that my son is getting married on January 17. His first wife died of cancer six months after they had their first child. This is a big day.

A lot of families we represent need the state. It's not the state; it's us as families caring for each other. It's us holding up children together. It's a cliché to say that a village raises a child, but I think the things we believe in over here and the actions that we've taken—and where we share some common values with the New Democrats in a lot of things is that we actually believe we have a collective responsibility for children's well-being.

1710

We can argue about who takes credit for what or whether an early childhood education program should be the lead, or universal child care, but we should both agree on this, because there are certain things—the member from Kitchener–Waterloo was talking about climate change earlier. I totally agree with her. That's something we should do like the Norwegians and the New Zealanders. We should simply say climate change is such a threat that we're going to make it a non-partisan issue, we're going to raise it up, and we're going to solve it together. Children are just too important, and the care and safety of children is just too important.

But what does the member for Nepean–Carleton say to people like me, my family? My mom, who is—I can't tell you what her birthdate is because she'll kill me, because she's probably watching. Hi, Mom. It's your birthday today, so happy birthday.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Don't reveal that detail.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I won't reveal that detail.

But my mom came into a Ukrainian family and couldn't have children, which was pretty tough for her, if you know the whole culture in the 1950s about what it was like to be a woman in a big Ukrainian family and be the only one of your sisters who found out you couldn't have children very easily—and she adopted me, and she's pretty remarkable, my mom. She had to make choices. She didn't come into the world with me. She's not a lesser mom because of that, and she needed the

state. She needed child and family services to be able to get a child and she needed support, and she turned out to be an awesome mom.

But this idea that somehow families and parents have rights—they don't. We lived in generations in the last 100 years where most women will tell you that sometimes the person they were most afraid of was the man that they were living with. You look at all the battered women's shelters—do you know how many kids live in care in my community? Is it because they were somehow dysfunctional or the state intervened? No, it's because so many kids aren't safe in the house that they were born in; so many women don't go home with a key to a safe place to live. The fact that the official opposition doesn't get that is shocking to me, in 2014. It really is shocking to me, especially after some of the stuff we've been reading about in the paper about violence and about denigrating women and about denigrating people, that you don't get that.

I'm hoping that someone in that party will stand up and say that the member for Nepean–Carleton wasn't representing the views of that party, because what I just saw was one of the most ridiculous and absurd speeches I have heard in this House. It denigrates the idea of families and of safety and just any sense of principle and humanity. To hear that kind of patriarchal stuff from a woman member of this House was quite shocking to me.

I will leave it to other members to continue, but thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Further debate?

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm proud to stand here and add some more comments from this side of the House after my colleague from Nepean–Carleton, Lisa Macleod, and Oxford, the great Ernie Hardeman. I just want to bring up again that he got that carbon monoxide detector bill passed in this House after many, many years, and at the end of the day, he's making a difference, and that's what this bill needs to be doing about children as well.

I wasn't going to go here, Mr. Speaker, but I am going to start off a little bit that I believe what's missing from this debate is the debate on what constitutes quality child care. Frankly, we can stand and debate all day until we're blue in the face about the Quebec versus Ontario model of child care. But the question really is, what do the parents believe is the best care for their children?

I find it interesting that the member from Toronto Centre uses arrogance to tell us that the state can do better, that they know how to do child care better than parents. I'm going to take a pretty firm stand against him on that one. I am a parent and I am a proud parent, as most of the people in this room, most of the people listening are proud parents that do right by their children. They want to raise their children to the best of their ability. I think it's a bit sanctimonious for him to tell us that the state always does a better job than parents do, because I am so proud of my mother, who sadly passed away last year, but she couldn't have been a better

parent. She gave me the upbringing that I have, and I have been able to be proud and privileged to be in this House to represent the people of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

She didn't need the state to come in and tell her how to raise me; she didn't need the state to tell me how to do my job. I don't need that, and I certainly don't want to go down that road for my children. I struggle with any form of compulsion, to be told, "You shall do this." We live in a free and democratic society. We just celebrated Remembrance Day, those brave men and women who gave their lives so we could have the freedom, the right and the privilege to do what we want, to have free speech and to choose.

Interjection.

Mr. Bill Walker: "We balked socialism" is absolutely correct, as my good friend from Elgin–Middlesex–London just said. We need to be here to represent the ability for people to have choice, to have the choice that they wish, and we need to do so particularly when it comes to our children—those pages sitting in front of you, Mr. Speaker—the next generation of our great province. We need to have choice. We need to have the ability for people to have choice, and I say sincerely—and I'll support my colleague from Nepean–Carleton particularly—that parents are in the best position to choose what the best option is for their child. Anyone who says that, I think, should be answering to others about why they feel so strongly that the state should be coming in here.

I have two boys, Zach and Ben. Zach is 20 and in Fanshawe College right now. Ben is 17. We had the privilege, we were lucky, to be able to have help raising them because we both had to work. We didn't have the luxury—as some members, I think, stated in this House, they were able to take off work and stay at home. That's great for those people who can, but the bulk of the people, certainly in Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, don't have that option, and Bill Walker certainly didn't, nor does he have that option, to not have two parents working in today's world.

We were fortunate to have a home care provider that was a very small independent operator who actually provided fabulous—in fact, they still send Christmas cards back and forth, my children to their child care provider, and I think it's the greatest thing that's happening.

We're going to lose 140 daycare spaces as a result of Bill 10—

Mr. Todd Smith: It's 140,000.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you—140,000. Where is that going to come from? In my riding, that's going to have a huge impact on those small, innovative, caring entrepreneurs who are providing virtually hour-by-hour care. More than just care; they become family. They actually treated my children like they were children of their own, and we want to ensure that that ability remains there. We can't allow a group or a motion to come out to make it sound good in the press without really knowing what the unintended consequences of that may be.

My boys were very fortunate. They were with other kids of a similar nature and similar upbringing, in a community, so they became good community friends. Again, they've kept in contact from that experience. An institution just doesn't have the ability in all cases to provide that same level of care, and I think we need to always be considerate of what that is. We need to understand what the benefits are.

Again, looking back at my children, my boys, and the choices that we were able to provide: We were able to put them into a home care situation so that when we left for work and we had to leave, we felt very comfortable and confident that they were going to get the best care possible, that they were going to be treated like an extension of that wonderful person's care. Joanne McCall was her name, and she's still a good, dear family friend. After a number of years she decided to move out of that, but I'll tell you, she had a lot of kids go through her system, through her home, and she provided excellent care. I've never heard a bad thing about it.

At the end of the day, being able to leave your children—I think someone the other day, Mr. Harris from Kitchener–Conestoga, said that he had to make a choice. He has two; Murphy and—what's his—

Mr. Todd Smith: Lincoln.

Mr. Bill Walker: Lincoln and Murphy. Again, Sarah is going to be going back to work very soon, so they're making that very challenging consideration of where they're going to leave their children every day. They're going with a small, independent operator that they know will give those family values, that caring one-to-one care that only they can.

They had institutional choices, I'm sure, at their disposal, and they've chosen—as I have and I think a number of my colleagues have—not to go that route.

Furthermore, in a rural municipality like Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, we don't have a lot of institutions at our disposal. We have these small independent operators. That's their way of contributing to their community, to their economy and to their livelihood. They actually operate businesses.

Again, back to Bill 10, my colleague from Simcoe North, Garfield Dunlop, is fighting to be able to have consultation out in the community, to actually have the people, the parents, have a choice in this very important debate. The Liberals have squashed that debate, for the most part. They've used tactics in this House to squash debate, to ramp up the debate and close it off. We're still going to continue to bring that fight for those people out there who truly do care and want to have abilities and options that they can discuss.

In rural Ontario, we don't have the luxury of having 15 of these in any municipality. If these get shut down, where do I take my kids? If I was going back 20 years, where would I have taken my children if there wasn't that institution? And can we afford that institutional setting that they are proposing will be the panacea to save all?

We cannot just sit here idly by—I certainly cannot—and argue that institutional child care is the best option

for every child, regardless of age, abilities, temperament, relationship to his or her parents, and socio-economic background.

Every child is different, Mr. Speaker, as we all know. You've got children, and I've had the pleasure of meeting them. They're wonderful children. I'm sure, like mine, they're different children. Both of my boys are chalk and cheese when it comes to certain things. They need different care; they need different approaches. You can't just put them into an institution and treat everybody like a widget. That's not what we're here to do. We're not creating engines on a machine line. These are children; they are our future. We need the ability to have what's best for that child, and each child, I believe, may need different things. All of us may choose different settings for each of our children as we go through the process. The whole idea is that you should have choice. You should have the ability to have those small independent operators that can provide that.

1720

We can't get caught up in the buzzwords and try to make this a political spin issue that we're going to get a couple of headlines in the paper with. This is about kids. This is about the future of our whole society, how we treat these children in their very earliest years. We need to do that so that we actually have them in the setting that's going to be best for them.

I'm going to repeat a number of times in this short little bit of time—I wish I had a couple of hours to debate. I could ask for unanimous consent to give me more—

Hon. Michael Coteau: We don't.

Mr. Bill Walker: Mr. Coteau, that's not very nice. What about this openness? What about this partnership and accountability?

We have to be reasonable. Most times, when I speak in this House, what I try to find is balance. I want to look at both sides of an issue and say, what's really the best for—in this case my children, but all children? And in the larger context, what's best for Ontario as a province? What's best for our children in this case? We need to make sure that we look at any policy decision and truly understand what the ramifications are going to be, the positive and the negative. The unintended consequences of some of these decisions are going to stick with us for a long time.

We've certainly seen this in my three years here with this government and the decisions they're making. We're seeing the repercussions already. We can look at energy, and the windmills that they, again, have forced undemocratically on the people of Ontario, and what that has done to our energy rates and what it continues to do to the businesses and families in my riding who come to me every day talking about energy rates and how exorbitant they are; that they can't afford—getting back to the child care debate, with the energy rates as they are, we're probably not going to be able to afford child care in the future if we keep going with these energy rates, because most of our paycheques are going to be going just to pay the exorbitant costs that they're putting into that system.

There are parents who will argue that the money you're looking to spend on such a compulsory policy—and again, I don't believe in compulsion. And that's money Ontario does not have, I should add. Let's not forget: Every single child in Ontario is now born into \$21,000 of debt because of this Liberal government that in 11 short years have doubled our debt, and have more debt collectively than the rest of the provinces in Confederation. That's abhorrent. For the members on that side to get up and preach to us about how much they care about kids, how can they continue to spend us into oblivion? Putting debt upon debt upon debt—\$21,000 per child. That's horrible. It's unconscionable that they would continue that, and bring out another budget again this year for another \$12.5-billion deficit. Yet, at the same time—let's talk about the transparency and accountability act that they've just recently introduced—they say that they're actually going to balance that budget by 2017-18. I just don't have the Liberalnomics to be able to add that all up and get the same equation.

Mr. Todd Smith: You have a different calculator.

Mr. Bill Walker: I definitely have a different calculator, one that actually works.

At the end of the day, what we should be doing in this child care act is making it mandatory that all children take math 101, and we'll make the Liberals take it right along with them, because they're not doing a great job with that math in the last 11 years.

We should be spending money to boost maternal and paternal leave or boost the child tax credit to help parents' economic independence, especially mothers. Those who truly need our help, that's where we should be focusing our process. We shouldn't be spending \$10.8 billion a year in interest payments to service the debt that that government has created; then we might have a lot more money to give back to those single moms who need some help or those single-parent families that need a hand up, not a hand out, to be able to help their children and ensure that they have proper daycare and food.

Anything that I've read—and I'm going to compare a little bit here because there seems to be a lot of noise being made about the Quebec child care centre regulation and model compared to Ontario's. There are a lot of differences between them, and I think I referenced earlier the chalk and cheese analogy. At the end of the day, they're saying that Quebec has a much better model. It's significantly subsidized. How can we do that and really ensure—what I want to do when I compare is look at ratios: For Ontario, the staff-to-child ratio for infants less than 18 months is 3-to-10; infants in Quebec, it's 1-to-5. It's just natural that we're going to, when we have that many more people working with our kids—which you want, one-on-one, as much as you can; you want that care based on people as much as you can and at the lowest ratio possible—it's going to be more costly to operate.

Food: Ontario requires centres to provide all meals and to post menus. Quebec does not require centres to provide any food to children in care. Again, it costs

money for food, particularly at the costs that this government has created for us to produce our food. Our farmers every day are telling me that it's becoming more and more costly for them to produce the products and services that we need because of the poor mismanagement policies and the waste, the billions of dollars that are boondoggled in things like gas plants, Ornge and eHealth. I don't really want to go off into those subjects, because we've talked about those almost every day I've been in this House. Sadly, it's billions of dollars that aren't going to the front line of our health care or our education sectors.

I'm currently the critic for community and social services and long-term care and wellness. It's just inexcusable that this government spends more on interest payments every year than they do on the whole social services sector. So if we really want to get down to the brass tacks of why this type of a bill is needing more debate, more thorough discussion, it's that if they weren't wasting so much money over there, there would be a lot more money for things like child care, like front-line education, like front-line health care services.

But I digress, and I know someone is going to stand on a point of order, probably, and tell me to get back to the topic.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Delaney's not here.

Mr. Bill Walker: Mr. Delaney's not here. Correct.

Physical space is another one. Ontario requires bigger physical space for children to play. Ontario requires, by law, at least 2.5 hours of outdoor time, weather permitting, and about six square metres of space per child. Quebec does not, and in fact only requires four metres. Again, if we think of something such as the MaRS building just across the street here, Mr. Speaker—just think of that white elephant.

Interjection: We could have daycare there.

Mr. Bill Walker: We could have daycare there. They might at least fill a few spaces in that already empty building. By the way, they're spending \$450,000 a month just on interest payments to keep that white elephant afloat so that they don't have to actually admit to the taxpayers that, yet again, they have squandered and wasted very, very special tax dollars.

I just heard before I came down today that they're going to be cutting \$500 million out of the education budget. That's going to have a huge impact in places like rural Ontario, and Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound in particular. I don't know how I'm even supposed to tell my constituents that they are going to do this and yet they are going to spend \$450,000 per month to keep a white elephant building going so that they save face. It's just like the gas plant boondoggle all over again. Just step up to the plate, admit that you don't know what you're doing and get out of it. We can't afford to continually go down this path, or we're not going to have any money left for daycare or for any other things that we're talking about.

Child care is among the most important concerns for parents seeking to contribute to the economic security of their families while juggling unpaid domestic respon-

sibilities. Intuition tells us that we don't want to necessarily have our children—we definitely don't want them in an institutional setting for 10 hours a day. It's a very heart-wrenching challenge for most parents who have to work, both parents, to go out and leave their children with someone else, but at the end of the day, the last thing we want is something that's institutional and they're just going to become part of that machinery. We're not a widget factory when we're talking about kids.

This is about our children, our most precious resource, the thing that certainly I and all of my colleagues, I believe, and hopefully all colleagues in this House, take as the most reverent responsibility that we have. We have to always put our children and their welfare ahead of anything else we do: their health, their welfare, their well-being. We need to put them on a firm footing from those very first days so that they're comfortable, they're confident, they're learning the social skills of interacting with other peers around them.

They need to be in a setting that, to me, is the most that we can assimilate to our natural home setting as possible. That means there needs to be choice. That means there needs to be a variety of different institutions that can actually provide care. Not the factory institution—I'm more meaning options of choice of facility, the ability to have single operators, small homes, grandmas, aunts, moms who are actually doing this, early childhood educators who are actually trained to do the specific type of training to ensure that our children get the exact care and options that we need. I definitely don't want institutional.

I'll be voting against this bill. We need to ensure that if it does go through, there are a number of amendments to ensure that children are the absolute first priority.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate.

Hon. Jeff Leal: It's always a great day when I get the opportunity to speak on an opposition day motion.

It being 5:30, I know my lovely wife, Karan, is just finishing up her day as principal at St. Patrick's school in Peterborough, doing another great job with all the wonderful students there—great kids, great potential for the future. My son, Braden, a grade 11 student at Holy Cross in Peterborough, should be home, and our daughter, Shanae, a grade 10 student at St. Peter in Peterborough—I've got to give a plug. Shanae's basketball team, junior girls, St. Peter, won COSSA last Thursday. What a great team. They went undefeated.

1730

Now I've got to get back to the debate at hand here, having given my plug for Peterborough.

Mike Pearson, Canada's Prime Minister from 1963 to 1968—one of my great political heroes. What Mr. Pearson said was that there are times in society when you do things on a collective basis to enhance individual rights. When you look at the Pearson legacy, the Canada Pension Plan, the new Canadian flag, the Canada Assistance Plan, negotiating the national medicare agreement with all the provinces across Canada—examples of doing

things on a collective basis to enhance individual rights. This motion that we're talking about today is exactly that: doing something on a national basis, on a collective basis, to enhance individual opportunities within families.

My good friend Ken Dryden, one of the greatest goal-tenders ever in the National Hockey League—a great team, the Montreal Canadiens—negotiated, in 2006, a national daycare program. He negotiated with provinces that were represented by Liberal governments, represented by NDP governments and represented by Conservative governments. Collectively, they put a plan in place to bring about a national daycare plan. Then, in 2007, when Mr. Harper came in, he cancelled the Canada-Ontario daycare agreement. Just like that, he ripped it up, got rid of it because it was a great program.

This motion today talks about looking again at a national daycare program, which I think is very important. It's something that my wonderful constituents in Peterborough take the opportunity to talk to me about—again, doing something on a collective basis to enhance individual opportunities, and this is what it is all about.

We know that in Quebec, through the equalization program that Ontario is a net contributor of some \$11 billion, they've taken those equalization dollars to provide daycare on a very cost-effective basis. Ontario, of course, right now doesn't have that advantage because we are net contributors to the equalization program of some \$11 billion.

But we have taken great strides over the last 11 years. We've had the great privilege of being the government of Ontario. In fact, our mandate was renewed on June 12, and it's great that we have some great new caucus members on this side, the kind of individuals who are very supportive of having quality daycare within their ridings—north, south, east and west.

I think that this motion that has been put forward by the leader of the third party is something that we certainly can support. As we move into the federal election next year, I'm pleased that the Leader of the Opposition in Ottawa, Mr. Mulcair, dusted off that Ken Dryden program and has now made that Dryden program the centrepiece of their election platform. It's always great when they take a great Liberal idea and use it as their own. As long as they footnote it in their election platform and put an asterisk there that it belonged to us, we'll be very happy about that.

We know that the province of Ontario will continue to invest in high-quality daycare, something that is very important to us all. I've had the opportunity, when I visit the rural part of my riding—40% of Peterborough riding is rural. When I'm in the great communities of Havelock, Norwood, Asphodel and Lakefield, I get the opportunity to see the quality daycare that is being provided in those great rural centres in my riding.

We've invested in full-day kindergarten, one of the great success stories of education in the world. Arne Duncan, Barack Obama's education secretary, has been in Ontario on at least five occasions to see the great

success of full-day kindergarten. He didn't go to British Columbia, Alberta, Prince Edward Island or Quebec. He came right here to the province of Ontario to look at full-day kindergarten, something that's been a renowned success story, to look at ways that he might be able to implement it in the school system in the United States. I think that's a great testament to what we're doing here in Ontario.

I want to thank the leader of the third party for bringing this forward. It's a timely debate, and I think we get the good sense of where this side stands on this opposition day motion, and I must say it's rather nice from time to time to join with our colleagues in the third party and support what I think is a well-thought-out, very responsible motion that they put forward here today.

I was getting worried in the spring of this year, Mr. Speaker, when they looked like Tories in a hurry, and now they've come back, after their convention on the weekend, being more moderate and responsive. I think this is a resolution that was drafted post-convention to bring them back into the political spectrum where they are closer to us and really showing the responsible way a third party can act in the province of Ontario.

I see that my time is up, so thank you so much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the minister.

Further debate? I recognize the member from Toronto–Danforth.

Applause.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I am happy to have the support of my colleagues, but also pleased that we're debating this matter today. Child care is a pressing issue across this country, and yet so rarely is it on the political radar. I am very grateful to Tom Mulcair and the federal NDP for coming forward with a proposal for \$15-a-day child care.

Speaker, as you are well aware, there is an opportunity here for Ontario, in partnership with an NDP-led federal government, to make a huge difference to the families of Ontario, to set the foundation for a licensed, non-profit, publicly run daycare system that will change the lives of children, women and men across this country. The commitment to \$15-a-day child care is a game changer for everyone.

Let's look at what a large-scale affordable child care program has meant in the province of Quebec. A recent study done by the respected economist Pierre Fortin showed that affordable child care has allowed a significant increase in the number of women in the workforce. That is a tremendous accomplishment.

When I go door to door in my riding, I talk to new parents who come to the doors with babes in arms, with children, and talk about their difficulties in finding licensed, affordable child care. Many people, first-time parents, have an incredible anxiety, because they can hear the clock ticking on their maternity leave. They know that in 11 months, eight months, six months, they're going to be back at work, and they have been scouring the community, they have been scouring the city, for child care that's accessible to them and that's affordable.

Those who have found care are staggered by sticker shock: \$1,600 a month for infant care. For families with two children, and let's say you're paying \$1,300 for toddler care, we have situations where people are paying more for child care than they are on their mortgage. This puts an incredible pressure on these new families. They're hard-pressed, they're sleepless, they're in love with their baby, but they can't figure out how to balance their budget. They know they need two of them at work, and they're trying to figure out how they can afford to do that and pay for child care at the same time, because child care can amount to a very large percentage of a person's take-home pay.

What Quebec does, what Ontario could do, in partnership with a federal government led by the NDP, is to end that anxiety and give people a clear path forward for their lives; a path for women—who most often stay home with their children—to know they can have a child and that they can spend, if they want, the first half-year or year at home with that child and then go back to work, to fully use all their training, all their skills and know that that child will be looked after by people who are trained, in an environment that's safe and stimulating so that they can go to work and live their lives to their full potential and live to their full potential as a parent. That's the kind of change we could make. That's why it's important for every legislator in this House to vote in favour of this motion.

1740

But Speaker, it's not just that it opens the door to a new reality of life for women, for men and for parents; it's also a situation in which, because many women are allowed to go back into the workforce, tax revenue is generated that pays the cost of this program. In fact, the taxes that were generated by the women who went back into the workforce paid for everything that the provincial government put in and paid a bonus to the federal government, which didn't put in a nickel. Let the women and parents of this country go to work and get the support that they need for good-quality, affordable, safe, stimulating child care.

This initiative increases gross domestic product—I'll just throw that one in—it allows women to get back into the workforce, and it pays for itself. On that basis alone, without saying anything else, we should support this program; this motion should be passed.

But I have to say, there's another extraordinary benefit. Just to give you an example, Speaker: In my riding, WoodGreen Community Services runs a program called Homeward Bound. Every year, they take in dozens of young single moms, and they give them the support—with affordable housing and with child care—to go back to school so that these young women and their children can leave the world of having to live on ODSP or on welfare and support themselves through employment. And they like that. They like that sense of independence. They like to be able to support themselves. It's a wonderful program, and when I go door to door in the building where these families live and talk to the moms

and see how the kids are getting on, I think that this investment in these young people pays incredible dividends. I'm also always aware that this is helping dozens of people; maybe hundreds; maybe, over many years, thousands.

But there are tens of thousands trying to get by on social assistance. Their lives are very difficult, and I talk to them as well, as I go to their door.

In Quebec, affordable child care has had a dramatic impact on the number of people living on social assistance. Here's what Mr. Fortin's study found. From 1996 to 2008 in Quebec, "The number of single-parent families on Quebec welfare rolls (headed in the vast majority of cases by women) declined from 99,000 to 45,000"—more than cut in half. If you want a cost-effective anti-poverty program, if you want to put people back on their feet, if you want to allow people to regain control of their lives, there is little better you can do than this.

Note as well, Speaker, that their median real after-tax income shot up by 81%: not just off social assistance rolls, not in a situation where they were trying to live on a very meagre amount of money, but in a situation where their actual household income came up dramatically.

A program that increases gross domestic product, that allows women to get back into the workforce, that pays for itself and that, at the same time, is an effective anti-poverty program—we need that, Speaker. We need it in this province.

Let's look at the issues that we face here in Ontario. I would expect that our leader, Andrea Horwath, may well have touched on some of this earlier, but I want to go back. We face a lack of licensed non-profit and public child care spaces in this province. It's the simple reality. I'm dealing with this in committee hearings right now on Bill 10. Something like 20% of children are in licensed care. There is another chunk that are looked after at home by their moms, family or nannies. There's another chunk in unlicensed care.

This is a pressing problem. Too few spaces, unaffordable costs—I outlined them. Parents who have two or three children are paying in the many thousands to access that care and make sure their children are well looked after. Thousands of families are on the waiting list for fee subsidies, and their whole lives are organized around the need to get that subsidy. When you have that situation where you have incredibly high costs and you have a lack of subsidies, you generate illegal daycare operations. I'm not talking about informal daycare or household care provided by a caregiver who has two or three or four children; I'm talking about people who will pack 10 and 12 children in a house. But people are so desperate that they will, at times, choose to ignore what is before them. We make people desperate when we don't provide good-quality child care that they can afford.

We know that our child care workers are in a situation where their pay is inadequate; it is low. When I talk to people who run child care centres, they acknowledge their frustration that they don't have the money to pay people the way they should be paid. Beyond that, they

have to deal with turnover because people are constantly looking for work that will pay them a bit more. As much as they love early childhood education, as much as it's something that opens them up, that makes life more exciting and more worthwhile for them, they have to pay rent, and they have to put food on the table. So they look for other work. Turnover is a big problem, and this has been mentioned before.

We have all these problems and a reduction of funding by this provincial government in 18 communities in Ontario, which will be leading to the closure of child care centres. We have all these problems and a further reduction in funding, a further burdening of stress and anxiety on the shoulders of parents and child care workers. We can't stand by while people continue to struggle with these problems. I'm very pleased that the federal NDP has come forward with this position. I'm very pleased that we have put this position forward, that Ontario should be working in conjunction with the federal government—a new federal government.

I think that we have an opportunity to say very loudly to people across Canada that we in Ontario are ready to move forward on this, that we are ready to partner with the federal government, that we are ready to take on this big social issue.

Like health care, this is an issue that is fundamental to families.

There are some today who have argued that this is simply the responsibility of parents. I have to say to you, Speaker, that every person in society benefits from children being born into that society. You go into a seniors' home, and you see the people in their 20s and 30s and 40s who are maintaining that home, who are looking after those seniors, who are giving them medication, giving them assistance. Where do those children come from? We all benefit from the parents and the families that spend the time and spend the love to raise children because the simple reality of us as humans is that we age. As we age, we look to others to care for us. If the next generation is not there, if they haven't been well nourished, if they haven't been well loved and well educated, believe me, it is not a pleasant thing to get older, not pleasant at all.

We recognize that to raise a child you need a whole society. With this motion today, we're recognizing that society can't just do it on the cheap; that it has to invest in those children, invest in those families and invest in that generation. When it does that, it can solve a myriad of problems that we wrestle with every day. It can make society as a whole wealthier; it can make sure that every person, regardless of gender, is allowed to fully use their skills and potential; and it can make sure that we start addressing the issue of poverty that gnaws at the fabric of this society.

Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The time for debate has expired.

Ms. Horwath has moved opposition day motion number 3. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1751 to 1801.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'd ask the members to take their seats, please.

Ms. Horwath has moved opposition day motion number 3. All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Fraser, John	Meilleur, Madeleine
Anderson, Granville	French, Jennifer K.	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gélinas, France	Miller, Paul
Balkissoon, Bas	Gravelle, Michael	Moridi, Reza
Ballard, Chris	Gretzky, Lisa	Murray, Glen R.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hatfield, Percy	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Bisson, Gilles	Hoggarth, Ann	Naqvi, Yasir
Campbell, Sarah	Horwath, Andrea	Natyshak, Taras
Chan, Michael	Hoskins, Eric	Oraziotti, David
Chiarelli, Bob	Hunter, Mitzie	Qaadri, Shafiq
Colle, Mike	Jaczek, Helena	Rinaldi, Lou
Coteau, Michael	Kiwala, Sophie	Sandals, Liz
Crack, Grant	Kwinter, Monte	Sattler, Peggy
Damerla, Dipika	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sergio, Mario
Del Duca, Steven	Leal, Jeff	Singh, Jagmeet
Delaney, Bob	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
Dhillon, Vic	Mantha, Michael	Tabuns, Peter
Dickson, Joe	Martins, Cristina	Vanhof, John
DiNovo, Cheri	Matthews, Deborah	Vernile, Daiene
Dong, Han	Mauro, Bill	Wong, Soo
Duguid, Brad	McGarry, Kathryn	Zimmer, David
Fife, Catherine	McMahon, Eleanor	
Forster, Cindy	McMeekin, Ted	

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Amott, Ted	Jones, Sylvia	Pettapiece, Randy
Barrett, Toby	MacLaren, Jack	Smith, Todd
Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dunlop, Garfield	Martow, Gila	Walker, Bill
Elliott, Christine	McDonnell, Jim	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Norm	Yakabuski, John
Harris, Michael	Munro, Julia	Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 67; the nays are 21.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

HOME CARE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member for Windsor West has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Min-

ister of Health and Long-Term Care. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I welcome the opportunity to readdress a question I asked in this chamber yesterday. I stood in this chamber and asked the Premier why, under her watch, health care services are being slashed in southwestern Ontario. The Erie St. Clair Community Care Access Centre, which services my riding of Windsor West, told its clients that they were cutting back on daily nursing visits by 33%. This abrupt and drastic slashing of services sent shock waves through my community. Yesterday, the minister denied this was even happening and stated that it just isn't true: "We are not making cuts to home care or to our community care services."

While the minister is in denial, my constituents are suffering from a dramatic reduction in services. The reduction in services is well documented, and I've heard first-hand from the CCAC that daily nursing visits will be cut by 33%. The CCAC claims that it will focus on servicing its core mandate and that there are other programs that can service clients with modest needs. The reality, however, is that my office is inundated by constituents with those so-called "low-mild" needs who had their home care services or the services available to a loved one cut off.

One constituent contacted my office concerned about their mother, who recently suffered from heart failure and COPD. Because of these conditions, what seem like mundane routines, like bathing, are actually a struggle and render her breathless. Requiring her to take responsibility for this routine is, in fact, a health concern.

Another person contacted my office because she was told that now it was her responsibility to administer her husband's medication intravenously. This is something the elderly woman is not comfortable with, and the CCAC was administering this treatment for years.

Finally, I've heard from an 89-year-old woman who is determined to remain in the house she has lived in for over 30 years. Unfortunately, she is unable to perform a number of tasks on her own and will be forced to leave and go to an assisted living facility. There are many more examples, and I regret that it is not possible to cover all of their stories in the allotted time.

1810

What does the minister have to say to these people when he denies that service cuts are actually taking place? We're told that they should expect other programs to cover these treatments, but no assessment of alternative program availability or funding level was performed.

The CCAC has increased its mandate over the years to the point where people rely on services to be available for moderate patient needs. I believe these people deserve to have these services and, that in performing these services for so long, the CCAC now has an obligation to provide them. To unilaterally slash services to our seniors and home care patients is truly unfortunate. It even represents poor economic planning, now that patients

may be kept in expensive hospital care longer because of the uncertainty of their level of home care.

I think what is most troubling about the CCAC slashing its services under this government's regime is that it reflects the larger trend we are seeing across southwestern Ontario since the Liberals took office. Most recently, Leamington hospital's obstetrics unit is on the chopping block. Luckily the community is banding together with local representatives and stakeholders to protect safe birthing options for mothers in the community. People across southwestern Ontario will not accept reduced treatment for our most vulnerable. We will not accept a government that is hollowing out our home care services, and we will certainly not accept a Premier and a minister who deny reality and state in this very chamber that these service cuts are not happening.

I will ask my question again: Will this government reverse each and every reduction to services at the CCAC?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I now recognize the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Mr. John Fraser: I thank the member from Windsor West for her question and for her advocacy on behalf of her constituents. Although I do not agree with the assertion of her question, I don't doubt the sincerity of it.

The fact is, in the last 10 years, we've doubled the spending on health care, from \$1.2 billion to \$2.4 billion. We've dramatically increased that. During that time, we've added an additional 226,000 people across Ontario who are now getting service, who weren't getting that service. That number, in 2003, was about 313,000; it's now 540,000. That's a 72% increase.

Specifically, the Erie St. Clair CCAC has received an increase of over \$60 million during that period of time, from \$72 million to \$132 million. This year alone, we're investing more than \$270 million across Ontario in community care, and we're getting results. We're measuring those things. Ninety per cent of people get their nursing visit within the first five days, and 50% of those people with complex needs get their nursing visit within a day. Additionally, about 84% get a visit from a personal support worker within five days.

Now, there is always more work to be done. CCACs are big, complex organizations. They serve thousands of people in thousands of places. I know, as the member has been getting calls—I think all members get calls from time to time in their office with regard to CCACs and people's needs. We often advocate on their behalf. I know that our CCAC where I come from, Champlain CCAC in Ottawa, has a process of appeals, and also our office has a very good contact at the CCAC that can call and assist people with the questions that they have.

As the member opposite would know, we're also increasing the salaries for personal support workers, some of whom have been traditionally the lowest paid in the health care system, and they're actually the people that provide the care for the people who we love and who we care for most. We've also given an additional three

million hours for personal support workers so that seniors can have more home care at home.

Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, we are investing more in home care. I know that the minister had, last year, struck a committee led by Gail Donner, who announced a six-member expert group looking into our home and community care programs. The group is looking at service variability, price and investment variability and innovation, and new approaches to care. The people that are on that committee as well are: Joe McReynolds, who's a former LHIN chair; Cathy Fooks, CEO of The Change Foundation; Dr. Kevin Smith, who's the CEO at St. Joseph's Health System; Dr. Samir Sinha—who you may also know provided a report for us on community care—who is at Mount Sinai and is the ministry adviser on seniors; and also Donna Thomson, who is a disability activist.

Again, I thank the member very much for her question and look forward to her response.

FOREST INDUSTRY

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member from Kenora–Rainy River has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister may reply for up to five minutes as well.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I'm going to keep my comments this evening brief, as I intend to simplify the issue and the call to action.

Earlier today, I asked the minister if he would act now to ensure that the mill assets are preserved over the winter months so that we are not closing the door to the future operation of the Fort Frances mill. In his response, the minister replied that even before the deal fell through, even before questions were being asked in this House, he was investigating to “see what was possible” but that he still didn't have anything to announce today as he is still “investigating the possibility to see what we might be able to do.”

Throughout many days of repeated questions and suggested solutions, the minister has been reluctant to come to the table and offer any solutions of his own. He has, however, come up with a lot of excuses and laid a lot of blame—at the NDP, at me personally, at the district and their specific requests. We've heard him repeatedly say that “The tenure system that is in place today is one that was created by the NDP in 1994”—I suppose suggesting that this mess is the fault of the NDP.

Sure, we put forward legislation 20 years ago, but it has been changed six times since its original adoption, including in 2011 when this government introduced and passed the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act. What the minister is not mentioning is that MNR ministers have always held to the principle that forest tenure was tied to local jobs. It has been successive Liberal ministers who have turned their backs on this fundamental principle of the Crown Forest Sustainability Act. This

minister should stop pretending his hands are tied. In fact, the minister is altogether dismissing the very important role he has to play in the future success of this operation.

Upon review of the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, the sustainable forestry licence for the area and in speaking with key players in the forest industry, we are repeatedly faced with the fact that all indicate that the power rests with the minister—that it is up to this minister to use his discretion and do the right thing to ensure a bright and prosperous future for the Fort Frances mill and the Rainy River district.

I want to make the actionable requests clear for the minister:

(1) We need a change to the wood allocation so that it is tied to the success of the mill. This is not something that is new or that has never been done before. To reiterate, there is a provision in the Crown Forest Sustainability Act that allows the minister to use his discretion and make changes to the licence that will benefit the local community. He can exercise this right by going to the Lieutenant Governor.

(2) We need this government to come up with money to heat the mill this winter to ensure that the assets are protected while a business-to-business deal can be brokered.

(3) We need this government to behave in a manner that is consistent with other new business recruitment: talk with the potential buyer, express how much Ontario values their business and do what we can to reduce the stumbling blocks and ensure that this deal is a success. There is no guarantee that Expera will come back to the table, but if not Expera, we will pursue another buyer that will see the value of the Fort Frances mill.

One final point: I take issue with the comments made by the minister this morning suggesting that I am wrong to offer hope to my constituents. There has been a steady flow of letters coming into my offices, and there are hundreds of names now on petitions by residents as well as mayors, reeves and chiefs of communities across the Rainy River district. NOMA, Unifor, ENGAGE Young Professionals Network and the Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce have all come out in support of a strong future for the Fort Frances mill. The media in northern Ontario, Toronto and across the country have been watching and writing news articles about this issue. Last week, people from across the Rainy River district took to the streets to march for action. Why? Because we are confident that a positive solution can be brokered if this government wants to see it happen.

1820

We all know that there is plenty of wood, a useful mill and interested investors. It's a lack of appropriate wood rights that are controlled by this minister's office and the delay in the willingness to make this deal happen that are the real stumbling blocks. Time is running out. We are in our hour of need. Will this government commit to action and more than just talking? If so, will this minister ensure that the wood rights are allocated to the mill, that the mill

is heated this winter and that companies can feel confident investing in northern Ontario?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Minister, you have up to five minutes to reply.

Hon. Bill Mauro: Speaker, I think I'll begin with perhaps just a little bit of history. The importance of large employers in small communities, which is what we are talking about here today—and this particular mill in Fort Frances was Boise, it was Abitibi, it is Resolute, and I'm not sure who it was before Boise, and has been in that community for 100 years. The importance of an employer, an economic driver like that in a small community, is obviously not for one second lost on me or on our government. In fact, in 2005, when the transition in the forest industry began, I would argue that in my home community of Thunder Bay and in my riding of Thunder Bay—Atikokan—perhaps no area of the province was as egregiously affected by that transition as was my home community of Thunder Bay and my riding of Thunder Bay—Atikokan. We lost more than one large pulp and paper mill and we lost more than one or two sawmills in the riding. I very much understand the importance of these economic drivers, even in a larger community like Thunder Bay but especially so in smaller communities like Fort Frances. We get it.

To suggest that what I've been doing to this point in this discussion is to be putting forward excuses is language that obviously I don't agree with. What the member opposite and party opposite refuse to acknowledge is that this is, at the end of the day, a privately owned facility. Resolute Forest Products owns this mill. It's not in bankruptcy. It is very much a going concern. They are a company that's still investing in the province of Ontario, and they are a company that is creating a great deal of employment still in the province of Ontario.

In the member's five minutes tonight, she spoke about the tenure modernization process. Before I go on, I want to read you a quote. This is from a few years ago. It says:

"You're" fooling "around with the licences of forestry companies, and you can ill afford to do so. If I, as a company, go out in order to finance myself for modernization in my mill or any kind of an investment I need to do for expansion, I've got to be able to show that I've got the ability to secure the money that I'm borrowing. How do you do that? Yes, it's by the assets that you have and, yes, it's by your balance sheet, but it's also by being able to prove you've got trees to put in the mill. You're putting those licences at risk."

That was a quote attributed to the member from Timmins—James Bay, a member of the NDP, the third party. They then went forward, after speaking against the

tenure modernization that we brought forward, and voted against the tenure modernization that we brought forward, and yet they're able to stand in the House and, to the people of Fort Frances, pretend that the system they thought was no good—hold that out as an olive branch to them to say that with the stroke of a pen somehow this would have solved everything. They thought it was a bad system, but today they want it to be extended to the town of Fort Frances.

I've said in this House numerous times that even if the eSFL process had begun, even if this particular forest, the Crossroute Forest, was identified as one of the four priority areas that are under way in the province of Ontario for discussion on tenure modernization, in my opinion it would not have guaranteed anything. None of those four eSFL processes that are the priority of the province right now are concluded. I've talked to people on the ground who are in those negotiations and I can tell you, they're finding the process very difficult. They have multiple stakeholders. If, as the third party has said, we would have, with the stroke of a pen, decided that an eSFL was going to be created there, it wouldn't have happened yesterday.

Even if it had, it wouldn't have solved the problem, Speaker. I can tell you that the people who are involved in the ministry, the people involved in the forest management, would not have wanted us to do that. All the loggers with the licences, all the multiple municipalities—and not just Fort Frances; all of the forestry companies would have wanted to have had input into the structure of that eSFL. They would not have wanted us to do that. Yet the very thing that they spoke against and voted against, they hold out to the people of Fort Frances as being a silver bullet to solve this problem.

On the point, I have said in this House numerous times that before this business-to-business deal fell apart, which is what this is, I had begun to contemplate what would happen if Expera and Resolute could not find a solution to this issue. Yes, we had begun the process of thinking about what we could do to help contain that asset, to maintain that asset and see what would be possible on a go-forward basis. We started that process.

It's a privately owned facility. We obviously need their support and engagement on that file, and we're working to try to achieve some positive end in that regard.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried. This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1826.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

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Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

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Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
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Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Cimino, Joe (NDP)	Sudbury	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	

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Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Bas Balkissoon, Chris Ballard
Grant Crack, Han Dong
Cindy Forster, Michael Harris
Randy Hillier, Sophie Kiwala
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Z. Milczyn
Laura Albanese, Yvan Baker
Victor Fedeli, Catherine Fife
Ann Hoggarth, Monte McNaughton
Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

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Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: John Fraser
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Cristina Martins
Vic Dhillon, John Fraser
Wayne Gates, Marie-France Lalonde
Harinder Malhi, Cristina Martins
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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Joe Cimino
Bob Delaney, Jack MacLaren
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadi
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Garfield Dunlop
Granville Anderson, Bas Balkissoon
Chris Ballard, Toby Barrett
Garfield Dunlop, Eleanor McMahon
Laurie Scott, Jagmeet Singh
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Présidente: Indira Naidoo-Harris
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry
Robert Bailey, Lorenzo Berardinetti
Jennifer K. French, Monte Kwinter
Amrit Mangat, Kathryn McGarry
Indira Naidoo-Harris, Daiene Vernile
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: France Gélinas
Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon
Christine Elliott, France Gélinas
Marie-France Lalonde, Amrit Mangat
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