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Thursday 27 November 2014

Jeudi 27 novembre 2014

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 27 November 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 27 novembre 2014

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 26, 2014, on the motion for time allocation 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): When this item of business was last debated, the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry had finished his speech. Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm pleased to rise today, on behalf of the people I represent in London West, to add my voice to the debate on time allocation on Bill 7, the bill that is optimistically called by the Liberals the Better Business Climate Act. I was looking forward to participating in the debate on the contents of the bill itself, but the government has chosen to introduce a closure motion to cut off debate and move the bill quickly to committee so that it can be passed.

Speaker, it will come as no surprise to members of this Legislature that my New Democratic colleagues and I are opposed to the time allocation motion. We are opposed on philosophical grounds, because closure stifles democracy; it silences the voices of the 13 million Ontarians who are represented by MPPs in this chamber from all three political parties.

Closure is a blunt instrument. If used, it must be used sparingly and only in circumstances that warrant its use. But the government has not put forward any compelling rationale for the need to move this bill through. They have not offered anything to back up the urgency of this legislation. They have not presented any kind of argument that justifies shutting down debate; that says there is a higher public policy good that will be achieved if this bill is passed now, something so important that it is okay to override the right of MPPs to speak on behalf of their

communities, to talk about what this legislation will mean to the people we represent. That's because the government knows that there is nothing in this legislation that allows them to make this claim. Despite its very hopeful title, it is an innocuous PR exercise that contributes almost nothing to getting our economy moving, to creating good jobs and to addressing the real challenges people face.

Like so many other bills we have seen since the election of this Liberal majority government, Bill 7 brings together two different and barely related pieces of legislation that were previously introduced and repackages them under a shiny new title.

Schedule 1 of Bill 7, An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, requires the minister to report annually on actions taken by the government to reduce regulatory burdens.

Schedule 2, the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, allows the minister to create plans to develop clusters and to consult with those interested in the cluster before the plans are finalized.

Looking at the first part of the bill, what's important to point out is that there is nothing in schedule 1 that actually contributes to reducing red tape, defined as the statutory, regulatory, procedural, administrative or other requirements that create costs to business in terms of money, time or resources, and unnecessarily inhibit productivity, job creation and innovation.

Bill 7 only commits the government to publish an annual report on what the government has done, if anything, to reduce regulatory burdens. While it clearly makes the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure responsible for reporting on how the government is reducing burdens, it is silent on the process that decides what constitutes a burden and which burdens should be reduced.

New Democrats fully support streamlining regulatory processes to make it easier for entrepreneurs to start up new businesses and to make it easier for established businesses to grow and expand. But we also believe that strong regulatory frameworks are critical in areas like environmental protection, for example, and worker health and safety, because there may be environmental regulations or health and safety regulations that are perceived by some businesses as burdensome, but they are absolutely critical to ensure clean air and clean water and to protect worker safety.

New Democrats have a concern that Bill 7 could implicitly condone the elimination of regulatory protections that are essential to safeguard the public interest, all in the

name of cutting red tape. That said, however, we certainly agree with the importance of removing unnecessary regulatory burdens for Ontario businesses, particularly when it comes to bringing those who have been shut out of the labour market back into the economy by giving them equal opportunities to start up and operate businesses.

Right now, the OECD is leading a study on inclusive entrepreneurship, to identify the policies and best practices that contribute to the social inclusion of youth, women, seniors, newcomers, visible minorities, people with disabilities, indigenous people and other groups who are disadvantaged and underrepresented in business creation and self-employment.

There is a terrific report that came out of that study just last year, called *The Missing Entrepreneurs: Policies for Inclusive Entrepreneurship in Europe*, which identifies some specific regulatory barriers that impact entrepreneurship and self-employment among disadvantaged and underrepresented groups and prevent access to key resources. These include tax, family and social policies that tacitly encourage traditional roles for women; age rules for participation in business activity and the complexity of regulations that are difficult for young people to navigate; retirement policies that create disincentives for seniors to earn additional income; foreign credential recognition and Canadian experience requirements that create barriers for immigrants to get into the economy; and social policies that put a cap on self-employment earnings for people with disabilities who are receiving disability benefits.

So, if and when the government takes steps to reduce the regulatory burden and when it presents its report on the steps that were taken, New Democrats will be looking at whether the barriers that prevent young people, immigrants, people with disabilities, First Nations and other disadvantaged groups from starting their own businesses are being addressed and whether the reduction of red tape is facilitating inclusive entrepreneurship for all potential business owners in this province.

It's also important to point out that the government doesn't even need Bill 7 in order to change unnecessary regulations. It could go ahead and do that today. It certainly doesn't need legislation in order to publish a report about what it is doing to change unnecessary regulations. If the government was serious about creating a better business climate, then it would do much more than publish a report once a year.

0910

I want to share with this House some of the barriers to self-employment and business ownership that were identified in my community just last month, when the London Small Business Centre reported on its entrepreneurship climate survey that was conducted in Middlesex, Elgin, Oxford and Lambton. About 1,500 people were interviewed by telephone and were classified according to whether they owned or had owned a small business or were seriously considering starting their own business. About 15% said that they currently owned a small busi-

ness; 14% used to own a small business; and 12% intended to start a small business.

When asked about barriers to business ownership, by far the most significant barrier for all respondents was insufficient financial resources, especially for those who were intending to start a business.

Other barriers that hold people back from business ownership are fear of failure and lack of a solid business plan, as well as insufficient knowledge or skills in the selected business, and family commitments. This suggests that access to funding, mentorship programs, tailored post-secondary education and training programs, and affordable child care or adult day programs for seniors are some of the critical elements that are necessary to improve the business climate in this province and enable businesses to thrive.

I now want to turn to schedule 2 of the bill, which deals with clusters, that is, geographically interconnected firms and supporting institutions within a particular industry sector. There is an emerging policy consensus about the effectiveness of clusters in stimulating job creation, entrepreneurship and innovation, so it's great to see that this government is talking about cluster strategies. The problem is that this legislation won't do a thing to facilitate cluster development in Ontario. There is no regulatory framework in Bill 7, no dollars to support cluster initiatives, no incentives to bring firms together in a cluster strategy and no resources to spark cluster innovation through regional networking.

When the NDP government launched its Sector Partnership Fund back in 1992, it provided funding of up to \$500,000 per sector to support the formation of a sector strategy.

Even the PC government recognized the importance of financial support and provided up to \$200,000 for the development of regional biotechnology cluster plans in 2002.

Some of the leading-edge research coming out of the US on clusters, from the Brookings Institution and elsewhere, emphasizes the importance of planning grants to support cluster development, grants that can fund feasibility studies by regional consortia like the RICs, or industry collaborations or post-secondary institutions. But what does this Liberal government include in their cluster initiative? Nothing, not a cent, which makes one wonder why they even bothered with this legislation if they weren't prepared to commit resources toward the development of cluster plans.

In my community, in London, where almost 30,000 jobs have been lost since 2008, there is also a concern about whether cluster strategies can address the needs of those who have been left behind by the collapse of the manufacturing sector and the transition to a new economy. Clusters tend to be associated with high-skill, high-wage jobs in fields like biotech and ICT, which often bypass economically and socially disadvantaged groups who are struggling just to put food on the table. As a result, cluster strategies have been critiqued for skewing resources to those who are already better off instead of

supporting just and equitable economic development for all.

But similar to the new focus on inclusive entrepreneurship that I mentioned earlier, there is also growing interest in inclusive cluster development; in particular, cluster development that meets the triple bottom line of increased competitiveness, economic opportunity for unemployed and disadvantaged workers, and environmental sustainability. To be inclusive, efforts must be made during the cluster selection phase to bring in people, places and firms that may be outside the economic mainstream. And clusters must be identified and nurtured across all regions of this province, not just in the established hot spots.

This is not to say that clusters can be artificially created where they do not authentically exist. There has to be evidence of co-located and interconnected firms working with the same supporting organizations. For example, in my community in London, an exciting digital creative cluster has taken shape, supported by local economic development efforts: Fanshawe College and Western University, TechAlliance and some internationally recognized anchor firms. Incubator space is available downtown at Hacker Studios, Inner Geek Studios and Un-London as well as at the MVP Lab at Western Research Parks. The Southwestern Ontario Angel Group is ready to provide that needed early-stage investment.

The cluster now employs about 8,000 people but could employ many more. A cluster plan, with funding attached, could help that digital creative cluster grow and expand, by supporting things like training, R&D, technology transfer and adoption, and marketing.

To ensure equitable access to economic opportunity, cluster strategies must involve all the partners within the local region, including governments, secondary and post-secondary education, training, economic development, labour and civic organizations. They must include a specific focus on the workforce development needs of the industry within the local labour market.

Absolutely essential to identifying workforce development needs is data—reliable, timely and granular data, which continues to be a gaping hole in our knowledge of local labour markets. In fact, cluster experts emphasize that each phase of cluster development, from the initial identification of clusters to the range of policy interventions to the measurement of cluster effectiveness, must be grounded in rigorous, empirical evidence and analysis. This is another area where the government could show leadership: by funding workforce planning boards to develop robust data collection and sharing capacities to inform cluster development strategies.

In my community, the Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board has operated on a shoestring budget to develop an amazing local resource called *worktrends.ca*, which offers one-stop access to rich information about the local labour market. As more and more community partners recognize that our local and regional prosperity depends on cross-sector collaboration and information sharing, this tool is only beginning to

scratch the surface of its full potential. It is a model that could and should be replicated in communities across the province, a model that would be even more powerful if the government dedicated real resources to its continued enhancement and if the government allocated resources to enable other local training boards to implement similar initiatives.

Worktrends.ca offers an important asset to assist in identifying areas of true competitive advantage within the region, to assist in identifying the existing skills that are already available in our local labour market, and also to identify the talent pool that is being generated by our local post-secondary institutions.

I want to close with a word of warning from the cluster experts I mentioned earlier. Cluster policy cannot be top-down. It must be driven locally. It must flow from the on-the-ground networks, experiences and resources that are already in place. It must leverage the work that is already being done by local actors, like the London Economic Development Corp. in my community, which has identified the key clusters that are ready for provincial innovation support, like food and beverage processing, which employs over 6,000 people in the London area; life sciences, which employs over 21,000 people; advanced manufacturing, with a focus on automotive, clean tech and defence, which employs over 30,000 people; in addition to the digital creative cluster that I talked about earlier.

The notion described in Bill 7 of the minister deciding to prepare a cluster plan and then consulting with persons or entities with an interest in the cluster, is hugely problematic, and it flies in the face of best practice and research from around the world.

0920

In closing, Speaker, New Democrats will be opposing the time allocation motion. We think that there should be much greater opportunity for MPPs on all sides of this House to talk about this bill, to talk about what this legislation means to the people we represent, and what it brings or doesn't bring to our community and our local efforts to get our economies moving.

However, we will be supporting the bill, but not because we think that it will do anything, really, to improve the business climate in Ontario, despite its very eloquent, optimistic and hopeful title, the Better Business Climate Act. We think it basically does nothing. It is an innocuous PR exercise that really doesn't contribute anything to getting the economy moving, and it's really not worth opposing.

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

Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 10. 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.

The vote will be deferred to after question period.

Vote deferred.

TRANSPORTATION STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT (MAKING
ONTARIO'S ROADS SAFER), 2014
LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE
LE TRANSPORT (ACCROÎTRE LA
SÉCURITÉ ROUTIÈRE EN ONTARIO)

Mr. Del Duca moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 31, An Act to amend the Highway 407 East Act, 2012 and the Highway Traffic Act in respect of various matters and to make a consequential amendment to the Provincial Offences Act / Projet de loi 31, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2012 sur l'autoroute 407 Est et le Code de la route en ce qui concerne diverses questions et apportant une modification corrélative à la Loi sur les infractions provinciales.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mr. Del Duca.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a real honour for me to have the opportunity to stand in the House today and to deliver remarks with respect to the second reading debate on this particular bill, which, in fact, is the first opportunity that I've had to introduce a bill since becoming Ontario's Minister of Transportation.

This is a very important piece of legislation, as all are, of course, that come before this chamber for discussion and debate, but this one in particular is, as it is largely aimed at working very hard to make sure that Ontario's roads remain very, very safe.

To that point, for the past 13 years, this province's roads have placed amongst the highest for safety in North America, ranking on a regular basis either first or second. This consistent success, of course, is a result of our tough laws, our strong enforcement and the work of our many dedicated road safety partners across Ontario.

We could not have achieved this remarkable record without the Ontario Provincial Police and municipal police services who enforce our laws that, of course, ultimately help keep our roads safe.

But I think we also need to acknowledge the work of hundreds of individuals and organizations that work tirelessly to promote and improve road safety in Ontario, organizations like the CAA, Parachute Canada, the Ontario Safety League and Share the Road Cycling Coalition. Many of these partners joined us on the day on which we launched to the media the announcement regarding this particular legislation. I want to take this opportunity to thank them for being there that day and for being such steadfast and strong supporters of this legislation.

Our partners work in areas like cycling, impaired driving, distracted driving, injury prevention, pedestrian safety, trucking and countless others to help raise awareness, advocate for change and save lives in our province.

Despite Ontario's excellent road safety record, there is always more that we can do to improve the situation,

because on average, one person is killed on our roads every 18 hours, and one person is injured every 8.1 minutes. So we will always strive to do more to improve the situation. That's why we continue to look for new and effective ways to save lives by keeping all Ontarians safe on our roads.

Last month, we introduced legislation here in this Legislature that, if passed, will help reduce collisions, injuries and fatalities on our roads and highways. It would also assist municipalities with respect to the collection of unpaid Provincial Offences Act fines and improve the safety of all road users, something that municipalities across Ontario have been calling for, for some time.

This bill is actually the result of collaboration among many members of this Legislature, including two of my predecessors who served in the past as Ministers of Transportation: our current minister responsible for the environment and climate change, Glen Murray, and our current Minister of Energy, Bob Chiarelli.

It also builds on four different private members' bills that have helped lay the groundwork for several of the road safety issues that we need to address. For example, my colleague the member from Scarborough–Rouge River has done important work on discouraging distracted driving in our province. I want to acknowledge, of course, the work of the newly elected member from Burlington, who prior to coming to this Legislature as an MPP and certainly since arriving in this Legislature has been a tireless advocate in the cycling community, working with them and working with us to encourage us to do more in this particular regard.

Of course, I want to acknowledge and thank both of my parliamentary assistants, the member from Cambridge and the member from Eglinton–Lawrence, for being strong supporters of this legislation and for helping us bring it to the fore at this point and time.

This bill is truly the result of a collaboration of many members in this House. It is a bill for all Ontarians, and it belongs to everyone in this Legislature. The Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act addresses many of the issues that affect the safety and well-being of everyone who uses our roads. Keeping our roads safe for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians is a top priority for this government.

Driving in the province of Ontario is a privilege; it's not a right. If this legislation passes, it would continue our strong legacy of actions to address the growing problem of distracted driving. As you know, Speaker, it is currently illegal for drivers to talk, type, text, dial or email using hand held cellphones and other hand held communications devices and entertainment devices. The evidence speaks for itself: A driver who uses a cellphone is four times more likely to be in a crash than drivers who are focused on the road. That's why safe driving requires undivided attention. Drivers need to focus on the task at hand, keeping their eyes on the road, paying attention to the conditions of the road and keeping their hands on the wheel.

While we have seen success with our distracted driving law and public education efforts, distracted driving

continues to be a growing problem on the province's roads. If current collision trends continue, fatalities from distracted driving may exceed those from drinking and driving by 2016. That's why we have been working on ways to discourage distracted driving and reduce those collisions, injuries and fatalities resulting from this practice.

The Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act would increase fines for distracted driving from a current range of \$60 to \$500, upward to a range of \$300 to \$1,000. This would become one of the highest fine ranges in Canada for distracted driving, illustrating Ontario's leadership in penalizing those who drive distracted. Additionally, we are proposing complementary regulatory changes that would apply three demerit points and add a distracted driving prohibition to the existing graduated licensing system's driver's licence conditions. These proposed changes send a clear message to all road users that distractions while driving are dangerous and can mean the difference between life and death.

If passed, this legislation and proposed regulatory changes would also strengthen our existing impaired driving laws to make our roads even safer. In 2012, Ontario had the lowest impaired driving offence rate in Canada. This is a remarkable achievement, but there is more that we need to do, more that we can do, to address impaired driving in our province.

We are proposing to require more drivers who are repeatedly caught drinking and driving to complete an intensive alcohol education program. This would be followed by a treatment and ignition interlock monitoring program if they continue to repeat this dangerous behaviour. The Reduced Suspension with Ignition Interlock Conduct Review Program would also be extended to repeat offenders. Research proves that ignition interlock devices are effective at preventing drinking and driving. That's why we would extend the program to reduce the risk posed by repeat drinking drivers by monitoring their driving behaviour.

This legislation would also expand existing alcohol-impaired sanctions to drivers who are impaired by drugs. Recent statistics show that over 45% of drivers killed had been using drugs or a combination of drugs and alcohol. These changes in particular will help enforce the message from industry players and partners such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving and Arrive Alive Drive Sober, who work hard to emphasize the dangers associated with driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

0930

The Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act would also be another step in strengthening the identification of medically unfit drivers. Ontario's mandatory reporting program for physicians is a key method for identifying individuals of any age with a medical condition that may make it unsafe for them to drive. This bill would enable the Ministry of Transportation to accept reports from a broader range of qualified health care practitioners in the future, and it would assist in clarifying mandatory reporting requirements according to standards developed in co-oper-

ation with the medical community. These changes would help keep our medical review program among the most stringent in North America and serve to help quickly remove unsafe drivers from our roads.

Ontario municipalities have called on the province to assist in providing more tools to collect defaulted Provincial Offences Act fines. If passed, this bill represents a major step forward in helping our municipal partners collect the money that is owed to them. In the future, any municipality that chooses to use this fine collection tool will be able to direct the Ministry of Transportation to not only suspend their driver's licence, but also deny all vehicle plates registered to an individual who has defaulted on their POA fines. This bill would also improve municipalities' ability to charge and prosecute out-of-province owners of vehicles involved in red-light camera and fail-to-stop for school bus offences in Ontario.

We are also proposing to improve the safety of tow truck drivers in our province. Tow truck drivers can face significant risks when they help motorists on the roadside of busy highways. If passed, motorists would be required to slow down and, if safe to do so, move over—as is the case with police officers and other emergency responders—when they approach stopped tow trucks with flashing yellow lights on the side of the road. This measure would help ensure drivers exercise greater caution around stopped tow trucks providing help to motorists, preventing needless collisions and saving lives.

Active transportation such as cycling and walking is the healthiest, least expensive solution to congestion. A growing number of Ontarians are choosing cycling as a way to get around. In my opening remarks in debate here this morning, I referenced the great work that the member from Burlington has done both prior to arriving in this Legislature and certainly since being here. But I also want to acknowledge again the current Minister of the Environment and Climate Change for his leadership, in particular on this file, while he served as Minister of Transportation.

That's why last year we released #CycleON, Ontario's 20-year strategy to become the most cycling-friendly jurisdiction in North America. If passed, this legislation would build on that strategy to give cyclists more ways to travel and improve their safety on our roads and highways. This act would introduce several measures to further help motorists and cyclists share the road safely, which is so crucial, increasing fines for drivers for dooring cyclists from a range of \$60 to \$500, upwards to a range of \$300 to \$1,000 and, going forward, raising the demerit points from two to three.

Where practical, motorists would be required to keep a minimum distance of one metre between their vehicles and cyclists when passing. These measures will help cyclists stay safe when they travel near other vehicles on our roads and highways. This legislation would also help ensure that cyclists are visible by allowing the use of flashing red lights on bicycles and increasing fines for not using required bicycle lights and reflectors. We propose to promote safer opportunities for cycling by allowing

cycling on paved shoulders of unrestricted provincial highways. This would improve safety for both cyclists and motorists by allowing cyclists to keep out of the flow of high-speed traffic.

This legislation would also support cycling in urban areas by allowing municipalities to create contra-flow bike lanes. These measures would provide more direct routes and connectivity for cyclists, giving cyclists more choices regarding how and where to travel. Ontario is committed to supporting active, safe and sustainable transportation across the province, and that's why we are proposing measures to support cycling throughout Ontario and, again, encourage safe practices among both cyclists and motorists.

The Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act would also help pedestrians stay safe in our communities. Overall, the number of pedestrians killed in Ontario has declined significantly in the past 25 years. That is good news, but as I said at the outset, our work in this regard is never done, as it shouldn't be. There is always room to improve. But pedestrians still represent approximately one in five motor-vehicle-related fatalities; 46% of those fatalities occurred at intersections.

In response to the coroner's office recommendations and requests from municipalities, if passed, this bill would require drivers to yield the whole roadway to pedestrians at school crossings and pedestrian crossovers, and it would also support municipal requests for new pedestrian crossing devices.

This bill also responds to industry requests for modifications to the technical rules governing allowable B-train double tractor-trailer combination lengths. With work alongside important industry partners, such as the Ontario Trucking Association and the Private Motor Truck Council of Canada, Ontario will be extending allowing to move from B-train double trailer combinations to extend up to 27.5 metres from the current 25-metre rule. These changes will allow carriers to use longer tractors with their existing trailers and will accommodate for such things as new technology required to meet air quality and greenhouse gas emission mandates and to include more comfortable sleeper berths for drivers on long-haul operations.

This legislation also proposes a change that will remove a redundant consultation process. Annual toll rate increases regarding the Highway 407 east toll rates will be based on Ontario's consumer price index. For a toll adjustment either above or below the consumer price index increase, a regulation would be required, and the public would be able to provide input through the regulatory registry.

With respect to our motor vehicle inspection stations, this legislation would modernize the program to protect consumers and improve the standards of this important program. The system we now have was established in the 1970s, and we know that the program can be improved. We need to improve the way vehicles are inspected to make sure that unsafe vehicles are not being fraudulently inspected and rebuilt and finding their way back on to

Ontario's roads. Currently, ministry-licensed inspection stations and mechanics that fail to follow our standards can often continue their business for a lengthy period after they have been identified as a problem. These are often businesses and individuals who are knowingly endangering lives by issuing fraudulent inspection certificates or illegally repairing damaged vehicles.

If passed, this legislation would replace the current licences with performance contracts between inspection stations and the Ministry of Transportation and secure a third party contract administrator to oversee the program. We anticipate that these new contracts would include many remedies to allow quick and effective action against inspection stations that don't meet our standards.

This legislation would also transfer regulation-making authority for the program to the Minister of Transportation, and the ministry would be authorized to set standards by ministry directive. This would help change inspection standards more quickly to keep them up to date with modern advances in technology.

This legislation would also improve the Mandatory Vehicle Branding Program to prevent vehicle fraud and protect consumers who buy used vehicles. Under this program, vehicles that have been written off because of a collision or a flood are branded by the ministry as either salvageable or irreparable. Vehicle owners can make a written appeal to challenge the accuracy of their vehicle's brand. Currently, many requests are submitted by individuals who have knowingly purchased an irreparable or a salvage vehicle and appeal the brand based on fraudulent motives.

0940

If passed, only the person who owned a vehicle at the time it was damaged and reported it to the ministry would be allowed to appeal its brand. This would prevent appeals by those looking to make a profit by illegally rebuilding vehicles or selling damaged vehicles to the unsuspecting public. The ministry would also be permitted to appoint a third party administrator to review and decide branding appeals.

The vital changes to motor vehicle inspection and the Mandatory Vehicle Branding Program proposed in this bill would protect consumers from unscrupulous parties and keep unsafe vehicles off our roads.

These changes, along with numerous others that we're proposing going forward, recognize that unsafe drivers and vehicles have no place on Ontario's roads. All road users need to feel safe and need to be safe on our roads and highways, no matter how they choose to travel.

We have had great success in keeping our roads safe, thanks to our legacy of tough laws, our strong enforcement and those partnerships that I talked about at the outset of my remarks this morning. Ontario is a North American leader with respect to road safety, and these new measures are intended to build on that legacy, to build on that track record and to improve it. The measures that we are debating here today truly reflect the achievements of our colleagues, our enforcement officers and our many road safety partners with respect to advocating for safer roads in our province.

Speaker, I don't mind saying in discussion and debate this morning that over the last number of weeks since this bill was first made public, since it was first introduced, in my opportunity to travel not only in my own community of Vaughan and across York region and around the greater Toronto area and beyond across this province, there is a great deal of anticipation in many circles with respect to this particular legislation. There is an awareness, I would say, that this is, as I said at the outset, a consolidation, in many respects, of previous legislation that had been introduced, both government bills—the former Bill 173 and the former Bill 34—and also a number of initiatives taken up by private members through private members' business in this place over the last number of years.

Certainly, in my two years in this Legislature as an MPP for Vaughan, I've seen these issues be discussed and debated in our caucus and, I'm sure, in opposition caucuses as well. There is a great deal of anticipation and, dare I say, excitement at the idea that we are moving forward in a determined way, in a methodical way, with government legislation that will consolidate a number of those measures brought forward previously in this place and build on that legacy and that record that we have here in the province of Ontario of ensuring that our roads and highways are either ranked first or second—consistently, for over a decade now—for road safety in North America. It's a record to be very proud of.

Certainly, for the Ministry of Transportation, our government, my predecessors in this particular ministry, all of the extraordinary public servants who work at the Ministry of Transportation, this is part of their life's work. We see evidence of the improvements, we see evidence of the achievements, with respect to that consistent first or second ranking that I talked about a second ago.

But we do have to do more. I've discussed today, measures with respect to reducing distracted driving. I've talked about the need for taking strong action regarding repeat offenders with respect to alcohol-impaired driving, bringing in sanctions for drug-impaired driving for the first time, bringing Ontario into alignment with what occurs in many other jurisdictions across this country. These are all steps that our government is taking at this particular point in time because, while the record is very strong, while the foundation is something for us to be very proud of, the work must continue.

Often, when I've had the chance to speak with my own constituents or others about the need for this kind of legislation, I've received a ton of positive feedback, and, by the way, Speaker, not just from people alongside me in this particular caucus but from members of the opposition, in comments made at committee, stuff that I've heard in the hallways as we have informal chats about this. There is, I know, a great degree of support for the general thrust of that which underpins this particular legislation.

That's why, over the course of the rest of the debate at second reading and beyond, and as we get into committee, I do look forward to the discussion; I do look for-

ward to the questions; I do look forward to the analysis. I'm a confident person, an optimistic person by nature, Speaker, and I'm optimistic and I'm confident that, working together, all three parties, all three caucuses in this Legislature, can find a way to move this forward.

It is important, and I say that not just as the MPP for Vaughan and not just as the Minister of Transportation. I say that as the father of two young children, a seven-year-old and a three-year-old. I think it's important for all of us, those of us who currently use our roads and highways, whether we're drivers, we're cyclists, we're pedestrians, we're passengers in vehicles; whether we do our travel because it's part of our business, because there's a commercial aspect to it or whether we do it to commute—it's extremely important that we never rest on our laurels, that we never step back and say, "It's okay; we've done enough for the last 13 years," that we continue to work with our partners, that we continue to embrace new technologies where they're available, that we continue to provide appropriate sanctions for repeated behaviours that are not acceptable on our roads, and that we always strive for excellence with respect to achieving and maintaining a road safety record that is something that should be admired, something that's very, very important to me, and I know it's very important to members on all sides of this House.

Again, I do want to say to everybody, let's have the debate. We will have the debate. We should have the debate and discussion. I know there will be lots of interest. I know, certainly, there's interest from a number of my colleagues on this side of the House who are very, very happy to know that we have consolidated some pre-existing legislation, or previously introduced legislation.

I mentioned earlier it's not just members of the governing caucus who brought forward private members' business or private members' initiatives in this regard. Members of the opposition have in the past as well, which I think bodes well for that notion that we can work together, that we can produce a positive result, that we can work hard to maintain that status that we have as a North American leader for road safety. I do look forward to the discussion.

I know that a number of organizations, even in my own community, have come to see me specifically about the provisions that will help support active transportation, the cycling components and a number of the other items that are in this bill. It's interesting for me to hear from those who, on a regular basis, do participate, in some cases for leisure, in some cases for recreation, and in some cases, also, again, for work-related reasons in what I'll call the world of cycling.

It's extraordinary for me to have heard first-hand from individuals in York region who have made it their passion, who have made it their mission, to improve cycling infrastructure and active transportation infrastructure in an area like York region; to hear their stories first-hand about the challenges that both cyclists and motorists face on a regular basis because some of the rules, perhaps, are a bit unclear; perhaps the infrastructure hasn't been able to keep pace with the expansion of active transportation.

That's why, under the leadership of my predecessor at the Ministry of Transportation, the current Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, and because of the extraordinary advocacy of the member from Burlington and her organization, the organization with which she has been associated, Share the Road, and so much other work that has been brought to bear on this, we have moved forward with the cycling strategy that I referenced in my remarks this morning. It's why we've included provisions, ground-breaking provisions in many respects, in Bill 31 to make sure that motorists, cyclists and all others participating and using our roads can share the space, can travel safely, can move, can have that sense that there is an overarching structure or regime of regulations and rules.

But at the same time, part and parcel of this is the education, to make sure that we are constantly raising public awareness so that motorists, particularly younger drivers as they're learning, as they're getting their licences, as they're embarking on becoming drivers for the rest of their lives—that there's an understanding of what it means to share the road.

I mentioned in my remarks this morning that all forms of active transportation are amongst the easiest and amongst the least expensive ways to improve congestion. We've seen our government take a very strong leadership role in terms of advancing that mission, in terms of advancing that cause. Here in Bill 31, we have an additional step forward, significant progress that's going to be made.

There are lots of other elements of this bill relating to our school bus system in the province of Ontario and the particular colours that apply to school buses.

I talked about some of the changes that we've made, or that we propose to make, with respect to what will take place on Highway 407 east, an extraordinary piece of crucial infrastructure that will help serve people from the GTA all the way through Durham out to, eventually, with phase 2, people living out by the Peterborough area and that part of our wonderful province.

This is a big bill. There are, as I like to say in the Ministry of Transportation, always lots of moving parts, and this bill is no exception. There are lots of moving parts in this legislation, each one very important.

We talked about the ability that we're going to extend to our municipalities with respect to being able to collect outstanding Provincial Offences Act fines. That has consistently been an issue that's raised, I'm sure with all members on all sides of this House, by our municipal partners. I heard about it loud and clear this past summer when I was privileged to attend the Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference. It was one of the questions that came from the floor and I heard about it in one-on-one delegation meetings that I had.

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There was a broad recognition from our municipal partners that we had made an attempt, with Bill 34 previously, to accomplish the outcome that they were looking for. They were calling on us—they have been calling on us consistently to reintroduce this legislation, and here

we are with Bill 31, taking these steps to respond to their very appropriate request for additional assistance to collect these unpaid fines.

Speaker, there are lots of moving parts in this legislation. It is a big bill. It has some very important objectives attached to it. I think the debate here today, and the debate for the rest of the time that's going to be apportioned for this particular bill, will be fascinating for me and the rest of our team to listen to. I do look forward to working with everybody on this one—very, very important.

Again, I want to close by thanking all of my predecessors, all of my caucus colleagues, members from the other side of the House, but in particular, our road safety partners, for the extraordinary work that they do.

With that, I will take my seat and thank you, Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to talk about Bill 31 today.

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

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm pleased to respond to the Minister of Transportation on his opening speech on the debate on Bill 31, and compliment him on his speech. It was a fine one, and we appreciated his overview of the bill.

I hope, though, in his response to questions and comments, that he will acknowledge that it was the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka who brought forward a number of private member's bills calling attention to the need to pave the shoulders of Ontario's highways and also to allow for an amendment to the Highway Traffic Act to allow bicycles to be used on the shoulders. I gather that's a component of Bill 31 that he has adopted as government policy. That's just like the bill being passed into law. So I congratulate the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka, and I would hope that the minister will be big enough to do the same.

He mentioned that he attended the AMO conference, just as he closed his speech. Certainly, I've heard from municipalities in my riding in particular of a number of issues with respect to transportation and the lack of funding through the Connecting Link Program, which, Mr. Speaker, as you know, was a provincial-municipal partnership, I think, that goes back to George Howard Ferguson's days in 1927. It's one of the longest provincial programs and joint programs with municipalities. Unfortunately, a couple of years ago, not this minister but another Minister of Transportation arbitrarily cancelled that program. There are a significant number of projects in my riding and across the province that need the funding that used to exist under Connecting Link, and I would hope that he would give consideration to that issue.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't remind the minister of the need to put the Highway 6 Morriston bypass project on the ministry's five-year plan. He indicated before that the plan is going to be coming out soon. It's called the southern highways program. I would encourage the minister to announce, in his response, that he has in fact listened to the people of our area, and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Chair of Cabinet and others who have spoken out in support—

the Premier, I think, has spoken out in support of the project too. We would look forward to his announcement today.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The government is notorious these days for putting all kinds of stuff into bills and giving them great titles so that it sounds like we're doing something that is oh so progressive.

Part of this bill deals with the vehicle inspection care system. There are changes in the act that essentially are going to create what is akin to the TSSA for vehicle inspections, if I understand and I'm reading the bill correctly. If I'm wrong, the minister can point that out. But I just want to say—oh, my God, another TSSA kind of organization? It's like we're getting rid of government red tape to create bureaucratic red tape within an arm's-length agency that you can never get a hold of or get a hold of the decision-makers to be able to deal with complaints.

We've had—and I'm sure members of this House on all sides have had—all kinds of constituents come to our office when it comes to dealings with the TSSA in regard to gas stations or what happened with licensing of electricians when they had to go through their master electrician—can you imagine? The TSSA, when they took over the regulatory stuff around electricians, said that people who had been in business for 25 and 30 years, running their own businesses, had to go qualify for an exam to get a master electrician's licence. People who were licensed, who had a licence for 20 or 30 years, who had run a successful business for 25 or 30 years, had to challenge the exam, rather than grandfathering, the way the government normally does stuff. It was pretty insulting for some of them.

The part that I didn't like was that it was almost impossible to get these people into a room to have a discussion about how we could fix this. We finally got them in the room and, of course, they said, "We don't have to fix it." Why? Because essentially—they didn't say this—they didn't have to listen to us, because we had delegated all of our regulatory powers, not to cabinet but to that agency. If we're creating another TSSA-type organization in this bill, this is not anywhere near where I want it to go. Remember what happened with Superior Propane, or whatever it was, in downtown Toronto here. I think this is a bad idea.

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

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I'm very pleased to rise today in the Legislature to speak on this bill. I applaud the minister's leadership on this and his predecessors who also worked on this.

As has been said many times over the last few weeks, we have some of the safest roads in North America, but we need to make them safer. I look at this legislation and I think very specifically about my community of Etobicoke-Lakeshore and some of the benefits that will arise from this for my constituents. Etobicoke is one of the

parts of this province with the highest proportion of seniors and, of course, many seniors, as they age, may have some medical issues that might challenge their ability to drive. This legislation will help address some of the issues, to make it easier to retrieve their driving privileges once their medical issues are stabilized. I think that's a very good thing for many of my constituents.

But, more importantly, it's things like making school crossings and pedestrian crossings safer. Like the minister, I'm the father of a young child, and I drive my daughter to school every day. I want to see all drivers have to stop at a pedestrian crossing and make sure children and others are able to cross safely before traffic continues. This legislation will do that.

I want to make sure that we have stricter fines for those who drive while they're distracted, which isn't just cellphones. It could be your morning coffee, it could be a bagel; it could be any number of things. We all see that when we're around in our communities. I think this legislation is very important in that, and also laws around making accident sites and vehicle breakdowns safer by extending the "slow down, move over" laws to tow trucks. I have many highways in Etobicoke-Lakeshore, and this is an issue in my community as well.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I would remind everybody that I am actually neighbours with the Minister of Transportation, so I think we both have a very good understanding of the problems in the GTA, specifically in York region, and I'm hoping that I'm going to see him—I believe January 28 is the date chosen by the York region chapter of the Professional Engineers Ontario to hold a symposium on transportation to get our roads safer and to give us their opinions on some of the proposals that we're seeing in this Bill 31.

I would like to see safer roads, just like everybody else here in the GTA and the rest of the province. I think that people do want to cycle, but we have to understand that the weather conditions are not always co-operative with cycling.

We can get traffic moving by synchronizing traffic lights. We can get traffic moving by keeping—the minister knows that I'm very concerned about bus lanes on some of the roads in York region, that I want to see the Highway 7 rapidway stay on Highway 7 instead of disrupting all the commuters and businesses on Bathurst and Centre.

I think that we need to get everybody in the province thinking about how we can get cars moving on our roads, get more people on transit, get more people to carpool and get more people to cycle when the weather co-operates. It's not just about keeping our roads for cars. I agree that we need to share the roads with pedestrians and cyclists. We want to encourage our kids and ourselves to have a healthy lifestyle.

I'd like to see the Minister of Transportation on York region roads with me when the weather improves this spring: cycling, walking and, yes, even getting the traffic

moving. Hopefully we can get some traffic lights synchronized as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the minister for final comments.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank all of the members who stood to provide questions and comments on Bill 31 here this morning.

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I'll start with the member from Wellington–Halton Hills. I did listen very closely and I did my best in the opening debate this morning to acknowledge the work that has been done by members. Of course, I did specifically reference some on this side of the House.

The member opposite is quite right: The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka and a number of others have worked on this and have worked on ideas that have helped get us to where we are today with this legislation. It is important to acknowledge the good work of every member in this House on these kinds of files, regardless of which caucus that member comes from. So I do acknowledge that.

The member from Timmins–James Bay: I heard his specific comments when he zeroed in on one particular aspect of the bill. I didn't acknowledge in my opening this morning that in fact his colleague the member from Parkdale–High Park actually worked very hard on helping to improve the notion of sharing the road between motorists and cyclists, fighting hard for that one-metre rule that I talked about, that's an important part of this particular bill. So I want to acknowledge that member.

Of course, I listened closely as well to the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, my colleague and my neighbour, as she pointed out, the member from Thornhill, with respect to both of the points that they have raised.

Generally speaking, though, to hear the comments from all four who have stood here this morning to talk about this, what I am encouraged by is that sense that I have managed to pick up over the last number of weeks since Bill 31 was first introduced, that general notion that there is broad support for getting behind a bill that will keep Ontario's roads safe; that will help our municipal partners collect outstanding Provincial Offences Act fines; that will help motorists and cyclists share the road; that will help reduce, if not eliminate, distracted driving; that will help bring forward, for example, drug-impaired driving sanctions for the first time in the province's history; that will bring improvements to the motor vehicle inspection system.

To all of the other moving parts or elements that have gone into this bill—to hear this morning that there is, generally speaking, broad support, is encouraging. I do look forward to working closely with every member in this House to get this bill passed.

Again, I thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity to discuss it this morning.

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

Mr. Michael Harris: I'm pleased to have the opportunity this morning, as the official opposition's transpor-

tation critic, to address Bill 31, the Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act. It's known in some corners as the Wynne Liberals' long-awaited distracted driving legislation.

I would note, off the top, the irony of the proposed law on distractions being introduced by in fact a government that is itself so obviously distracted, Speaker—distracted to the point that it is really unable to keep its eyes on the road and leading us, perhaps, straight into the ditch time after time.

There is no doubt that we do need to address new and emerging safety concerns on our roadways, as this legislation proposes, much as we need to address the distractions that surround this government's agenda.

A few years ago, we saw the Wynne Liberals so distracted with the need to hold on to power, in fact, that they cancelled two gas plants that left us with a \$1 billion-plus tab to pick up. In the end, they distracted the electorate to the point that it has taken us three years, really, to unravel the mess—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Point of order, Speaker.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I remind the member from Kitchener–Conestoga to stay focused on the bill.

Mr. Michael Harris: I believe I've at least referenced "distracted" multiple times.

I'll continue on with more distractions that have helped feed the scandals around eHealth and Ornge as well. I believe the government is too wrapped up in itself and really distracted by the lights that shine on them every time they make an announcement—and they do make a lot of them, of course—to take the time to ensure proper oversight. With eHealth, it cost us \$1 billion. Then there was Ornge. Now we have—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Point of order.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Speaker, this member is so far off topic of the bill and so completely out of order. He's continuing, and I'm not sure how many minutes of his time he plans on talking about something other than the bill—

Mr. Michael Harris: Fifty-seven.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Otherwise, the rules have no value if we're not enforcing them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member for the point of order. I would ask the member to again focus primarily on the bill and discuss the debate at hand.

Mr. Michael Harris: Yes, well, thank you, Speaker. I mean, I do have 57 minutes and I am—

Interjection: Just getting started.

Mr. Michael Harris: I'm just getting rolling here on this bill, as you'll see. I'm going to take the hour. I was hoping the minister would have taken the full hour to really pitch to Ontarians the need for this. I know that the parliamentary assistant typically gets to chime in as well. I was hoping, of course, to hear from them. Nonetheless,

I really do see it in my critic file: We've got lots of announcements, but when the rubber hits the road, the Wynne Liberals are too distracted to live up to their word.

I think of the winter maintenance announcements in Grafton and then repeated here in the House: \$15 million for new equipment, but only half that actually went to new equipment. When it came to clearing the highways of snow a week ago, instead of just talking about it, the Wynne Liberals were nowhere to be found. Instead, we get more finger pointing, more distractions.

Mr. Grant Crack: On a point of order, Speaker: I would just ask the member from Kitchener–Conestoga perhaps when he's addressing the government and the Premier to refrain from using "Wynne Liberals" and say "the Premier and the government."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I would ask the member again to refrain from any comments that may be construed as perhaps derogatory, and I would ask that the member would continue to speak and address the bill at hand.

Mr. Michael Harris: All right. Well, I was just saying that the Liberals were nowhere to be found. Instead, of course, we get more finger pointing, more distractions—going back to the bill, of course.

Speaker, you know the routine: "It's not us; it's them," the old Wizard of Oz approach, a "Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain" type of analogy. Like when we hear the finance minister point the finger at the Prime Minister for lacking federal transfer payments—this despite the fact that the government's own public accounts documents show we actually got \$600 million more from Ottawa last year to help fund our roads and infrastructure, things that are mentioned in Bill 31. Distractions—we've had 11 years of distractions while the same regime doubled the debt and then continued to blame lower-than-expected revenues and the federal government.

Now, as the minister points at the feds and doubles down on his claims that he can still balance the books in 2017-18, he also reveals that Ontario is collecting half a billion less in tax revenue than expected.

Mr. Grant Crack: Point of order, Speaker: I don't believe the member from Kitchener–Conestoga is referring to the bill before the House at all. I would ask the Speaker's indulgence to perhaps, if you feel fit, remind him of such.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I would ask the member to speak directly to the bill now, or I may be forced to move on.

Mr. Michael Harris: I can only imagine that folks on television are distracted by all the interruptions, perhaps, by the government interrupting me.

You know what? I should note that when it comes to the legislative channel, the good folks up running things—I do want to welcome the former member for Durham, John O'Toole. I know he tunes in regularly to the legislative channel, and I'd welcome him this morning to that. I'm going to get to him later on pertaining to

the bill, but I think we need to consider some of the very important safety protection measures we see in this bill to address distracted driving. And more, you can understand that I will also be addressing some concerns both with this bill and with the distracted government that is proposing it. I think that's fair, Speaker; I really do. I hope you'll give me some discretion here on that.

A case in point is the revelation from our Auditor General that the Premier's decision to reopen those contracts, of course, will cost the taxpayers an additional \$468 million that could go toward road safety measures in the province of Ontario. But of course, we find ourselves debating and speaking to, in many cases, timely measures of legislation with a government that continues—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I would ask that the members refrain—we have the speaker back on topic. I would appreciate attentive listening to his debate and this bill, in fairness. My role is to ensure there is fair debate on both sides, so I would appreciate and thank you for your consideration.

Mr. Michael Harris: I'll get back to my notes here, perhaps.

All that said, it's not too often that we have an opportunity in this House to work through these continued distractions and share common ground, to bring all sides together for a common goal. The truth is, there are shared goals amongst all of us here for the protection and maintenance of public safety on Ontario roads. As such, I felt that Bill 31, Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act, offered one of those rare opportunities to encapsulate the work of government, opposition and our diligent road safety partners in the effort to protect motorists, pedestrians and cyclists alike as we address new and emerging challenges on our roadways. It offered us that opportunity, and while we do see this proposed Legislature taking some solid steps delivering on that opportunity towards road safety, I look forward in the time I've been provided—about 10 minutes, less all those distractions—to the opportunity to deliver my remarks on road safety.

I look forward in the time provided to also explain how it missteps on further road safety opportunities and leaves some concerning questions on the government's direction on a series of fronts. So in the rest of the hour I have left, I will be examining and focusing on both the direction and the missed direction—or in some cases, misdirection—to making Ontario's roads safer.

Specifically, Speaker, I will use that focus to examine each section of this far-reaching bill. There are a series of steps to go through, as you will see and hear. From distracted driving to enhanced impaired driving penalties, including drug-impaired driving; bicycling measures; rules surrounding medical reporting; a new vehicle inspection centre program; emergency vehicles measures; empowering municipal unpaid fine collections; extended length B-trains on transport trucks; questions surrounding chrome yellow buses and the lack of roundabout rules, there will be a little something for everyone, so stay tuned.

As we've heard, the Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act combines two pieces of proposed legislation from the previous session and adds a couple of new facets to the earlier distracted driving and unpaid fine collection provisions. I do want to be clear, as we begin walking through this newly merged proposal, that given the impacts of distracted driving and impaired driving, it is essential that we do take significant steps towards better education and tougher penalties to ensure drivers are focussing on the road.

Further to that, we also support efforts to give our municipalities the tools they require to collect unpaid fines. There is no doubt that, after years of waiting for government to grant these powers while watching countless millions in fines go uncollected, AMO and its municipalities will welcome the opportunity to add the revenue this legislation allows.

I know I am running out of time, as we recess prior to question period, so I'll end my remarks there. I've got 47 minutes left, less the time we were distracted by the government interrupting me. I wish the minister was here, of course, to hear my remarks, as I was for him. So I will leave it to you to make—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I would remind the member that, in the absence of a particular member, you are not to reference that. Thank you.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Seeing as the time is 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1014 to 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock on a point of order.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion with respect to a select committee on sexual harassment in the workplace.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion. Do we agree? I heard a no.

It is now time for—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm standing.

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm sick of their games.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And I'm sick of some people interrupting while I'm trying to get attention.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Are you challenging the Chair?

Mr. Steve Clark: No.

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

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I would like to introduce the family of page Nicole Eaton: Wendy Eaton, Sean Eaton, Ali Eaton and Quinton Eaton. Two of them are here and

two aren't, but they're coming to question period. Welcome.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I would like to introduce Keely Hargraft, who is a co-op student in my office, and Justin MacLean, who is on his way here, who manages the office.

Mr. Bill Walker: I'd like to welcome the manufacturers and dealers of the assistive devices organization and also recognize Steve Cranna, the outgoing chair of the Canadian Assistive Devices Association. Welcome to Queen's Park and thank you for your efforts.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'd like to welcome Josh Wiwcharyk and Tom Elltoft. Both are from Parliament Oak school in the parent group there, CARE. Thanks for coming.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I would like to introduce the students from St. Helen Catholic School in my riding of Davenport—accompanying them are Mr. Carnovale and Ms. Uncao, who are the grade 4 and 5 teachers—as well as students from Dewson Street Junior Public School, avec M^{lle} Segreto. Bienvenue.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It's a pleasure today to look up in the gallery and see a number of representatives from the wonderful county of Huron. Thanks for making the trek to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I'm pleased to introduce page captain Ethan Sequeira's mother, Dimple Sequeira, and sister Meagan Sequeira from the great riding of Mississauga–Brampton South. They are in the east members' gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Jim McDonell: This morning I want to welcome Craig Miller, Daniel Blocka, Mark Agro, Jon Allen and Steve Gilmour from the assistive devices association. We had a great meeting this morning.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's my pleasure to welcome Stephen McDonald and Sarah Marsh to the Legislature today. Sarah was just elected to Kitchener city council.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature my good friend Mr. Rohan Linton and his two sons, Justin and Dylan. Hey, guys. I grew up with them in Don Valley East.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'd like to welcome Jim Wilson and his daughter Victoria here. Now, this is not the Jim Wilson we know on this side of the House; this is the "Silverado Sheriff," one of the largest GM dealerships in Ontario.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I've got several guests to announce. Rossana Magnotta is here today representing the G. Magnotta Foundation for Vector-Borne Diseases.

David Kelso is here from the Ontario Lyme Alliance and Larry Herr from the Ontario Lyme Alliance.

Also, we have the Minister of Health and Wellness as well as the Minister of Seniors from Nova Scotia here today, the Honourable Leo Glavine.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I would like to welcome what will be about 100 people from Goderich township in Huron county—some of them are in the building, but not yet here with us—as well as many members from the Ontario Landowners Association from across the province

of Ontario. They are here to see the petition of right which calls for the de-amalgamation of Goderich township being presented to the Attorney General at the end of this question period. Seventy-five percent of the property owners have signed the petition.

I will mention the names of a few of the leaders in the community who will be here with us today: Cindy Moyer of the Huron-Perth landowners, who did the research to find out that the petition of right is a law that will help; Brian Barnim, a councillor from Goderich township who led the charge to pursue de-amalgamation; David Hemingway, president of the Huron-Perth Landowners Association; Tom Black, president of the Ontario Landowners Association; and Roman Sarachman, president of the Ontario De-amalgamation Network, from Flamborough.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm delighted to introduce Tony Ayala, a graduate of King's University College and a resident of London North Centre. Welcome, Tony.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Please join me in introducing Michael O'Brien and Leonard Swartz, who are joining us in the House this morning. They're part of the Friends of the Museums of Mississauga. Michael O'Brien is a quality engineer at Messier-Bugatti-Dowty, a great constituent of Mississauga South and a great contributor to our community. Thank you very much, both of you, for being here today.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I ask everyone to join me in welcoming citizens from my wonderful community of Burlington: the parents of our page captain today, Ella Walsh—her mom, Sylvie Walsh, and John Walsh—and Ella's grandmother, Elizabeth Zalewski. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to welcome Gabby Dwosh to the House. Gabby is the niece of my very good law school friend, Jonathan Boulakia. Gabby is here as one of a lot of kids from the Bialik Hebrew Day School. I want to welcome them to Queen's Park.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I would like, this morning, on behalf of all the members here, to pay tribute to and congratulate Suzanne Côté, who was just appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada. She's a lawyer from Quebec. She's one of three Quebec lawyers appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada. I wish her all the best in her new endeavour.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Good morning. I would like to introduce members in our gallery: Mike Longo; Marshal Holman and his mother, Carman King; Frank Lucas; Paul Levin; Gayle King; and Janet Issac.

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

I do want to take a moment, just before we move into the next section, to remind all members that your co-operation is necessary to ensure that we use the time wisely for introductions. Please keep them to introductions and maybe the title of the person or persons who represent a group. But if you start getting into explanations, I will be accused of allowing statements to be made, and that's not permissible during that time frame. Please, as a reminder, stay with just introducing the

guests here at Queen's Park. I'd appreciate your co-operation.

It is now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

PESTICIDES

Mr. Toby Barrett: To the Premier: Your government announced on Tuesday that it's asking for comment on an 80% reduction of neonicotinoid pesticides by 2017. The Grain Farmers of Ontario project this ban will cost them \$630 million a year, but Health Canada said there is no conclusive scientific evidence that this ban will cut bee mortality rates.

Your government said it would only take action if there was conclusive scientific evidence that neonics are a problem, yet in a scrum yesterday your Minister of the Environment said, "All of the science is inconclusive."

Premier, why are you cutting neonics by 80% and hurting farmers without the conclusive research evidence necessary to back it up?

1040

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I want to thank the member opposite for the question. This is a very important issue. Of course it is important to our grain and oilseed farmers. It is important for beekeepers across the province. But there is a much greater issue at stake here, and that is the health of pollinators across the province—and, quite frankly, across the country—and the ability for us to have a healthy ecosystem.

What I said at the beginning, when I was the Minister of Agriculture and Food, and what I continue to say is that we need to make sure that we take the competing interests—because there are competing interests—and we act in the context of the greatest interest, which is that we have a healthy ecosystem and that we preserve that ecosystem for our children and our grandchildren.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Toby Barrett: We do both agree that there is an issue with bee health and mortality in Ontario. In fact, you took the initiative. You created the Bee Health Working Group to study the problem. When the group reported, they didn't recommend a ban; they didn't recommend a reduction of neonics. What they did recommend were new best practices for using neonics during planting, because the planting process is when the insecticide can be transferred through airborne dust. Those recommendations were acted on during planting last spring—for example, through the use of a dust-reducing lubricant. As a result, we are told, bee deaths were cut by 70%.

Farmers are doing their part to cut bee mortality. Why punish them for the progress they have achieved?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change will want to speak to this, but let me just say that we know that

Ontario's economy is driven by a strong agricultural sector. The sector relies on pollinators to be productive. We have worked with the bee working group. The reality is that best practices do point to a reduction in the use of neonicotinoids, and that is what we're doing. What we're saying is that we have set an aspirational target to reduce the use of neonicotinoid-treated corn and soybean seed by 80% by 2017.

We are not proposing a ban. We are proposing a reduction. We are proposing a different way of using this pesticide. We are working very hard to achieve an over-winter honey-bee mortality rate reduction of 15% by 2020. That is our target, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Back to the Premier. I used to work for OMAFRA. I remember the extensive pest-management training. I remember the efforts that went into educating and encouraging farmers to embrace conservation tillage.

Today, in 2014, Premier, farmers are doing their best. It's the norm for them to have environmental farm plans. You should know that, as a former Minister of Agriculture. Ontario farmers are outstanding environmental stewards. And now, seemingly, you're asking them to go back in time, using conventional tillage practices and pesticides that are more harmful to the environment.

Premier, going backwards is not an option for Ontario farmers. So I ask you today: What is the alternative practice that you're going to encourage them to use?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would ask the member opposite: What is the alternative if we lose our pollinators? The fact is that we are going to work with the farmers. I have had many conversations with the head of the grain and oilseed farmers. I understand the concerns and I have committed to continue to work with them. We have set some aspirational targets to change the practices—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That'll do. Don't worry, I'll get down to the individual.

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We have set some aspirational targets. There is time to continue to work with the farmers; they know that. I've had person-to-person conversations with them. I will be meeting many of them tomorrow. But the practices do need to change, and we're going to work with them to make sure that they do.

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Todd Smith: My question this morning is for the Premier. For three years, we've been asking for a line-by-line budget for the Pan Am Games. Yesterday, we found out the reason that we've never gotten one. "Budget" apparently has a much different meaning if you're a Liberal cabinet minister than it does for regular people in the province of Ontario. Some \$121 million was set aside for security; \$245 million is actually the expense so far.

The Auditor General's report showed that \$39 million was set aside for a security contractor; \$81 million was actually spent and was in the budget. The reason? Only half the job was actually budgeted for when the contract was put out.

Premier, who is being held responsible for this level of incompetence at Pan Am? And if you won't punish those who are responsible, aren't you just encouraging this kind of incompetence to continue there?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I had the opportunity to start my day in a gym this morning with some young people. We were making an announcement with the Minister of Education and the Associate Minister of Long-Term Care and Wellness. We were talking about moving to having 60 minutes of physical activity in schools across this province, partnering with Ophea and with Canadian Tire.

In that gym were a number of athletes who are right now training for the Pan and the Parapan American Games. If the member opposite asked those young people the price that they would put on their security, I think what those young people would say is, "You know what? It's your responsibility to do everything you can to keep me safe. I'm going to train every day. I'm going to train eight hours a day on the trampoline, on the track, in the pool. You, government, you keep us safe. That's your job."

Interjections.

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

Supplementary?

Mr. Todd Smith: Speaker, if budgeting were a Pan Am sport, this government would be disqualified for incompetence-enhancing drugs. They don't know what they're doing. They can't even answer a question about budgeting.

Premier, the auditor's report yesterday had more revelations about management problems at Pan Am. Had the security contracts been put up for bid earlier, it would have saved taxpayers money. Had the government factored new police contracts into its security costs instead of basing the costs on contracts it knew would expire before the games, it might have had something that resembled an actual cost for security. Had the government not underestimated the number of venue-operating days by a whopping 317%, it might not have ended up with a security contract that came in 106% over budget.

This is some pretty basic stuff that TO2015 is missing here and the Ministry of Community Safety has messed up. Premier, will someone be held responsible, or will accountability be yet another thing that's overlooked at the Pan Am Games?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Many of these questions were answered at the technical briefings, which the member opposite did not attend, Mr. Speaker. We're happy to provide the information.

But I want to just go back to my original answer, because this member has made some pretty outrageous statements, in my opinion, about these games. He said on

September 30 of this year, “There’s no comparison between the Pan Am Games and the Olympic Games. These are tier-two games that we’re having here.”

He also said, on July 17, “There’s no reason to cheer about these games and everybody out there knows it.”

I take him back to the gym this morning, Mr. Speaker, where there were young people who are training eight hours a day. They’re getting ready for the Pan/Parapan Games. They are racing in their wheelchairs, they are diving into pools, they are jumping on trampolines, and they are getting ready for the Pan/Parapan and the Olympics. I would ask him to look those young people in the face and make those—

Interjections.

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

Final supplementary.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, come to order.

Mr. Todd Smith: Premier, that was a gold-medal performance in deflection. You can’t answer a simple question about the budget for the Pan Am Games. You can’t do it, because it’s a pipe dream for you. The budget doesn’t—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I know. It actually helped. Thank you.

Final supplementary, please.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you, Speaker. We’re not talking about the athletes here and their performances. Our Canadian athletes are going to be great.

We’re talking about budgets and we’re talking about missing deadlines. You don’t understand it, Premier. You don’t understand anything about the Pan Am Games. You’re even—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport will come to order.

Please finish.

1050

Mr. Todd Smith: I’m trying. Thank you, Speaker.

Budgeting seems to be a lost art for your government. This week, it came out that you guys are spending \$400,000 on a porcupine for the Pan Am Games for goodness’ sake. Come on, Premier. This is ridiculous.

Will you commit to holding Pan Am officials accountable if they miss one more deadline or blow through another budget? Or will you just pay whatever invoice comes onto your desk, whatever cost is necessary for the taxpayer—

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

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is talking about the budgets. I’m very pleased that the Auditor General was able to look at the numbers. Her report confirms that the procurement of private security was transparent and fair. She confirms and contradicts the claims of the opposition. What she said is that the budget for the security of the athletes, spectators and volunteers is \$239.5 million, Mr. Speaker. It’s part of the budget that she has said is reasonable. The fact is that those security costs can evolve.

I am talking about the athletes, the safety of people like Rosie MacLennan, Josh Cassidy and Damian Warner, who are some of Ontario’s finest athletes. It is their safety and it is their performance that we’re talking about when we talk about the Pan/Parapan Games, Mr. Speaker. I hope that at some point the member opposite can understand that and can understand that this is about the athletes.

Interjections.

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

Mr. Todd Smith: It’s sure not about the taxpayers.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings—the second time—will come to order, and you know what that means.

I’ve stopped the clock for a purpose. I am getting quite frustrated with people yelling across the floor—one. Two, yelling people’s names across the floor, you’re not following the convention of the House, and I’m getting tired of it. It elevates the excitement; it doesn’t bring it down, and I want you to bring this down to intelligent question-and-answer and debate.

New question.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, 87% of women in Canada say they have been harassed at one point or another. It’s reality, plain and simple.

Yesterday, the House passed a motion—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): To the Premier?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: To the Premier. Sorry, Speaker.

Yesterday, the House passed a motion for a select committee on sexual harassment to be struck. I was proud to support that motion, as were my colleagues here in the NDP caucus.

But here is the reality in Ontario: Funds for victims’ services are being cut. We are still waiting for the government to implement the recommendations of the coroner’s inquest into the murder of Lori Dupont. Employers and employees don’t have clear tools to deal with harassment in the workplace.

Speaker, we need to act now. When is the Premier going to actually strike a committee on sexual harassment?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. I understand that the House supported the motion, because, in essence, we believe that there needs to be a committee struck. I have said that

we should move ahead with that, and we will move ahead as expeditiously as possible.

I hope that we can agree that there are many voices that need to be heard on this subject. We need to hear from young people, we need to hear from aboriginal women, we need to hear from the LGBTQ community, and we need to hear from visible minorities because this is an issue that affects all people across society. So my hope would be that the work of that committee, which will be struck in the tradition of this Legislature—my hope would be that that committee would consult broadly with people from all groups.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: We are at a unique and important point of time. Sexual harassment is being discussed publicly and openly in a way that it really never has before in history, Speaker. We need to send a clear message—a very clear message—that sexual harassment is an issue that we can talk about without politics and without partisanship. When will the Premier actually strike a non-partisan select committee of this Legislature to deal with this issue?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, as I have said, striking an all-party committee is something that I agree with. I have said from the beginning that I was open to it. From the time the member of the official opposition asked for this, I said I was open to it. I think we need to move ahead and do that.

As non-partisan, all-party committees have been struck under the Conservative government, under the NDP government and under the Liberal government, we will form that committee as it reflects this Legislature. That is the tradition of the place. It is what has been done under every party, Mr. Speaker, and I believe that we should continue in that tradition.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, there are a lot of things that we don't agree on in this Legislature, in this House. The Premier and I are both women who lead our political parties, and we agree, I think, as do the Conservatives here, that sexual harassment is an issue that needs to be dealt with here in Ontario, so let's get on with it.

This House sent a message that is plain and simple: Stop playing politics and stop pretending that this is something that cannot be done in a way that isn't partisan and isn't a political football—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Sorry, stop the clock. The Minister of Finance will come to order.

Please finish.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Strike the committee on this issue; strike the select committee so that it reflects all of the voices in this Legislature in an equal way. I need to ask, finally, when will this Premier do the right thing and make sure that this committee is established? When is it going to happen?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I understand that the leader of the third party is taking a ferocious ap-

proach on this. I am just as ferocious on this. The reality is that I have said yes, we need to have a committee. I have said yes, we need to do this as soon as possible, and the House leaders are going to work on that. I have said yes, we need to have an all-party committee, and yes, we need to have many voices weigh in on this issue. This is an important moment.

I have said also that we need to strike that committee as it reflects this Legislature, as every select committee under the Conservatives, under the NDP and under the Liberals has been done. That's how we're going to move forward, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. John Yakabuski: We can do anything we want by unanimous consent, Premier. Don't be snowing anybody—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will come to order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: And I think, with all due respect, the leader of the third party needs to ask who is injecting politics into this, Mr. Speaker. We've said yes.

CHILD CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: To the Premier, Speaker—but I have to say that I will not be embarrassed for being passionate about this issue. It is a disgrace the way you responded—a disgrace.

My next question is on a different issue. Last week, the Legislature got behind the NDP plan for a national \$15-a-day child care program that is being spearheaded across this country by Thomas Mulcair. I was proud that our Legislature and our province sent a very strong message that we—

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I didn't get the House quiet for you to interject.

Please finish.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I was proud that Ontario, our province, sent a strong message that we want affordable child care here in our province. But the Liberals are cutting millions of dollars out of child care, Speaker. Can the Premier explain to parents why she's slashing budgets for child care centres across 18 communities?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: In fact, the number of child care spaces has actually increased over the last year.

Interjection.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm sorry. One of the things about having licensed child care centres is that we actually know how many spots we have licensed. Since we took office in 2003, the number of licensed child care spots in Ontario has increased by 130,000. If you look at each of the last four or five years, the number of licensed child care spaces has increased by 18,000 each year. On average, the number of licensed child care spaces has increased by 18,000. If you look at the funding, it's double. So I'm not really quite sure what the problem is.

1100

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, by cutting funding from public not-for-profit child care centres, the Premier is taking a step backwards when we should be moving forward. Because of Liberal cuts, the Coronation Park Day Nursery in Sarnia, a not-for-profit child care centre that has provided child care since 1972, is closing its doors tomorrow, and 100 parents are going to be stuck trying to find reliable, safe, affordable child care in that community.

For once, could the Premier's actions actually support her words? Will she restore the funding for Coronation Park Day Nursery, and make sure that the cuts to child care that are happening right now in this province stop?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Let me go back to the point that I was making at the end of my comments. The truth is that we have more than doubled the funding for child care since 2003. In fact, we now spend over a billion dollars on child care.

I think you will find that the decision to close this particular child care centre, which is operated by a municipality, was made by the municipality. But what does remain as the absolute funding history is that, in fact, we have increased the funding to child care each and every year we have been in office, including this year.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Municipalities are stuck holding the bag because this government is not funding at appropriate levels, and they're making cuts that are forcing them into these untenable decisions.

Ontario is behind a \$15-a-day child care plan, apparently. We all voted for it in this House, yet the Premier is slashing funding to child care. Coronation Park is actually closing its doors tomorrow. That's only one child care centre; over 18 communities are seeing the same kind of thing happening.

I can't believe that this minister refuses to acknowledge what's really happening—not what happened last year, not what happened in 2003, but what's happening right now, what's happening tomorrow, in 2014. Why are this Premier and this Liberal government taking us backwards when we should be moving forward on a plan for safe, affordable, licensed child care in this province?

Hon. Liz Sandals: The member opposite wants to know what's going on this year with funding, so I would just draw to her attention that we increased funding by \$90 million in 2012-13, \$68 million in 2013-14, and \$84 million in 2014-15—that would be this year, Speaker. We did in fact increase funding to child care by \$84 million this year, and we'll continue to do so in future years. Those are the facts.

RING OF FIRE

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. Minister, \$2.7 billion is waiting for Ontario in the Build-

ing Canada Fund for infrastructure. While your government has yet to submit a list of projects for this application, you were quoted last week stating that the upcoming application from Ontario is "unlikely" to include a request for infrastructure funding for the Ring of Fire.

Minister, could you please let us know which specific infrastructure projects are more important to your government than making the Ring of Fire a reality?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'm delighted that the member has raised this question in the Legislature, because it gives me an opportunity to share with all of my colleagues here the challenge that we have had with the federal government on this program.

Since March, we've been asking the federal government to share the details of the program with us that will help us in prioritizing what programs we're going to put forward. It was only this week, after numerous requests, that our staff were invited down to Ottawa to be able to see this information, so finally we have the information we need. We're going to be prioritizing our projects.

But what the federal government has been doing with infrastructure projects, here in Ontario and across the country, is playing games with projects like the Ring of Fire, trying to suggest that their portion should be funded from programs that are to go to roads, bridges, transit and other important infrastructure. They need to do what our Minister of Northern Development and Mines has done: have a separate funding proposal for a billion dollars to go to infrastructure in the Ring of Fire. That's what they need to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Norm Miller: Again to the minister: It's hard to believe that Cliffs Natural Resources at one time predicted that they would have a mine producing chromite from the Ring of Fire for refining in Ontario by 2015.

I find it interesting that you choose to mention the federal government now. It was just over one year ago, as Cliffs made the decision to idle their project in the Ring of Fire, they specifically cited "unfinished agreements with the government of Ontario that are critical to the project's economic viability."

Minister, how can you blame the federal government when the largest player in the Ring of Fire made such a clear indictment of your lack of action?

Hon. Brad Duguid: It's not a question of blame; it's a question of total lack of action on the part of the federal government. We made a commitment in our last budget to fund infrastructure in the Ring of Fire to the tune of a billion dollars. Their commitment right now is zero. They have not made a commitment whatsoever.

Just recently, they went forward with a further \$6 billion in the small amount of infrastructure that they're funding across this country, and that was to go to federal buildings, federal projects—nothing for the Ring of Fire. They had an opportunity this week to match our commitment in the Ring of Fire. They failed this week. Thus far, they have failed incredibly—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. The members from Leeds–Grenville, Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and Prince Edward–Hastings will come to order.

Please finish.

Hon. Brad Duguid: It's time for the federal government to come forward with a proposal to match our commitment of a billion dollars in the Ring of Fire. They can keep playing games all they want with infrastructure projects. It's a very simple request: Match our funding. That's all we're asking.

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Premier. The Auditor General released a report very clearly addressing the issues of security at the Pan Am Games. The Auditor General makes it very clear that there are some serious concerns with respect to security costs at the Pan Am Games. The security budgets have doubled. The government is behind schedule in terms of signing contracts. The auditor says that because of that, costs could go up. In fact, some of the private security contracts have more than doubled in just one year. But the Liberal ministers keep on insisting that everything is just fine, everything is just peachy.

Will the Premier tell Ontarians, did her Liberal ministers read the same report that everyone else read?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: to the minister responsible for the Pan Am Games.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'm happy to take the question from the member opposite.

Yesterday, the Auditor General put out a report that confirmed what we have been saying all along, that this government followed the procurement process in order to provide that security need for the Pan Am Games.

We're quite confident with TO2015 and the work that they've been doing, and we're very confident with the work that the ISU has been doing, which is made up by the OPP, our federal and municipal partners. I think we should take their advice; they are the experts. We believe we're in good hands. We will not compromise the safety of Ontarians during these games, and we have full faith in the OPP and TO2015.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: The question is about the security costs, and this is the Auditor General of Ontario, someone we entrust with the responsibility of ensuring that there is oversight. The Auditor General says there are problems that this government is not addressing. It's very clear. Let me quote the auditor: "A lack of clear communication has led to a potential security gap."

If this government is so concerned about security, why don't they address the security gap that the Auditor General has presented to you, has told you about? The games are less than eight months away, and we have no security for the fields that the Pan Am Games are being played on.

The auditor is clear that leaving plans to the last minute will cost us more: higher costs in recruiting, higher

costs in training and planning, and the list goes on. Will the Premier tell Ontarians how much it's going to cost to make this fix in the eleventh hour?

Hon. Michael Coteau: To the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I do want to remind the member, jog his memory, as to how this Auditor General's report came about.

I remember very distinctly, in late March, when I was appointed as the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, from day one, that party and that member were asking questions about the procurement process around a private security contract. They were questioning our procurement practice, they were questioning the award and they were questioning the bidder.

1110

In fact, they asked the Auditor General to look at the process of their procurement. This is what the Auditor General said in that regard: "The all-party Standing Committee on Public Accounts asked us to review the processes used to award security contracts for the games. We found that the selection processes were fair and transparent, in accordance with government procurement policies, and took into consideration"—

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

New question.

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Chris Ballard: My question is for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. Minister, I've noticed a large delegation of Ontario chiefs at Queen's Park both yesterday and today. I'm aware that this government will be partaking in a series of round tables with the delegation to continue to build and renew our relationship with First Nations in Ontario. Our government has demonstrated its commitment to invest in First Nations while the federal government continues to fall short on its responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, can you inform the House on what this government has done to cement our relationship with the Chiefs of Ontario and the First Nations in Ontario?

Hon. David Zimmer: This government was responsible for creating the first stand-alone Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, in 2007. This reflected the importance we placed on developing a stronger and a broader partnership with First Nations communities in Ontario.

This week's meetings represent another significant step in renewing our relationship and the journey toward reconciliation. Eight different round table sessions have been scheduled with various ministers and Chiefs of Ontario. This highlights the accessible, transparent and open approach this government is taking. These round tables provide a forum for meaningful conversations to take place on topics such as clean water, business development, poverty alleviation, murdered and missing aboriginal women, and treaty awareness.

Mr. Speaker, we want to have frank discussions on how we can work with First Nations in this province

because when all communities succeed, this province is going to be a better place.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Chris Ballard: These round table sessions are significant and showcase the progress this province continues in strengthening the relationship with First Nations in Ontario. This is a great event organized by the Chiefs of Ontario organization, and I commend our government for being dedicated to these conversations with First Nations leaders from across Ontario.

The minister has affirmed that this government takes its commitment to First Nations communities very seriously. I know our government is taking a leadership role in many issues impacting First Nations and people in our province. The minister highlighted some of the topics that we're discussing in these meetings. I look forward to my participation this afternoon in the business development and poverty alleviation sessions.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Could the minister please inform the House on the significance of treaties and treaty awareness?

Hon. David Zimmer: Treaties represent the solemn agreements that we live together on this land through the formal exchange of promises that created the rights and responsibilities of Canada, of Ontario, and of First Nations. Treaties are still a part of what we do today. For instance, with the Algonquins of Ontario, an agreement is being negotiated today in the 21st century.

My mandate letter committed this government to moving forward with a treaty strategy that will promote constructive engagement with First Nations communities, revitalize treaty relationships and improve socio-economic outcomes for aboriginal people. Together, through respectful and meaningful dialogue, we will come to better understand about different perspectives on treaties and work together on practical solutions and practical initiatives that will continue to support our strong treaty relationships.

HOME CARE

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Senior citizens across Ontario are losing publicly funded home care services. According to these patients and their families, there is no one in your ministry nor your bureaucracy—the community care access centres, or CCACs—willing to acknowledge the cuts, to stand up and protect the critical home care services they need. This is the state of home care service on your government's watch today in Ontario.

Minister, do you think it's acceptable? Do you think it's justifiable to have our seniors' care cut?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Of course I don't think it's acceptable. In fact, that's not what we're doing at all. We're dramatically increasing our funding to home and community care.

I have to say that I was hoping this question would come from the NDP because I was going to offer the entire caucus a briefing on what we are doing for CCACs. I

think I need to include the PCs as well in this briefing, because the truth is absolutely contrary to what we're hearing.

We've roughly doubled our funding to the CCACs over the last decade, to community and home care. We've also increased \$250 million this year alone, a three-quarters-of-a-billion-dollar increase in three years' time. We know, and the opposition parties know—both of them—our commitment to transferring more care closer to people's homes, where they want to see that care, where it can be provided effectively and efficiently. We aren't cutting services; we aren't cutting costs; we're doing the opposite.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Bill Walker: Well, Minister, I'd like to give you a briefing from the people who are calling my office and all my colleagues, telling me there are cuts happening. It's appalling that you're going to spend \$450,000 a month in interest for an empty MaRS office building but cut front-line care to our seniors. We still have not heard you even acknowledge that there are cuts being made, and we're hearing it every day in our offices.

Minister, we think your most important task is that you stand up and provide services for our very needy seniors. Will you show leadership and issue a directive that funding will be restored to the CCACs ASAP?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Again, I think it's important that we speak accurately and with the facts. There is no funding to be restored, because we've been increasing funding year over year to our CCACs and to home and community care, and we're seeing the results across the province.

I know we have been talking about Erie St. Clair. The reality with Erie St. Clair is that we've doubled the funding over the last 10 years, with a \$3-million increase this year alone—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: That generally is the practice right across this province. A quarter-of-a-billion-dollars increase this year; that amount is going to increase by \$750 million in additional funding for home and community care. We're seeing the results. There is transformation under way. Gail Donner and a team of experts are looking at home and community care to see how we can continue to improve the services. We're expecting their report in the new year, and I look forward to their recommendations.

CHILD ADVOCATE

Ms. Catherine Fife: Yesterday afternoon we had final hearings on Bill 8, the so-called transparency and accountability act—

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Who is this for?

Ms. Catherine Fife: —I'm sorry: to Minister Matthews—a piece of legislation that in fact fails this province's most vulnerable children. Mr. Irwin Elman,

the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, told members of the committee how it fails. He told the story of a 10-year-old boy in a group home who was put in physical restraints 108 times in a 13-month period. Mr. Elman added: “It takes a great deal of courage for a child as vulnerable as those in my mandate to speak up. Those children, who with great strength come forward, often alone and frightened, have a right to expect my office has all the tools it needs to assist them.”

Minister, you know that the NDP supports Mr. Elman’s amendments to Bill 8. Will this government have the courage to help this province’s most vulnerable children?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Thank you to the member for asking a very important question.

We’re actually meeting today with the provincial advocate to discuss his proposals and a number of recommendations under consideration right now. Let me just say, too, that the goals of the government are the same as the advocate’s: that is, the best care and support for children in our province so that they can reach their full potential.

Bill 8, as the member knows, if passed, will give the provincial advocate new investigatory powers that have been modelled after other powers provided to the Ombudsman under the Ombudsman Act. So we do have the same goals: It is about child protection, safety and helping children reach their full potential.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: The minister knows what authority the children’s advocate needs and deserves. Mr. Elman has asked that he be given the power to investigate all children under his mandate. He has been asking for these changes year after year for the past six years.

Bill 8 still excludes young people involved with youth justice; mental health; development services; children’s treatment centres; residential schools for deaf, blind and severely disabled children; as well as First Nations children and those with special needs. Right now, Ontario’s children’s advocate is the only independent officer of the Legislature and the only child advocate in the country that doesn’t have these powers.

Why does this government continue to bring forward legislation that is designed to fail the children of this province?

1120

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: We’re very pleased with what is in Bill 8 right now to give that broader power to the advocate when it comes to child welfare. In addition, there are other accountability measures with the Children’s Aid Society.

The member mentioned youth justice. We’ve also ensured that the Ombudsman has oversight of all of our youth justice facilities. I’m really looking forward to hearing the outcome of the meeting today with the provincial advocate as this bill moves forward.

I just want to say it was the third party, however, when given the chance, who shot this bill down. They didn’t

want it to go forward. They refused to support the bill. Here we are, and we have brought it back, as the Premier promised. We brought the bill back as is, before the election, and now we’re moving forward. I hope we’ll have a good resolution.

As I said, the advocate does great work. We all share the same goal, which is the best interests of children in our province.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Arthur Potts: My question is to the ebullient Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. Ontario’s clean energy initiatives have attracted billions of dollars in new investments, generated more than 40,000 jobs and significantly increased the amount of clean energy generated throughout the province.

Our government’s elimination of coal-fired electricity in Ontario is the number one greenhouse gas reduction initiative across North America. It represents the equivalent of taking seven million cars off the road. Moving away from burning fossil fuels and toward renewal energy is helping Ontario meet its greenhouse gas reduction goals, improves our air quality and is helping our economy grow toward low-carbon solutions that meet our needs.

Earlier this month, Health Canada released the results of a wind turbine noise study, and I’m sure the people of Ontario are very keen and interested in the results of that study. Would the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change please update the House on the findings of Health Canada regarding wind turbine noise and its effects on health?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Thank you very much to my friend the member from Eaches—

Interjections: Beaches–East York.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Beaches–East York. I want to thank him for—

Interjection: We’re just getting used to saying it.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Yes, exactly. It has been over a century since we Liberals have been able to say that with the enthusiasm that we can now say it.

I’m very appreciative for his advocacy. Closing coal plants was very important. But there have been a lot of misconceptions, I think, about wind turbines and their health impacts.

Our friends in Ottawa at Health Canada put out a study. I’d just like to actually read directly from their report: “Illness and chronic disease: No evidence was found to support a link between exposure to wind turbine noise and any of the self-reported illnesses ... and chronic conditions” like heart disease etc.

On the issue of stress, which was the second area we and the federal government were asking them to look at: “No association was found between ... multiple measures of stress”—and they list them.

I will continue in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Again, my question is to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. I'm pleased to hear our government is moving forward with a science-based approach to renewable energy, and that Health Canada's study supports the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health's findings that there were no links in stress, chronic disease or sleep between wind turbine noises and these adverse health impacts.

It's important that Ontario continues its strong commitment to clean energy sources and moves us away from burning fossil fuels. I'm sure my constituents in Beaches–East York are pleased to know that there are alternative energy sources, such as wind, and that they are a safe, clean and sustainable way to meet our needs, and that a significant concern of those opposing wind turbines has been resolved.

Speaker, through you, would the Minister of the Environment please share with the House why it's important that we continue moving Ontario towards safe and clean renewable energy?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It's important for a lot of reasons, but I just want to finish with the health piece, because they went on to study sleep and a number of other matters. Health Canada, in every single case, found no link between wind turbines and any negative health effects in any of the areas.

It's particularly interesting, because claims have been made by members of the opposition that there were health issues. Now we know scientifically and clearly that that is not the case.

There are health issues with coal. There are health issues with transmission lines. There are health issues with all manner of things, but this is clean.

The other piece that's very important is, as Ontario right now is over 6% below its 1990 GHG levels, we're actually one of the world leaders now in meeting and exceeding global targets for GHG reductions. This is critical, not only for clean energy and the billions of investment dollars, but we couldn't get to our climate change goals without the wind sector, Mr. Speaker.

INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: My question today is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Minister, as you know, next week most of us will attend some inaugurals. Already I'm hearing difficult times are ahead for many of our municipalities: huge taxation increases because of policing, the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund dwindling away, and what is really hard to bear are the inequities and discrimination that municipalities receive when they apply for infrastructure programs.

It is clear that well-managed municipalities that actually have reserves set aside for specific projects have their applications rejected. I can give you many examples of that and I can give you letters to support that. Many of the mayors are saying, "Don't even send out the forms anymore," because all they are doing is wasting valuable time and money filling them out, only to be rejected over and over.

Minister, is it your intention to continue on this path, or will you begin to treat all municipal projects based on their merit and not on the good or bad management of the municipality?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Well, how do you answer a question like that? We have a great working relationship with municipalities, quite the departure, dare I say, from the previous government that downloaded many of the issues referenced in passing.

We're investing literally billions of dollars with respect to uploading some of those issues that the previous government downloaded. We're engaged with housing issues. We're engaged with ice storm assistance with the feds. We're insisting, as AMO would have us insist, that there be accountability mechanisms and priorities set with respect to all this funding. That's exactly what we're doing and will continue to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: You know, Mr. Speaker, you never, ever get any kind of an answer.

Minister, we know that your government operates on the credit card that our great-grandchildren will be paying off. Are you expecting municipalities to do the same? Some municipalities actually do care about their finances. When all citizens of Ontario pay their provincial taxes, do you really think it is fair that well-managed municipalities and their ratepayers are discriminated against so that infrastructure grants can be directed to those that have mismanaged in the past? That's exactly what's happening. I don't know if you get it or not, but that's exactly what's happening.

Give the new councils some credit. Give some clarity on whether it actually pays to be efficient in this province as a municipality, because there's one thing we know for sure: We don't have a very efficient Liberal government.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Look, let's be perfectly frank about this. Municipalities, by and large—there's the odd exception where there's a need for some special assistance—are well managed. They work hard at ensuring that they are well managed. We work together in making sure that the joint programs we offer are transparent, accountable and well managed. I'm proud of our municipalities, all 444 of them across Ontario that struggle every single day to try to build stronger, healthier communities. We're pleased to be engaged in that process with them. We'll continue to be engaged.

I'm participating right now in our building bridges tour all across Ontario. I've visited and spoken directly with over 60 municipal councils. They appreciate that we're having that dialogue and we're making the kinds of changes to build stronger communities in Ontario.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Recently we learned, through a newspaper investigation in Hamilton, that the people of Ontario will never hear the results of an OPP probe of a botched murder investigation from many years ago. The reason? We

don't even know that, Speaker. And why don't we know? Because the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the day finally had to concede that she couldn't get the government to explain why they kept the probe's findings secret.

Does the Premier think that it's right that the Information and Privacy Commissioner, an independent officer of this Legislature, doesn't have the power to compel the government to provide information to the people of this province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I thank the member opposite for the question. I think the member opposite very well knows that this is a matter that is before the courts right now, which is being actively considered and has been subject to several years of litigation. It would be highly inappropriate for myself, the Premier or any member of the government to comment on this matter.

1130

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This is a matter that the Information and Privacy Commissioner clearly stated should be open to the public. It's got nothing to do with the courts, and this government and this minister know that very, very well.

This case went all the way to the Supreme Court. One man went to jail for seven years, and another was actually deported. The original police investigation was found to have used illegal wiretaps, and the conviction was thrown out. Now, more than a decade later—a decade and a half, almost—this government still won't release the results of the probe into what went wrong. They won't even explain why they refuse to tell us.

How can the openness-and-transparency Premier ignore orders from her own Information and Privacy Commissioner, her own watchdog?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: As I mentioned earlier, this is an issue that is very much before the courts. It would be highly inappropriate for any member of the government to comment on that.

We know that our police officers do extremely hard work, and we thank them for the work that they do. In respect to the release of the report, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services is very much committed to fully complying with the provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and we'll comply with the ruling of the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

But, as this matter is still subject to ongoing legal proceedings, it would not be appropriate to get into any further details.

SKILLED TRADES

Mrs. Cristina Martins: My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, skilled tradespeople are vital to Ontario's economy. Our government established the Ontario College of Trades to

give tradespeople and industry responsibility for regulating the skilled trades for the first time.

In just over a year and a half of operation, the college has had a number of important successes as it fulfills its mandate to protect the public by regulating and promoting the skilled trades. For the first time, Ontarians can access a public register to view the credentials of professionals working in the skilled trades.

Constituents in my riding of Davenport are pleased that they can rely on the public register to ensure that the skilled tradespeople they hire, especially in compulsory trades, have the appropriate qualifications.

Minister, can you inform the members of the House how the College of Trades is regulating and promoting the skilled trades and supporting the highly skilled workers we need here in Ontario?

Hon. Reza Moridi: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member from Davenport for that question. The Ontario College of Trades has taken vital steps to regulate, modernize and promote the skilled trades in Ontario. The college has helped to promote careers in the trades as first-choice professions for our students, and is also doing important work to protect the public through the public registry.

Since its inception, the college has done a review of all 33 apprenticeship ratios, reducing 14 of these ratios. The college has put the skilled trades on a similar footing with teachers, doctors, dentists and nurses, who all have their own professional regulatory bodies. Our government believes that decisions regarding the skilled trades in Ontario should be made by industry and tradespeople themselves, not by politicians.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Thank you, Minister, for that answer. I'm pleased to hear that the Ontario College of Trades has had some very important successes since its launch.

Minister, I understand that, after hearing the advice of industry leaders and tradespeople, our government has appointed Mr. Tony Dean to review some aspects of the College of Trades' work. I know that our government made a commitment to undertake this review, and I'm happy to hear that we have appointed such a highly qualified person.

Many of my constituents in Davenport are members of the Ontario College of Trades, and are interested in understanding his role in greater depth. Minister, can you update the members of the House on what Mr. Dean's role will be and how his review will support the continued success of the college?

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank the member again for that question. To support the continued success of the college, our government has appointed Tony Dean to the role of reviewer. His job is to examine the trade classification review process and issues related to the scope of practice of trades, including their connection to enforcement.

Our government fully supports tradespeople. That's why we have asked Mr. Dean to conduct this review of

specific activities of the college. Mr. Dean's appointment has been welcomed by a diverse range of industry groups, and there is broad agreement that he is well qualified to address these issues.

It will continue to be a priority for our government to ensure that the College of Trades can carry out its mandate as effectively as possible.

CHRISTMAS TREE INDUSTRY

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Premier. Premier, earlier this year I reintroduced An Act to proclaim Christmas Tree Day. If passed, this legislation will designate the first Saturday in December of each year as Christmas Tree Day in Ontario.

The US has deemed the entire first week of December as National Christmas Tree Week. This effort has boosted Christmas tree sales considerably across the United States.

Premier, the Christmas tree industry employs thousands of workers in the farming, transportation and retail sectors. More than one million fresh, farm-grown Christmas trees are purchased each year in Ontario, and the same number of seedlings are planted each year. There are 647 Christmas tree farms in Ontario, more than in any other province.

Premier, in recognition of a rural industry that our province benefits greatly from, will you agree to unanimous consent of my bill and make Christmas Tree Day a reality?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know that the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure is going to want to speak to this.

I just want to say that I think that anything we can do to support the Christmas tree industry—I can remember, as a young mom, we would take our kids to Horton Tree Farms—I'm not sure whose riding Horton Tree Farms is in.

Interjection.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Horton Tree Farms; there you go—to cut down a tree. I think it's a terrific tradition, part of the season for people who celebrate Christmas.

I would be happy to follow up with the Leader of the Opposition. I know the minister of Economic Development will have something to say about this.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Premier, I'm not sure what to take of that answer—whether it was a yes or a no. I'll just indicate that after question period—Mr. Speaker, with your permission—I'm going to ask for unanimous consent. The first Saturday of December comes very soon.

This gives the industry an opportunity to encourage more consumers to buy Christmas trees. We should know that the industry points out the environmental benefits of Christmas trees—one acre of trees removes up to 13 tonnes of airborne pollutants—so we need to encourage this industry.

I hope people aren't grinch over there or over there, and that you'll join us in supporting this very, very important industry today.

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

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'm waiting for my Christmas tree note to come, and it doesn't seem to be coming.

But I can tell you this—and I may have a bit of a conflict here. I have family in the Collingwood area, who may well be your constituents, who are in this line of work, who do farm Christmas trees. I don't know if they're still doing it, but they were years ago.

It is an important sector. I think the member raises a valid concern. In the area he represents, this is an important industry and something that I think all Ontarians can embrace.

Let me take this time to wish everybody in this House a merry Christmas and encourage everyone to get their Christmas trees up. I know we're busy. Get to it. Get those Christmas lights up. Let's get in the spirit.

I thank the member for bringing this to our attention.

HOME CARE

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Speaker, earlier this month, when I asked the Minister of Health about the CCAC slashing its services, he stated that it just isn't true. Earlier this week, he described these service cuts to home care in Windsor as no cuts at all.

But this weekend, in my riding, I will be meeting with more home care patients and their families who have been hit by these service cuts, just as I have done this entire month—people like Betty Terry, who is 89 and suffers from dementia; and Madelyn Reitzel, who is 89 and has suffered from a stroke and needs constant care.

With nursing visits slashed by one third, my constituents are being left without the care they need. They are told these service cuts are myths.

1140

Will the minister finally do the right thing, admit that these service cuts are real and apologize to the people of Windsor for saying the exact opposite?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question. My job as the Minister of Health is to ensure that those individuals across the province who do need care are provided with that care. We're doing that in home and community care as well.

In Windsor, in Erie St. Clair, we're not changing the criteria, nor will anyone have a change in their services unless their objective assessment indicates that they require a change in their services. Sometimes that's an increase in services, Mr. Speaker, and sometimes that's a decrease in services. But it's made by our care coordinators, our health care professionals, in a very objective way through assessment.

In Erie St. Clair, there is no wait-list for nursing care. There is no wait-list for PSW care through our CCACs. Everyone needing home care in Erie St. Clair is getting home care. That policy is not changing. We're adding additional funds, as I've mentioned before, to be able to accommodate any increases—

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I have a quote from the First Vice-President with the ONA. She states, “I don’t know whether he needs to come and see, whether he needs to talk to people whose services have been cut ... I don’t know how” the minister “can say there are no cuts....”

There is absolutely no excuse to cut home care services in Windsor and no excuse for the minister to bury his head in the sand. These service cuts are spelled out in the CCAC memos, and patients are feeling the effects each and every day.

If the minister really thinks that there are no service cuts to home care in Windsor, he needs to order that the home care services that have already been reduced be fully restored immediately. So why does the minister continue to deny that these shocking service cuts—not funding; service cuts—to home care are happening under his watch?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Yesterday, I had the opportunity to speak both with the CEO of the CCAC in Erie St. Clair, as well as with the CEO of the LHIN that has responsibility, and they’re working together. In fact, there’s an open board meeting today at the LHIN. The CCAC CEO is going to present.

I look forward to the member opposite, frankly any members in this Legislature, if they have specific examples, specific individuals who they feel are not receiving the care that they’re entitled to, I expect them—I in fact believe they have a responsibility to bring those specific cases to my attention. The third party has not done that in any specific example of bringing—their responsibility to bring those people to my attention. I look forward to hearing from them.

I would suggest that they follow the lead, as well, of the member from Sarnia–Lambton, who is working with our LHIN, working with our CCAC. It’s their LHIN, their CCAC, and there are meetings taking place—

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

The member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills on a point of order.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Mr. Speaker, a point of order: I will now present a petition of right to the Attorney General.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It’s not a point of order. All members have a right to walk any document back and forth between each other, and that’s an acceptable practice.

The Leader of the Opposition on a point of order.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I seek unanimous consent that the orders for second and third reading of Bill 16, An Act to proclaim Christmas Tree Day, be called immediately and that the questions on the motions for second and third reading of the bill be put immediately without debate or amendment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Wilson is seeking unanimous consent that the orders for second and third reading of Bill 16, An Act to proclaim Christmas Tree Day—

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): —be called immediately and that the question on the motions for second and third reading of the bill be put immediately without debate or amendment. Do we agree? I heard a no.

Interjections.

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

As is the tradition and the convention in this place, our guests are always welcome to be here, but I would have to announce to you very clearly that you cannot do any demonstration whatsoever. I would appreciate it if you could follow the convention. We still welcome you to be here, under those rules. I appreciate that.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on the motion for allocation of time on Bill 7, An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014.

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

The division bells rang from 1145 to 1150.

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

On November 26, Mr. Bradley moved government notice of motion number 10. All those in favour of the motion, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

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

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

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hatfield, Percy	Pettapiece, Randy
Arnott, Ted	Hillier, Randy	Sattler, Peggy
Bailey, Robert	Horwath, Andrea	Scott, Laurie
Barrett, Toby	Jones, Sylvia	Singh, Jagmeet
Bisson, Gilles	MacLaren, Jack	Smith, Todd
Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa	Tabuns, Peter
Dunlop, Garfield	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
Gretzky, Lisa	Munro, Julia	Yakabuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Natyshak, Taras	
Harris, Michael	Nicholls, Rick	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 48; the nays are 40.

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

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1153 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Han Dong: Speaker, it's my pleasure to welcome three strong advocates from my great riding of Trinity–Spadina: Mr. Tim Maxwell, Mr. Kevin Lee and Mr. Gary Newhouse. They do good work helping the vulnerable in my riding seeking justice and fairness. Welcome.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't like to repeat myself, but there were many members and guests who were late getting here this morning that I wasn't able to mention. They're coming in now, or are here now, from Goderich township, Huron county and across Ontario, mostly members of the Ontario Landowners Association, to witness the petition of right being delivered to the Attorney General this morning, which was a wonderful historic privilege for all of us, and for these people. I say welcome to Queen's Park.

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

WEARING OF RIBBONS

Mr. Michael Mantha: Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent of the House today that I be privileged to wear this green ribbon on my shirt as I speak to my motion on an Ontario Lyme disease strategy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Algoma–Manitoulin is seeking unanimous consent to wear a green ribbon for his statement. Do we agree? Agreed.

I guess there's a typical question we tend to ask; that is, are the ribbons available for all members of the House, and if not, is this specific to your statement? I just need clarity for that.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I will make them available for everybody in the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'll make sure the House leaders are aware of that, and we'll put them where they're supposed to be so that they can support as well.

Further introductions? The member from Algoma–Manitoulin.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Now my friends have some work to do with some ribbons.

I'd like to introduce my friends here today. I would like to recognize the Ontario Lyme Alliance, CanLyme, York North Lyme group, Hamilton Lyme group, the G. Magnotta Foundation for Vector-Borne Diseases. Please help me to welcome them to Queen's Park as we address the issue of Lyme disease. They're all here.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

HAMILTON TIGER-CATS FOOTBALL CAP

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I rise on a point of order, if I could, to seek unanimous consent to have the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek's Hamilton Tiger-Cats cap placed on his desk for the duration of the afternoon session.

As you know, Speaker, the member is away at his daughter's wedding, but we know he would want to be wearing his cap and seeking unanimous consent to do that, had he been here. We're hoping the Tiger-Cats bring the Grey Cup back to Ontario on Sunday, so I'd like to seek unanimous consent to put his cap on his desk.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I might even classify that as half of a statement, but that's not the problem. The problem is that I need to seek unanimous consent for the Tiger-Cats hat to be placed on the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek's desk until after Sunday, when they win the Grey Cup.

Do I have agreement? Agreed. Proceed.

It is now time for members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

GODERICH TOWNSHIP

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Mr. Speaker, this is about the petition of right, which has been our topic today, and for the people who are here as guests to see this done.

The property owners of Goderich township want to de-amalgamate from the amalgamated municipality of Central Huron in Huron county. They have chosen the Petition of Right, an ancient law from 1628, as the instrument to restore their right to determine their own self-governance.

The property owners of Goderich township pay about 60% of the total property tax bill for the amalgamated township of Central Huron, but none of this money is spent on capital projects in Goderich township.

The people of Goderich township are unhappy and they want out. The Petition of Right of 1628 was used by the common people to have the King or Parliament correct a wrong. The people would take a petition signed by a legal majority of the people that defined the wrong and defined what right should be done and presented this Petition of Right to the King or Parliament, and the King or Parliament was bound to say, "Let right be done."

This was the law then; this is the law now. So I say to this House, the crown and the people of Goderich, “Let right be done.”

WINTER ROAD MAINTENANCE

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yet again, we approach that season where we have lots of snow coming down on our highways across the province of Ontario and people are starting to be concerned about the conditions of the roads.

I appreciate and respect that the government has tried to move somewhat on this issue by increasing the number of plows that are on our highways, but we all know that we’re still about 400 plows short to what we used to have when MTO was responsible for plowing our highways. That means that highways in your communities, highways in my communities and across this province are being plowed at a less frequent rate than they were before. I, yet again, got phone calls this morning in my constituency office in regard to the condition of our roads. People are recognizing that the roads are not being maintained to the degree they used to before.

I have a very simple point that I want to make here and a very simple request that I want to make to the minister. Our roads are in worse condition than they have ever been before, and we’re calling on this government to do the right thing. You’ve got to do two things: You’ve got to include, inside the current area maintenance contracts, the circuit times that used to be in those contracts before and allowed our roads to be in a better condition as far as plowing, and we need to increase the amount of equipment that we’re using on our highways to make sure the highways across this province are safe for everyone to travel.

LOCAL FOOD

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It’s an honour for me to speak today about an outstanding restaurant in my riding of Northumberland–Quinte West. The Social Bar and Table in Port Hope has been designated by the Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance’s Feast ON program. This designation is awarded to applicants who purchase at least 25% of their food and beverages from Ontario producers. They must also commit to participate in local food events and partner with local food and beverage providers.

The Social Bar and Table buys over 55% of their products from Ontario suppliers. I’m thrilled that they are one of five restaurants chosen to participate today at Queen’s Park at the 2014 Premier’s Summit on Agri-Food. The Social Bar and Table will be showcasing local products from Linwood Acres Trout Farm, Burnham Family Farm apples and North Gate Organics produce.

Please take time to stop by the agri-food summit reception later on this afternoon downstairs, which focuses on Ontario’s finest producers and demonstrates how important it is to buy local and know where our products are coming from.

The Social Bar and Table is located at 26 Ontario Street in Port Hope. Please stop by when you’re in the riding.

And don’t forget: Good things grow in Ontario.

FILIPINO CHINESE COMMUNITY

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I’m delighted to rise today to congratulate the Federation of Philippine Chinese in Ontario on celebrating their 25th anniversary. This is a non-profit organization that works tirelessly on behalf of the Filipino Chinese community with the goal of preserving their unique traditions while putting down roots here in our province. They promote wonderful cultural and recreational events throughout the province, including holiday traditions, sport leagues and youth events. They also offer support to new Canadians, assisting with communication and socialization and helping them to integrate into their new communities.

I was lucky enough to attend the Moon Festival celebrations held by the FPCO in September. I was blown away by what a vibrant and engaged community they have and by the warm welcome I received.

1310

Tomorrow night, they will be celebrating their 25th anniversary with a Christmas party, so I want to join with the friends and supporters of the FPCO in commending the dedicated service which has built and sustained a thriving community environment for the Filipino Chinese in Ontario. Again, congratulations on a milestone anniversary. I’m sure it’s just one milestone of many to come.

SPORTS IN HAMILTON

Miss Monique Taylor: I’m always proud to stand in this House and have the opportunity which not many are able to enjoy. I have to say I’m thankful to be standing here today to speak about the wonderful city that I live in and also enjoy.

I’m a proud Hamiltonian and I, quite frankly, have been my entire life. I have always been the person to jump at the chance to support a city gathering, a parade or the torch run through my city. I have always been eager to show up at the rallies or engagements that showcase our city and cheer on our teams.

Speaker, as you’re aware, Hamilton was very successful last weekend. The McMaster Marauders won the Mitchell Bowl, sending them to this Saturday’s Vanier Cup, where they will face the University of Montreal. The Marauders were Vanier Cup champions in 2011, finalists in 2012, and I know they’re looking forward to bringing that victory home this year.

Then there are our Tiger-Cats. I have to say I’m rallied, I’m excited and I am so looking forward to Sunday’s game. On Saturday we won the eastern final and on Sunday we will be playing in the 102nd Grey Cup.

I’ve been attending the games since I was a child. I remember being a little kid, sitting in the stands with my family and watching the game. This season has been no

different. I did my best to be at as many games as I could. My brother and I are both season ticket holders, and many a game we shared, bringing our dad or our nephew, or just spending time with our spouses at the games. Whoever I was with was okay with me, as long as I was cheering on my team and having a good time, rain or shine.

I can't believe I'm out of time already, but I just have to say Go, Cats, Go! Oskee Wee Wee! Hamilton will be cheering you on, and I know you're going to bring it home.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Far be it from me to cut off "Oskee Wee Wee."

The member for Burlington

CENTRE FOR EQUITABLE LIBRARY ACCESS

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Mr. Speaker, Oskee Wee Wee indeed.

I rise in the House today to recognize the extraordinary work of the Burlington Public Library and in particular a wonderful organization that I had the privilege of learning about when I toured our library recently, the Centre for Equitable Library Access.

The CELA is a national not-for-profit organization established by Canadian public libraries to provide equitable public library services for Canadians with print disabilities. Our Burlington Public Library is a member of this wonderful national organization, providing print-disabled residents in my riding of Burlington with access to published material in accessible formats.

The inability to hold or manipulate a book, an impairment to reading comprehension, severe or total impairment of sight or the inability to focus or move one's eyes are a few examples of disabilities that prevent print-disabled residents from accessing conventional print.

For the 10% of Canadians who have a print disability, access to reading materials in alternative formats, such as Braille, audio or described video, is often an ongoing challenge. With help from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, digital accessible formats of published material are being produced for visually impaired and print-disabled residents; and my public library is serving as an access point.

The Centre for Equitable Library Access makes it possible for print-disabled residents to gain easy access to a wealth of published materials in formats of their choice, right in their own communities, through their public library.

Speaker, I'm so pleased to stand in my place today and salute our Burlington Public Library for this wonderful and enjoyable and accessible program.

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Today is a good day when we celebrate excellence in Ontario's agri-food industry, but I'd also like to remind the House that earlier this year

the Premier challenged this very same industry to double its growth rate and create 120,000 new jobs by 2020.

Years ago, when I was vice-chair of Ontario Agri-Food Education, Lorie Jocius, the current chair, projected that Ontario's agri-food industry would have jobs without people. Sadly, that's our reality today.

First of all, I would like to congratulate the University of Guelph as well as Food and Beverage Ontario for recently announcing their action plan to address this. Indeed, a new generation must be interested and enthused to pursue post-secondary education focused on primary agriculture and the agri-food sector. But the question is, when should this interest be fostered?

The industry has already indicated that the current number of students in post-secondary education will not meet their future employment needs, and educational stakeholders are telling me some of their programs are going not completely filled. This all indicates that we need to promote careers in Ontario's agri-food sector to youth in a timely manner.

I would suggest, Speaker, that you will find on the order paper today that I've introduced a resolution that would encourage the government to include a mandatory agri-food component of career opportunities in the grades 9 and 10 guidance and career education curriculum.

By supporting Ontario Agri-Food Education, the industry at large has already invested in educational material. Now it's time to put it to use.

WE DAY

Ms. Daiene Vernile: A week ago, 7,000 young people crammed into the Kitchener Memorial Auditorium. There was music; there was a glitzy light show and a lineup of famous people. But this was more than just a rock concert; Kitchener hosted We Day. It's a day long event that encourages young people to care about global issues. The elementary and high school students who were invited to the event all helped to raise funds for Free the Children, and this was their reward. Since 2007, young people across Canada have raised \$45 million for more than 1,000 local and global causes.

Captain Richard Phillips, who was portrayed by Tom Hanks in the movie about the 2009 hijacking of his ship, told the students that attitude will always impact results. I had a chance to see this in action a few years ago when I visited a camp in west Kenya while producing a TV documentary on a group of high school students from my region. After fundraising for two years, they travelled to this remote area and they helped build a school. They installed a water collection project and they were there to learn practical ways to mitigate poverty and hunger. They built the school, and they provided young people there with a very positive and good change for them.

We Day is more than just a one-day event. The messages that they hear empower them to find their passion and to live by example the kinds of changes that they want to see in this world.

COMMUNITY CENTRE

1320

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I'm rising today to showcase a fantastic organization in my riding of Davenport.

Every day, I'm struck by the generosity of our fellow citizens, and nowhere is that generosity of character more apparent than at the Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre. For nearly 30 years, the Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre has tirelessly worked to promote the health and social well-being of the west Toronto community with a broad range of programming. From the preschool program and other services at the Ontario Early Years Centre to the Youth Leadership Project for teenagers, all the way to computer training for seniors, the centre really provides something for everyone, and these programs make a huge difference in the lives of my constituents.

The centre's new HERE4YOUth initiative launched last week. It will fit right in among the roster of fantastic services. HERE4YOUth is a youth-led program that aims to empower young people between the ages of 13 and 24 in the west Toronto area. A team of young researchers are engaging their peers through a number of means in order to figure out what prevents the city's youth from accessing sexual and mental health services. It's an important question, and HERE4YOUth is a great program model. The initiative, which was funded by an Ontario Trillium grant, not only explores a pressing question but also offers a chance for young people to develop their research and community engagement skills.

Last week, I was delighted to attend the HERE4YOUth community fair at the Davenport-Perth centre, and I'm happy to report that it was a successful evening.

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

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE
ON ESTIMATES

Miss Monique Taylor: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Estimates.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Trevor Day): Pursuant to the order of the House dated July 24, 2014, Miss Taylor from the Standing Committee on Estimates reports the following resolutions:

Resolved that supply in the following amounts and to defray the expenses of the following ministries be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2015:

Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport: vote 3801, ministry administration—

Miss Monique Taylor: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense.

Pursuant to standing order 63(d), an order for concurrence for each of the resolutions reported from the committee will be placed on the Orders and Notices paper.

Report deemed received.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT
(SCHOOL BUS
CAMERA SYSTEM), 2014
LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT
LE CODE DE LA ROUTE
(SYSTÈME PHOTOGRAPHIQUE
RELIÉ AUX AUTOBUS SCOLAIRES)

Mr. Nicholls moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 50, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act /
Projet de loi 50, Loi modifiant le Code de la route.

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. Rick Nicholls: This bill amends the Highway Traffic Act to add a new part respecting school bus camera systems. Subsections 175(11) and (12) of the Highway Traffic Act set out certain requirements that apply when a vehicle encounters a school bus on a highway. The new part provides that a photograph of a vehicle obtained from a school bus camera system may be received as evidence in a proceeding under the Provincial Offences Act respecting an alleged offence under subsection 175(11) or (12).

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES

IMMIGRATION POLICY

Hon. Michael Chan: Before I start my remarks, I want to acknowledge some very important people in the House. Some of them just left. I had a big delegation of students from Parkland Public School, but unfortunately they left just moments ago. But there are other important people here. It's my wonderful staff. Without them, this bill would not be possible.

Speaker, I want to acknowledge my deputy, Chisanga Puta-Chekwe; my ADM, Marsha Barnes; and Katrina, Larissa, Akbar, Nick, James and Alice. Thank you for being here today.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the legislation that was introduced yesterday to make immigration work better for Ontario and for newcomers. Ontario has relied upon immigrants from its earliest beginnings. We continue to do so today. But we need to make some changes so that immigration continues to work for us long into the future. I'm proud to have reintroduced the Ontario Immigration Act for the consideration of this House.

As we all know, Speaker, a very similar proposal was introduced last spring, but the House was dissolved

before it was passed. We have brought it forward again, because immigration is important to our future prosperity and to our social fabric.

One study forecasts that there will be more than 2.5 million job openings in the province over the next 10 years, most of them requiring high-skilled workers. Our homegrown talent in Ontario will not be able to meet this number. We will need skilled immigrants to help us fill those jobs and keep the economy growing.

Speaker, an important part of Ontario's economy is trade. It's one of the many areas where our diversity is a strength. Newcomers bring international connections and networks that drive economic growth. The more immigrants we have, the more we can tap into new markets. And the more we trade, the more jobs we create. It's as simple as that. This natural connection between trade and immigration is why the Premier appointed me as Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade.

Our proposed legislation is very, very important. We need to act now to ensure that immigrants continue to bring their skills and talents here.

Two years ago this month, our government announced Ontario's first-ever immigration strategy. Now we are taking the next step by introducing the Ontario Immigration Act. If passed, Ontario would be only the second province or territory in the country to have its own immigration legislation.

This proposed legislation would help us achieve three goals. First, it would help Ontario's work with the federal government on recruitment, selection and admission of skilled immigrants. Second, it would help strengthen our ongoing efforts to reduce fraud and detect misrepresentation, and it would help protect the integrity of our immigrant selection program and improve accountability. Finally, it would increase transparency and enhance information-sharing with our immigration partners, including all levels of government.

Speaker, I believe Ontario is the best place for immigrants to find success. Millions already have. But we must continue to put out the welcome mat, and we have to help immigrants succeed once they arrive here.

Two years ago, our government decided to take immigration in a new direction. Today we are taking another vital step in this new direction, to keep Ontario strong, to keep Ontario prosperous and to keep our province moving forward.

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

Mr. Monte McNaughton: It is an honour to stand here today and respond to the minister's statement.

Many of us here have heard a good deal of debate on this specific piece of legislation already. The Ontario Immigration Act was debated, as the minister said, as Bill 161 through February, March and April of this year. As I understand it, not many changes have been made to the bill, but there were a couple of changes. The basic intention is still to increase the proportion of economic-class immigrants to the province, to deter immigration fraud

and to allow new Canadians to practise in their chosen professions whenever possible.

Ontario has always taken pride in its diversity, in not only welcoming immigrants but in being the first choice for new Canadians. They enriched our culture and brought prosperity because we provided them with opportunity. But sadly, when we talk about this symbiotic relationship, it's starting to sound a bit like we're talking about the good old days rather than about our present. Ontario doesn't offer the same kind of opportunities that it once did, and people just aren't choosing to make Ontario their new home as often as they did in the past.

As economic development critic, I stood in this House month after month to talk about how Ontario's unemployment numbers were below the national average, which they were for 93 consecutive months. As the new critic for citizenship, immigration and international trade, I have a new set of statistics to study, but they really reflect the same trend. This is data that has been brought to the government's attention before, but it bears repeating. Ontario had the lowest percentage of economic immigration in Canada in 2013, about 46%. That's over 20% lower than the national average. Overall, Ontario has about 20% fewer new Canadians choosing to live here than it did only 10 years ago.

You can't blame new Canadians for choosing to head west these days, because average weekly wages are lower here in Ontario, and our unemployment rate for very recent immigrants is the second-highest in all of Canada.

It's obviously a good idea to try to increase economic immigration, but it seems to me that many of the challenges we face here are symptoms of a poor economy. I'd like to see the government address not only the symptoms, but the root cause as well. On top of our obvious economic challenges, we have an aging population and a declining birth rate, as well as significant numbers of young people leaving Ontario to head west.

Our future is very much tied to new Canadians and the ability to attract new Canadians. If we want people to come here and to stay in Ontario, to start families and to put down roots, we need to give them a good reason. We need to start turning things around and making it possible for people to envision a bright future for themselves and their families here in Ontario.

We need to focus not only on attracting new Canadians but also on retaining these hard-working and talented people. We can bring people to Ontario, but it doesn't guarantee they will stay if better opportunities exist in other provinces. If we want spots allocated to fit the province's economic needs, then we need to show that provincial nominee program applicants stay here. The federal government won't allocate more spaces if we're not using what we already have.

1330

There are many aspirational elements to this bill that are subject to federal approval, like selection programs and target levels. Negotiation and communication with the federal government has presented some challenges for this particular government in the past, which causes

me some concern about how productive discussions will be and if measures in this bill will be able to move forward in a timely way. So it remains to be seen what this act will be able to do in practice if it does receive approval from this House. We also have new federal legislation coming into effect, or it has come into effect, which will obviously change some of the context here.

I do want to conclude by applauding the government for introducing legislation, because it's clear that there are specific problems that need to be addressed, and in this bill some of those issues will be addressed, as I mentioned in the beginning. I look forward to studying and debating this bill to find out if it has the solutions that Ontario's immigration system needs.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'm pleased to rise today to speak to my friend the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration's new piece of legislation entitled the Ontario Immigration Act.

Speaker, as you may know, the Windsor–Tecumseh region is home to—the area of the province third for the number of immigrants who come from other areas. In fact, we have more than 100 languages spoken in the homes of the students who come to our schools in Windsor–Tecumseh.

This legislation isn't quite new. As we know, the government has introduced it previously, yet it has never made it to royal assent. And although I'm going to be critical of some parts of the bill, I want to thank the minister and his staff for finally taking action on immigration matters. Thank you, sir.

We absolutely support fairness in immigration. On behalf of the NDP caucus, let me repeat: We absolutely support fairness in immigration. However, I caution the government that if they want to control immigration in this province, that means taking responsibility as well. We can no longer afford to simply point blame at our federal counterparts; we must take the lead on immigration in this province and ensure that we are protecting those who need it, especially our migrant workers.

Frankly, it's about time that Ontario had some immigration policy on the books, given that we are one of the last jurisdictions in Canada to do so. For 41 years, Quebec has been choosing its own immigrants, since they signed their accord in 1973. Today, we are seeing the Ontario government signal their intention to do what Quebec has done for all these years. The British North America Act, section 95, sets out that there's a dual jurisdiction for immigration and for agriculture, and yet Ontario has shirked its responsibilities for choosing immigrants and settling immigrants.

We need to look to other jurisdictions, because not only has Quebec done a better job than Ontario, but so have British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and even Prince Edward Island. Finally, Ontario is getting on-board. It's a timid getting on-board, I have to admit. We take on more than 125,000 immigrants a year, and we're saying that a percentage of those are now going to be chosen, in part, by the province of Ontario.

Sadly, there are many things here in the act that cause our party some grief. Sadly, there's a whole emphasis on

compliance and enforcement and those who fraudulently accept immigration to Canada. The number of people who fraudulently gain entry to our country is less than half of 1%—less than half of 1%—and I believe that Ontario ought not to be going down that path. Are there people who cheat the system? Absolutely, Speaker. Are the numbers large? No.

Control of immigration in this province should also mean an end to all harassment of undocumented workers that we saw last summer, workers who were pulled from their cars and had to show documentation. It means getting out of the detention business and seeking ways to work with undocumented workers who are more than capable of making real contributions to our society. We must stop this process of locking away those undocumented workers indefinitely and find ways to include everyone who wants to make this province their home.

This bill is virtually unchanged from a previous version and thereby runs the risk of continuing to fail Ontario's migrant workers, in particular. My party and I believe that migrant workers should be granted full immigration status and have access to benefits.

Much has been said highlighting what is happening here. I want to say that we need to do the kind of job that Quebec has done for 41 years. We need to assess the immigrants while they are still in their home countries. We need to assess them and tell them what kind of opportunities are here, and also what kind of upgrades they are going to need and that they can undertake while they are there, before they come, or what they are going to need when they get here. It's only fair.

It's unfair to individuals and to other countries to take their best and brightest doctors, engineers, nurses and everybody upon whom they rely and bring them here to a place where they cannot practise their profession. We have too many people with PhDs or MDs driving cabs, taking people back and forth to the airport, instead of practising what they've been trained to do.

So that's one thing that should be improved. We have to do more for the people who are coming here. I look forward to working with this government and with this minister on this bill.

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

PETITIONS

LYME DISEASE

Mr. Rick Nicholls: “Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's, Alzheimer's, arthritic diabetes, depression, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, is increasingly endemic in Canada, but scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the USA and Europe;

“Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of their professional journal that Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada, particularly in southern Ontario;

“Whereas the Ontario public health system and the Ontario Health Insurance Plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process for establishing a clinical diagnosis, but only recognize testing procedures known in the medical literature to provide false negatives at 45% to 95% of the time;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health to direct the Ontario public health system and OHIP to include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme diagnosis, to do everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic and successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians.”

I approve of this petition. I affix my name to it and give it to page Kelsey.

LYME DISEASE

Mr. Michael Mantha: Here’s a good petition, Mr. Speaker.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario does not have a strategy on Lyme disease; and

“Whereas the Public Health Agency of Canada is developing an Action Plan on Lyme Disease; and

“Whereas Toronto Public Health says that transmission of the disease requires the tick to be attached for 24 hours, so early intervention and diagnosis is of primary importance; and

“Whereas a motion was introduced to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario encouraging the government to adopt a strategy on Lyme disease, while taking into account the impact the disease has upon individuals and families in Ontario;

“We, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to develop an integrated strategy on Lyme disease consistent with the action plan of the Public Health Agency of Canada, taking into account available treatments, accessibility issues and the efficacy of the currently available diagnostic mechanisms. In doing so, it should consult with representatives of the health care community and patients’ groups within one year.”

I wholeheartedly support this petition and present it to page Ethan to bring down to the table and the Clerks.

LEGAL AID

Mr. Han Dong: On behalf of Kensington-Bellwoods Community Legal Services, I’d like to present to the Legislative Assembly a petition concerning the transformation of community legal services in Toronto as follows:

“We, the undersigned, call upon the Attorney General of Ontario and Legal Aid Ontario to require the GTA legal clinic transformation project to develop a new vision for community legal services and draft a new proposal that has been created through genuine consultation with low-income communities, clients and front-line staff of all clinics as well as all members of the clinic boards over the course of the next 18 to 24 months.”

I support this petition, and I give it to page Nicole.

1340

WIND TURBINES

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Recognizing there are a number of people in the gallery who are negatively impacted by industrial wind turbines, and that we still get hundreds and hundreds and thousands of signatures, I am pleased to present this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“In light of the many wide-ranging concerns being raised by Ontario citizens and 80-plus action groups across Ontario and the irrefutable international evidence of a flawed technology, health concerns, environmental effects, bird and bat kills, property losses, the tearing apart of families, friends and communities, and unprecedented costs;

“We, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to declare an Ontario”—I’ll say that again, because it’s very important. ‘We ... ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to declare an Ontario-wide moratorium on the development of wind farms.’”

I totally agree with this petition. I’ll affix my signature and send it to the table with Nick.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

Mr. Michael Mantha: “Whereas a motion was introduced at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads ‘that in the opinion of the House, the operation of off-road vehicles on highways under regulation 316/03 be changed to include side-by-side off-road vehicles, four-seat side-by-side vehicles, and two-up vehicles in order for them to be driven on highways under the same conditions as other off-road/all-terrain vehicles’;

“Whereas this motion was passed on November 7, 2013, to amend the Highway Traffic Act 316/03;

“Whereas the economic benefits will have positive impacts on ATV clubs, ATV manufacturers, dealers and rental shops, and will boost revenues to communities promoting this outdoor activity;

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

“We call on the Ministry of Transportation to implement this regulation immediately.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition, affix my signature and present it to Vida to bring down to the Clerks.

HEALTH CARE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support the petition, and I give my petition to page Johann.

GODERICH TOWNSHIP

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Goderich township was formerly a thriving and independent community before forced amalgamation;

“Whereas the taxpayers of Goderich township have suffered an inequitable burden since forced amalgamation;

“Whereas Goderich township is financially secure, independent and self-sufficient;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to de-amalgamate Goderich township from the municipality of Central Huron;

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

“Reinstate the municipality of Goderich township to its former status with all rights, privileges and duties formerly held therein.”

I agree with this petition, affix my signature and give it to page Kelsey.

ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have a petition signed by people from right across Ontario:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I agree 100% with this petition. I will affix my name to it and give it to page Albany to take up to the desk, as soon as the member opposite gives me the pen he just borrowed from me.

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Mrs. Cristina Martins: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario is home to over 400,000 first-, second- and third-generation Hispanic Canadians who originate from the 23 Hispanic countries around the world; and who have made significant contributions to the growth and vibrancy of the province of Ontario;

“Whereas October is a month of great significance for the Hispanic community worldwide; and allows an opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about the outstanding achievements of Hispanic peoples to our province’s social, economic and multicultural fabric;

“We, the undersigned, call upon members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support proclaiming October of each year as Hispanic Heritage Month and support Bill 28 by MPP Cristina Martins from the riding of Davenport.”

I agree with this petition and will affix my name and give it to page Joshua.

LYME DISEASE

Mr. Toby Barrett: “Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many

catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's, Alzheimer's, arthritic diabetes, depression, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, is increasingly endemic in Canada, but scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the USA and Europe;

"Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of their professional journal that Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada, particularly in southern Ontario;

"Whereas the Ontario public health system and the Ontario Health Insurance Plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process for establishing a clinical diagnosis, but only recognize testing procedures known in the medical literature to provide false negatives at 45% to 95% of the time;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health to direct the Ontario public health system and OHIP to include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme diagnosis, to do everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic and successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians."

I affix my signature with the rest of them.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

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

"Whereas northern Ontario will suffer a huge loss of service as a result of government cuts to ServiceOntario counters;

"Whereas these cuts will have a negative impact on local businesses and local economies;

"Whereas northerners will now face challenges in accessing their birth certificates, health cards and licences;

"Whereas northern Ontario should not unfairly bear the brunt of decisions to slash operating budgets;

"Whereas regardless of address, all Ontarians should be treated equally by their government;

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

"Review the decision to cut access to ServiceOntario for northerners, and provide northern Ontarians equal access to these services."

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition and will take the pen that I borrowed from my colleague—and present it to page Mikaila to bring down to the Clerks.

1350

LEGAL AID

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

"Petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

"Population-based legal services funding.

"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 to the desk with Steven.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr. Toby Barrett: I received petitions just a few days ago in my office in Dunnville. These are part of 1,600 names.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Health Canada has approved the use of Soliris for patients with atypical hemolytic uremic syndrome (aHUS), an ultra-rare, chronic and life-threatening genetic condition that progressively damages vital organs, leading to heart attack, stroke and kidney failure; and

"Whereas Soliris, the first and only pharmaceutical treatment in Canada for the treatment of aHUS, has allowed patients to discontinue plasma and dialysis therapies, and has been shown to improve kidney function and enable successful kidney transplant; and

"Whereas the lack of public funding for Soliris is especially burdensome on the families of Ontario children and adults battling this catastrophic disease;

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

"Instruct the Ontario government to immediately provide Soliris as a choice to patients with atypical hemolytic uremic syndrome and their health care providers in Ontario through public funding."

I support this petition.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

LYME DISEASE

MALADIE DE LYME

Mr. Michael Mantha: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care should develop a comprehensive and integrated Lyme disease strategy for Ontario that is consistent and

integrated with the Action Plan on Lyme Disease being developed by the Public Health Agency of Canada;

That the strategy must enhance public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario and ensure that all scientifically verified tests and treatment for acute and chronic Lyme diagnoses are available to patients and health care practitioners in Ontario;

That in developing this strategy, the minister should recognize the impact that Lyme disease has on individuals and families across Ontario and focus on addressing access to care issues faced by people at every stage of the disease;

That in developing this strategy, the minister should:

—Consider the availability of current laboratory tests and protocols to support clinical diagnoses, and specifically the efficacy of currently available diagnostic mechanisms in Ontario compared to other jurisdictions;

—Evaluate the publicly funded services and treatments available to Ontarians, with a view to improving the availability and accessibility of effective services and treatments within the province to provide optimal patient outcomes;

—Recognize the importance of health promotion, disease prevention, and early intervention in the diagnosis and treatment of Lyme disease;

—Consider the role of the government of Ontario and local public health agencies in conducting tick surveillance and tabulating case numbers of Lyme disease; and

—Include any related issues that, in the view of the minister, deserve or require consideration.

That in developing this strategy, the minister should engage and consult with representatives of the health care community and patients' groups, including the Ontario Medical Association, the Ontario College of Family Physicians, the Association of Local Public Health Agencies, the Ontario Lyme Alliance, the Canadian Lyme Disease Foundation, international scientific advisers and medical experts in the field of tick-borne diseases having diverse perspectives, workers' organizations and veterinary associations, amongst others, and accept written submissions from Ontarians; and

That the minister should table the Lyme disease strategy in the House by no later than one year after the passage of this motion.

I so move.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mr. Mantha has moved private members' notice of motion number 13. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I rise today to introduce a motion titled "Motion on Ontario Lyme disease strategy." I choose to put my private member's spot to speak on this topic and introduce this motion due to the overwhelming number of people who have come forward to express their concern on Lyme disease.

People in the riding of Algoma-Manitoulin and across this province are alarmed at the increasing infection rates of Lyme disease, people like Ona and Oliver Maki from Elliot Lake; a beautiful young girl, Kari, whose father I

was introduced to, Denis Villebrun from Elliot Lake; Cherie Prieur and her wonderful son Nolan, who I was introduced to through her mother, Rachel Paterson; and my wonderful extended family that has joined me here today in the battle, in the strategy, with Lyme. Welcome to Queen's Park. I look forward to our many, many, discussions that we're going to have on this.

Lyme disease is a serious bacterial infection acquired by tick bite. Ticks are closely related to the spider family, and many of you may know them more commonly as deer ticks. Ticks carry bacteria which is a type of spirochete, and they feed on the blood by attaching themselves to birds, animals and humans. So when a tick bites one of us, we end up infected with Lyme disease.

Currently, there are eight known endemic areas in the province, and the risk of infection is increasing at an estimated rate of 33 to 55 kilometres per year. This is directly related to climate change. In Ontario, the highest-risk zones are along the shores of Lake Erie, Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. The Kingston and eastern Ontario public health units have declared their regions as high-risk. However, just yesterday in Toronto, Durham and York health units issued an advisory about Lyme disease. Public health units in the municipalities have recently found evidence that black-legged ticks are in the Rouge Valley and that some of these ticks tested positive for the bacteria that causes Lyme disease.

Almost anywhere, infected ticks arrive in Ontario on birds and can be dispersed along their migratory routes. The Public Health Agency of Canada has forecast that by the end of 2020, 80% of people in eastern Canada, including Ontario, will be living in areas endemic for ticks that transmit Lyme disease.

So many of you are here thinking that you are all not at risk of infection. Do you own a dog? Do you have a cat? Do you enjoy walking? Do you enjoy golfing? Well, you are at risk. People who spend time outdoors, working, hiking, camping, playing sports and hunting, are all at risk. We all need to be aware of the dangers and how serious Lyme disease can be if undiagnosed or misdiagnosed. Lack of public awareness puts us all at risk of contracting Lyme. Outdated and incomplete information continues to circulate and dominate the discourse of Lyme. Ontario continues to rely on testing methods that Health Canada says are unreliable. If left undiagnosed and therefore untreated, Lyme can mimic other diseases, such as ALS, MS, lupus, just to name a few, and a lot more.

For all of the abovementioned reasons, it is imperative that we work together to come up with a comprehensive plan to address these shortcomings and create a strategy that prevents the spread of Lyme disease and properly diagnoses the threats to those infected.

1400

For these reasons, I am introducing this motion for an Ontario Lyme disease strategy. As I mentioned previously, this motion will enhance public awareness of Lyme in Ontario and ensure that all scientifically verified tests and

treatment for acute and chronic Lyme diagnosis are available to patients and health practitioners in Ontario.

We have heard from physicians that many are unable to diagnose and treat Lyme because of the inadequate testing available here in Ontario. There is no blood test or other laboratory test available that will reliably detect a current Lyme infection. The technology exists. Other countries and states are using it currently. Many Ontarians are travelling abroad to get these tests done. We need to ensure that people living in this province have access to the best testing and treatment out there. We need to do this immediately, so that more people do not become infected, are misdiagnosed and suffer as a result of not having the latest testing methods available to them.

Some doctors have gone as far as recommending that their patients go to the United States for a correct diagnosis and treatment plan. As you can imagine, this is a huge financial burden for many families. For others, it's not a financial possibility or even logistically possible for them to accomplish.

The motion I have just introduced includes directions to improve the availability and accessibility of effective services and treatments in the province to provide optimal patient outcome. As I mentioned earlier, one of the largest barriers we face are the misconceptions surrounding Lyme, and we need to improve public education.

Lyme disease is not confined to one small area. It's across this province and across our country. As an endemic area widens, we need to ensure that individuals and health care providers have the most current information available to them. We also need a comprehensive public awareness plan so that whether you are a child at school, hiking outdoors, walking your dog or on the ninth hole, you are educated about ticks and Lyme disease. We need to be working together with health care providers, the public education system, parks, provincial parks and outdoor sporting and leisure spaces to ensure that all Ontarians are properly informed about Lyme.

I have had the pleasure of meeting with individuals from the Ontario Lyme Alliance, Canadian Lyme Disease Foundation, the Ontario medical professional association, the Ontario College of Family Physicians and the Association of Local Public Health Agencies. We need to work with all the above to collect concrete data to better shape our ability to combat this debilitating disease. Many people have loved ones suffering from Lyme, and many have lost loved ones. One of the scariest things about an illness is not knowing what's wrong.

I want to recognize Rossana Magnotta, who has joined us here today. Rossana has founded a charitable organization, the G. Magnotta Foundation for Vector-Borne Diseases. The G. Magnotta Foundation has been working closely with the Canadian Lyme Disease Foundation and executives of the Humber River Hospital to establish an extensive human tissue research program using today's most current DNA sequencing technology. Rossana is also part of an ongoing discussion with senior executives of the Public Health Agency of Canada in regard to better

diagnostics and education on Lyme disease issues in Canada. There are many individuals like Rossana who have dedicated countless hours to advance the discussion, to research and to determine the way forward in how we deal with Lyme disease. People like Rossana need to be consulted and included in the government's next step.

We have had several guests join us today who have been personally impacted or are suffering from Lyme. Some of them have shared their stories me. I would like to tell you about Sarah Herr. Unfortunately, Sarah couldn't join us today, but her father, Larry, is here with us. In September 2007, at the age of 18, after having been a healthy person all her life, she suddenly became very sick with severe flu-like symptoms and a variety of other unexplained symptoms. Her ongoing illness forced her to withdraw from first-year university, losing her scholarship in the process. During the next three years, she experienced 22 periods of severe undiagnosed illness. During those three years, she experienced numerous very invasive medical procedures which would have cost OHIP many thousands of dollars. Despite seeing several medical specialists in Barrie and Toronto, no doctor was able to come up with a diagnosis.

The ELISA screening test for Lyme was requisitioned—in fact, twice—but results were negative both times. The follow-up Western Blot test was requisitioned, but the test was never administered. According to available testing, she did not have Lyme. Doctors told her they didn't know what was causing her illness, but they did tell her that it definitely was not Lyme disease.

By 2010, her family began to suspect that she had Lyme disease, although doctor after doctor told her that she did not—since the disease is so rare in Canada that Lyme was not even a possibility. Sarah decided to send a sample of her blood to IGeneX, a tick-specialty lab in California. Bingo. The result came back as a positive test for Lyme. Sarah had her diagnosis.

She searched for and finally found a doctor in North York who was willing to treat her. After several treatments, this doctor suddenly announced, without explanation, that he could no longer treat her and that she would have to look elsewhere for her treatment. She soon discovered that there were no doctors anywhere in Canada who were willing to treat her illness. Even worse, she learned that some Canadian doctors who were successfully treating their Lyme patients were being harassed and disciplined by the College of Physicians and Surgeons. Some had even lost their licence to practise medicine because they were treating Lyme patients.

She learned that doctors in some American states were following different Lyme protocols and were having success treating their patients. Although treatment in the States was an expensive option, her family supported her and convinced her to proceed despite the cost.

By the time her American Lyme doctor treated Sarah, she had been sick for more than three years. The doctor told her that it could be several years before her health was even partially restored. The disease was so firmly established in her body that she would probably never

eradicate it. Her illness had become chronic. It was treatable, but not curable.

As you can imagine, Sarah and many others like her share similar stories of having their lives turned upside down and of serious and chronic suffering. It is clear by meeting with the health care professional organizations working online and the many people whose lives have been impacted that there is a need for an accurate testing, diagnosis and treatment protocol for Lyme in Ontario. A failure to do so would result in a clear dismissal of the thousands of lives that are impacted by Lyme.

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

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise this afternoon to speak in support of the motion presented by the member from Algoma–Manitoulin. I want to first commend him for his commitment to this particular illness, because at the end of the day that's why the people of our ridings bring us to this chamber: to make sure that we are championing various causes and issues.

Our government is committed to protecting Ontarians from Lyme disease. Our Lyme disease strategy includes public education, human and tick surveillance, and tick control. I know the member opposite just said earlier that there was a report identifying some positive ticks in the Rouge Valley in the eastern part of the city of Toronto, and I certainly know that this is a concern in our community.

Public education is the first piece in raising awareness of this particular disease, helping Ontarians to avoid the disease and focusing on prevention, early treatment, early diagnosis etc. I know that our government is committed to the public awareness campaign launched in 2010 to educate the public on how to recognize ticks, tick bites and symptoms of Lyme disease, and ways to protect themselves.

I wanted to share that with everybody in the House, as well as those who are watching today. As a former member of the Toronto Board of Health, I can speak with some kind of expertise on this. On the Toronto Board of Health website—they have a huge website there—under Lyme disease, there are eight folders: clinical signs and symptoms, transmission, surveillance, diagnosis and testing prevention, tick removal and submission, prophylaxis and treatment, and references. That's just the city of Toronto's website about Lyme disease.

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Also, in preparation for today's discussion on this particular motion—we know that this is not just an Ontario strategy we're talking about. We need to be looking at a national strategy, so I know my colleague has probably done his homework as well. Public Health Ontario also has a very expansive website about Lyme disease. It talks about the whole issue of vector-borne disease, the 2012 summary, the definition of Lyme disease and the whole issue of different vector-borne diseases. I want to make sure that the audience here in the House and those who are watching today are aware that both provincially and locally in the city of Toronto there is some public educa-

tion campaign. Obviously, there's more that needs to be done.

The public education campaign cannot be exclusively focused on the health sector. We just heard earlier from the member from Algoma–Manitoulin that outdoor education—I come from the school board sector. Many of our kids, every day, are going out for outdoor experiential learning. We've got to make sure that this particular motion brings in other ministries: the Ministry of Education; of course, the Ministry of Health; looking at the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities—we have post-secondary students outside doing experiential learning out in the community; and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. We don't want to see this particular disease as just health-centric. That's one thing I want to mention to the member opposite.

I know that our government has been working very closely with Public Health Ontario in terms of diagnostic guidelines and providing scientific advice and continuing medical education. I think the member opposite did mention the professional responsibility with respect to this particular disease, Lyme disease, as well as making sure, navigating through Public Health Ontario, to undertake the laboratory testing and do the early diagnosis so a treatment can be provided.

We are also working with Public Health Ontario and Lyme advocates, the community—and I think the member opposite earlier recognized some of the members who are here today from the Lyme community—to ensure the public and health care providers have the resources to have up-to-date information in terms of testing, treatments and diagnosis.

The other piece I want to share with the member opposite and the members of this House is the fact that, with regard to Lyme disease here, it's not like the tick can just stay in a stationary piece. In the Public Health Agency of Canada, they too have a very large, comprehensive website. In their website it talks about what the causes of Lyme disease are, the risk of getting Lyme disease, how we prevent Lyme disease, and the health professional piece—and I would say not just the health professional piece; I would say the whole issue of how to bring awareness of Lyme disease across the professional sectors. As I said earlier, it's not just about health sectors, but also educators—the symptoms, the treatments, the surveillance and the reporting. Oftentimes people may have something like a symptom but they don't report it. How do you get the treatment if you don't report it?

The other piece is that we have a very diverse community. I know that in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt, for over 50% of my constituents English is a second language. How do we ensure that Lyme disease gets communicated across Ontario with a very large, diverse community?

At the end of the day, I welcome the conversation with the member from Algoma–Manitoulin about this particular disease, but more importantly, we need a comprehensive strategy working with all three levels of government, a multi-ministry strategy. I believe that there are merits to

having this conversation because we know that one person having a diagnosis of Lyme disease is one too many, and if we can prevent and educate and, most importantly, have early treatment of this disease, we may reduce deaths, which is the worst tragedy of this piece.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: During my years in the Ontario Legislature, there haven't been many times that members from all sides of this House have come together to support a private member's bill, and I do know that we in the official opposition will be supporting this legislation from Michael Mantha, the member for Algoma-Manitoulin.

The second reading of my private member's bill also, as many would know, was debated last Thursday. It covered not only Lyme but a number of other emerging infectious diseases. It also received all-party support.

The thrust of that bill, as I've indicated, is not only Lyme but also West Nile and Ebola, and setting in place a protocol for any future diseases that may arrive in the province of Ontario.

I think that's important for this legislation and the legislation we debated last Thursday. There is no legislation, at present, directing the ministry to have a comprehensive plan or a program dealing with diseases such as this, so these proposed laws would set in place a decision-making structure and policies to better enable the province of Ontario to better serve its citizens.

Today's motion, as we know, calls on the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to develop a comprehensive, integrated Lyme disease strategy for the province that is consistent and integrated with the action plan on Lyme disease being developed by the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Over a number of months, I developed legislation to deal with the diseases that I discussed. If passed at second reading, it develops a provincial framework and an action plan that establishes a provincial surveillance program as well as educational materials and guidelines regarding prevention, identification, treatment and management of vector-borne and zoonotic diseases. The bill promotes research and requires collaboration among all concerned, particularly the public.

I should mention that vector-borne and zoonotic diseases are infectious diseases. Transmission involves animal hosts. In some cases, it involves vectors—in this case, the tick, and for West Nile, for example, mosquitoes.

We're competing for scarce resources. Much of the talk today is about Ebola, of course. It's important that the frameworks developed are based on objective science, to better enable government to set priorities to allocate those scarce resources. A surveillance program must be designed to properly track incidence rates and also associated economic costs.

There's obviously much work to be done on the diagnosis and treatment and the management side of things with respect to Lyme. There are so many conflicting medical and scientific viewpoints. There's the political

dimension and the social dimension. Social media has been accused of communicating inaccurate medical information and pitches for treatment that is dubious at best and expensive. There are also allegations, as we hear, of shortcomings in the diagnosis and treatment of Lyme directed at mainstream medicine.

There is much work to be done as far as emergency preparedness, and much work to be done for this government to work with the province of Ontario. Most importantly, the discussion must continue, but research must continue as well.

Again, today's legislation is all to the good. As the member had indicated, we have to work together. As I said, we'll be voting for it.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm glad we're discussing Lyme disease here in the House today, because I think this is a major issue in our province.

We're seeing a rising number of ticks here in Ontario, ticks which are carrying Lyme disease. In 2009, there were only 10 areas confirmed to have infection. Today there are 22 known areas. Since national reporting began in 2009, Ontario has had more than half of the country's reported cases.

When someone gets bit, they may see some initial symptoms, things like a red rash, and get a fever or get sick. Some may never see symptoms at all.

According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, when someone is bit by a tick and believes they have Lyme disease, the agency states they should, "See your health care provider right away if you develop symptoms of Lyme disease in the weeks after a tick bite."

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But what happens when the doctor won't diagnose Lyme disease or when the Canadian test comes back negative? This is a huge issue. You see, this is a major problem. The symptoms of Lyme disease can look like a lot of other diseases. People are being misdiagnosed. In my office, I have spoken with people who were treated for MS, fever, brain tissue damage, all of which were misdiagnosed Lyme disease.

This is still an emerging disease. There is a lot of information available to doctors out there about Lyme disease. The problem is that it leaves the people of Ontario holding the bill.

Those who contract Lyme disease get sick; they stay sick. They have constant fever. Processing thoughts becomes hard. They feel tired all of the time. In a number of cases, they come down with depression. Functioning in their day-to-day lives becomes almost impossible. They start to lose weight. Their overall health dramatically declines.

Look at the case of Amanda Wilson from Fort Erie in my riding. I know I mentioned this recently, but it's worth mentioning again. She works for the border security services. A few weeks back, I went to a fundraiser for her. I mentioned it then, and I'll mention it again: I was blown away by the purpose of this fundraiser.

Amanda had contracted Lyme disease. She lives in Fort Erie, yet every week she drives to New York state and pays out of pocket for her treatment. She can literally see her home across the river, yet she has to pay an American doctor for treatment.

I'm happy to say that the fundraiser was packed. Her friends from border security all came out and the community rallied around her and donated to their fellow co-worker to help her fight the disease.

Fort Erie is a great community, a community that takes care of its own, but they shouldn't have to. Amanda is a talented and smart young woman who should have the support of this province, and so should everyone else who contracts Lyme disease in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say here that the health minister did approach me on this case, and I thanked him very much for that. Amanda was thrilled to know that someone was finally—finally—interested in what is happening to her. For a long time, people had been ignoring Amanda or unable to help.

The only problem is that this doesn't affect only Amanda. I'd like the rest of my colleagues to listen to this. Just today I spoke with another constituent who has a bill right now totalling \$50,000 for treatment he has received in Florida. He pays \$3,000 a week in medical bills, plus what it costs to live down there. He has to leave his family, his friends and his job just to try to get treatment so he can function in his daily life. He told my office that the last year of his life has been wasted trying to find a diagnosis for this disease. Think about that. He couldn't get one here in Canada and Ontario. Now he flies to Florida to receive treatment for Lyme disease.

Mr. Speaker, what's even more troubling is that when we contacted him, he already knew—when I talked to him today, he already knew—of three other people in the city of Niagara Falls who have Lyme disease and are getting treatment in New York state.

These are people who are being bankrupted by these treatments. Just think about the pain they must go through if they are willing to spend their entire life's savings to go into debt just to get treatment. I thought we came to the conclusion a long time ago that no one in the province of Ontario should have to choose between good health and poverty.

These are employed people, too—people with good jobs. Imagine what it would be like to be on social assistance or to be unemployed with Lyme disease. You would never be able to go and get treatment. I have no doubt in my mind that if the people I've spoken with so far are coming to my office, there are people living below the poverty line with the disease who can't afford to get treatment.

When you have the symptoms of Lyme disease, you can expect to spend weeks, if not months, in and out of the hospital, trying to figure out what is wrong with you. Our medical testing is falling behind. It's frustrating already sick people. The only reason people keep coming back to the doctor instead of giving up is because of how hard it is to live with the disease. These are people living in Ontario who need medical help.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to commend the member for Algoma–Manitoulin for this. I think it's a really thoughtful and important bill. I enthusiastically support it and commend him for his leadership and his work.

There are really no other times to do this, but I also really enjoy working with him. I think we've both worked very hard on a number of issues, particularly in his constituency. He has always brought a great deal of professionalism to this House, so I'm particularly pleased to be able to support another initiative of his, and I hope that spirit becomes more infectious.

While we're very supportive of this, the government of Ontario sees the issue of Lyme disease as much as a strategy that is needed as being part of our climate change strategy. The member from Niagara Falls described very accurately, I think, the plight of a person who makes repeated visits to a hospital just to get a diagnosis, because the geography which these ticks occupy now is huge. Ten years ago, when I moved back to Ontario, this was a southern Ontario disease, limited to peripheral areas of the province. We are now at a point where you will find these ticks have migrated up into the constituency of the member from Algoma–Manitoulin, up to Thunder Bay. Over the next few decades, the mean temperature in Ontario will warm faster than in most other parts of the world. It will be about a five-degree Celsius mean temperature change.

Compared to the continental United States and the south, the more south you are, it's two degrees Celsius, but as you know from looking at California—Mr. Speaker, our food prices are going to go up in all of our constituencies by 20% because of the three years of severe drought—20%. Severe drought in Brazil led to, today, Tim Hortons increasing its coffee prices by 10 cents a cup.

One of the biggest things that is actually going to drive the cost of living for Ontarians is going to be the accelerating pace at which the climate is changing.

So when I hear people, especially in the official opposition, who would like to chide the government that there should be no market mechanism to correct this market failure, and that everything we do is a carbon tax, I want them to think about the person who is trying to get help in Niagara Falls. Four out of five times, the reason that person got Lyme disease—they would likely have never gotten it, because that tick and the vector for this disease would not have existed in their community if the climate wasn't changed.

This is only one of a number of very terrible diseases that are going to be visited upon our citizens as a result of this rapidly warming climate, and it doesn't mean balmy days. We will have more severe winters that are ridiculously cold. We will see a lot more experiences as we saw in Buffalo, where 12 people have now died because we had a severe snowstorm, followed by flooding 24 hours later; or in Burlington, where people are having trouble getting insurance because the modern stormwater sewage system is under capacity.

But it's probably in the area of health care that the costs and the difficulties and the impacts on people's lives are going to be most severe. We know SARS, we know AIDS; we know where epidemics can come out of the blue.

We're now into a rich, changing, warming climate where viruses and bacteria borne on different species and insects are going to become more pervasive. The cost of Lyme disease over the coming decades is going to be in the billions of dollars. It is estimated that with 28,000 cases in the United States last year alone, up 25% from the year before—you're now seeing a very serious, debilitating illness that is increasing right now at 25% per year. That will probably accelerate: 30% per year, 40% per year. We will probably soon see rates that are five times what today's infection rates are, simply because, the way the ecosystems are working with these changing climates, when you have ticks which have thermal capacity, in other words, thermal sensors, they move—because they don't think—they just move and migrate to these different climates.

1430

How did we pay for this, Mr. Speaker? How are we going to pay for this? An aging population: How are we going to pay for this? We have exploding autism because of all kinds of reasons we don't understand. We have type 2 diabetes. We have onset dementia. How do we take care of our citizens when we're also going to be dealing with more ice storms and more flash floods? We have to have a more serious conversation about the costs of climate change on our infrastructure, on our lives, and we are not having a serious conversation.

I have little patience for members of the Flat Earth Society, some of whom are in this House, who think that climate change isn't happening and we should still be debating the science. I have about as little tolerance for those who don't understand that the cost of everything we do just to keep our citizens healthy is going to cost us billions of dollars a year—to have a transit system, to keep roads in good repair. We are going to have to retrofit about 90% of our buildings that are already built to actually get down to the insulation levels to reduce our GHGs to avoid this continuing disaster.

But this is a bright light today. I thank the member for Algoma–Manitoulin. I hope, in return, the NDP will support building a health strategy into our climate change strategy for these kinds of diseases because I think we're going to need to work together on this. This should not be a partisan issue.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: It's a pleasure to speak in support of the motion from the member for Algoma–Manitoulin. In my riding, the areas along the St. Lawrence are a real hotbed for Lyme disease, so this is a very important—and also personal—debate for myself and members in my riding.

I've been talking about the need for the government to get serious about Lyme disease since I first rose in the

Legislature on November 23, 2011, with a petition. In the three years since, I and many of my colleagues have tabled numerous petitions representing our constituents right across the province. The call for a comprehensive Lyme disease strategy isn't new for us. But what's frustrating for members and their constituents whose lives have been devastated by the disease is that those calls have fallen on deaf ears. The current and former Ministers of Health and Long-Term Care basically gave me a pat on the head with their petition responses and told me that everything was okay.

If they had listened to the constituents who have written to them, they'd realize everything isn't okay. The reality when it comes to Lyme is that things are getting worse, not better; and Ontario must start treating it like a serious disease by developing the comprehensive approach that the member is talking about in this motion: for testing, diagnosing, treating and preventing Lyme disease. I applaud him for putting this motion on the floor today.

In Minister Hoskins's response to the petition I tabled on July 7, he notes that the number of Lyme disease cases in Ontario is fairly stable. The reason for this is evident if he actually read the petition. The testing protocol in Ontario doesn't work. The result is that people who have the disease—because we lack the adequate test—don't show up in the statistics. What's worse, they can't get the treatment.

In a member's statement I made earlier this year, I spoke about one of my constituents, Karen Brown, whose horrible experience having been bitten by a tick near her Mallorytown home in 2013 really sums up, to me, everything that is wrong with our present system. She had two tests for the disease and they both came back negative, because OHIP won't cover the most accurate test. So instead of starting treatment, Karen was told to go get another test. Meanwhile, Lyme disease takes a stronger hold on her body and her prospects for recovery, if she ever starts treatment, lessen. It's a vicious circle that too many Ontarians watching the debate today can relate to.

Look, I don't want to stand here today and slam the government. I want to make sure that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care Actually admits that there is a problem, and to do something about it. It's not always an admission of failure to say our system can do better, but it becomes one when you ignore the reality all around you and allow the disease to continue to ruin people's lives. It should be unacceptable to our Minister of Health, who is a doctor, to see Ontario falling behind other provinces and the federal government on Lyme. We can do better, and it's past time that we did.

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It's always an honour and a privilege to rise in the House to speak on behalf of the residents of my riding of Windsor–Tecumseh and to add my comments to the debate of the day. Today I'm especially honoured to rise and speak about my support for the motion brought forward by the hard-working member from Algoma–Manitoulin.

In my short time in the House—well, it's been more than a year now, so I guess I shouldn't call it a short time, but I've been so impressed in the time that I've been here by the member from Algoma–Manitoulin. He always brings his A game to the floor of this House. He always speaks from the heart, with great passion, about the men and the women in Algoma–Manitoulin, the great people who live there. He speaks to the issues that concern his residents; indeed, that's what they want us to do when they send us here: to be their voice and to raise their concerns.

This issue is of great concern to the people who call Algoma–Manitoulin their home. As we've heard earlier today, Lyme disease is not an issue just to the northern part of the province, but it's a problem for those of us who live in southern and southwestern Ontario, as well—as well as the eastern regions of the province, as we just heard.

Mr. Mantha, the member from Algoma–Manitoulin, brings forward a very timely motion, one that calls on the government to develop a strategy on Lyme disease. This isn't just any type of strategy, but rather one that would be comprehensive, integrated and aligned with the Action Plan on Lyme Disease being developed by the federal Public Health Agency of Canada.

I know the spotlight on Lyme disease has garnered greater intensity over the past number of years, and I know this, Speaker, as do you, because of Point Pelee National Park. It's just a 45-minute drive from my riding of Windsor–Tecumseh. It's in your riding, as you well know, just outside of Leamington, and it has a tip of land that runs out into Lake Erie. That tip of sand is recognized as the most southern tip of land mass in Canada. That's not to downgrade the folks who live on Pelee Island, or further south out on Lake Erie, but Point Pelee National Park is as far as you can drive in Canada without taking a ferry, boat or canoe and still be within Canada.

The point of this geography lesson, Speaker, is to inform you that the park is now listed as one of the eight endemic areas in Ontario by the federal Public Health Agency of Canada. That's right; we know about Lyme disease in our part of the province. It's an issue that affects us all, no matter where we live in Ontario.

It's a known fact that the black-legged tick has become established at Point Pelee National Park. Obviously this is a cause for concern, not only for the visitors who visit this treasured national park—the smallest national park—but for the residents of our entire region. Point Pelee National Park has always been one of the most popular with visitors, partly because monarch butterflies cover the park from late August to early October—visitors come in droves to see that—and birdwatchers flock to the park in great numbers during the first three weeks of May for the Festival of Birds.

When I first moved to southwestern Ontario, way back in 1974, I moved to Leamington from Pembroke, right in the heart of the riding now held by Mr. Yakabuski, the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I've re-

mindful that member many times that I used to interview his father when I was a reporter up in Pembroke and his father was the Conservative member from that area. But I left CHOV television in Pembroke and was lured away to be news director of CHYR Radio in the tomato capital of Canada, Leamington—obviously before I moved into Windsor and became the member from Windsor–Tecumseh. But I digress, Speaker; I know.

Anyway, this is why all parties need to get ahead of the game here. We all should be supporting this motion. According to the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit, there have been four cases of Lyme disease reported in my area of Windsor and Essex county since 2010. In 2013, two ticks were tested and found to be carriers out of the 96 that were submitted by the public and local physicians.

1440

Look, we need to take action. We need to take action now. We need to ensure that all scientifically verified tests and treatments are available to patients and their health care practitioners. We need to recognize the impact that Lyme disease has on individuals and families across this province, and we need to focus on addressing access-to-care issues faced by people at every stage of this disease.

As a province, let's take some immediate action. That's why I'm supporting this motion brought forward today by the member from Algoma–Manitoulin.

I came across some interesting facts that I thought I should share. Lyme disease was actually named after the town of Old Lyme, Connecticut, where a cluster of people were diagnosed with the disease around 1975. By 1977, the first 51 cases of Lyme arthritis were described. In 1982, the bacterium that causes Lyme disease was discovered. In 1987, Lyme disease became a reportable disease and all physicians were required to report it. By 1988, the news of Lyme disease spread to national media attention.

Mr. Speaker, I'm almost out of time. Let me just say that I heard the petitions on Lyme disease and the motion that's being brought forward by the member of Algoma–Manitoulin. I have one on my website. Anyone can download it. I have petitions in my constituency office in Windsor–Tecumseh. I invite anyone to come in who wants to take part in the campaign launched today by the member from Algoma–Manitoulin.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It's my pleasure to join today's debate and also share my support with the member from Algoma–Manitoulin.

We've spoken about this issue for some time, and I am so pleased that, together, the member from Algoma–Manitoulin and the member from Haldimand–Norfolk have shone a very, very important light on this disease that affects so many.

I represent the riding of Huron–Bruce. I have folks with whom I have been meeting since 2011 who suffer with this disease. I spoke to the private member's

initiative last week. While I was doing some errands in town over the weekend, I ran into one of the people I spoke of. She had tears in her eyes. It's an incredible thing, learning to live with this disease and learning to live with the fact that people don't always necessarily understand what it is you're going through.

Deborah, just for the benefit of the people who are here today, has Lyme disease, and she passed it along to her three sons. Her eldest son, Caleb, has been most affected. Before they really understood what the problem was, he was in a behavioural class. She had to send him 45 minutes away from home to a different school so he could get proper support in an educational environment, and then they sought out treatment. I thank the member from Niagara for recognizing the costs that are associated with treating this disease. They put everything towards their kids, until they couldn't afford it any longer.

Sadly, her eldest child, Caleb, is now back in behavioural classes and he's going to a psychiatrist when what he really needs is a government in Ontario that, first, agrees that this is an issue. Lyme disease is an issue that should be a priority and therefore have the proper action plan. That's why I congratulate the member from Algoma-Manitoulin, along with my colleague, for standing up and doing right by all the people in Ontario who have been affected.

Another lady from my riding was first affected by Lyme disease going back to 2008. She's watching, she cares and she wants action. Just earlier this week, she sent me an email—from Doris—with some suggestions. I'd like to read them into the record so that it's something to consider when this bill gets into committee. Doris suggests that we need:

“(1) Public education: awareness of Lyme in Ontario, how Lyme is contracted and how preventive measures can lessen the exposure.

“(2) Physician and health care workers' education: Lyme symptoms and treatment can mimic other conditions.” She feels very strongly that our local physicians here in Ontario, as well as health care workers, need to be more in tune with this particular disease.

Her third suggestion was—and we've heard about it; I read about it with our petitions—that we need “better Lyme testing methods” to be available right here in Ontario. It's ridiculous that people in Ontario have to send their tests to California to get proper testing as opposed to false negatives that happen all the time.

Doris went on to say that there are test methods recommended by the International Lyme and Associated Diseases Society.

We can do better, Speaker, and I look forward to everyone's support.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Algoma-Manitoulin for a two-minute reply.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to thank the members from Scarborough-Agincourt, Haldimand-Norfolk, Niagara Falls, the Minister of the Environment and

Climate Change, Leeds-Grenville, Windsor-Tecumseh and Huron-Bruce.

Lyme disease is called the great imitator. It often mimics many other conditions and diseases, such as multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's, ALS, fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue, dementia, lupus and rheumatoid arthritis. Our physicians need to recognize Lyme as a possible diagnosis and educate themselves about the disease.

Merci beaucoup, Jeanne. J'espère que tu es contente que j'aie rentré ça dans le « record » de ta part. C'est grandement apprécié d'avoir participé à notre discussion qu'on a eue cet après-midi.

Lyme disease is also a significant and growing health concern in our province. The numerous people already infected and those who will be infected by Lyme unless action is taken come from all walks of life. This is a health care issue that is and needs to be non-partisan. People from all political parties are recognizing that they have to join together to effect changes needed to protect everyone in Ontario.

The fundamental difference between this motion and the bill I supported from my colleague last week is that this motion requires the development of a comprehensive and integrated Ontario strategy which will specifically address Lyme disease. In developing such a strategy, it will be necessary to examine a broad range of factors and include an examination of diverse perspectives, some of which have been and continue to be controversial, in order to arrive at solutions to improve the availability and accessibility of effective services and treatment in order to provide optimal patient outcomes.

Give me time, Speaker. I'm almost done.

The development of a well-crafted strategy for Lyme disease is fundamentally needed to provide the foundation for action planning. A strategy is an overall plan which can also include a formal mechanism by which current and future studies and discoveries can be evaluated and incorporated as they become available to allow both the strategy and any action plans and framework to evolve and adapt to changing circumstances.

That is why this motion needs to proceed independently. It would be very appropriate for Ontario to be the first Canadian province to establish a provincial strategy on Lyme disease. I thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank you all for joining us here today. Let's hope this is a step towards getting that strategy done.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member from Algoma-Manitoulin.

Orders of the day.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: I move that, in the opinion of this House, water fluoridation promotes good health, and the optimal concentration of fluoride in drinking water is essential to the health of Ontarians by minimizing tooth decay, and helping restore tooth enamel.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mr. Delaney has moved private members' notice of motion

number 10. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Speaker, this past summer, I met with a number of dentists from our Halton-Peel Dental Association to resolve some issues between the province and the dental profession. At one of the meetings, almost in passing, one of my guests mentioned municipal water fluoridation and expressed a worry that municipalities might move away from it. That discussion caused me to get interested in the remark.

In the most recent municipal election, I was surprised by the number of fringe candidates advocating something as egregiously stupid as ceasing to add fluoride to municipal drinking water. So I looked into municipal water fluoridation some more, and I found some of the most transparent junk science that I have seen in quite a while.

We need to shine a light on something that Ontario is generally doing very well—adding a small amount of the element fluorine, about 1 milligram per litre, to municipal drinking water to protect against tooth decay—and not only raise the profile of doing something right, but sound a warning against doing something wrong by changing this sound and healthy practice.

1450

To this end, I'm very pleased to welcome some of the best dentists in the Halton-Peel area, who have taken some of their very valuable time to be with us today. I call members' attention to the east gallery, where I'd like to welcome Dr. Lisa Bentley, past president of the Halton-Peel Dental Association and current chair of the ODA economics committee; Mr. Frank Bevilacqua, ODA's director of professional, government and component society affairs; Dr. Raffy Chouljian, member of the ODA board of directors; Dr. Steve Lipinski, past president of the HPDA and my own dentist; Ms. Roberta MacLean, ODA's health policy specialist; Dr. Brian Tenaschuk, immediate past president of the HPDA and a current member of the ODA education committee; Dr. Larry Tenaschuk, member of the ODA board of directors, and his wife, Mrs. Olga Tenaschuk, whose birthday is today; and Dr. Brenda Thomson, past president of the HPDA and a current member of the ODA's membership services committee.

Let's start at the beginning. Fluorine is a natural element. In its pure form, it's a gas. It's found in nature, combined in minerals and rocks and soil. When water passes over these rocks and soil, it dissolves fluoride compounds and releases fluoride ions into the water. Fluoride is naturally found in varying concentrations in water everywhere. Where fluoride concentration is about 0.8 to one 1/1000th of one gram per litre of water, or 0.8 to one milligram per litre, drinking such water regularly makes the outer layer of teeth stronger and much less likely to get cavities.

In Ontario, the water found in Stratford naturally has just about this concentration of fluoride. As researchers half a century ago mapped the incidence of tooth decay and overlaid it with naturally occurring areas of fluoride concentrations, the picture was crystal clear. Where

fluoride was about 0.8 milligrams per litre, children and adults had cavities and tooth decay at rates consistently much lower than in areas where the concentration of fluoride was lower than this 0.8 milligrams per litre threshold. Not surprisingly, when fluoride was added to municipal drinking water with low fluoride content, tooth decay rates dropped as people regularly ingested the local drinking water.

After the common cold, tooth decay is the most frequent disease in the world and one of the leading causes of absences from school. If you take the flu shot to avoid an influenza infection, if you take a vaccination to avoid a whole host of fatal or debilitating diseases such as polio, tuberculosis and others, why wouldn't you want drinking water that strengthens your teeth and protects them from decay? We pasteurize our milk to protect ourselves from dangerous bacteria such as salmonella, E. coli, and listeria. We add small, trace amounts of chlorine to our drinking water to kill similar bacteria in our water.

In my parents' day, their water was not fluoridated, and they and most of their friends routinely lost all of their teeth and wore both upper and lower plates early in adulthood. I did benefit from municipal drinking water all my life, in three provinces, and combined with regular dental care, I still have my own teeth—which also means I'm a goaltender.

In 2012, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health—*Interjections.*

Mr. Bob Delaney: Goalies wear helmets these days.

In 2012, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Arlene King, published a report on oral health. It made four recommendations for action by the province. Let me read recommendation number one verbatim: "Conduct a review of current policies and mechanisms to ensure that all Ontarians have access to optimally fluoridated drinking water." The fact is that tooth decay and gum disease are not only preventable; they're easy to prevent. Fluoridation works just by having a drink of water, and it reaches everybody served by a fluoridated supply of municipal drinking water. You don't need private dental insurance to get access to it. Most municipalities in Ontario bring the levels of naturally occurring fluoride in their water up to this optimal level of 0.8 to 1 milligram per litre by adding the difference at the filtration plant where their water is treated.

Another way to see the cause and effect between tooth decay and the fluoridation of water is to look at data where city councils have listened to the junk science and stopped fluoridating their water. One such area is Dorval, Quebec, near where I grew up on the Island of Montreal. Water fluoridation was halted in Dorval, Quebec in 2003, and within three years, the rates of tooth decay had doubled.

In Ontario, the city of Windsor stopped fluoridating its water in 2013. Last weekend, a group of our Halton-Peel dentists came to my home to visit me to help me prepare for today. They were joined by a dentist named Dr. Charles Frank, a plain-spoken Windsor-area practitioner. Here is what Dr. Frank said to me of his professional work in Windsor. I will read it verbatim:

"In the Windsor-Essex region, there is a diagonal line that runs through the county which separated the fluoridated and non-fluoridated areas. It was common for the dentists to be able to have a good idea of which side of the line the children came from based upon the amount and severity of the dental decay they presented with.

"It can take a few years before the effects of removal of fluoride from the water supply become noticeable. It hasn't been very long, and already I've noticed an increase in the level of dental decay.

"A couple of months ago, I treated three children from Windsor, all between the ages of four and five years of age, who, due to their young age, and the quantity of dental treatment needed, required this treatment in hospital as outpatients, under general anaesthesia.

"A child of this age normally has 20 teeth. The first child had nine teeth which needed to be treated; the next, 13; and the last, eight. This is far in excess of what I am used to seeing in Windsor for children of this age.

"As a health care professional, it has been disheartening to see this needless increase in preventable dental disease in these children—one of the more vulnerable segments of our population.

"As an aside, each of these children are on the social services program administered by the city, another vulnerable segment of our community. This past week, Carol Pavlov, who administers the city's dental program, called our office and has advised us that the program is running out of funds due to the increased demand for dental treatment."

Speaker, it seems that the \$150,000 the Windsor city council thought it might save has been spent many times over in treating completely foreseeable and preventable dental decay.

I've read through the so-called arguments against water fluoridation. They span the spectrum from silly through pseudo-science all the way to the paranoid. I especially enjoyed reading the one about fluorine being a mind-control agent used by dictators.

The real science is methodical, clear, consistent and conclusive: Fluoride, in the right concentrations, coupled with regular dental care, means stronger tooth enamel and less tooth decay and gum disease. In my opinion, it's time for our Ministry of Health to step up and implement Dr. King's recommendation and insist that all Ontario municipal drinking water be treated not just with chlorine to kill bacteria, but fluorine to prevent tooth decay, just as all milk must be pasteurized and all children vaccinated against preventable diseases.

Moreover, it's time for our health care professionals, especially our dentists, doctors, hospitals, CCACs and public health clinics, not to take the good sense and sound science of fluoridation for granted. They need to use their access to their patients to treat them and their families and to teach them why their water is treated with fluoride and why it is important that it remain so.

I just want to thank all of our wonderful dentists, not just those who are here but those all across Ontario, for their overwhelming support and for speaking up on

behalf of their patients and urging our province and our cities to act—and in most cases, to continue to act—responsibly by fluoridating Ontario's drinking water now and into the future.

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

1500

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: It's a pleasure for me to rise on behalf of the PC Party and speak to this matter.

I have some research here, done by the Ontario Dental Association. It was interesting to find out that the first community water fluoridation process was developed—the trials began in Brantford, Ontario, in 1945. At last count there are over nine million Ontarians who have access to fluoridated water, representing 75% of the population in the province. Currently, community water fluoridation is a practice in over 30 countries around the world, providing over 370 million people with optimally fluoridated water.

I want to speak to something that the member from Streetsville was saying—it's not Streetsville.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Mississauga.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: —Mississauga—Streetsville was saying about when these trials began. I grew up on a farm, as you well understand, Speaker. We didn't have access to fluoridated water. I can remember as a child, apart from some of the other hardships that we had, of walking uphill both ways to school and through snowdrifts that would make a sasquatch back off—

Mr. John Vanthof: It was uphill both ways, right?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Yes, both ways—spending a considerable amount of time in a dentist's chair. At that time, and this is when I was in public school, the dentist said that I had a condition. I don't know the name of it, but I had too strong of an acid in my mouth and it was actually eating the enamel on my teeth. So I spent a lot of time in a dentist's chair, and I'm still frightened of these guys to this day. But growing up on a farm, we certainly didn't have access to fluoride. When our children were born, we certainly made sure that the dentist trips were on schedule because, again, we were still on the farm and didn't have access to this product.

In talking to my own dentist, he is quite worried with some of the children that come into his office with bad teeth. They're sick from it, they can't eat properly, and he wishes that there was a little bit more support for families who can't afford proper dentist care, that they could get the proper dental care and certainly their health would improve. Because I don't think it's any secret that if you've got poor dental hygiene, the rest of your body certainly suffers with colds and your system is not what it should be to fend off diseases.

So when we moved into town—actually it was before that. When I started serving on council in North Perth, one of the things I didn't like doing was getting a glass of water because it tasted bad to me, but it was the fluoride in it. Every once in a while we'd sit there and the councillor next to me would give me a nudge and say, "What's it smell like tonight?" Because he was from a farm, too.

Anyway, I think the benefits of this chemical certainly are well known. I have got all kinds of paperwork here—that there is just no evidence to me that it is a bad idea to put this in drinking water where it's needed. So we certainly support this motion and we want to continue to support it as we go along. The scientific proof is there so why don't we use it?

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

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm absolutely pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this motion brought forward by the member from Mississauga–Streetsville today, as it has been a topic of interest and debate in my own hometown of Hamilton for a number of years.

The city of Hamilton produced an oral health report last year, and I have offered much of what I had to say based on that report. I'll make no apologies for that, Speaker, because this motion calls on the House to express an opinion on the effects of water fluoridation. I'm neither a doctor nor a dentist, so I'd look to the experts to provide guidance on this matter.

Although overlooked by our public health system, oral health is something that we must all pay close attention to. Those who have never suffered a toothache are few and far between, but we can likely remember a time when we have all endured excruciating pain as we waited to get to that dentist. We might not want to remember it, but we do.

Beyond the pain, however, oral health is integral to good overall health. Poor oral health can affect emotional health, social relationships and economic activities. Our economy is affected through lost work and school days and expensive emergency health care costs from untreated dental problems. So it is important that we take care of our teeth. It is important for our immediate comfort, it is important for our current and future overall health and it is important for our economy.

That is where fluoride comes in. Fluoride strengthens tooth enamel and prevents tooth decay. Water naturally contains some fluoride. In some communities, the natural fluoride levels are sufficient, but in others it makes sense to add a little bit more. By doing this, we improve oral health for a large number of people at a very low cost.

You will notice that I said "a little bit" of fluoride, and that's an important point, because too much fluoride can be potentially harmful, or maybe smelly, as the previous speaker said. Too much of anything can really be harmful. Too much medication, too many vitamins, even too much water can be harmful to your health, and fluoride is no different. It is important that we keep careful watch on our fluoridation process.

Brantford, as said previously, was the first city in Canada to add fluoride to their water, which was 68 years ago, and Hamilton followed suit and approved fluoridation in the city water in 1967. So we've had many years to study the effects of it.

What has been reported is that fluoridation reduces cavities in children's baby teeth by up to 60%, up to 35% in children's permanent teeth and 20% to 40% in adults and seniors through lifelong exposure. That's an absolute

significant benefit. The cost to Hamiltonians is about \$2.50 per household per year. That's about the cost of a coffee for the whole year, so that's pretty reasonable.

Support for fluoridation of drinking water comes from over 90 provincial, national and international dental and health organizations, including the Canadian Dental Association, the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario, the Ontario Dental Association, Health Canada, the Canadian Public Health Association, the World Health Organization and many, many more. There is very broad support for fluoridation in water among experts in the field.

Now, of course, there are many other ways to protect and promote our oral health. You'll have to excuse me, Speaker. I have a cold, so speaking today seems to be an issue. Regular brushing of our teeth, regular checkups at the dentist, eating healthy food—all things we should be doing, but it is a sad fact that not everyone can do what needs to be done.

Most Ontarians enjoy good health and access to health care services. Unfortunately, equitable access does not extend to dentistry. Many people can pay for dental treatment through an employee benefit package. Some are eligible for government support programs, and others pay for it out of their own pockets. Many of those who have to pay for it out of their own pockets simply can't afford to go to the dentist; some can't even afford toothpaste. When you're down to your last few dollars and you have children to feed, the reality for too many—for way too many—is that toothpaste is a luxury that they can't afford. Yes, that's right: Toothpaste is a luxury for too many people in Ontario.

Why do so many people find themselves in such a situation? Let's take a quick look at the government oral health programs in Ontario. In Canada, government programs pay for approximately 5% of dental treatment, but in Ontario, this figure is just 1.3%. Ontario pays the lowest amount for dental care of all provinces, \$5.67 per person, while the national average is \$19.54. Spending in Ontario has been decreasing since 2001, while the costs have been increasing.

1510

I hope the government members across the floor are listening, including the member who was so concerned about our oral health that he felt the need to bring this motion to the floor—a motion that doesn't call on this government to do anything; a motion that does nothing that I can see to improve the lives of Ontarians; a motion that simply asks us, many with no medical training at all, to express an opinion on what is good for our health. Yes, the motion helps in some small way to promote the benefits of fluoridation, but there is so much more that could be done.

It's about time that this government gave some serious thought to addressing the growing problems of the social determinants of health, including oral care. It's about time they stopped cutting back on health care services. It's about time they realized that health outcomes are directly affected by the amount of money that families

have, and did something to address the growing problem of poverty in our communities.

Saying all of that, I will be supporting this motion, but I hope that this is just the first very small step moving forward to make sure that we're really doing something about dental care in this province.

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

Hon. Helena Jaczek: It's certainly a pleasure to stand in the House and support the motion brought forward by my colleague the member for Mississauga–Streetsville: "That, in the opinion of this House, water fluoridation promotes good health, and the optimal concentration of fluoride in drinking water is essential to the health of Ontarians by minimizing tooth decay and helping restore tooth enamel."

As the former medical officer of health for the region of York, it was my responsibility to advise regional council on this issue of fluoridation and to advise them on the dose that was required in our water in York region. This particular measure is really the cornerstone of good public health practice. We in public health believe that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. As has been mentioned, the cost of fluoridation of water is in fact very, very low when you consider the alternative, which is increased dental costs.

I was surprised, though, that my colleague felt it necessary to bring this motion forward at this time. I thought this battle was won long ago, and it was certainly with some interest that I caught up with what has been happening across the province, with many municipalities wanting to re-examine this. The Ontario Dental Association had found it necessary to go out to municipal councils to argue for this very essential public health measure. Apparently this has been an issue in Tottenham; Alliston; Hamilton has been mentioned; Calgary; Halton; and Haldimand and Norfolk. Of course, their medical officers of health have all made their representations and, in fact, fluoridation is currently in place in most municipalities in Ontario.

This controversy around the safety of the addition of fluoride to drinking water does go back many, many years. I was intrigued to discover that, during the 1950s and 1960s, some opponents of water fluoridation suggested that fluoridation was a communist plot to undermine public health. Some of the older members of the Legislature—not to name any names—may remember a broadcaster whose name was Gordon Sinclair. He used to refer to fluoride in drinking water as rat poison.

Of course, as has already been mentioned in this House, excess fluoride can be harmful. It can lead to minor things like dental fluorosis, which is staining of the teeth, but it can also, in very extreme, large doses, result in skeletal fluorosis, which is harmful. This is something that can occur with an excess dose of just about any particular medication or additive that we put into food or other products.

I do want to address briefly the issue of oral health. Oral health is absolutely essential for one's overall health. It is obviously not only painful to have dental

caries, but it can also lead to things like abscesses and far more serious health issues. In my own Ministry of Community and Social Services, there is considerable concern about those with poor oral health—with cavities, or maybe who have lost many teeth and so on—in terms of their ability to seek employment. Imagine going to an interview without having your teeth.

So I'm pleased to say that our ministry, in fact, has started the healthy smiles program, which consolidates a number of programs to assist those vulnerable people in financial need with oral health care. I must say that that is done with the assistance of the Ontario Dental Association, and we value that assistance tremendously.

I did reference the dose. The actual dose that Health Canada has set as the guideline for fluoride in drinking water is, as a maximum acceptable concentration, 1.5 milligrams per litre. In York region, we were using a dose of 0.9 milligrams per litre. The dentists in our community, a number of years ago, suggested that perhaps they were starting to see some of the dental fluorosis—in other words, perhaps excess fluoride. People use fluoridated toothpaste; some people even take fluoride supplements. In consultation with our local dental association, we advised our regional council to reduce the dose to 0.7 milligrams per litre, which is, as I understand it now, a fairly common dose that we're seeing across the province.

In terms of the people who have commented on the need for fluoride in drinking water, my colleague from Mississauga–Streetsville did quote the former chief medical officer of health for Ontario, Dr. Arlene King, and one of the things that she did say in her report a couple of years ago was, I think, worth repeating here today: "Fluoridation is highly effective and can reach large populations who benefit from it."

Other preventive services may be less accessible to people without private dental insurance, or to those living on low incomes, which further reinforces the importance of a population-based prevention such as community water fluoridation.

Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to support my colleague's motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? I recognize the member from—

Ms. Laurie Scott: Haliburton.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Excellent. I was just giving you a little hint there and you got it, all of it. Thank you very much.

I'm pleased today to speak to ballot item number 17, brought forward by the member from—

Interjection.

Ms. Laurie Scott: —Mississauga–Streetsville—I was just testing—on water fluoridation.

Coming from a health care background, as a nurse, I can certainly appreciate the importance of working with the medical and health professionals to develop solutions that ensure Ontarians receive the best health care possible.

We just heard from the minister of her background and how prevention is worth a lot, especially a lot of costs, and a lot of health care benefits and a better life for those people.

The resolution we have here today promotes water fluoridation as good health, and that an optimal concentration of fluoride in drinking water is essential to the health of Ontarians by minimizing tooth decay and helping restore tooth enamel.

It's been spoken about, and it's correct: The responsibility for the fluoridation of drinking water supplies is a decision that is made by each municipality. We will be supporting them indirectly, maybe, because it does support good health.

As many know, but I'll say again, fluoride is a mineral that already exists naturally in virtually all water supplies, even the ocean. It works by making the outer layer of teeth stronger and less likely to get cavities. It can also prevent or even reverse the decay process.

According to the Ontario Dental Association, which has been a strong proponent of this, the first Canadian community water fluoridation trials began in Brantford in 1945. At last count, 9,229,015 Ontarians had access to fluoridated water, representing 75.9% of the population of the province, which is pretty remarkable.

Currently, community water fluoridation is practised in over 30 countries around the world, providing over 370 million people with optimally fluoridated water. The goal is to find the right balance of fluoride in the water, to maximize its benefits and minimize the potential of dental fluorosis.

Dental decay is the second-most-frequent condition suffered by children and is one of the leading causes of absences from school. I don't know if many people knew that before we had this discussion. It kind of surprised me, that stat about school. It was quite amazing.

1520

A lot of people don't understand the connection with dental health and overall health. We're making this point today, but it is very important that people really realize that.

With children, it can reduce tooth decay in children's primary teeth by 60% and in permanent teeth by up to 35%. It's also useful for those with limited dental care and can help prevent severe health complications. We all have parts of our constituencies that may not have access, whether through economic reasons or just availability, to go to the dentist. This is a broad preventive measure that we can do, and we should certainly promote it. It's endorsed by over 90 national and international professional health organizations, including Health Canada, the American Dental Association, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the World Health Organization.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to support the member from Mississauga–Streetville's motion here this afternoon. I'm pretty sure he's going to receive all-party support, so, well done.

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'll be less than a minute, Speaker. I just want to mention a couple of things about the Windsor debate that happened in 2013. I've never seen so much documentation. City councillors were given this report and this report—we had stacks of reports.

My friend Dr. Charles Frank has new evidence. I suggested that Charles should take that new evidence to the new city council, which has a new mandate, and perhaps they'll reverse the decision we made back in 2013. Those who said they didn't want it said they didn't have a choice: You could choose whether to take a flu shot, but you couldn't choose whether to drink fluorinated water. They said the fluoride they were putting in the water was an industrial by-product that was so toxic that you couldn't landfill it. That's the argument.

Kitchener-Waterloo had a referendum on it, and 5,149 lawsuits followed. They never used it in Leamington because Heinz wouldn't put it in the baby food. Those were the arguments and the decision made in Windsor.

We support it. The NDP supports it. I just wanted to put that on the record because Windsor–Tecumseh was mentioned.

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

Ms. Soo Wong: I think it's my turn to speak today; I don't know. Anyway, I'm following the Minister of Community and Social Services in support of my colleague's private member's resolution about municipal water fluoridation. I spoke earlier on the previous private member's bill from the member from Algoma–Manitoulin.

As a former member of the Toronto Board of Health—we had long debates about fluoride in the water. As someone who spent much of my previous career in public health, this should be a no-brainer. I'm applauding my colleague, who's also my seatmate around here, for bringing in this resolution. I don't understand why, when we have scientific evidence of the importance of fluoride in protecting young people's health—and I want to thank the dentists who are here today to hear this debate, because it's absolutely criminal when we see young people with dental problems that can be prevented.

I know that in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt, we have many new Canadians living there, and they are coming to Canada with a mouthful of preventable dental problems if only their home country had fluoride. These are all preventable things, and I don't understand—maybe it's the nurse in me or maybe I'm just being progressive about this whole issue.

The other big thing here that the member from Mississauga is bringing forward in terms of a private member's bill is raising awareness for those municipalities he alluded to earlier, like Windsor, and the dentists seeing these dental problems that are all preventable clearly tells us that we need to have a conversation with those communities that still believe that fluoride is bad for you. We have scientific evidence—and I know the minister and the Premier have always said scientific-based, evidence-based practice. We have evidence-based practice that

fluoride is good for dental health. At the end of day, I'm fully supportive of the private member's resolution, and I'm going to encourage those municipalities who are thinking of removing fluoride from the water: Think about the next generation of young people. Are you prepared, on record, not to protect young people's oral health? The costs of removing fluoride are going to be greater later on than today. At the end of the day, we've got to raise awareness and provide the facts based on evidence, as opposed to, as my colleague said, "junk science." We know fluoride does protect oral health.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to stand in this House, especially on this issue. I'd like to commend the member from Mississauga–Streetsville for bringing forward this motion on water fluoridation.

Unlike many of the members here, I have no medical background, no dental background. I'm a dairy farmer by trade. Yes, I've researched—

Mr. Wayne Gates: You still brush your teeth.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes, I brush my teeth. I lived in the country, and I didn't have the benefit of fluoridation.

I've read most of the research. We've done a lot of research, all of us, on this. But I have one advantage, because in my riding of Timiskaming–Cochrane I have the president of the Ontario Dental Association, Dr. Rick Caldwell. He's a great dentist and not a bad golfer either. The reason I know that is because Rick, Nancy, Ria and I—I'm a terrible golfer; I've golfed, like, twice in my life—did a charity event for Ducks Unlimited. Nighttime golf. I think it was like a four-man scramble. It's lucky, because Rick and Nancy can golf and Ria and I would still be out there if it wasn't for them. But we had a long discussion about—other matters as well—fluoridation, my riding, Rick's practice and Rick's knowledge. In Rick's practice, he deals with patients who have access to fluoridated water, patients who don't, and he also has patients who have naturally fluoridated water. He explained to me that you could actually tell where kids came from without looking at their address. You could basically pick where these children came from based on if they had access to fluoride in their water or if they didn't.

Speaker, that's proof enough for me. You can have all the scientific arguments you want, but if you can tell where a child comes from based on the health of their teeth, whether it's fluoridated water or not, that's a good enough argument for the people behind me, and I think for the people in this House.

There's something else I'd like to mention. I'd like to get this on the record because I think it's really important. It's not part of this debate, but it's something that this House needs to hear. First Nations have—and Rick does work with the First Nations—incredible problems with dental issues. We've been discussing First Nations in this House—I believe there's a First Nations meeting going on in the House today. Something I'd like to put on the record is that while we're discussing whether or not we should have fluoride in water—it's a

huge issue—in remote First Nations in Ontario, 80% of them don't even have access to potable water; 80% have to boil their water. I think that's something we have to put on the record.

This a good motion. I think it does what it's intended to do, because it has brought some visibility to this issue and it has made us all think. But we should also all think about some of the things that are equally—perhaps more—important, and that is one issue that this province has to fix.

1530

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

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: It's a pleasure to rise in the Legislature this afternoon to speak to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville's motion, which is an excellent motion.

It's nice to be standing in this House and listening to a debate where there is real agreement, thoughtful agreement and consensus.

Over the years as a city councillor, I was often approached by very-well-intentioned residents who were concerned about fluoridation of the water. Despite the fact that Toronto has been fluoridating its water for some 60 years, and it has proven to be an effective way of protecting dental health and promoting dental health, every once in a while, I'd have these very-well-intentioned people coming forward, whose concern was about what we are putting in the water that is going into our bodies: "Where is this substance coming from?" As one of the other members said, I also heard all the arguments about, "This is an industrial by-product and it's toxic, and you wouldn't put it in a landfill."

Despite all these good intentions, they were losing sight of the purpose of fluoridation, and that's to protect our health, and our dental health is just one part of our health. As the minister was saying, dental health, if not well taken care of, leads to other health implications—abscesses, infections, other issues—not to mention the social issues. A child or a young adult without nice, healthy teeth may find themselves at a social disadvantage as well.

We're very blessed in this country that people generally have good dental health, partially because we have excellent dentists and access to dental products—but so many Ontarians have fluoridated water and have had it for generations now. I hope this motion from the member for Mississauga–Streetsville causes those communities in Ontario that haven't opted for it yet to pause and think about it. They're actually denying the residents of their communities an important measure to protect their health.

I applaud the member for this. He's doing a great public service for the health of all of Ontarians today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

Further debate?

The member from Mississauga–Streetsville has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Thank you very much, Speaker.

I am very impressed with the comments and the passion shown by the members who have commented on this. Certainly my colleague from Perth–Wellington, born like me near the end of the dark ages of dentistry, has learned how beneficial fluoridation is. My colleague from Hamilton Mountain quoted some of the authorities behind fluoridation, and I thank her for that, because I didn't have time to get to those in my remarks.

We had one MD, the Minister of Community and Social Services, talk to us today, lending her perspective of being the former chief medical officer of health for York region and talking about how they adjusted the fluoride to ensure that it got just the right job done. Two nurses, the members from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock and Scarborough–Agincourt, talked about not merely their perspective but mentioned that some 30 countries worldwide do this, and pointed out that a control group would consist of newcomers who come to Canada from countries that don't fluoridate their water, and we can see with stunning clarity what condition their teeth are in.

We also were fortunate to hear from two city councillors. I thank my colleague from Windsor–Tecumseh for the insider look at a decision that perhaps Windsor city council might want back and, of course, my colleague from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, who pointed out that no matter what your politics may be, fluoridation has proven itself to be good sense and sound scientific practice. Finally, my friend from Timiskaming–Cochrane, in his own words a common sense dairy farmer, could see for himself the difference between the oral health of kids who came from areas where the water was fluoridated as opposed to those who had come from other areas.

Finally, once again, thanks to my friends from the Halton–Peel Dental Association, not merely for the idea for this resolution but for their assistance in preparing for it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member for Mississauga–Streetsville and all members for their contribution to a healthy debate this afternoon on this particular motion 10.

Orders of the day.

PROHIBITING DRIVING WITH
UNLAWFUL HANDGUNS ACT, 2014
LOI DE 2014 SUR L'INTERDICTION
DE LA CONDUITE
AVEC DES ARMES DE POING ILLÉGALES
DANS LE VÉHICULE

Mr. Colle moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 24, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act and the Civil Remedies Act, 2001 to promote public safety by prohibiting driving in a motor vehicle with an unlawfully possessed handgun / Projet de loi 24, Loi modifiant le Code de la route et la Loi de 2001 sur les recours civils afin de promouvoir la sécurité publique et d'interdire la

conduite sur la voie publique d'un véhicule automobile avec une arme de poing dont la possession est illégale.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Mike Colle: This private members' time, I think, is a very precious and important time for all MPPs. Over the years, I've moved a number of private members' bills, some that have been passed and some that have not passed. I think it's a very important time for us as MPPs to express, to the other members of the Legislature, to government, no matter what side you're on, and to, I think, the public at large in Ontario, certain things that we feel passionate about or feel that are important. I know that sometimes a member will sort of put down another member for moving a bill because they're not aware of it or not tuned into it, but I think every member should treat this time with a great deal of reverence, because it's about the only time, whether you're a government member or an opposition member, to really express something that you feel is important. I thank you for this opportunity.

This Bill 24 is a bill that I've introduced on a previous occasion. Essentially, it's a bill that has come out of a reality in my community and the greater community of Toronto. It's about the fact that a number of innocent people have been gunned down in cold blood by thugs who drive by with guns in their cars, and they shoot people, in many cases for no good reason. They may shoot them because it's an initiation ritual. Sometimes they shoot them as revenge.

Sadly, this summer a 31-year-old teacher, a model teacher, Abshir Hassan, was shot down in cold blood standing not too far from the school he was teaching at. Two of his friends were also shot. Sadly, Abshir succumbed to his injuries and was killed. The perpetrators have never been caught.

I know that earlier this year in Scarborough there was a young mother of four children, Andrea White, who was in her garage area with a couple of her friends. There was a drive-by shooting. Andrea was shot and killed, and her four children were left without a mother after this drive-by shooting in Scarborough.

I was trying to do a survey of where these have been occurring, and this is just over the last year. We'll see that in Windsor there was a drive-by shooting on August 13. There was another one in December in Windsor; in January, Niagara Street in Windsor; Sherway Gardens, Etobicoke; Enfield Place in Mississauga—this is all within the last year; Heron Road in Ottawa; another one in Ottawa; Major Mackenzie up in Vaughan. So it's not just in my community and not just in Toronto. In Sudbury there was another drive-by shooting, a 24-year-old injured in a vehicle who just got shot in Sudbury; another one in Sudbury.

1540

So these are happening, and they're happening because there's a small element in society that feels there's no consequence in shooting people. They feel there's no

consequence, because they know that—the peculiar thing is, the way our laws work, the Criminal Code basically can be very hard on criminals when they commit crimes like carrying guns or shooting people, but yet if they're in a car, there is a big loophole.

That's why my act here tries to basically add another level of frustration for these criminals by saying that if a police officer finds that you have an unlawful handgun—these are guns that are stolen, smuggled—and you have one in the vehicle, the police officer should have the right to impound the vehicle and suspend your driver's licence for seven days. Take the car off the road at least and let the other criminal proceedings go ahead, but at least take the darn vehicle off the road.

The strange thing is that these thugs that drive around with these guns—they have so many tricks on how to avoid criminal prosecution. One of the tricks they use is that they will say, “Yes, there is a gun in the car, but I just borrowed the car from my Uncle Louie, and I didn't know my Uncle Louie had a gun underneath the driver's seat.” So, therefore, that person walks.

There was an individual who was driving a car, and the people in the car had six weapons in the car. The police seized six handguns. The driver of that car got off scot-free because he said, “I didn't know my friends had guns in the car.”

Another trick they pull is that their younger partners who are under 16 will have a gun in their parka or in their purse. They'll say, “It's not mine. I didn't know that the person with me had a gun in their purse.” Or the other thing they'll do is they'll say, “I rented the car; I borrowed the car; so therefore I didn't check the whole vehicle for weapons. The weapon was there; I don't know how it got there.”

In all these cases, these people basically avoid any kind of prosecution under the Criminal Code. I'm saying: Let's at least use the powers we have under the motor vehicles act, like we did with—and I think, Mr. Speaker, you were here in 2007, and MPP Kwinter knows well about this—when we had a rash of stunt driving, car racing, where people were going 200 kilometres an hour. We put in a law which said that, “If police officers caught you racing at that speed, or stunt driving, the police officer would be given the authority to seize that vehicle and suspend the driver's licence.” I think that has been a good law that we passed to try and make our roads safer.

I think we have an obligation to at least frustrate these people who flagrantly disobey our laws and drive around with these guns that they have no business having. We should make it difficult for them to be mobile. Where are they going with a loaded handgun in their car? Are they going to go see Grandma? No; they're going, probably, to commit a criminal act. It's pretty obvious. If you're not a police officer, if you're not a sharpshooter, a marksman who's in a gun club, or if you're in the army—we're not talking about ordinary working people who have the right to carry a gun. But these people are essentially using their vehicles as a means of committing a crime and of transporting that unlawful handgun.

This bill is supported by the Police Association of Ontario. The city of Toronto council supported it unanimously. The Ontario Safety League—Brian Patterson was here today supporting my bill, as was Dave McFadden, the past president of the Ontario Police Association.

Our front-line officers know that there is a great danger. If you approach a car—it could be speeding; it could be running a stop sign. If you approach a car and they roll down that window, you don't know what that person is going to have. They are very, very apprehensive, because there are just too many of these criminals who can get these guns.

I know that in Toronto, it's very common. For 50 bucks, you can rent a gun.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Rent?

Mr. Mike Colle: Easy. Rent a gun for 50 bucks. It's all out on the street. If you can get 50 bucks, you can rent a gun. And what do you do with that gun? Sadly, a lot of what they do with these guns is totally connected with the cocaine trade. If there's cocaine, if there are drug dealers and if there are crack houses, they have guns.

Therefore, we're putting our police officers at risk every day. That's why the Police Association and Police Chief Blair are supportive of this legislation—because it's not going to stop all these gangsters, but at least it's going to make life a bit more difficult for them, to at least impound their car, no questions asked: “What are you doing with a gun in the car? Okay, you can explain that later in court, but at least we're going to take the car off the road, because you are a danger to innocent people and you are dangerous, certainly, to the police who have to make our roads safe.”

There are basic provisions of this bill to try and at least do something that is, again, helpful to our police and helpful to our citizens who just want to go about their business and do their regular things. If this can prevent one more death in one of these drive-by shootings, it is worth it, at least as a deterrent. It sends out a warning that this is another thing that might bite you if you flout the laws like they are doing right now.

It is, again, something that will send a strong message out to these people, because many of them are either totally foolish about their understanding of what reality is—some of them are very arrogant about reality, but these people need some kind of extra deterrent, because right now it's just too easy to get away with driving around our city streets with a weapon. Anything that can restrict their mobility and make it more difficult would be a help to the police and would be a help to our citizens who are looking for safety.

I know that in the past we've talked about how we need more social programs or educational programs to cut down on crime. I totally support that, but in one area of my riding where I've had a number of these shootings—it's a high-risk neighbourhood—we've got over 60 government-related programs that work there: by the city, by the province, by the feds and by the school boards. There are 60 programs, but do you know what ruins the 60 programs? That, at any time, criminals can

come into that community and start shooting the place up. They shoot people. A guy walking a dog got shot and killed; a teacher got shot; a 15-year-old coming home from school got shot—and in most cases, they get away with it. It's really hard to apprehend these criminals because there is a fear about reporting them.

That's my reality and that's why I think that this bill would at least help our police officers and help our communities stay a little safer. They should be safer, especially where people are just doing their normal, everyday business. They should be doing that in some kind of peace and comfort, and not be worried about somebody driving by and shooting them. Thank you very much for your attention, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I thank the member from Eglinton–Lawrence for his concerns about gang warfare. I think that we all tend to live in our own little neighbourhoods and feel quite safe; it isn't till we read something on the news that we kind of wake up and realize what a dangerous world we live in sometimes, and how precarious life can be.

We're all worried, I think, for our family, our friends and ourselves being out there. I think that there's a lot that we can do to combat some of the gang warfare that goes on in some of the big urban centres, but it's limited. It's limited, what we can do. I support the efforts of this bill.

We all realize that for some criminals there's a certain amount of peer pressure, especially with youth and gangs. Even if they know that they're putting themselves at risk by driving their friends—they know if their friends have concealed weapons, or even visible weapons. They usually know. Sometimes they may not know, but they usually have a pretty good idea if their friends have weapons. I think that adults—what we call professional criminals—will give some thought as to whether or not they're going to drive the getaway car for bank robbers. They'll give some serious thought to it. But I just wonder how much youth will think before they act, because we know about the peer pressure. Just losing their car—they could lose their lives in gang warfare, and they still go ahead and do it.

1550

So that's part of the problem: that too many youth see so many dangerous things in life, not just guns, not just gangs, but just sort of walking along a cliff, thrill seeking, bungee jumping, skiing off—I know people who are ski patrol, and they can never understand why these kids go off the trails, because it's dangerous. That's why they do dangerous things, because it's dangerous. That's the whole fun for them. They don't think of the consequences. They think life sometimes is like a videogame where you lose your life and you just buy another life or you wait and you get another life. They don't understand the consequences. They don't understand that death is permanent.

I think that what seems to be very effective in our schools is when people who have survived, either as a

victim or as part of a gang, go out and speak to the kids before they get themselves into trouble. I know from kids in my neighbourhood, from my own children—they said that this was incredibly effective, when they went and heard from kids who were involved in gangs, kids who were in a car accident who were maybe speeding or stunt-driving or they knew their friend was driving dangerously but they didn't speak up because of peer pressure; that all these things can be effective. It might not be the actual law itself, because I think these kids don't know about the laws and they don't care about the laws when they do know about the laws, but what might be effective is to have education and public awareness in our schools.

I've always felt that TV programs, sitcoms that are very popular, sometimes are the best educational tools for all of us in terms of alternative lifestyles, in terms of different career paths. People do learn a lot from TV shows. I almost wonder if we should just leave it up to chance that they decide to do certain episodes on certain topics. Maybe it's up to us politicians to go to the writers of some of these sitcoms that are popular and say, "Hey, you know what? We want to get a public awareness campaign going on the fact that kids can lose their car or what happens when they get involved with a gang, and maybe you could fit that in your storyline of *Glee* or *Modern Family* for us and help us get the message out." I think that we spend millions of dollars sometimes on these public awareness campaigns that aren't terribly effective, whereas one sitcom, one episode, can really hit home a message.

I think that we want to see our safer roads, and I think that this bill does address that. So I definitely would support anything to encourage people not to drive—I guess we can call them friends—peers in their cars who they know probably do have weapons or they know for certain do have weapons. I think that maybe it has to go further, that people shouldn't have relatives living with them who they know are members of gangs and they know have weapons and they know are dealing with drugs as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to learning more about this bill.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: Bill 24, the Prohibiting Driving with Unlawful Guns Act, 2014: Thank you for allowing me to speak on this issue. This bill may seem confusing at first, prohibiting driving with unlawful handguns. The thing with this bill is, you can't really prohibit it because possession of an illegal handgun is already prohibited. What this bill does do is give our police force the ability to take action when they catch someone driving with an illegal handgun.

We all know the issue of gun control at the federal level has become extremely controversial. For some reason, this has become a political issue when, really, they should be interpreting the suggestions of the police force locally, provincially and federally. We have to

remember that the local police in our community will be the ones on the front lines who deal with this issue the most. They're the ones who come face to face with it. Their suggestions are the ones we should take seriously.

As far as I can see, the Police Association of Ontario and Crime Stoppers are supportive of this. They're supportive of having another tool to keep handguns off our streets and keep our streets safe.

"The members of the Toronto Police Association see first-hand the devastating impact firearms, especially handguns, have on the citizens of Ontario. Our association fully supports your ... efforts to provide another tool"—there is that word again, another tool—"to assist officers in fighting ... gun crime in our communities." Who said that? Mike McCormack, president of the Toronto Police Association.

"The Police Association of Ontario fully supports Bill 24. Modern criminals are more frequently arming themselves and are increasingly mobile. This bill will provide an additional tool"—there's that word again—"for front-line police officers to take illegal guns off the streets and remove the offender's mobility. Police officers in this province know too well the ... impact the increasing use of illegal guns is having" on our communities. "This bill can only assist us in working to keep our communities safe. We urge the Legislature to pass this bill." That was Dan Axford, president of the Police Association of Ontario.

Of course, this bill doesn't touch on the root causes of crime, things like poverty and a lack of proper social assistance to keep our people away from a life of crime. One of the main purposes of this bill is to keep our streets safe and reduce the illegal use of firearms. We can do that, but that's after the fact. If we want to get a head start on this issue, and I know we all do, we should start at the root cause of addressing the issues that cause crime.

There are a number of studies out there—they aren't hard to find—which indicate that poverty breeds crime. We need to take a closer look at those kinds of policies and concerns in order to make our community safe and healthier.

Just this week, after question period, I took a tour of the Thorold detention centre, and it was amazing to me how many young people—young people—were in that jail. I was also amazed at how understaffed it was, and how many mental health issues we had there among our young people.

On the bill, I don't think anyone disagrees that we need to eliminate illegal handguns off our streets. This measure will help raise the penalty for those who want to transport these handguns.

Though I find it interesting, the original version of this bill, Bill 66 from 2013, had a wider scope. Instead of just being illegal handguns, the original bill was focused on illegal firearms. I'm not entirely sure where the narrowing of the scope went or why it's here.

If we're committed to keeping illegal guns off our streets, then to me it makes the most sense to keep all illegal weapons off our streets, not just certain kinds. We

had complaints before that people weren't being charged if they were caught in a vehicle with an illegal handgun. This bill will close that loophole, but the language seems to indicate only if you have a handgun. If you're driving around with a rifle or a semi-automatic weapon in your car, you still fall under the old regulations.

1600

There was a case a few years back of someone being pulled over with a grenade launcher in the car. So I'm confused as to why we're softening our stance. We know if it's not just illegal handguns in vehicles, we should recognize that. We've got heart-wrenching stories of people being pulled over with numerous guns in their cars and then walking away from charges and using those firearms to commit crimes. I'm certain that not all these stories were limited to handguns.

This law isn't here to prohibit those who have lawfully registered weapons. We need to make sure we're not making any concessions to those who are already breaking the law. Make no mistake about it: There are illegal handguns in every member's riding. This isn't an issue that affects just one MPP or one region; it affects the entire province. Let's continue to work with our local police forces addressing the issues that they ask us to. Let's make sure we don't play politics with issues of gun violence and illegal firearms. They are the experts who have made the recommendations to the province and, quite frankly, to the country. Thanks very much.

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

Mr. Han Dong: It's quite an honour to rise in this House and speak to Bill 24. I want to applaud the member from Eglinton–Lawrence for coming up with this very smart, in my opinion, timely bill.

I want to speak to it from three perspectives. First, I want to speak to it as a parent. I'm a young parent. I have two kids. One is four and one is six. Having kids completely changed my perspective on life. Nowadays I do everything thinking how this is going to affect my kids, including the fact that I ran and have the privilege of representing the great riding of Trinity–Spadina here today in this Legislature. I think I am doing a very meaningful job for the future of my kids and of kids in this province.

I want to share with the House a very terrifying close encounter with gun violence in my community. About two years ago, both of my kids were playing in the playground near my parents' house. Both of my parents were looking after them. While they were enjoying themselves, they heard two shots close by. Luckily, it was just the sound and the shock that they felt, and they were quickly taken indoors to my parents' house. Later we found out there was a gunshot nearby and someone, I think, was fatally injured at the time.

To me, as a parent, when I heard that over the phone, not only was it shocking, but I was shivering, because it was so close. We all hear and we all watch these things happening on the news, but having something like that happen close by, near my parents and near both of my

kids, is terrifying for sure. Every time since, when I see something on TV about gun violence or that someone got shot, it's very alerting to me. I think something has to be done about that.

This past August, a young woman was shot and killed in my riding near, I think, Wellington and Spadina. She was a young college graduate walking home from work. I think she was a new immigrant from Croatia, working and looking after her elderly aunt. She was a victim of gun violence, at a very young age with a bright future, and has now perished because of illegal handguns.

There was another, closer incident that just happened a few weeks ago, on Dundas Street. In both incidents, the police suspect that a vehicle was used as either a drop-off or getaway car. I think the member's bill will address that, making sure that the police, our brave men and women, have the tools that they need to protect us and protect our kids. I think, from a parent's perspective, it's a very good bill, and I look forward to supporting that.

I also want to speak to it as a member of a community. We all know that Trinity–Spadina has a lot of tourist attractions. It's a great downtown riding, just like the neighbouring riding of Toronto Centre. We have a lot of tourists coming to our community to take a look at all the special heritage. Whenever we hear about a shooting, especially a drive-by shooting, it gives us such a bad reputation. People think that Toronto is not safe, but the fact is our city has never been safer, and we've seen a steady decrease in violence. But it's this kind of crime and the way it's carried out that is giving our community a very bad reputation. So I look forward to supporting this bill.

I'm going to share my time with my colleague from this side.

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

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'm going to be very short in my remarks, and I thank the member from Eglinton–Lawrence for bringing this forward.

I do have a few comments, and I'm a little confused with some of the terminology that is used. One concerns an "unlawful handgun." An unlawful handgun doesn't have to be stolen. In my understanding of it, if you don't have the permits to have a handgun and it's in your car, that's an unlawful handgun. So I think there are some problems with the terminology and how it's going to be interpreted. There are prohibited and restricted weapons, and certainly you can find them in the Criminal Code, which I did some research on. I think we have to understand what an unlawful handgun is and whether it just refers to stolen guns, unregistered guns or where a person has no permit for the guns. We have to understand those types of things before this can go on.

But another thing I'd like to point out to the member is that a couple of OPP that I know of have been killed where I'm from. One happened back in the late 1960s. They drove out to a domestic dispute in the country—the justice of the peace was with him—and the officer was shot. He was sitting in his car when he got shot. The

justice of the peace ran, and he was also shot. That was not with an unlawful handgun; it was with a rifle.

The other incident happened a couple of years ago near the little town of Walton, which is just west of where I live. The OPP were looking for a car, again involved in another domestic dispute. The officer found the car. He turned around to pursue the vehicle. The vehicle stopped, and just as the officer went to get out of the car, the fellow in the pickup truck got out and shot him in the head and killed him—again, with a rifle.

So I think we need to think a little bit more about what you want to put into this bill, because a weapon of any type, if it's unlawful and used in the commission of a crime—maybe you should look at this and add it to this bill. That's one of the things that I think is quite important to this, because there are more unlawful weapons around than just handguns.

I understand the theory you used on drive-by shootings. I understand that type of thing, but I do believe that some other things should be looked at.

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

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise this afternoon to support my colleague's Bill 24.

The member from Eglinton–Lawrence is passionate about this issue of keeping our roads safe across Ontario. I know he's been very passionate about this issue. I remember him contacting those of us who live in the city of Toronto about this kind of safety in our community.

He made a comment earlier in his opening remarks about the tragedy involving Andrea White, a mother of four who was killed while sitting in her house in a drive-by shooting. It did not just destroy Andrea White's family; the families of the two accused also have been destroyed. Very clearly, these kinds of tragedy also are preventable—not just the victim but also the two young accused. So this is a very, very important piece of legislation and discussion that we're having here today.

I too hear my colleague's comment about supporting the proposed Bill 24. One piece that really concerns me, which the member from Eglinton–Lawrence is talking about, is the accessibility of these illegal handguns and their being portable and travelling across the province, because we know there are no gates or barriers to transporting anything in Ontario. The proposed legislation, if passed, will amend the Highway Traffic Act, under the new section 172.2, making it an offence to drive having unlawful guns in your possession.

I think the member from Eglinton–Lawrence talked earlier about the fact that criminals will use every excuse under the sun to transport—using the vehicle as a way to transport—these unlawful weapons. It affects all of us. I don't think there is one community in 107 ridings in Ontario that has not been affected by this kind of unfortunate tragedy.

I applaud the member from Eglinton–Lawrence for his leadership on this piece about keeping our community safe. And I know the member from Niagara Falls has also

spoken about the fact that the law enforcement community is supportive of our proposed legislation.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: I will point out that an earlier version of this bill—it was back in 2008—wasn't specific to only handguns. It covered firearms and other long guns. As was pointed out earlier, removing long guns from this would remove other categories of restricted and prohibited firearms. I'm using the federal definition, which could be a machine gun or an AK-47.

I had an incident in my riding. A fellow let loose with an AK-47 from the seat of his car, sitting on a provincial highway, Highway 6. You could probably guess, this happened in Caledonia. There was no police news release about this. There was nothing in the papers about this. It was covered up. But this is a case where this goes on. He shot up a smoke shack. I happened to be at a meeting at West Haldimand hospital when his victim was brought in. It almost ripped his arm off. So that is the other side of this.

I do support the intention of this bill. Again, I have questions as to how it can be enforced, how practical would it be; how can it achieve its goal? I don't know whether it is worth spending time on new legislation around taking a vehicle away when a criminal act like this requires jail time. I mean, take the freedom away—maybe not focusing on the vehicle.

As I've suggested, firearms control falls under the jurisdiction of the federal government. The Supreme Court of Canada confirmed this when Alberta wanted to opt out of the federal Liberals' gun registry. So if you are nailed with an illegal firearm in a vehicle or outside of a vehicle—if you're riding a horse, for example, which would not be covered by this legislation—you will face federal laws, as I understand it.

The Supreme Court of Canada decided that firearms law, again, is the responsibility of the federal, so I question why we'd debate this in the provincial Legislature. I question its constitutionality, as federal laws already exist to deal with prohibited and restricted firearms, the various classes of firearms.

I am concerned. We know that those who have a permit for restricted—i.e. in most cases, a handgun—travel. They travel in a vehicle to a gun range. They are a member of a sportsmen's club. They've been vetted. They pay a fee—these clubs are very heavily supervised. I wouldn't want to see a jackpot where somebody is giving somebody a ride somewhere—maybe it's in a taxi or maybe it's a rental car, and he doesn't know the guy has a firearm in the trunk; maybe the permit has lapsed. It seems to open up an awful lot of confusion.

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

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I'm pleased to have an opportunity to speak on Bill 24 regarding the unlawful possession of handguns in vehicles. I applaud the member, but the problem with guns is not only in Toronto. It's right across Ontario, and it's happening

more and more—where people get guns, go out with their car and start shooting from their car.

I looked up some cases. There are almost 100 pages this year alone of different drive-by shootings that occurred by people who were in their cars and decided to just shoot out of nowhere. For example, one headline in the Windsor Star says, "Man with Bag of Guns Sentenced to Three Years in Jail; Kooner Seeks Bail on Appeal."

"Five years after pitching a bag of guns and ammunition out the window of a moving car," the victim "began serving a penitentiary term..." What was happening was that they were shooting at each other, and the one who tried to get away threw his guns out—a bag of guns, rather. They caught him, but they're still in the middle of a court hearing. These were all this year.

Another headline reads, "Prime Suspect Arrested after Gang-Related Shooting." This is in Kanata, Ontario. The police "guns and gangs section" responded to eyewitness statements that there was a shooting going on on the streets, in vehicles that were passing each other.

It's not just here that we talk about it; it's all over Ontario.

There's one headline here, "Man Shot near Richmond Hill Restaurant Had Survived Previous Attack." Again, it's a story where his SUV was shot at, and the person was killed in the car by another car that was driving by. This was in Richmond Hill—all sorts of cases from all over Ontario.

"Man Killed in 'Brazen' Shooting in Toronto Plaza Third Sibling from Same Family to Die." This is in Toronto, and it says that the person was only 15 when his brother and sister "were gunned down nine months apart in horrific shootings that both made headlines."

"Now, a dozen years later," the victim "met a similar fate and becomes the third sibling ... to die" from bullets fired from a car.

The problem is—and the newspapers are saying that—that it's an issue all across Ontario. There's news that comes out every day, but it gets mixed in with other headlines from around the world. What this bill does is that it distills everything down to what's important: handguns in cars.

People are getting access to these handguns illegally, to keep them in the car, and it's very hard to be able to monitor them. A lot of these handguns are brought up from the United States—imported. They're hidden in the car, and they decide to go after someone or a gang—let's say a gang—and what they do is that they shoot outside their car.

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Even though there are all sorts of other things that could be done, I think that, in terms of the weapons, the handguns are the easiest way. They can hide in the car, bring them to where they're going to shoot, fire and get rid of the gun or else keep the gun in the car and run away. This year alone, I found over 60 cases, all over Ontario, where handguns were being used in cars—shooting.

I think this bill is important to pass, so we can be able to at least bring in some law to stop guns in cars.

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I am also honoured to add my voice to the debate.

I want to make one thing very, very clear: Obviously, all members in this House want to do whatever is possible to reduce crime; all members in this House also support any initiatives we can bring forward that would reduce gun violence. I think that's one thing we can all take away from this debate; we all support that.

We all have tragedies in our ridings or in our communities, where gun violence has stolen the lives of members of our community. We're sorry for that, and we express our condolences for those who have lost their lives to these tragedies. It's completely unacceptable. So we stand united on that.

When it comes to addressing this problem, there are various approaches we can take. Absolutely, in certain circumstances, we need to make sure we have the correct tools—those tools are legislation; those are laws—to ensure that we can protect our communities. Absolutely, we need laws to enforce the rule of law to make sure our communities are safe.

But we'd be doing a disservice to those who have lost their lives, and we'd be doing a disservice to the violence that is prevalent in our community, if we didn't look to the root causes of this violence. It's very clear. The evidence is unequivocal. The evidence leaves no doubt that crime, particularly violent crime, is linked to socio-economic factors. There is absolutely no doubt about that.

While we must have laws that actually protect our community—absolutely—we must also recognize the steps we can take as a government, as a society, to address the root causes. Like anything, if you only look at the symptoms and address the symptoms, there is no way to prevent the actual recurrence of that phenomenon. What I'm suggesting in this debate, in the time that I have, is that I want to add my voice to support the initiative to reduce crime, but to suggest some solutions.

If you look across the world, we have countless examples of countries that have far lower rates of crime than others, and we have evidence about why that occurs.

The country that has the highest rate of incarceration, some of the most strict forms of laws and some of the highest numbers of police officers, has one of the highest crime rates in the world. This is the United States of America. They have one of the highest rates of incarceration in the entire world. They have some of the strictest laws. They have a large population of police officers. But they have one of the highest rates of crime.

We know that, strictly speaking, incarceration isn't a solution. We know that, strictly speaking, just increasing the number of police officers isn't the solution, because we have evidence from what has happened in the United States.

On the contrary, we have examples like Iceland. The entire country of Iceland has 200 prisoners—200 people who are in prison in the entire country. They have 700

people on their police force, and if you match the per capita rate of violence, they are among the lowest in the world, even factoring in their lower population. It's not because of the strictness of their laws; it's because of the social services. It's because people who have access to education, who have access to housing, who have access to opportunities, who have access to hope—and who have hope—are less likely to be in a situation where they are desperate and less likely to commit crimes of violence. That's the evidence. We have that in a number of examples across the world.

We have countries like Norway, which also has some of the lowest rates of violent crime in the world, in comparison to their population. Again, it's not because of their strict laws, it's not because of their rates of incarceration and it's not because of the number of police they have.

While I support, of course, that we need to have police and we need to have laws that protect our society, we need to look at the underlying factors that create crime, that cause crime, and those are socio-economic. Those are poverty, those are child poverty, those are lack of education, lack of access to education. We need to address those underlying causes, and then we can truly address this serious problem that we face.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member from Eglinton–Lawrence has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Mike Colle: I appreciate all the very thoughtful comments by everybody today. I just want to try and respond to a couple of them.

To the member from Thornhill, I couldn't agree more. Peer pressure is incredibly powerful for young people. It's just overwhelming. You try and be a parent and talk to your teenager: It's very, very difficult.

The member from Niagara Falls mentioned the front-line police officers who do this 24/7. They know they need more tools to do their job. They are just trying to do their job, and they just want to be protected on the job. It's job safety, almost, for the police officers. You ask any police officer in Niagara Falls or Toronto or Windsor, and they'll say, "Hey, listen, we just want to do our job and be safe on the job." This is about job safety in many ways.

The member for Trinity–Spadina talked about children being exposed to gunfire. That's not a rare occurrence anymore because of the proliferation of guns.

The member from Perth–Wellington talked about the definition of "unlawful handgun." Well, I did work with the legal branch here and I worked with the legal experts at the OPP, and the definition is one that they agreed to. That could be changed if there is another definition of "unlawful handgun." Basically, if you don't have a permit and if you're not a police officer and you're not in the army, you shouldn't have a gun on you. That's basically what the law is.

The member from Scarborough–Agincourt talked about poor Andrea White, who was killed in cold blood in front of her house. We've got to think about her.

The member for Haldimand–Norfolk talked about jurisdiction. All I know is that the thugs and criminals know the Criminal Code isn't working here. Every time they get stopped with a gun in their car, they get off. They know it's a joke. At least this gives another obstacle, you might say, to these criminals. Right now our laws are not working because they can just say, "I borrowed the car." They walk. They're walking every day because we've got a very weak Criminal Code when it comes to gun possession in vehicles. It's basically a sieve. It's not even a law anymore, and the criminals know it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you.

Mr. Mike Colle: The member for Scarborough Southwest talked about typical—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member from Eglinton–Lawrence.

The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

LYME DISEASE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): We will deal with the first ballot item, number 16, standing in the name of Mr. Mantha.

Mr. Mantha has moved private member's notice of motion number 13.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

WATER FLUORIDATION

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mr. Delaney has moved private member's notice of motion number 10.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

PROHIBITING DRIVING WITH UNLAWFUL HANDGUNS ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR L'INTERDICTION DE LA CONDUITE AVEC DES ARMES DE POING ILLÉGALES DANS LE VÉHICULE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mr. Colle has moved second reading of Bill 24, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act and the Civil Remedies Act, 2001 to promote public safety by prohibiting driving in a motor vehicle with an unlawfully possessed handgun.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I would ask the member from Eglinton–Lawrence, which committee would you like your bill referred to?

Mr. Mike Colle: I would like the bill to be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The Standing Committee on Justice Policy. Does the House agree? Agreed.

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ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 25, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): When this item of business was last debated, the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton had the floor with time remaining. I recognize the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. All right, we have 27 minutes, folks. Sit back and enjoy. We'll get into some details around Bill 35.

When I left off, I was talking about some of the concerns I had with Bill 35. Just to lay out the outline of what I want to share with you: Essentially, you have the Public Works Protection Act. That act was seriously flawed. It was the cause of some serious civil rights violations. In fact, the Ombudsman of Ontario, André Marin, said it was one of the worst civil rights violations in our history. All sorts of folks spoke about this. There was a report commissioned by the government, and it had Justice McMurtry respond to the issues around the Public Works Protection Act. There were some serious issues.

Namely, one of the major issues with the existing act was that it was too broad. It provided too broad a range of powers to the police. The issue was that if you provide overly broad powers to the police, the police can then abuse those powers and it can result in infringements of your civil liberties. So, overly broad powers are problematic. Justice McMurtry also said that if you provide someone with a vague set of powers, you don't actually delineate specifically what those powers allow you to do,

you don't specifically say, "You have the right to do" this narrow area or this narrow level of search or this narrow interpretation of the law. So, specific and clear—then you would be in a good position—but if it's not clear and specific language, then it leaves it open to interpretation, and what can happen as a result is that you can see some serious violations.

Well, last time around, a number of stakeholders voiced their concern. They said that there were some serious problems with this bill. The bill is largely—there have been some amendments and there have been some changes, and I acknowledge that. That has taken the bill a step forward and made it better. It has improved the bill. But there still remains a significant number of problems that will go contrary to the entire intention of getting rid of the Public Works Protection Act. Put simply, you're getting rid of a bill that had problems in it to replace it with a new bill that has a lot of the same problems. It doesn't make a lot of sense, does it? If you acknowledge that an existing act is not good and it's problematic because it has certain broad and vague elements to it, then why would you introduce a new bill that has similarly vague and broad powers?

A number of stakeholders spoke about this. One of those was the Ontario Bar Association. They submitted some remarks on April 19, 2012. They submitted them to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy. In their analysis of the bill, they noted a number of areas of concern; and some of those concerns have been addressed, and they appreciate that, as well as I. They specifically spoke about the issue of vagueness, that a vague law is a bad law, basically put. If you have a law that is vague, there is a high likelihood that it's going to be abused or misused, so it's better to avoid that in the first place and make sure the law is not vague and is actually clear.

In their comments, they mentioned the fact that vagueness was an issue, underneath their remarks around other constitutional and legal principles to be addressed. They mentioned vagueness as one of those. In specific, they said one of the problems with the PWPA from a constitutionality perspective was that it contained terms, such as "any approach" to a public work, that were vague. As Mr. McMurtry wrote, "Vague laws offend two fundamental values of our legal system. Firstly, individuals are not provided with sufficient guidance as to what behaviour a law prohibits. Secondly, those in charge of enforcing the law are not provided with clear guidance as to how to enforce it. A vague law can lead to inconsistent and arbitrary enforcement."

That's exactly what happened in G20. There was inconsistent and extremely arbitrary enforcement of the law. In G20, people were rounded up for just being on the streets. People were rounded up; they were detained. Just to understand this concept, they were placed in makeshift metal pens. They were rounded up, often in situations where they weren't even involved in a protest; and even if they were involved in a protest, we should support the right to dissent. That's a fundamental part of democracy. So people who were protesting and some

people who weren't were rounded up and placed in metal pens and kept there for three days, and largely the reason was because the laws that this government used, the Public Works Protection Act, were too vague and too broad. Because they were too vague and too broad, the police enforced them in a very arbitrary and inconsistent manner. They took away the rights of people they shouldn't have, they detained people without any right, they took away people's civil liberties, and there was really no recourse. People didn't get any remedy for that. It was one of the worst of its kind in the history of Canada.

So if you accept Justice McMurtry's report that says vagueness was a problem—he specifically points to the vagueness of the Public Works Protection Act and says that it's a problem; it shouldn't be vague, and it resulted in some of the infringements that we saw—then why would you include it in this bill?

The Ontario Bar Association goes on to say, "The bill"—this bill—"contains similarly vague terms that require further definition in order to make the court security provisions compliant with constitutional principles and the rule of law. These provisions include those highlighted below...." The Ontario Bar Association goes on to specifically highlight that one of the major concerns was under section 138.(1)1, point number ii: "to provide information for the purpose of assessing whether the person poses a security risk."

So you're required, to get into the courthouse—these are powers that you are conferring upon the police. The power is conferred in this manner that says that to enter into a courthouse, the individual who is going to screen you to enter in, whether it's a police officer or someone else designated by the Police Services Act—that person can require you to provide information. What information, what sort of information—none of that is clarified by this law.

Broadly speaking, "provide information" could be anything. To provide information for what purpose? Maybe the purpose would narrow it a bit, make it a bit more clear, less vague, less broad: "for the purpose of assessing whether the person poses a security risk." That could be anything. That's so subjective. There are no guidelines there. It doesn't say that we need to provide information as to whether or not they have a weapon. That would be narrow, that would be defined, that would be clear, so that the individual who is enforcing this law would say, "Okay, I can only obtain any information that would help me assess whether they have a weapon or not." I still think there are some problems with the wording, but at least that would be clear language. That would help you obtain your objective, which is to make sure the courthouses are safe, which is the objective of all of us.

But the way it's currently worded is so broad, here are some of the scenarios that could occur: "to provide information for the purpose of assessing" could be anything. They could say: "What court are you going to? What case are you here to hear? Why are you at the

courthouse? Why do you have an interest in that particular case?" How does that protect people in the courthouse?

Good police work is based on evidence, investigation and building up a case, and if there are reasonable grounds, then to arrest somebody. These are the steps. You want to have evidence that builds a case in a meaningful, thoughtful way. Fishing expeditions have been said to be, time and time again, unconstitutional, improper and not the right way to engage in investigations and not, frankly, the right way to engage in creating a safer society, workplace or, specifically in this case, a courthouse.

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If it's not the way we need to go, if we don't want to have fishing expeditions, we don't want to have broad powers without any real guidance in terms of what their goal is. If there's no connection between the right conferred and the objective, then why are you doing it?

I spoke before about the importance of an open courthouse. I want to touch upon that and provide you with some guidance in terms of some of the laws that have been passed and some of the decisions that have been made in this country with respect to the idea of an open courthouse. Simply put, if we live in a democratic society, a democratic society has a number of hallmarks or a number of signs, a number of indicia, things that you can look to and say, "Yes, that's a democracy." They have these things. They have certain things in them so you can tell that this is a democracy. Some of those things are, for example, the right to vote. Broadly speaking, all people being able to vote is a sign of some democracy. Having free and open elections is a sign of democracy.

Another sign of a democracy—an important sign—is that a democracy should have the rule of law, meaning that there can't be arbitrary decisions. It's not just, "Because I don't like that person, I'm going to put that person in jail," or, "Just because I don't like the colour of their shirt, they're not allowed to walk into this building over here." Those are arbitrary decisions. Instead, if you have the rule of law, the rule of law means there's a law that applies equally to all people in a fair and just manner so that you know what to expect. You know that these are the laws and they're not going to be arbitrarily applied to me and not applied to someone else. You know that there will be a uniformity, a consistency, about the laws. That's the rule of law.

In addition to the rule of law, to have faith in the administration of justice: Basically, to believe that the laws are being enacted in a meaningful way or in a way that actually serves justice, then you need make sure that where justice is dealt, where these decisions are made, people are able to walk into those places. In a democratic society, you want to be able to go and see justice unfold. You want the ability to go into a courthouse and see how it is that the rule of law is actually, in a practical sense, being implemented. The open court principle and access to courthouses is essentially a fundamental principle of

all democracies, but particularly it's something very important to us here in Canada.

Two years ago, when this law was first introduced on April 19, 2012, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and at that time Nathalie Des Rosiers, the general counsel, and Abby Deshman, director of the public safety program for the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, presented at the Standing Committee on Justice Policy in regard to, at the time, Bill 34, which was the previous iteration of this current bill, Bill 35. In their remarks, they spoke about the importance of an open justice system—an open court principle—and the idea of access to courthouses. They write, on page 2 of the report, "The open court principle is essential to the maintenance of a fair and functional justice system and must be a central consideration when evaluating the reasonableness and impact of courthouse security."

What are guiding principles? If we're looking at courthouse security, two things need to guide us. The major thing that should guide us is the open court principle. This should be our central consideration when we look at: What is a reasonable type of law to be applied? What is a reasonable infringement on individual liberties? What makes sense?

When we're looking at what makes sense to implement in court security, we need to look at the open court principle. In fact, the open court principle was reaffirmed a number of times, specifically by the highest court in Canada, the Supreme Court of Canada. Later on, on page 2 of this report, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association states very clearly, "The Supreme Court of Canada has repeatedly emphasized the importance of this presumptive openness." In the report, they continue to say, "Just last year the Court unanimously reaffirmed the rationale behind this principle" in the decision *Vancouver Sun (Re)*, [2004], a decision by the Supreme Court of Canada, with comments from Justice Iacobucci and Justice Arbour. The court found that:

"The open court principle is of crucial importance in a democratic society. It ensures that citizens have access to the courts and can, as a result, comment on how the courts operate and on proceedings that take place in them. Public access to the courts also guarantees the integrity of judicial processes inasmuch as the transparency that flows from access ensures that justice is rendered in a manner that is not arbitrary, but is in accordance with the rule of law."

People, the public, play an important role in ensuring that we have a transparent courthouse. But, more importantly, they actually assist in maintaining the rule of law. They act as a check and balance—an informal check and balance—on our judicial system.

The Supreme Court of Canada, the highest court of Canada, makes it very clear that an open courthouse is essential, is fundamental. It's something that is so important that we can never look away from that importance; we can never undermine that importance—public access, accessibility, the ability to go to court.

That's why I turn your attention again to why you, as a government, would include in this law a provision that

requires people to have to provide information before they can get into a courthouse. Why would you do that? It makes no sense. It contravenes the principle of an open court. It contravenes the idea of having a transparent courthouse. In fact, it goes against the idea of a true democracy.

There are so many other ways to do this. There are so many other ways to address this issue. It's not necessary to require such an onerous burden.

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association goes on to provide specific criticism of this broad requirement to provide information.

We've already indicated that the Ontario Bar Association, in their submission to the justice committee back in 2012, raised concerns around the vagueness of it. The Ontario Bar Association represents thousands of members, thousands of lawyers, across the province. Some of the greatest legal minds of our province are represented. Some 18,000 lawyers, judges, law professors and students in Ontario make up the Ontario Bar Association. With the weight of that association, they raise this concern around access to courts, a very important civil liberties issue.

The minister, the House leader, gets up in this House and says, "We're balancing civil liberties with security." I say, very openly, that you are not balancing those interests. We have a number of civil liberties experts who say that you're not. I challenge you to show me how you are, when we have evidence, we have legal minds who have looked at this and said, "No, this is not balancing civil liberties."

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association, on page 5 of their submission to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, indicates the broad requirements to provide information: "Similar to the identification requirement, Bill 34 would also give officers the power to require a person to 'provide information for the purposes of assessing whether the person poses a security risk'.... This amendment seemingly confers extremely broad powers of mandatory interrogation that could be used to inquire into any aspect of a person's life upon entry into a courthouse."

I need to emphasize that once more. In response to this broad provision, this overly broad power which Justice McMurtry criticized—Justice McMurtry said very clearly that the problem with the PWA was that it was too broad; it was too vague. This law is also too broad and too vague. We have the Ontario Bar Association stating it very clearly.

In addition, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, which is well respected for being a bastion of civil liberties, for standing up for civil liberties, justice and rights, is stating very clearly that this provision, which requires you to "provide information for the purposes of assessing whether the person poses a security risk ... seemingly confers extremely broad powers of mandatory interrogation that could be used to inquire into any aspect of a person's life upon entry into a courthouse." It continues, to say, "Members of the public should not

have to subject themselves to a fishing expedition aimed at revealing whether or not they pose a 'security threat' in order to access public courtrooms, provide testimony, or otherwise participate in the justice system." That's what you're doing. You're requiring people to subject themselves to an interrogation, potentially. You're requiring people to subject themselves to a fishing expedition, potentially.

1650

This law does not balance civil liberties at all. You have learned nothing from the problems that your government created under G20, specifically with respect to what Justice McMurtry said: that the PWA is problematic because it's too vague, it's too broad. Your bill is too vague and too broad. The Canadian Civil Liberties Association states that, that it's actually an infringement on civil liberties. Why would you do that? Why would you replace a law that infringed people's civil liberties with a new law that also infringes people's civil liberties? It boggles the mind that after so much criticism, after so much loss of rights, you would do something of this nature.

It's not like you didn't see this coming. This is from two years ago. Two years ago, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association clearly stated that this is not right; there's a problem here. They clearly stated this. The problems haven't gone away. This was two years ago. So why didn't you address this issue?

Now, you might state that, "This seemed to be the only way. This was the only way we could do it. We had to balance the interest of security." Well, the CCLA did a wonderful job of comparing across the provinces and territories. I note the minister is present. In the province of Manitoba, they have one of the best court security acts in the country, the Manitoba Court Security Act. That court security act is efficient. It creates a high level of security, and in no way requires any of these intrusive, civil-liberty-violating principles or amendments that components of this bill have.

The Manitoba security act doesn't require you to identify yourself to enter the courthouse. The Manitoba security act doesn't require you to provide information so that someone can assess your level of risk. They don't require that. In fact, the CCLA did a comparison of nine other provinces and one territory. This is important: nine other provinces and one other territory. They found that none of the legislative frameworks give security officials a general power to demand information. So you'll be another first. Out of these nine provinces and one territory, you'll be the first to require that someone provide information before they get into a courthouse. Congratulations: You're the first. You're the first to do that. Nine other provinces and one territory—none of them have this provision which requires you to provide information just to get into a public space. None of them have that. I repeat that: None of them have that. You're the first province that will bring that in. That is so unacceptable.

In fact, none of these other nine provinces and one territory have a legislative framework authorizing

random vehicle searches, as your bill has. Why are you doing this? I don't understand. This is not civil liberties. This is not social justice. It's just simply not.

Again, if there was an evidentiary basis for it—if you're, like, "You know what? We have a lot of evidence that shows that if you search cars in the parking lot of a courthouse, you can prevent things from happening." There is no evidence to back that up. None of the security threats that have ever come across this province involved issues around searching the courthouse parking lot. They just don't. That's not the issue. The issue is, you don't want people bringing dangerous materials into the courthouse. That is all it is. And that's what your law should say. The law should be very clear that you're only screening people—not searching them broadly, just screening them—so that people don't bring in any sort of dangerous material, they don't bring in dangerous weapons, they don't bring in flammable material, they don't bring in explosives. That's all it should be, really. What else do you need to say?

And that's how courthouses work right now. There are metal detectors in some courthouses. You walk through that, there's a wandling process, your bag gets metal-detector searched—not actually pried through and people look through it, but it goes through a conveyer belt and it's searched. That's not intrusive. That's acceptable. That makes sense. That's what goes on right now. You walk through a metal detector. That also makes sense. You get wanded down sometimes with the metal-detecting wand. That also makes sense.

Why would you include these extra provisions? You have to identify yourself and you have to provide information to the person screening you or the person searching you. Why? There is no basis for that.

So I can state very clearly that there is a distinct departure from our position that courts should be open and transparent, that people should be able to access courts, and your position where you want to place some of the most draconian laws in the entire country, some of the most draconian laws in the country, to limit and impede people's ability to go into a courthouse. That's all this does. It's impeding people's ability to get into a courthouse. It's limiting and barring access to justice.

That's contrary to what democracy is founded on. Democracy is founded on open courts. The only places where they don't have open courts are the places where they don't have democracies. Everywhere they have open courts is where they have a democracy. So I am questioning whether or not you believe in this principle, because you're creating a barrier unnecessarily.

There are some other folks who weighed in on this, so it's not just my opinion. I openly state that this is clearly unfair and wrong, but I've cited from the Ontario Bar Association and I've cited from the Canadian Civil Liberties Association. I'll also cite from or reference the Toronto Lawyers Association. The Toronto Lawyers Association, otherwise known as the TLA, has in excess of 3,000 members making up the Toronto bar of lawyers. These are lawyers who practise in the Toronto jurisdic-

tion. They're referred to as the voice of Toronto lawyers. These individuals are the voice of Toronto lawyers. So we have the voice of Ontario lawyers in the Ontario Bar Association, we have the voice of the champions of civil liberties, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, and now we have the Toronto Lawyers Association.

So again, this is not just my opinion. These are the opinions of some far more intelligent minds than mind, far more experienced minds than mine, and people who have a proven track record of standing up for civil liberties. They also state very clearly their concerns around this bill.

Again, the Toronto Lawyers Association made a submission to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy on April 13, 2012; again, two years ago. The Toronto Lawyers Association stated very clearly on page 2 of their report, "The provisions that ... concern TLA are those that permit a police officer to do the following"—these are the provisions that the TLA are concerned with, the Toronto Lawyers Association, the voice of Toronto lawyers. They indicate that these are the areas they're concerned with: "(1) Require a person who is entering or attempting to enter premises where court proceedings are conducted or who is on such premises ... (ii) to provide information for the purpose of assessing whether the person poses a security risk."

They also have the same problem. So it's not just me. It's the Toronto Lawyers Association, it's the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and it's the Ontario Bar Association. These are serious problems.

One thing that I want to make very clear and that I'm very proud of: The Ontario New Democratic Party worked very hard, and I was very honoured to submit this accommodation provision and amendment, which was amended and which was carried, which requires the court to allow an accommodation for religious freedoms, accommodations in connection with their creed or disability. I'm very honoured that that was passed, and that is one definite improvement of this bill, but there is still much that needs to be improved.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I appreciate the member's concern about liberty. I just want to make a few points here. One is, critically, that we were operating under legislation that was World War II and Cold War legislation, which was totally inadequate for that. We were also operating at the time—and I think I spoke out on this; Mayor Miller, the mayor of Toronto at the time, spoke out—of probably the most ridiculous location to have an international summit, with most of the world's major leaders in a place where there were more gun points from every building, more passageways, more sewers, more subways, more ability to actually move in and out. It was the hardest place to protect. We were dealing with inadequate legislation.

I think that moving forward on this bill is so important, especially before the Pan Am Games. We do not have very civil-liberty-sensitive legislation in most prov-

inces. I lived in Manitoba through the Pan Am Games, and we had similar problems with that. This is all long overdue. We can point fingers, but a lot of us have been on this side of the House and it didn't happen.

1700

What I'm most concerned about—and, out of this, what I've been on the campaign for with some of my federal members, in both parties, including members of the third party federally—is to restore the Canadian charter challenges program and restore the funding. No one could take the federal government to court. We never got answers out of the federal government. We had independent police inquiries and we had independent inquiries at the provincial level; there was no federal inquiry. These were all CSIS- and RCMP-run things. That is what is really concerning me.

This is the kind of legislation that we should bring forward. What was actually, when I was growing up, liberty and freedom has now become privacy, and privacy, as far as the Internet and government intervention, is almost dead. Getting a Canadian charter Court Challenges Program in the Human Rights Code would actually reactivate the Human Rights Code and make it the legislation that we need to actually protect ourselves. In that, my friend from Brampton and I are of one mind.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: We echo that. We're going to be supporting this particular bill, but I'd like to share with you that we feel on our side of the House that it's straightforward legislation that addresses the recommendations made by former Chief Justice Roy McMurtry in the wake of the G20 fiasco.

It's unfortunate that it has taken nearly three years—again, I stress that it's unfortunate that it has taken nearly three years—since new legislation was first introduced to get to this point, to replace archaic powers. The outdated Public Works Protection Act included, as just mentioned, wartime powers for the protection of public infrastructure from saboteurs, but relied too heavily on the discretion of the minister.

The former Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services and the McGuinty cabinet used that discretion to secretly introduce secret powers of arrest during the 2010 G20 summit. The Liberal government failed to take responsibility for the widespread confusion that followed the introduction of these powers. This legislation removes the minister's discretion to grant special powers of arrest, but it does not address, sadly, the lack of sound judgment demonstrated by the McGuinty cabinet during and in the wake of the G20 summit.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm pleased to be able to follow the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton and his intricacy when working on this bill. I believe that this is the third time that this bill has been in front of us. I could be mistaken, if it's our second, but I'm thinking that it's the third.

That's a problem, because the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton has consistently brought forward concerns and has talked—the Toronto Lawyer Association, the civil liberties association and the Canadian Bar Association, and this government has still failed to make those changes. I think that that's a real problem here in this House, because other people were elected, just the same as the people across the hallway.

The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton is a lawyer. This is something that is right in his district, and is something that he knows quite a bit about. Like I said, he has brought great substance to this debate. He has brought great options forward. I'm happy to see that there were changes that were made in the bill that he brought forward when it came to religious entitlement; what a huge success that was, so I congratulate him on that. I just wish that the government would be listening when it came to other matters.

Identifying people when they come into the courtroom—think about the victims who are in those lineups. Who are the people who are behind them? Is it people who are of concern to that victim? Is it the press who are behind that victim? We have to really be considering what it is and the position that we're putting people in, in this province. Are we doing the justice that needs to be done? Yes, we need safety in our country and in our province, and we need to make sure that we have a safe environment, but we also have to make sure that people's identities are also safe at the same time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We have time for one last question or comment. I recognize the member for Scarborough–Agincourt.

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise this afternoon to support Bill 35. I want to comment on the comments made by my colleague opposite from Bramalea–Gore–Malton. He needs to remember that he sat on the same committee as me back in 2011, having this debate. Fifteen MPPs from all three parties have already had an opportunity to speak about this bill. We also had 19 hours of debate on this particular bill during nine days of debate.

If the third party hadn't forced the recent provincial election, this bill may have been passed. Let's call a spade a spade. We know that we have to pass this bill, and everybody agrees in this House. I think it's time for this bill to move to committee so that it will be further strengthened and then come back for a final vote.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton has two minutes.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank all the members for joining in the debate. Thank you for your comments. I really appreciate it.

I want to just reiterate how proud I am of what we were able to do as a party and what we were able to achieve.

The bill, as it was initially written, didn't have any provisions for folks with disabilities or for people with religious articles of faith or other forms of religious

expression. There wasn't an accommodation for those folks. I'm very proud that our party stood up and put forward an amendment in committee when this bill was first introduced, and I'm so proud of our work to introduce an amendment that required a reasonable accommodation. We put forward that accommodation because we believed that courts should be open and accessible to all people regardless of creed or disability. We put forward that accommodation, and that accommodation found its way into this bill. That's a significant success for us, and we're really proud of that achievement.

We're really proud that now, moving forward, this bill actually includes an accommodation factoring in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, factoring in the Human Rights Code and requiring that courts accommodate people based on their creed or disability. That's a phenomenal success story. That's something we're so proud of. New Democrats pushed for that. We fought for that and we were successful in achieving that.

I want to just take a moment to reflect on that achievement, but at the same time, to make it very clear that this is my first time to speak on this new introduction of this bill. Two years ago, there were significant issues raised. There were serious problems raised about this bill's infringement on civil liberties. I want to make it absolutely clear to the members opposite and everyone in this House: There are serious problems with this bill. This bill was brought in with an attempt to rectify the civil liberty violations of another law, and now this law itself has the potential for some serious civil liberty violations.

Don't make another mistake and create a new law that can violate rights once again. Let's get it right this time. Let's make sure that our courts are open, transparent and accessible.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Further debate?

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm very pleased to have this opportunity this afternoon to participate in this important debate on Bill 35, An Act to repeal the Public Works Protection Act, amend the Police Services Act with respect to court security and enact the Security for Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act, 2014.

Might I say, Mr. Speaker, you look very distinguished in the chair. You do credit to your predecessor, Bert Johnson, who for many years was an outstanding Deputy Speaker in the Legislature. You're doing him proud by participating, and I thank you for filling in for me for a few minutes this afternoon too. We're a bit short-handed this week, and everybody is pitching in. It's great to see you there.

This important debate was commenced again on October 30, 2014, when the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services introduced Bill 35 in this Legislature. I thought it was interesting, when I was trying to research through Hansard, that it appears to me that we couldn't find that the minister even did a ministerial statement the day that he introduced the bill.

As you know, normally when a government bill is introduced in the House, the minister stands up that day and gives a statement of some sort about the bill, and members of the Legislature are given the opportunity to respond, in a preliminary sense, to the bill. In this case, there appeared not to be a ministerial statement. Certainly he gave a bit of a presentation when second reading of the bill was commenced, but, at the same time, he didn't speak for very long.

It's interesting how the government is, in this fall sitting, not necessarily interested in debating the legislation that it's bringing into the House and is starting to routinely use time allocations to shut down debate. I would ask them, on this important issue, not to bring in time allocation. I think there should be an opportunity for members of this House to participate in the debate. We have an obligation on behalf of our constituents. There are 107 of us here; we all represent ridings. You would think that we would all get a chance to participate in debate.

1710

I would again encourage the government, not only to listen to the debate that is taking place in the House, but to allow the debate to take place and allow the members who wish to speak to the bill to have that opportunity.

As we know, one of the things this bill does is repeal the Public Works Protection Act. The government tells us that this bill is far narrower in scope and covers only limited categories of public infrastructure. As you know, Mr. Speaker—and you've heard, in the course of this debate—the repeal of the World War II-era Public Works Protection Act as part of this bill sets out a legislative amendment to the Police Services Act to address court security and to set out stand-alone legislation with respect to security at prescribed electricity generating and nuclear facilities.

Schedule 1 of the bill repeals the Public Works Protection Act. That's the act that was brought in at the time, I guess at the start of World War II, 75 years ago, to protect, I understand, some of our—it wouldn't have been nuclear in those days, but some of our electricity generating facilities, because there was a legitimate fear of enemy saboteurs coming into the country and wreaking havoc with their activities. So apparently the Legislature decided to move quickly to ensure that there was adequate protection for those facilities.

Also, this bill includes schedule 2, amendments to the Police Services Act to address court security. The proposed changes would ensure that court security guards have the power to require all those entering a courthouse to show identification and indicate their reason for being there, subject themselves to a search, if necessary, and, if deemed necessary, allow security officers to search the vehicle that they arrived in without a warrant. The bill also provides for penalties in the event that these things happen, and perhaps anyone refusing to identify themselves or failing to leave on demand could face fines of up to \$2,000 or imprisonment for up to 60 days.

Then, of course, we have schedule 3 of the bill, which enacts the Security for Courts, Electricity Generating

Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act, 2014. This provides for the appointment of security personnel as peace officers and sets out security regulations for electricity generating and nuclear facilities that are similar to those set out for courthouses.

Our caucus has expressed, obviously, a number of observations about this bill. This bill, we acknowledge, is straightforward legislation that appears to be a response in an attempt to address the recommendations made by former Chief Justice and former Attorney General Roy McMurtry, who served with distinction in this Legislature for many, many years and is someone who is held in, I think, high regard by all of us in this House. His recommendations followed the incident at the G20 in Toronto where a significant number of people were arrested after a protest that turned into, in some cases, a riot. Obviously there were a lot of questions asked afterwards, and Justice McMurtry was asked to review the matter and make recommendations to the government for the future.

It has apparently taken three years since he made his report for this legislation to get to this point, to replace the previous law, the outdated Public Works Protection Act. Again, that included wartime powers for the protection of public infrastructure from saboteurs, but we submit that it relied too heavily on the discretion of the minister and it had become outdated as well. So we use the word “archaic” when we talk about that piece of legislation, that is, in fact, being repealed by Bill 35, if it is passed by the House.

We know that the former Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services and the former McGuinty government used the discretion that was on the books as a result of the existence of the Public Works Protection Act to secretly introduce special powers of arrest during the G20 summit, which—again, it’s hard to believe—was four years ago, in 2010. We say that the Liberal government has failed to take responsibility for the widespread confusion that followed the introduction of these powers. We say that this legislation removes the minister’s discretion to grant special powers of arrest, but it does not address the lack of sound judgment demonstrated by the McGuinty cabinet during and in the wake of the G20 summit.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is really a new attempt to pass this legislation. Apparently, in the previous Parliament, it was Bill 34. I understand it was first introduced in February 2012. I understand several amendments were made after the bill was reviewed by the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, but the bill died on the order paper. Bill 34 was then reintroduced as Bill 51 in April 2013, but that died on the order paper at second reading when the election was called.

Again, I would remind all members: I know we were all excited and paying attention to what was happening—those of us who were running for the first time and those of us who were seeking re-election—but the fact is that the New Democrat leader announced she would not be supporting the budget, and upon hearing that news, the Premier called the election. So, let’s not pretend that it

was the New Democrats who called the election. It’s actually the head of government who goes to the Lieutenant Governor seeking dissolution. That’s how it works in a parliamentary system of government. That’s how it has always worked. The Premier called the election.

It’s also true that the New Democrats said they weren’t going to vote for the budget. Another scenario might have been that we would have come back into the House, debated the budget and had a vote on the budget. If the vote had been defeated, the government would have been defeated in the House, because it’s a confidence motion. Then, again, the Premier would have been expected to go to the Lieutenant Governor to seek dissolution. That’s actually how it works. For the government members to try to suggest that the NDP called the election is just not true.

So we carry on with this bill. The fact is that the election took place, and the bill died on the order paper when the House was dissolved. We see no significant changes between last year’s Bill 51 and today’s Bill 35; just a small number of date changes and minor grammatical alterations. The bill was originally introduced due to events that followed the McGuinty cabinet’s decision, made in the lead-up to the 2010 G20 summit in Toronto, to invoke regulation 233/10 under the Public Works Protection Act, making the G20 zone a “public work” between June 21 and June 28.

Media coverage leading up to the summit circulated around reports of the police being granted special powers of arrest up to five metres on either side of the security fence in the G20 zone, which was requested by Toronto police chief Bill Blair. There had been widespread confusion leading up to and during the G20 summit about exactly where the special powers of arrest applied among the public, police and the media. It was only after the summit was over that the government publicly acknowledged that the police were never granted powers of arrest five metres outside of the area designated as a public work under the regulation. Many felt that this suggested the government had deliberately obscured the facts to bluff the protesters from occupying the area surrounding the G20 security zone.

In December 2010, provincial Ombudsman André Marin said that the illegal regulation resulted in a massive breach of civil rights. In April 2011, an independent inquiry led, as I said, by former Chief Justice McMurtry found the act to be beyond troubling and recommended that it be repealed.

Now we’ve heard from the critic for the New Democrats, who gave an hour-long speech over the course of a couple of days—he had about half an hour today. He talked about some of the civil liberties concerns that have been expressed by a number of organizations in the province. I would recommend to the government that they carefully evaluate those concerns. Obviously, the government would tell us and have us believe they have struck the balance between maintaining the appropriate level of security at the same time as, the minister said in his second reading remarks, “we strike the right balance

between protecting Ontario's courthouses, electricity generating plants and nuclear facilities, and respecting the civil rights of the people of this province." So he's saying on one hand that they're ensuring that there's an adequate level of security and that they're balancing that with respect for people's civil rights in a democracy. Certainly, that still is a point of contention, and I would recommend to the government that they carefully evaluate the concerns that are being expressed by some of these organizations before the House concludes its debate on this bill.

I would anticipate and expect that this bill most likely will pass second reading at some point.

1720

Again, I hope that the government doesn't employ time allocation to curtail and shut down the debate, but in all likelihood the bill will continue to be discussed, and at some point there will be a second reading vote. The government has a majority, and we know that if all their members show up, they have the power to pass any piece of legislation that they want, in the final analysis. But at the same time, the bill most likely will go to a standing committee of the Legislature—we would hope that would be the case—and there would be, hopefully, some public hearings to allow for some of the groups and individuals who have concerns about this bill or have ideas to improve and strengthen it. Again, that's part of the legislative process too. It's the way we've always done things in the 24 years that I've been privileged to serve in the Legislature.

We need to hear from the public, and we need to give the people who have an interest in legislation an opportunity to be heard. It doesn't mean that we're always going to be able to satisfy or accommodate every request for changes, but at least people do in a democracy have the right to be heard, and we should, as members of the Legislature, understand that, respect that and allow that to happen so that we ensure we are doing the right thing and taking the time to get it right.

I have, in the past, had the opportunity to raise some concerns about the need for a new courthouse in the region of Halton, and since this bill discusses courthouse security, I think it's important for me to reiterate some of the concerns I have about the existing court facility that we have in Halton, in the Milton community. I can't speak for the other members who are privileged to represent Halton, but certainly the member for Burlington and the member for Halton, as well as the Minister of Labour, who represents the community of Oakville—I have had a number of conversations with them, and I am certainly willing and prepared and happy to work with them to advocate for a new court facility in the Halton region because, quite frankly, we need it.

I had a chance on September 10 to tour the existing court facility, and I think the other area MPPs from Halton had a chance to tour it in the last couple of weeks. We are actually going to have a briefing from the Attorney General's staff, I think next week, to hear from the staff about the process for the approval of new

courthouse facilities, something that I'm looking forward to. I hope that all the other Halton area MPPs are able to attend so that we can sit down with the ministry staff and ensure that we're all talking about the same thing and that we all know and understand the process and that we can work together in the public interest, across party lines, to get this done.

I have had a chance, actually today, to reach out to the Halton County Law Association. Again, this relates to courthouse security in the town of Milton today, in the region of Halton. This is what they told me about the inadequate security that they currently have at their location, which again leads us to advocate for a new courthouse.

They tell me that the existing Milton courthouse is dysfunctional. They say this:

"The floor plan of the Milton courthouse can only be described as a 'labyrinth'. The hallways are cramped, they weave around rooms and the infrastructure, and ingress and egress in an emergency could be compromised.

"Judicial access to some courtrooms is through public hallways and stairwells. In these situations, judges are accompanied from their offices to the courtrooms by an armed police officer.

"Access between the third-floor courtrooms in Milton can only be achieved through the basement, which can lead to some prisoners (some of whom might be deemed to be high-risk) being transported from the cells to the courtrooms through public hallways.

"Significant concerns regarding the housing and movement of persons in custody are the following:

"The holding cells in the Milton courthouse are wholly inadequate and potentially dangerous. There are two "bullpen"-type cells that are used to house all male adult prisoners—one that is used to hold prisoners for bail hearings and one for holding prisoners at court for trials and other appearances. Given the limited space for individual holding cells (which are reserved for women and young persons), the situation often arises where violent offenders are being held together with the general population," obviously a serious concern.

"Transport, housing, and movement of persons in-custody are of particular concern, given the layout of the building....

"There is no accommodation, whatsoever, for jurors in Milton. When jury panels are called (a regular occurrence in Milton), potential jurors must sit in stairwells or roam the corridors until they can be sufficiently accommodated in a courtroom. This creates capacity and potential safety issues for all users of the courthouse, especially when high-risk prisoners end up being transported through public hallways and stairwells.

"The elevators in the building are highly unreliable, with frequent breakdowns being the norm."

This is the message I received today from the Halton County Law Association. Again, I would I asked the government to give considerations for our need for a new courthouse in Halton based on the concerns that have been brought to our attention.

I would add, Mr. Speaker, that I had the opportunity to speak to the Attorney General about the need for a new courthouse in Halton since the House resumed sitting this fall. She seemed to be quite interested and I was pleased that she demonstrated genuine interest. In fact, on her own initiative she toured the Milton Courthouse herself a few weeks ago and saw the need for herself. I'm hopeful that we're doing everything we can do to draw the attention of government to the need for a new courthouse. We know that the government is planning to spend \$254 million for justice infrastructure this year and we would anticipate that they're going to spend a similar amount going forward in future years. What we want to know is, where are we on the priority list and what communities might be ahead of us and why? Hopefully we'll be able to establish our need and make our case so that we can be the number one priority.

There was a rumour circulating in recent years that the Milton courthouse was the first priority on the list, but then something happened—quite frankly, that was before I was involved in the issue, so I can't speak to that particularly, except to say that I have heard this from a number of the people who were interested and concerned. At the same time, we need to know where we are now so that we can move forward.

I know this is a very important issue, but the bill does speak to courthouse security. That's one of the main focuses of the bill and that's what the government told us at second reading, so I think we have every reason to talk about our own individual courthouse needs in our ridings. In this case, the existing courthouse happens to be in the riding of Halton, but again, I express my willingness and desire, actually, to work with the other Halton area MPPs to advocate for the government in a constructive and positive way and hopefully get the new courthouse that we need as soon as possible.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the time that you've taken to listen to my contribution to the debate on Bill 35. It's an important piece of legislation. I would suggest to the government that they need to listen to the concerns and some of the observations of the opposition over the course of this debate and ensure that the bill goes to committee—hopefully they won't use time allocation to shut down the debate—and then we can ensure that we get this important issue right as we debate it in this Legislature.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the indulgence you've given me, and I look forward to the other members' comments and questions.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Questions and comments?

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm happy to stand up in response to the member from Wellington–Halton Hills. He clarified something for me that I had said in the last two-minute portion, that this is the third time this bill has been in front of us. I wasn't so sure, but he clarified that.

The member from Scarborough–Agincourt had pointed out that if it wasn't for us in the third party, this bill would have already been passed, but I think she

forgot the fact that Bill 34 was killed when her government prorogued. Right, Speaker? That's exactly what happened. All the pieces are starting to come together quite clearly now. I just wish that the Liberals would take that advice of having the pieces come together after this many debates and that they would have changed this bill to make it better.

I talked about the concern of people coming into the courthouse being IDed. My next concern is about vehicles being searched by people who attend at the courthouse. Why is it that, if I'm dropped off at the courthouse by, say, my mother or my sister or my neighbour, and I have done something wrong in that courthouse, they would then have the ability to go and search somebody else's vehicle? There's a problem with that. It's not my vehicle; it's just the vehicle that I got there in. Are they going to search the bus, possibly, that I took to the courthouse? Or maybe the taxi that I took to the courthouse? I'm not quite sure how that will exactly work, but there are problems there, and I think they need to be looked at.

1730

The Minister of the Environment had also brought up the fact that this bill needs to get through because the Pan Am Games are coming forward. We know that the government still hasn't even secured the security for the Pan Am Games. So that's a major issue that needs to be talked about also.

That's my time again, Speaker. Thanks for the opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Questions and comments?

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I was very interested, listening to the members from Wellington–Halton Hills and Hamilton Mountain, but as a new member of the Legislature, I value the fact that the people who have already sat in this Legislature for a number of years—24 years, as one member said—you've already debated this repeatedly.

I'm very proud to be sitting on this side of the Legislature with a very responsive government, that we have an 80-year-old piece of legislation that was born out of a very different era when we didn't have a Charter of Rights and Freedoms, when we didn't have our own Constitution, when the government of the day thought it was all right to intern Canadians of particular ancestry because of the fear of what they might do during a war. It was a very different era. We have rights now. This government realizes that the legislation that's 80 years old needs to be updated.

When we listen to people like the Honourable Roy McMurtry, who says the police have broad powers to protect our society in all kinds of circumstances, but where they do need some additional powers is in court security and at nuclear power plants and electrical generating facilities—so this is very important legislation.

As we saw a few weeks ago on Parliament Hill, it does not take a lot to have a threat become a very serious incident. But when it comes to our courthouses and I daresay to our nuclear power facilities, a very minor threat can have very significant impacts. That's why it's

very important that we move forward with this legislation, pass it and allow the extensive consultation that's already happened to be respected. We've addressed those concerns that have been raised, and we have a good bill before us that we can pass.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Questions and comments? The member from—

Ms. Laurie Scott: Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): —Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

Ms. Laurie Scott: That's great. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for filling in for our Speaker, the member for Wellington–Halton Hills, who had to come out of his first role and do his other role today. He's always a very accommodating member and represents his riding very, very well. It's always a pleasure to follow him and make comments, today on Bill 35, Security for Courts, Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act, 2014.

It's been brought up, the bill's history—third time—the charm, maybe; we'll see how it goes. It was, I think, ready to be voted on, but the election was called by the Liberal government—just to back up some of the comments and to help my friends in the third party. But several amendments were made, I think combined from all parties, which has made this a stronger bill.

It was mentioned many times that it was brought up because of the G20, I guess I can call it, fiasco. Anyway, there were some problems after G20. The Honourable Roy McMurtry, who was a minister in the Conservative government a couple of decades ago, led that and made some recommendations to the government to change a very old bill, 75 years old—what is it? There it is: the Public Works Protection Act; right. That's good.

So we've kind of all worked together. We've made some amendments. We're hearing rumours that they're going to do time allocation, though. That doesn't make us on this side of the House very happy, because this is a bill that we could debate some more on. Security, courts, nuclear generating—so, we're hearing rumours that there is time allocation.

I only have seven seconds left, probably for the whole bill, before it comes to time allocation. Mr. Speaker, thank you for that time. I compliment the member from Wellington–Halton Hills on his comments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): I recognize the member from Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I want to prove to the PC Party that I was listening to their comments, particularly from the member from Wellington–Halton Hills, my good friend and colleague. But it's nice to hear he got it right—I want to compliment him on that—when he said it was the Liberals who called the election. We want to be very clear on that. It wasn't done by Andrea Horwath and the NDP. So I congratulate our member from Wellington–Halton Hills on raising that.

The second thing that was interesting to me as I spent the entire afternoon here enjoying myself, talking to a

number of motions and bills—there is one interesting one that we debated not that long ago, about an hour ago, I guess it was. It was Bill 24, Prohibiting Driving with Unlawful Handguns Act. Then I listened to the colleague from the Liberal Party very clearly say, you know what? We have to listen to the experts. We have to listen to the police associations. We have to listen to the OPP. We have to listen to everybody on what is in the best interest of the province of Ontario to make sure of public safety.

Yet in this bill, the same thing is happening here. When you take a look at the experts who are saying we shouldn't be doing this, let's see who it is:

—Canadian Civil Liberties Association—a pretty good group;

—The centre for constitutional rights—can you imagine wanting to keep your constitutional rights in the province of Ontario? Makes sense to me;

—Law Union of Ontario—now, think about that; and

—Ontario Association of Police Services Boards, which supports having more protection around handguns.

If I get another opportunity to talk, I'd like to talk about how you're going to have people search me who are untrained private security guards, security officers. I would like to talk about that one if I get a chance.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): I return to the member from Wellington–Halton Hills.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm pleased to respond to the observations made by the members from Hamilton Mountain, Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock and Niagara Falls in their questions and comments.

In particular, I want to respond to the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore. He's a government member, and I'm sure he wants to see this bill proceed, and the government would like to see it passed as soon as possible, as well as the other bills before the House. But I would again speak to the importance of ensuring that we get this right.

The government introduced the previous Bill 34, passed it at second reading and sent it to committee. At committee, over the course of the discussion, the public hearings took place and amendments were brought forward. In fact, there were a number of amendments that were brought forward by the opposition that I understand were accepted by the government, which obviously means the government thought they were good ideas.

One added a definition of “‘premises where a restricted access facility is located’ that would include any real property, including buildings and structures on that property that are under direct control of its operator.”

Another amendment: to “change the power of security personnel to ‘request’ that an individual produce identification, information, or submit to a search to the power to ‘require.’ This language is more consistent with the powers of court security personnel under schedule 2.”

Another amendment that came forward by the official opposition that the government accepted: “Remove the requirement for a person to consent to a search of the person, his/her vehicle, or property.”

A fourth one: “Clarify that only vehicles located on the premises could be searched.”

A fifth one: “Add ‘found on’ to the arrest and offences provision to make it an offence to be ‘found on’ prohibited areas in the premises.”

Again, the committee process is important. It allows for public input, and it allows for the members of the Legislature to bring forward ideas to strengthen the bill. In the past, we have done this. We commend the government when they listen to us, and we appreciate it, obviously, because we want to work with the government to improve legislation in this House and ensure that we get it right.

I would again say the committee process is important for Bill 35 and would encourage the government not to employ time allocation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Further debate? The member from Windsor West.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: No.

Miss Monique Taylor: Oshawa.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): I’m sorry. Oshawa.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: That’s okay. It’s the dark hair, right?

I am pleased to have this opportunity to get up and speak to Bill 35, An Act to repeal the Public Works Protection Act, amend the Police Services Act with respect to court security and enact the Security for Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act, 2014. I didn’t know I was going to have this opportunity today, but as the Liberals apparently are not going to speak to this bill today, I am thrilled to have this opportunity.

1740

I’m always impressed when my colleague from Bramalea–Gore–Malton speaks so eloquently—and elegantly, sometimes—but in this case very specifically and using legal terms. You’ll have to forgive that I don’t come from that background; I’m going to put things more into a layperson’s terms here. I’d also like to thank the member from Wellington–Halton Hills for his thoughts on this bill, as well.

I have some opinions. First of all, I’d like to acknowledge that it is a wonderful opportunity that we have here to work at the Legislature, which we know is a beautiful and historic building. I think we can all appreciate that it is open to the public and that we invite civic engagement as much as possible. We balance the safety of our members and of our staff but also of members of the public who come in, and that really is an important part of our democratic system. As my colleague from Bramalea–Gore–Malton pointed out, that is something that we should really be proud of and keep up on that pillar.

When we think about our courts and our court system, that is a very key part of our democratic system; I would say it’s an anchor. When we are thinking about our rules and our laws, we should be vigilant to ensure that they are consistent and that they are fair, and that they are fairly and equally applied, recognizing that there is, as

we’ve heard from the government, the need to balance safety with personal infringement. We recognize that. I mean, nobody wants to think that people who pose security risks are able to just walk in freely and potentially do damage. We all believe in safety, and we recognize that.

Something that I’ll point out that I have had confirmed—I already thought I understood this: The police do a pretty darn good job at what they do, and they can always investigate as needed if they have the grounds to do so, just to put that out there.

So let’s walk through the bill a little bit. This first section here, schedule 2, says:

“Powers of person providing court security....

“Require a person who is entering or attempting to enter premises where court proceedings are conducted or who is on such premises,

“(i) to identify himself or herself, and

“(ii) to provide information for the purpose of assessing whether the person poses a security risk.”

So it’s saying to identify themselves and provide information, just to figure out whether they pose a risk. It’s not saying that there needs to be a visible risk or that there need to be grounds. It’s just, “We’re asking for information to then assess whether you pose that risk.”

I’m curious as to how this would be applied, because when it says, “require a person ... to identify ... and ... to provide information,” I wonder if that means to require all persons, because if it’s to require all people coming in to identify themselves, first of all that would be quite a cumbersome process. It begs the question of if there would be some kind of sign-in to expedite the process. But if it’s all people, is it going to be children that are in line coming into the courts? Is it going to be, potentially, as my colleague from Hamilton Mountain had said, those who are perhaps wanting anonymity for safety reasons, or who have been victimized in their own journey, and there they are, wanting to engage in the court process and maybe be a casual observer? Is it those individuals? Is it, as I said, individuals who should be protected, or whose identity should be protected rather than publicized? Or is it just the average human being who wants to come in and engage anonymously, as is their right?

If it isn’t all—actually, no, we’ll stick with the “if it’s everybody” thing. Every court has its own security procedure. That may look similar court to court; I don’t know. They might have metal detectors, they might have cameras, they might have video. If everybody is required, or if certain people are required, to identify themselves arbitrarily, is that then going to be recorded and tracked information? It doesn’t say here.

If there is an individual who feels forced to give their identity and it is uncomfortable for them to do so—they’ve perhaps been victimized and they’re now being re-victimized—is that now on video? Is that going to be recorded information? Is there a sign-in and sign-out? Are we going to start doing that? Does that constitute an infringement? I’d say yes.

If it isn’t everybody though, then who is it going to be? Is it going to be subjective? As it says now, “if there

is reason to believe that the person poses a security risk”—what is it going to look like? Is it going to be targeted groups? Is it going to be profiling? Are we going to see racial profiling?

We're already seeing, I would say—I don't know how to word this—disproportionate incarceration of certain marginalized groups. Are we then going to see that—I don't know whether I should say “bias,” but are we going to see that reflected then in who we allow to engage in the process or who we choose to identify coming and going in our court system?

Also, it says here in section 2:

“Search, without warrant,

“(i) a person who is entering or attempting to enter premises ...;” or

“(ii) any vehicle that the person is driving....”

As the member from Hamilton Mountain said, it could be a bus, it could be a taxi, it could be the horse they rode in on. But why? As it is now, the police—

Interjection.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Not the Trojan Horse they rode in on.

But as it stands now, the police can secure a vehicle, if they feel there is reason to, and then get a warrant, because that's how things work. But in this case, if I don't like the look of you or if someone doesn't like the look of someone and feels the need to identify them, they can also search them. And it doesn't say what that search would entail. So how invasive is that search going to be potentially? And again, back to that, if we're re-victimizing victims with a physical search, what are we talking about? It isn't outlined here. Perhaps we replace the word “search” with “screen.” That seems less invasive.

Also, if someone is a risk in front of whoever is doing the—I'm going to use the word “screen,” as people are coming in and they're letting them in, if they feel that there is reason to get their name or to search them, that would be an immediate, in-their-face situation, not a parking lot risk, so I'm curious about that.

Also, those who would be conducting the searches—I guess in some courts, it would be police and in some courts it could be court security officers. It could potentially be private security. I would say the government is putting itself out there for getting in trouble in terms of who is searching and profiling and whatever.

Okay, next section here:

“Refuse to allow a person to enter premises ...

“(i) if the person refuses to identify himself or herself ...;” or

“(ii) if there is reason to believe that the person poses a security risk....”

So they can refuse based on: “You won't give me your name” or “You haven't provided enough information” or “You're refusing to subject to a search. I'm therefore not going to allow you in.” That doesn't seem fair.

They also have the right, according to this, to “demand that a person immediately leave” those premises if the person refuses to identify themselves—again, coming

back to those privacy issues or where we need to protect people instead of publicizing their identity.

Interestingly, if an individual doesn't want to subject themselves to a search, if someone doesn't want to give their identifying information, their name or otherwise, or their situation, they can be arrested. Again, these are pretty arbitrary, from where I sit, or if they're not, I wonder why they're not more specific as laid out in here.

If this is going to pass, I would suggest that you make things pretty clear because, just as a concerned citizen, I've refused searches at the airport—not the metal detectors, but the things you go in and walk around. I've opted for other alternatives. Does this allow for any kind of alternative—hold on; I'm not sure what I just said there.

1750

Rather than a big room that spins around you, I've gone through the other door, and you can have a pat-down. You have an alternate opportunity for safety and security. Here it says, if you don't give your name or you don't subject to that search, you can't come in, and if you don't like it, it says here that you can be arrested. So if you do not immediately leave the premises, you can be arrested. I don't know what “immediate” means. I know what immediate can feel like, but I don't know what “immediate” technically, legally means. Is that within five minutes? Is that going to give me a chance to let me plead my case, let me tell you why I don't want to tell you who I am and this is why I'd like to be in that courtroom? Maybe there is a communication issue with this individual. So if it's not fast enough, I can be arrested? I have concerns with that.

We've heard about paralegals who have been detained and searched. I mean, the documents that they carry into and out of a courtroom—if I was being represented, I wouldn't want those to be read by just anybody. It does say in here “privilege preserved.” I would just want to make sure and be on the record that that does indeed cover paralegals in terms of the documents that they would potentially be carrying.

I wonder if that's everything—oh, no. In Oshawa, we have a big and beautiful court building, and that's great. It's a stand-alone building. But in many places, the courts are part of a larger building. Where does it say that it's just going to be at the door to the court portion of this building? If someone was entering the government buildings to do other business that is none of anyone else's business, but just over the course of the day popping in, are they then subject to this? Do they have to say who they are? Do they have to say why they're there? Is it the same line in some buildings?

There's really a lot of wiggle room here, and as my colleague from Bramalea-Gore-Malton pointed out, the reason for this bill, with repealing the Public Works Protection Act—that's based on vagueness, and we got ourselves into trouble with vagueness—“we” being not me, but the government got itself into trouble with that. This is a bit of a poison pill. We all want the PWPA, or the Public Works Protection Act, repealed, because it

was brutal, but now here we're opening ourselves up to major issues, and they're civil liberties issues, and I don't think that's something to be taken lightly.

I forgot to mention that I would be sharing my time. So I am pleased to share my time—I think I've got everything—with my esteemed member from—

Mr. Wayne Gates: Esteemed, wow. Niagara Falls.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: —from Niagara Falls, yes. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm pleased to recognize the member for Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thanks very much as well, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I'd like to thank you for letting me speak on the bill. During my career, I've been involved in a few protests in my day. I can tell you most of them were peaceful. As a matter of fact, we had a protest here just last week on health care. It's a great freedom in this province to be angry at politicians, which many people have been and continue to be, and to be allowed to protest. I've exercised that right a number of times, and I'm sure a few others in the chamber have, as well, who are here tonight.

Before someone across the floor calls a point of order or asks me to stay on the topic, allow me to explain why this is relevant to the bill we're talking about. The bill takes quite a few angles, some of them good, but some of them not so good. Bill 35 repeals the Public Works Protection Act. It's a nice title; it sounds good, to protect our public works, until of course you realize that this act was one of the pieces of legislation that was responsible for the arrests of peaceful demonstrators during the G20. The Ombudsman of Ontario even pointed out that the misuses of the Public Works Protection Act led to the abuse on the civic liberties of people here in Ontario—as a matter of fact, just a few steps from where we are today.

It looks good to remove the act, although it should have been done earlier. Really, this is an issue here that allows us to see some of the major flaws in the bill. The Public Works Protection Act was supposedly well-meaning, but it was used to arrest a number of peaceful protesters, and nobody in this House can deny that—nobody on this side, and certainly nobody on that side. Ontarians had no idea of the power that was enclosed in that act. It is a perfect example of what happens when we are not clear and concise in our legislation and what can happen when large pieces of legislation are open for interpretation. Did everybody hear that? I know you're all paying attention: open for interpretation. In this case, a reading of that act was used to take away people's rights—rights that are the foundation of this province and, quite frankly, this country. So we need to make sure that the provisions of these bills are necessary by law and

warranted. We need to make sure they can't be construed to take away anybody's rights.

We can do that here today. We can start with the bill at hand.

This bill narrows down the list of public spaces where searches can be conducted, ID can be asked for and questions can be asked with little suspicion necessary. Think about that. So what's left?

We still consider our courthouses public space. Of course, the court deals with law, and sometimes people in bad situations can do desperate things. I don't think anyone believes these institutions shouldn't have some form of security, but this bill allows for some questionable acts. For example, any person walking into a courthouse will be able to be stopped and searched without reason. Maybe they're going to support a friend. Who knows?

In fact, it goes beyond this. If you're around a courthouse, authorities can search your car without a warrant—think about that—or just cause. We're all familiar with just cause. Keep in mind that pretty much any other public building in Ontario does not have this provision.

So this means that if you show up in a court to defend yourself, which is one of the fundamental rights of this province, before you even enter the courthouse, you could have your car searched without any good reason. Before you even walk in the doors of the courtroom, someone is already presuming you are guilty of something.

On one hand, we're repealing the law that caused these unreasonable searches and arrests, which the Ombudsman said was against civic liberties, and yet we continue to enshrine this. We enshrine it around our courthouses, around our large areas of land. It assumes that our laws and our security aren't good enough to handle threats. Instead, it says we should suspend civic liberties around certain areas.

Part of this bill repeals actions caused by the second part of this bill. Let's take a look at Bill 35 again and ask ourselves, are these unreasonable and unwarranted searches actually necessary or are they an attack on our fundamental rights?

I want to finish by saying clearly, when you're talking about searching people, do we want untrained private security officers to be able—to give them the opportunity to search us? It makes absolutely no sense.

Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): This House stands adjourned until Monday morning at 10:30.

The House adjourned at 1800.

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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
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
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 Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
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	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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
Vacant	Sudbury	

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COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

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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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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson
Mike Colle, Grant Crack
Joe Dickson, Lisa Gretzky
Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala
Eleanor McMahan, Lisa M. Thompson
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Cristina Martins
Vic Dhillon, John Fraser
Wayne Gates, Marie-France Lalonde
Harinder Malhi, Cristina Martins
Jim McDonell, Randy Pettapiece
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney
Jack MacLaren, Michael Mantha
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qadri
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

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Chair / Président: Toby Barrett
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
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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
Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry
Peter Tabuns
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